

RECIPES FOR DYEING FABRICS FLESH TONES



Courtesy of Doll Street

<http://www.DollStreetDreamer.com>



Basic Flesh Dye Recipe

1/4 tsp. Tan RIT dye

1/8 tsp. Rose Pink RIT dye

1/3 cup table salt (don't use iodized)

1 gallon of water

Follow the directions for stove top dyeing on the back of the dye box. This will dye 1/2 yard of fabric. I leave my fabric in the dye bath from 5 to 30 minutes depending on how dark I want my fabric. Remember fabric looks darker when it's wet, so don't take it out too soon. For more ethnic colors of flesh, increase the amount of dye powder, just keep the same ratio of tan to rose pink. –thanks Rene' Garrod

Miriam Gourley's recipe

1/8th tsp of Rose Pink and 1/4 tsp Tangerine (Rit dyes) in 3-4 quarts of hot tap water. Put 1/2 yard of fabric into the pan and stir it now and then for 20 minutes. Wring it out and dry it in the dryer to heat set it.

PAT NELSON'S RECIPE

Put 3-4 quarts of hot tap water in a pan....add just a smidge of Rit Peach dye (like a 1/4 tsp.) Then dip a scrap of fabric or the end of a white paper towel in the dye bath...if the color is too dark add more water and keep adjusting it until you get the color that you want...if I want a browner tone, add a little (a small smidge) of Rit Caramel. This will do 1/2 yard.

Pat Nelson (patsy@willapabay.org)

MARY TRESSLER'S DYE RECIPE

Because doe skin is a knit that is treated and has a slick and nappy surface, it sometimes takes longer to dye than some of the other knits.

Lycra dyes fast so you have to watch it closely. The more cotton in the fabric, the less time it takes.

I use my washer, on the hottest setting I have, but you could use a basin for smaller pieces of material. I use Rit dye and salt. I prefer the liquid Rit. When dyeing the cream colored or white knits, I mix 3/4 parts tan rit with 1/4 part rose pink for a ruddy complexion. I also use tangerine dye in the place of the pink for a more peachy complexion for my dolls.

When I want a good outdoor girl color, I use a combination of all three colors, tan, tangerine, and rose pink. When I want to give a flat tan cloth a flesh tone, I use the rose pink by itself to make a flesh tone.

When I find a doe suede in a brown that I want to make more

natural looking, I use a mauve Rit to add flesh tones to it.

Now, I dye fabric much like I cook, I mix the colors in a jar of hot water till it looks right, then I cut a swatch of the fabric and let it sit in the dye bath until the color begins to get darker than I want it. I take it out rinse it under the faucet and dry it with a blow dryer. If it is the color I want, I write down the number of minutes it takes to get the color .

Remember that most natural skin is not exaggerated pink or peach, it is more subtle that our eye sees it. (Then I add a drop of more of peach, or a drop of tangerine, more tan etc.) When you have found the right color you can fill your basin or washer and add your color to the tub. Add one full cup of salt to set the color and allow it to work itself into the fibers of your cloth.

Set your kitchen timer or your washer to the number of minutes it took to get the desired color and let it agitate for that length of time. Remember yor fabric will look one to two shades darker when wet. If the color is not what you want you can add small amount peach, pink or mauve after about ten minuets to get more robust looking skin tones.

When you get comfortable enough with this technique and begin to study the tones of the people around you, you can begin to add yellows, for oriental, and use taupe instead of tan, cocoa brown and mauve give a wonderful dusky color skin, when you add just a touch of golden yellow.

The key is testing the different fabrics till you are familiar with their properties and their ability to take dyes slowly or quickly, and training your eye to pick up the colors in your own skin, and not being too generous with the dye at first, you can always add more to the fabric, it is hard to lighten the fabric if

you have made it too dark. . This like everything else takes practice, and it is a matter of preference. I have even dyed olive green, and pink doe suede to make skin tones, the pink is obvious, add taupe or tan, the olive is less obvious, but if you mix tan and rose with a dark olive, then over dye with taupe, and overdye again with cocoa, you get a good rich ethnic skin color. But the basic colors of Rit you will need are rose pink, tan, taupe and tangerine to make caucasian skin tones.

