

Handcrafted Watercolor Paints Recipe

Below is the paint recipe demonstrated in Christine Elder's handcrafted watercolor [workshop](#) based on a recipe modified and expanded from one provided by [naturalearthpaint.com](#).

1. Gather your watercolor paint-making supplies listed in the previous handout.
2. Set up your supplies in a well-ventilated but draft-free room (other than kitchen) and begin.

Prepare Watercolor Binder Medium

1. Place 3 Tbsp. of **gum Arabic** in a container
2. Add 6 Tbsp. of **hot water** (distilled is best) to gum Arabic and mix gently until dissolved
3. Add 2 Tbsp. of **honey** and mix until dissolved
4. Add 2 drops of **clove oil**, 1 drop of **oxgall**, and 10 drops of **glycerin** and mix gently.
5. Leave the watercolor medium to settle for 24 hours in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Prepare Watercolor Paint

1. Gently measure equal parts **watercolor binder medium** and **pigment**. I suggest 1 Tbsp of each when you are first learning which will still yield several pans of watercolors to experiment with.
2. Gently place 1 Tbsp pigment on mixing surface and make a well in the middle.
3. Pour 1 Tbsp watercolor medium in center of the pigment.
4. Gently mix the two ingredients together with a palette knife until equally wetted.
5. Begin the mulling process, bringing the spread-out paint back to center with knife or spatula.
6. Mull the paint for approximately 15-30 minutes. The time necessary relates to the size of the pigment particles, with bigger particles requiring longer mulling times (such as earth pigments).
7. If the paint seems to be drying out too much while mulling, add a few extra drops of binder medium.
8. Once the mixture is creamy like butter, paint a swatch of it on a piece of watercolor paper and let dry.
9. Observe the dried swatch. If the dried paint swatch rubs off and is dusty, you'll need to add more medium to the paint. If the swatch seems too glossy, splotchy, and/or cracks, you'll need to add more pigment to the paint.
10. Adjust the paint if necessary and mull a bit longer and test again.
11. Once you are satisfied with the mulled paint's consistency and swatches, gather it up with the palette knife and fill your watercolor paints with your new paints!
12. Allow paints to dry for several days before beginning to use them. They may shrink in the pans a bit.

NOTES:

* Successfully mixing paints is as much an art form as a science so approach it as such. Many factors determine the correct blend of binder medium and pigments, as well as mulling times so experiment and enjoy the learning process.

* Many colors of handcrafted paints are more muted and subtle than commercial brands. Also, they may benefit from being pre-wetted a few minutes before you begin using them to 'awaken' their colors.