

Salt Dough

Coral Reefs



It's almost time to hit the beach! Summer is just a few weeks away. The days are getting warmer and schools are letting out. It's not only a great time to head to the beach, it's also a great time to help kids learn about the ocean! Making Salt Dough Coral Reefs is a great way for children to learn about these precious sea ecosystems while exploring their creative side and exercise gross and fine motor skills.

MATERIALS

- Salt
- Water
- Measuring Cups
- Mixing Bowl
- Mixing Spoon
- Sturdy Plate
- Paint
- Paint Brushes
- *Optional: Pasta, Shells, Rocks, Pipe Cleaners, Pony Beads, Toothpicks*



STEPS

- 1) Combine 1 cup of salt and 2 cups of flour in a mixing bowl.
- 2) Gradually add 1 cup of water while stirring and mixing until a Play-Doh-like consistency is reached.
- 3) Scoop up all the dough and form it into a ball, then knead it for 5 minutes until the dough is firm and smooth. If the dough is too sticky, add a touch of flour. If the dough is too dry, add a touch of water.
- 4) Take a chunk of dough and use it to form your reef base- This can be a flat surface or a rock-like mound.
- 5) Create your reef! What types of things would you see in a coral reef? Explore [THESE IMAGES](#) of some of the most stunning coral reefs in the world thanks to Discovery.com for inspiration. Create them with your dough, then either stick them firmly to your base or use a bit of glue to attach them to your base.
- 6) Once you have created your reef kingdom, begin to paint its features with bright colors like those you'd find in a real reef. Set your project aside to dry.
- 7) *Optional: Consider adding some pasta, shells, rocks, pipe cleaners, pony beads, or toothpicks to your reef to create more shapes and textures!*



Opportunities for Expanded Learning

What is a coral reef? Often referred to as the “rainforests of the sea,” coral reefs are beautiful, bustling oceanic ecosystems that provide homes to more than 4,000 species of fish, 700 species of coral, and thousands of other plants and animals. Check out the links below to learn more about these fascinating and important biomes!

Coral is a living organism! Learn more about its features and life cycle [HERE!](#)

What lives in coral reefs? Discover what a coral reef ecosystem includes [HERE!](#)

Why are coral reefs endangered? Learn about the threats these biomes face and what kids can do to help them [HERE!](#)

What words do scientists use to talk about coral reefs? Explore these fun vocab flashcards [HERE!](#)

Want to take a “deeper dive?” Go “underwater” with this incredible video footage from [National Geographic!](#)



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