The salt is a must, and the patience to get the color right. Now this is a time consuming process, you may not want to use it if you are not intending to make a lot of dolls, it can get expensive using three colors to achieve one. I have bought bolts of fabric in the past and cut it in three to 5 yds length and spent a whole day dyeing and overdyeing. For your purposes you may want to dye one or two doll length at a time in a basin or tub. Hope this is clear enough. But basically you use tan in combination with rose pink for rosy complexion, tan in combination with tangerine for a more peachy complexion, and mauve to add the ruddy undertones that some skins have in combination with tan or taupe.

Dyeing in a teacup

(Sally Lampi's recipe from Dru)

" This is very scientific!!!! In a cereal bowl put Rit Liquid Dye:

1 t. Peach and 1/8 t. Dark Brown. Fill with water. Dip in fabric which is already wet. For a larger amount of fabric I increase porportions to accomodate the size of pan I am using. She uses this for knit in her "The Villagers" but I use any fabric. "

NATURAL DYES

by Victorya Blue Lightning Snake

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When creating cloth dolls, it is often difficult to find fabric that accurately represents many ethnic skin tones. One typical solution to this dilemma, is to dye white or neutral fabric. The shortcoming in this solution is that most commercial dye available for purchase tint fabric a flat, uniform color with few shade variations. This is very limiting since all “hue-man” beings come in a wide variety of colors and hues.

My experience in trying to achieve more natural looking skin tones, has led me to experiment with Native American recipes for natural dyes. These recipes use many natural plant products – flower petals, leaves, roots, seeds and seed pods, nut hulls, spices, vegetable skins and berries. By playing with different plant fibers, one can achieve wonderful color variations.

The procedure is as follows:

First, gather the plant fiber material. You will need approximately one ounce of plant material for each ounce of fabric you are intending to dye. Pick through and clean away any debris from this plant material as it may affect your dye color.

Next, heat the plant materials in an equal amount of water (one ounce plant fiber to one ounce water for each ounce of fabric). Bring the water up in temperature, stirring all the while. Flower petals and leaves must come to a slow simmer, not to a roiling boil. All other roots, pods, spices, skins and berries reach a full boil. This will allow the color to come out into the water. The longer the simmer or boil the more intense the color becomes. Light tints need only a few minutes, while intense colors usually take one hour or more. After you have achieved the desired color (determined by placing a small snip of fabric in the dye bath, then rinsing and drying with a hair dryer) place the hot liquid in a crock pot. Remember that you are only looking for the correct shade of color in this test strip. The depth or intensity of the color may take much longer to achieve. Also remember that the color will appear darker when wet and lighten when dry. If you are desiring an even all-over, monotone effect, then strain out the plant fiber before pouring the dye liquid into the crock pot. Leaving some types of plant fiber in the liquid, may give variations in color density where the leaves, skins, or berries touch the fabric.

Now you are ready for your fabric. Of course, 100% natural fiber fabrics dye best, as like attracts like. Examples are cotton, silk, or hemp, and things like mohair, alpaca, and lamb’s wool. I have had success in achieving subtle tones with fiber blends – so just be brave and try. Always wet your fabric first before placing it in the dye bath, and never place fabric or roving in boiling liquid (unless you want it distressed). This is why the crock pot is so helpful. It will maintain a constant simmering temperature without boiling the dye liquid. It is important to dye your fabric before you cut any pattern pieces; as being a natural fiber, it will shrink some.

As to colors -- the odd thing is that the color of the plant material as seen by your eye is NOT ALWAYS the end result color of your dye. For example, dandelion roots create a bright magenta dye. Also, the dye color will vary from plant to plant and from season to season. Even circumstances like the time of day gathering plant material occurs and how much moisture is in the air can cause subtle differences.

Below are some suggestions of things you might want to try.

Blackberries, blueberries, purple cabbage leaves, black teas, coffee grounds, blue iris petals and roots, blue pansies, elderberries, wild grapes, and black beans are suitable for blue-black, African skin tones.

Black walnut hulls give more of a dark brown tone.

Yellow onion skins, curry, saffron, turmeric, lily stamens, apple or pear tree bark are appropriate for Asian skin tones.

