

Mummify an orange!

Mummies are the preserved remains of dead people and animals. Mummies have been found all over the world but it is the Ancient Egyptians who are most famous for their mummies, and their preparation of the dead for the afterlife.

The mummy making process would take up to 70 days! First, all of the internal organs would be removed from the body. The heart was wrapped in bandages and put back inside the body as it was thought to be the most important organ. But the brain was removed with a large hook through the nose and thrown away because the Ancient Egyptians thought that it was useless! The body's other organs were placed in 'canopic jars', each one corresponding to a different son of the god Horus.



Once all the organs had been removed the body needed to be dried out. The body was cleansed in water and date wine and then packed with bags of natron (a type of salt) which was very effective at soaking up moisture. After about 40 days, the body would be darker and look withered. The natron was then removed and replaced with linen and sawdust. The body was rubbed with perfumes and oils and coated in resin to protect it. Finally the body was completely wrapped in linen bandages, with charms or amulets also placed in the wrappings. These were believed to protect the dead on their journey into the afterlife.

Now have a go at making your very own mummy (no humans or animals involved) with our fun activity!

YAC HQ

Adult supervision is not required for this activity.

Ages : Suitable for all ages.

Time Required: 30 minutes to prepare your orange. Several weeks for it to become a mummy!

Materials Required:

- An orange
- Salt
- Bicarbonate of Soda
- Small roll of crepe bandage
- Knife
- Teaspoon
- Cloves
- Ground cinnamon
- Two bowls
- Kitchen towel or toilet roll

1. Make a slit in the skin of your orange from the top to the bottom (you may need an adult to help you)



2. Use your teaspoon to scoop out the inside of the orange. Make sure you do this over your bowl - it can get messy!



3. Once you have removed all of the orange's insides, stuff it with kitchen roll to absorb any juices left over. Keep replacing with new kitchen roll until the inside of your orange is dry (you can now remove the kitchen roll).



4. Sprinkle a spoonful of cinnamon and a few cloves into your orange



5. In another bowl, mix together enough salt and bicarbonate of soda to fill your orange, then spoon this mixture into the orange



6. Now it's time wrap up your mummy! Make sure the slit is pushed together and then start to wrap the bandage around the orange



7. Tie a knot or secure the bandages with a safety pin when your orange is completely covered.



8. Your mummy now needs to be kept in a warm, dry place like an airing cupboard. It can take a while for mummification to happen. Check your orange every few weeks to see what it looks like, you'll be able to see that it shrinks and gets darker over time - just like a real mummy!

