

Hand dyeing with

What is Kool Aid? Kool Aid is very easy and safe to use. It is used for making soft drinks in the US and does not need any chemicals, just water and heat. Kool Aid dyeing can be done in the kitchen with your normal household utensils, however, it should be mentioned that the colours do stain hands, surfaces, carpets etc. so cover up carefully! (As a tip, white vinegar can be used to remove stains but check first that the vinegar itself won't damage the affected area). Although it is a food product, we do not sell it for food use so please do not use as a drink; also, avoid inhaling the powders and naturally, don't use if you are sensitive to any of the ingredients.

Can I only dye yarn? Although the instructions refer to yarn, any animal fibre can be dyed, including fabric, fleece, tops or other fibres. Silk is also suitable. Simply ignore the references to skeining and divide your fabric/fibres as appropriate.

What about cotton and synthetics? Although Kool Aid powders stain fabrics they are not suitable for cotton, other plant fibres or most synthetics.

How much do I need? One packet of Kool Aid will dye approximately 25g of yarn to a good strength colour. More powder is needed for darker colours, less for pale ones.

Do the colours last? Providing the yarn is properly fixed and washed in gentle handwash liquid like any delicate fabric, the colours should remain colourfast, although they may fade a little over time. We do recommend washing separately, however, as some residual dye may leach out initially.

How to use Kool Aid Dyes

You will need:

- Kool Aid powder (unsweetened)
- Microwaveable dyeing containers
- Gloves, apron and newspapers to cover surfaces
- Plastic bucket for soaking yarn
- (For dyeing multi-coloured skeins) several containers to hold the dye solutions: Squeezy "sports" bottles are ideal; alternatively, jam jars, well-rinsed plastic milk bottles or plastic cups are fine.
- Access to a microwave to set the dye (see note below if you do not have access to a microwave)

(1) Skein and soak your yarn

Wind your yarn into skeins then soak in a bucket of cool water until thoroughly wet (around 45 minutes). Adding a drop of washing up liquid will help. With Kool Aid you do not need to add any fixer as it contains citric acid.

(2) Apply the dye

You can dye your skeins all one colour or make them multi-coloured.

To make a skein in one colour:

- i) Soak the yarn as above.
- ii) Dissolve a sachet of Kool Aid in cool water, enough to cover the yarn.
- iii) Squeeze most of the water out of the skein you have been soaking and put it in the dish. (If you want a deep colour you may need to dissolve two sachets in the water. It is the amount of dye powder which is important, the amount of water should not make any difference).

To make a multi-coloured skein:

- i) Soak the yarn as above.
- ii) Put a sachet of powder into a bottle or cup and add some warm water. For this method the more water you add to the bottle the paler the colour will be so if you want a dark colour, only add about 100mls (about 3 fluid ounces) of water. Do this for each colour, using a separate bottle for each one.
- iii) Squeeze most of the water out of the skein you have been soaking and put it in the dish.
- iv) Squirt or pour the dye directly onto the yarn. Try not to apply too much dye as the colours may mix up too much and go “muddy”.

(3) Fix the dye, wash and dry

To make the dye permanent the yarn needs to be “cooked” once the dye has been applied. If you do not have access to a microwave, see the note below.

- i) Cover loosely and microwave on full power one minute at a time for 3-4 mins or until the liquid is near to boiling. This time may need to be varied depending on the power of your microwave. Do not let the yarn dry out – add a little more water if necessary.
- ii) Leave to cool, rinse thoroughly and dry.

If you do not have a microwave:

If you do not have a microwave, you can dye the yarn in an ovenproof pyrex or similar dish, steam in clingfilm or dye in a pan on the hob. Follow the instructions to dye, rinse and dry the yarn as for the microwave method but cook as follows:

- For the oven, cook for 20-30mins at 275°F/140°C/gas mark 1
- For the hob, cover and simmer gently for 20-30mins
- Steam for 20mins (5mins if using a microwave steamer)

Note: For all cooking methods, ensure that the yarn is kept wet at all times. Yarn should not be allowed to boil but should be kept at simmering point. If necessary, add a small amount of water to the dye pot during cooking to prevent the pot boiling dry.

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