Rose petals, goldenrod, sunflowers, or beets create a golden to bronze color. Small additions of pokeberry, or henna (both bring about intense reds) produces dyes fitting for Native American skin tones.

You can tone down any of the above dye combinations with additions of red onion skins (produce a gray-green color), green tea, lichens, mushrooms, nettle, spinach leaves or carrot tops.

In addition, there are two VERY IMPORTANT things to remember about using natural dyes. Some plants or plant parts are very poisonous. Either stick with something you know to be safe or purchase one of several available books on this subject and become more knowledgeable. Do not assume that if a part of a plant is safe, that that entire plant is safe for use. Tomatoes and potatoes are edibles – and their flowers, leaves, stems and roots can cause a very irritating skin rash and are poisonous if ingested. Red sumac and poinsettias could disperse a vibrant red dye color – both are highly toxic.

The other thing is that the smell and taste of natural dyes attract bugs and mice. It would not be fun to create a beautiful doll and have vermin come along and bite holes in her or him for dessert. DOLLY OUCHES!!! This problem is solvable. After completing the dye process, rinse the fabric well. Begin with hot to warm water, lowering the water temperature with each rinse until you are using only cold water. Then allow the dyed fabric to sit in a slightly warm mixture of water, white vinegar and borax. About ½ cup white vinegar plus 1 cup borax, to one yard of fabric submerged in enough water to completely dissolve the borax, is sufficient. The vinegar and borax bath act as a mordant, which helps set the color and keep the critters from snacking. If you have pets, especially cats that climb on counter tops, be careful with the borax not spilling somewhere that they can lick and ingest it. Leave the fabric in for an hour. Rinse well again in cold water until the water runs clear, then dry. Either line drying or a LOW temperature in a clothes' dryer will work. Iron if desired.

Thank you for reading this article. I hope that it will interest you in the process of using natural dyes, spur your imagination and help you to achieve more natural skin tones in your dolls. If you have questions or comments, please contact me by email.

Peace, Joy and Grace on life's journey; Namaste.

Recipe for dyeing unbleached muslin

1 package peach Rit Dye, 1 package rosy pink Rit Dye, 2 packages taupe Rit Dye. Mix all 4 boxes together in a large mayonnaise jar. When ready to dye, take 2 to 3 TBS of powdered dye and mix in a large jar of VERY HOT water. Mix well to dissolve. Add this to a VERY HOT wash tub of water and agitate to mix. Then add about 3 yards of WET unbleached muslin. Run through a regular wash cycle (about 14 minutes) and rinse cycle and dry in dryer. I do this all the time and have never ruined a load of laundry. It seems to rinse clear. This recipe goes a long way and produces a nice tan/peach flesh tone. I have also used it on pink fabric and got a pinker flesh tone. - Thanks Donna Schramek!

from KELLY LYNN SMITH

"Please note--these directions are an excerpt from copyrighted instructions to make a

reproduction of my original doll Mocha. You are free to print them out for home use. I used 100% polyester sweatshirt fabric from JoAnn Fabrics and Rit Dye.

"Prepare Your Fabric--I selected a 100% polyester sweatshirt fabric for Mocha's body. It was dyed to match the porcelain. You will have to experiment a bit to get the exact shade to match your fired porcelain. Cut several small 2" squares of fabric. These will be test strips. Wet these and the rest of your fabric with warm water--set aside the main fabric piece.

Fill a bucket with very hot water and add a small amount of dye. Stir thoroughly (**equal amounts of rose and tan are used for the Caucasian flesh, Dark Brown for African American, Tan for Hispanic) Place a wet test strip in the dye. Remove and run under cold water. Compare to your porcelain. If the strip is too dark--add more water. If it is too light--add more dye. It may be necessary to test several strips to achieve the proper color. When satisfied, put your fabric in the dye, stir for about 1 minute. Remove and rinse IMMEDIATELY in cold water. (This sets the dye.) Dry fabric in a warm dryer and refold down the center."

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It does require some experimentation but will let you control the shade of your fabric. Always be sure and do a test strip FIRST. Most polyesters will dye successfully. Since writing this, I have done further experimentation using a mixture of Dark Brown with very small amounts of Black or Tan or Orange or Purple for different skin tones.

