

DIY cinnamon Applesauce ornaments

These ornaments are fun, easy to make (even for adults) and last for many years. Your house will smell wonderful as you make, dry, and display these beauties.

TO MAKE 12 1-1/2 INCH STAR ORNAMENTS YOU'LL NEED:

1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce

1/4 cup ground cinnamon (look for the cheap, off-brand stuff)

1 1/2 teaspoons white craft glue

Mixing bowl

Drinking straw, skewer, toothpick, or paperclip

Plastic wrap

Rolling pin or flat glass

Baking sheets and parchment paper

Cookie cutters or paper cutouts

Sandpaper

Oven, food dehydrator, or just a spot out-of-the-way (for drying)

Optional decorating ideas: glitter, acrylic paint, puffy paints, rhinestones, ribbon or hooks for hanging

INSTRUCTIONS

Measure the applesauce, cinnamon and glue go into a mixing bowl. Some people use their hands to mix the dough, a sturdy wooden spoon works too.



Depending on a number of factors (wetness of applesauce, humidity, etc.) you might need to add more applesauce or more cinnamon to make the dough come together. You want it to be just a touch dry (because it'll dry faster), but you also want it to hold together enough to roll, cut, and remove it from the board.

When you can form it into a big ball, you're done mixing. Now it's time to roll. Take the stiff dough and place it on a cutting board. You can add more cinnamon to the board prevent sticking or place it on a section of plastic wrap.



Cover the ball with a sheet of plastic wrap and flatten it. Using a rolling pin or flat glass, roll the dough into a sheet between $\frac{1}{4}$ " and $\frac{1}{3}$ " inch thick. The thinner you go, the quicker it will dry and the more ornaments you can get out of a batch, but it also makes them more fragile and less likely to last from year to year.



Remove the top layer of plastic wrap (set it aside to use on the next batch of dough), and then cut out shapes with your favorite cookie cutters. You can also print shapes onto paper to cut out. Don't choose anything too large because the possibility of breakage is

higher with a large ornament. You can re-roll the unused scraps to make more ornaments.

Before you transfer your ornaments to dry, take the straw, skewer, toothpick or paperclip tip and poke holes where you want them to hang from. Make the hole bigger than you think it should be, since the ornaments will shrink some as they dry. I just wiggled a skewer tip around until the hole was large enough.

THERE ARE THREE METHODS THAT WORK FOR DRYING THE ORNAMENTS:

Baking: Place the ornaments on parchment paper on top of a baking sheet in a 200° oven for about 2-1/2 hours until the ornaments are dry and hard. This is the fastest method, but it also results in a little bit of curling and bubbling.

Food Dehydrator: Place the ornaments on the racks of a food dehydrator, and dry at the highest setting for about 6 hours.

Air Dry: You can easily just put these ornaments on baking racks and dry them in an out-of-the-way place. This method takes a few days, and works best in dry climates.

If you used the oven, let the ornaments cool before decorating. Once they are dry you can start decorating. Or, if you prefer, you can just tie a pretty ribbon through the hole and hang them plain.

WHAT CAN GO WRONG?

If you are using the oven drying method, parchment paper is essential or the ornaments will stick to the baking sheet and you'll end up with pieces. These still smell wonderful, but are not much to look at!



Edge curling is another drawback to the oven method, especially if you have rolled the ornaments thinly. To overcome this, check them every 30 minutes during drying and flatten with a spatula (if needed).



If the edges of your ornaments are a little ragged, you can use a small piece of sandpaper to clean them up, and then they'll look lovely.

After a few years, these ornaments do lose some of their cinnamon-y oomph. To bring them back to life just place a drop or two of cinnamon oil on the back of each ornament. Your house will once again have the sweet smell of the holidays.

