

Ice Dyeing Tutorial

By Peg Weschke

I wanted to learn how to ice dye fabric. Lucky for me that Jody and Donna were already creating some beautiful ice-dyed fabric.

For several months we talked about setting up a date to meet at Jody's house to do some ice dyeing. Finally, in early August, Jody set up a day to meet, dye fabric and then tour around Savannah (an incredible city with so much to see)! Unfortunately, the day we chose, the temperature in Savannah was close to 100 degrees and the heat-index was around 106 degrees.

The steps below are a composite of what I learned from Jody and Donna and a tutorial from Dharma Trading Co. (<https://www.dharmatrading.com/home/learn-how-to-ice-dye.html>).

Step 1:

Purchase PFD (Prepared for Dyeing) mercerized cotton fabric. You can find it out on Dharma Trading Co. or Amazon. Our local Island Quilters on Hilton Head Island (thank you Beth Ridder) is also carrying it.

Step 2:

Purchase Procion MX Dyes, long rubber gloves and a face mask respirator (to protect you from inhaling the very small particles of the dye/chemicals). You will also need Synthrapol to wash out and catch the dye in the final hot wash. Again Dharma or Amazon is the place to go. A small jar of dye goes a long way.

Step 3:

You will need to gather the following equipment: a pail, a dry measure cup (don't use again with food), one or more dishwashing tubs and one or more colanders or drying racks. You will also need a lot of ice cubes from your fridge or buy a bag of cubed ice.

Step 4:

Next put on your rubber gloves and your face mask. Mix up your soda ash, heaping 1/2 cups per gallon of warm water, and add in your dyeable items. Let them soak for about 15-20 minutes. Pull them out and squeeze out the excess solution, (again wearing your rubber gloves). You can save the soda ash for more dyeing later.



Step 5:

Place the colander or drying rack into the tub.

Step 6:

Scrunch up your soda- and put them on the rack. If them or tie them up more

We laid some of the fabric then put the rack/colander more scrunched up fabric the ice and dye will melt both the fabric on top and different when done.



soaked dyeables randomly you want to, you can pleat like tie-dye. It's up to you.

in the bottom of the tub and on top of them and place into the colander. This way together and place dye on on the bottom. They will look

Step 7:

Next, cover everything on the rack or in the colander in ice.

You want to cover the dyeables as much as you can, as areas with no ice will likely end up staying white as the ice melts. Crushed ice may make it easier to cover everything without the ice falling off.



Step 8:



Time to put on the dust mask and your gloves. We are going to be using the dye powder and we want to be safe about not inhaling any fine particles of dye or getting any on our hands.

Grab your first color and start sprinkling the dye powder on the ice. Be as random or as specific as you want with how you spread the dye. Remember, as the ice melts colors will mix and blend as they hit the fabric. So, if you put yellow and blue together, you will get greens. On the other



hand, part of the fun is that “mix” colors will split up a bit into their component colors, giving you neat effects. You can use this to your advantage when choosing your colors.

Step 9:

Once everything is sprinkled to your liking, cover the tubs with some plastic and let the melting progress. Putting the tubs in a warm place can speed things up. Let it all sit this way for 24 hours.

Remember my mentioning how hot it was? After our lunch and our shopping tour of Savannah (about 4 hours), I needed to start my 90-minute drive home. So, we moved on to the next step. It certainly worked fine but I think it may be the fact that we were dyeing in temperature over 100+ degrees in the garage.



Step 10.

The fabric in the tub may look like a big pool of black or brown colors. Don't worry, it isn't going to end up all muddy, we promise. The items that were elevated so the melt water could drain away are a little less scary looking.



Take your tubs over to the sink and start rinsing your items in COLD running water. Rinse until the water is running mostly clear. At this point, I stuck my fabric into gallon zip lock bags and hoped that they would hold the dye. I then drove home and then washed them.



Step 11.

Finally, toss everything in the wash with HOT water and Professional Textile Detergent (Sythrapol). Dry and wear your ice dyed garment! Or cut and sew your ice dyed fabric!

Here is what my final dyed fabric looked like after it was washed, dried and ironed. Thank you, my friends, for taking me through the process.

