

Use Turmeric To Make Your Own Hand Dyed Yarn

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This dye is made from turmeric which you can buy at your local supermarket. Dye made from turmeric will give your wool a lovely brownish/yellow color. On cotton the color will be more like ochre.

First thing to do is to select your yarn that is to be hand dyed. Different fibers take dye differently. All-wool yarn takes on color much more easily than other fibers whereas cotton takes on very subtle, pastel shades when hand dyed. You'll find that using the same dye on a wool fiber and a cotton fiber can produce fibers of differing colors.

All you need to dye yarn is what you'll find in the kitchen. In fact, dyeing yarn was once very common in many households and was usually done in the kitchen or wash house. The following items are what you'll need.

1. A sharp knife and chopping board.
2. You need pots. Don't use those coated with anti-stick materials. Use an old stainless pot.
3. A stove.
4. A timer such as a clock. The timer has to time over a long period of time.
5. A pair of tongs or spoons to handle the yarn. If you plan on dyeing different colors at the same time, you'll need another pair of spoons to avoid accidentally mixing colors.
6. You need a chair or something else for drying your yarn.
7. Take detailed notes so you can repeat the process at a later date.

Making the turmeric dye.

This quantity is enough to make 2 balls of wool or cotton: 1 oz of ground turmeric, 3 quarts water.

Bring the mixture to the boil and stir gently. Simmer for 30 minutes.

Bundle the yarn for dyeing into a hank. The dye needs to be able to mix freely, so make sure to loop the yarn loosely but also make sure it's secured so it does not tangle; this is important as you don't want to be spending a lot of time untangling it when it's wet. Wool yarn will felt together if moved during the drying period, so it's crucial that you bundle it. Making the bundles is easy:

Wind the yarn into a large loop. Try wrapping it around the back of a chair or by wrapping it around your forearm from your fingers or under your elbow and back up again.

Tie the yarn loosely in two places using short sections.

Double the loop if your pot is small. This is done by twisting it into a smaller circle and tying it with two more short pieces of yarn.

Bring the bath to boil.

You want to dampen the yarn by dipping it in water and wringing it out well. This is important as it helps the dye spread smoothly through the yarn.

Place the yarn in the dye bath.

Cook the yarn for 30 minutes. If the water evaporates so that the yarn is not covered, add more water.

The longer you leave the yarn the more color it takes. You can test the color by taking a small section and rinsing it. If you like the color then you remove all of the yarn or else let it boil for longer.

When the yarn is finished simmering, remove it from the bath and rinse it in cool water until the water runs clear. KEEP the dye bath until the yarn has dried completely and you know you are satisfied with the color. Importantly, you should rinse the yarn using soap as well as water. It's better to find out that your yarn is not color-fast now than later when you've made it into something.

Gently ring out the yarn.

Cut the second set of ties on the yarn, but leave the first ones in so that the yarn is in a big loop.

If you are dying wool, put it back on chair, rewind it into a ball and then rewind it back into its loop. This is because some of the strands may have felted together slightly. The winding process will unfelt fibers that felted; it's much easier to do this when it's damp.

Hang up the yarn and let it drip-dry.

Follow the links for more information about hand dyed yarn like Rio De La Plata Yarn as well as other beautiful yarns like Margaret Stove Yarn