

Healthier Easter with Homemade Egg Dyes

Sunday, March 20, 2011 by: Tony Isaacs

Coloring boiled eggs has been a longtime Easter tradition. So has including plenty of milk chocolate and other sugar-laden candies. However, many of the food dyes commonly found on grocers shelves are synthesized from petroleum derivatives and even coal tar. This year, provide a healthier Easter for your children by making your own safe dyed eggs and opting for healthier substitutes for most or all of the candies.

In addition, some food dyes based on natural ingredients may come from items you may not care to ingest. For example, the common red food coloring agent carminic acid comes from the dried, crushed bodies of pregnant scale insects.

Plant-based dyes for coloring Easter eggs provide a synthetic-free and bug-free alternative and their muted yet vibrant colors are far lovelier than their counterparts. Children seem to find that mashing food is also much more fun than simply dropping a tablet in a cup. As well, it is a great lesson in creativity and exploring which plant materials work in this way.

Some materials work best when they are boiled with the eggs (as noted below), and some work well made ahead and used for dipping or soaking the eggs. If you use juice, just use it undiluted. The longer you let the eggs soak, the more intense the color will be (for the boiled versions, you can remove them from the heat and allow to cool in the dye bath).

You can use your favorite egg-dyeing tricks here as well: Like crayons for a batik effect or rubber bands for a tie-dye effect. If you like a glossy egg, you can rub the dyed eggs with vegetable oil when they are dry.

Homemade Dyes

Blue

Canned blueberries and their juice
Purple grape juice
Red cabbage leaves (boil w/eggs)

Red

Red onion skins, use a lot (boil w/eggs)
Pomegranate juice

Yellow

Lemon or orange peel (boil w/eggs)
Carrot tops (boil w/eggs)
Celery seed (boil w/eggs)
Ground cumin (boil w/eggs)
Ground turmeric (boil w/eggs)

Green

Spinach leaves (boil w/eggs)

Orange

Yellow onion skins (boil w/eggs)

Pink

Beets, fresh or canned
Cranberries or cranberry juice
Raspberries
Red grape juice

Violet Blue

Violet blossoms
Red onion skins, less amount than you need to make red (boil w/eggs)

Lavender

Diluted purple grape juice
Violet blossoms plus squeeze of lemon (boil w/eggs)

Brown

Strong coffee
Instant coffee
Black walnut shells (boil w/eggs)

Yellow Green

Bright green apple peels (boil w/eggs)

Yellow Brown

Dill seeds (boil w/eggs)

<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/homemade-natural-easter-egg-dyes.htm...>