



Christmas fun



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Yes, 'tis that time of the year. Shops are starting to put up Christmas displays, Christmas trees and baubles are on sale ... and I can almost smell my upcoming leave. Since it doesn't actually snow here during the festive season, we've decided to steer clear of snowflakes and snowmen. What we're doing for our Christmas display is making Christmas decorations ... with a simple clay recipe. Granted, you'll have to do the baking at home, but your younger library members will have a ball painting and finishing them off.

You will need:

- ½ cup of corn starch
- 1 cup bicarbonate of soda
- ¾ cup water
- paint (any normal acrylic paint will do)
- cookie cutter
- straw
- baking tray
- baking paper
- string/ribbon.

Method:

Mix corn starch, bicarbonate of soda and water together in a medium-size pot, and stir over a medium to low heat. The mixture starts to thicken (which will take a few minutes). When the mixture resembles the texture of smooth mashed potatoes, remove it from the heat. Spoon the mixture into a ball and allow to cool by covering the dough

ball with a damp cloth. When it's cool, knead it a little to check if it's sticky at all. If it is, add a little more corn starch until it no longer sticks.

Preheat your oven to 175 degrees. Line a baking tray with baking paper. Roll out your dough about 1.5cm thick, and use cookie cutters to cut out the shapes. Use the straw

to cut out holes for the string/ribbon.

Bake this for about an hour, turning the decorations halfway through the baking time.

Finally, paint or decorate them, and thread a piece of ribbon through the hole.

And there you have it ... home-made Christmas decorations.