--from Alyson Sprague

This recipe creates a wonderful light tan with pinkish glow to 100% cotton knit fabric. Put 8 cups of water in a small saucepan and bring to boil on the stove. When it starts to boil, turn off the heat and add 4 bags of "Bigelow Fruit and Almond" tea. Allow to steep until the water is room temperature. Wet your fabric (about 1/2 yard) in lukewarm water and place into large bowl. Pour tea over fabric. Using a wooden spoon poke fabric down to make sure the tea touches all of the fabric and is absorbed by every part of the fabric. Allow to sit in tea for about one hour. Remove fabric and rinse in lukewarm water. Allow to air dry. Fabric is now ready to use and it smells great too.

Alyson Sprague - flysndolls@forcomm.net

FROM KIANGA (hanif@gate.net)

For my workshops that I do with community groups I purchase the white muslin pre sewn dolls from Home-Sew. These workshops are almost always multi-cultural. So that everyone has a shade that they can relate too I use this simple method. I start of with Rit Tan. I vary the amount of time that I leave the dolls in to achieve white to hispanic shades I leave the dolls in the dye bath from 10 seconds to a few minutes. Keeping in mind that the dolls will dry a shade lighter than they appear wet. For varying shades of African- Americans I gradually add Rit Cocoa Brown to the dye bath. Following the same steps that I described above to get as much of the human rainbow that these two shades allow. This method has worked well for me over the years and there is room for you to be creative. I have also been dying the dolls

non human colors such as red, yellow, blue and purple to help people to expand their thinking.

MARY TRESSLER'S RECIPE FOR DOLLS OF COLOR

When it comes to dyeing fabrics for dolls of color, that is a tricky situation, to make the dolls faces show up, and when your eyes are wearing out, like mine, from too much fun with fabric, sculpting can be a chore. But there is a lot to be said about using an olive green dye on brown or tan fabric to get the desired results. It gives takes out some of the reds that brown contains naturally. I have even had good results beginning with olive green doe suede and using a cocoa brown rit, and salt, to let the fabric absorb the dye more easily. Here's how I do it.

I fill my washer with the hot water on a small cycle. I let it fill, and pour the cocoa dye, into the tub. CLOSE the lid, let the dye agitate for a few seconds. If I am using olive green fabric, that's all there is to it, then I add 1/2 cup salt. If I begin with tan or white or off white, I add the cocoa dye in parts that equal two times the amount of the olive green dye, and then continue the process. Even dark brown doesuede will pick up the yellows and greens as undertones and soften the harshness if you leave it in the dye bath long enough. Flesh tones will lose the pink when green is added and then you can add cocoa dye in small amounts until you get the desired effect. You can vary the amount of color, and even the shade of skin as you like (Golden Rod Rit) is a good rich yellowish brown that will soften the brown to a rich undertone. Experiment gals, get yourself some little bowls or buckets and play with the color amounts....and different colors....with small scraps of fabric ,and write down the recipe as you experiment so you can duplicate the colors you like..... I have even had good results with charcoal gray and plain brown rit. Something about the greens and blues in the charcoal just gets the red out, and softens the effect. If you have a set of fabric markers, the kind that has the brush tip on one side and makes a wash of color on paper, you can make a mark of the olive green, the brown, and the yellows in the same spot and see how the colors mix before you use the dye...course you have to realize that the colors won't be the same, but you will learn the " what if " of mixing colors. You can create Hispanic, Mullatto, Black, Asian, and a wonderful world of colors for you dolls. They type of fabric DOES make a difference in the amount of color you get into the fabric, so adjust the dye time for cottons, less time, knits lots more time, and doe suede, varies by the manufacturer.....and it has been my experience ,that you have to remember that the color will be lighter or darker when it is dried...and that when sewn and stuffed it will look even different still.

Try using a darker fabric one time that you feel is just too pink or too dark, and lay a piece of fabric over the piece for the costume and the hair color on the side and see how the shade seems to change, and make a darker

than usual leg and stuff it, even the shape changes the look of the shade.....Fun Fun Fun

FOR A COMPREHENSIVE TUTORIAL ON DYEING, PLEASE SEE DREAMER MARY TRESSLER'S SITE AT <http://uncommonfolk.org/dyeing.html>