

# DYEING WITH POMEGRANATE



by

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# ALL ABOUT POMEGRANATE DYE

Did you know that pomegranate **skins** (not the brightly colored seeds) are the most dye-potent parts of the fruit?

That's partly because of something called a **tannin** in the skins. Tannins make some parts of plants taste bitter, and they can also indicate the presence of long-lasting natural dyes.

Pomegranate skins are a zero-waste food dye! Eat the yummy seeds inside, then save the skins for dyeing before composting them.

Pomegranate skin dye produces a range of yellow colors, from **sunshine to mustard yellow**, depending on the plant's age and health, the soil and climate where it grows, and a number of other factors.

People have been making dye with pomegranate skins for thousands of years, particularly in the Middle East and Mediterranean regions, where the pomegranate is native.

**In a couple steps, you can create dye with them in your kitchen at home!**

# PREPARING YOUR FABRIC

The first step to working with many natural dyes is **mordanting**. Treating your fabric with a **mordant** before dyeing ensures that a permanent bond is formed between dye and fabric, resulting in longer lasting and more vivid color.

Mordanting with **alum** before dyeing with pomegranate skins will yield a sunshiney to mustard yellow, while without a mordant, the dye will yield a subtle beige to soft yellow color.

Typically, mordanting is done using a metal salt called **alum**. Alum powder can be found on [botanicalcolors.com](http://botanicalcolors.com).

## BASIC MORDANT RECIPE:

- Measure alum powder at approx. 10% of the weight of your fiber, and dissolve in very hot tap water in a bucket or non-reactive pot (reserved **only** for natural dyes).
- Soak your fabric in the alum solution, stirring often to ensure even uptake of the mordant, for one hour.
- Rinse & proceed to dyeing.

For more detailed instructions, visit [berbostudio.com/resources](http://berbostudio.com/resources).

# HOW TO MAKE DYE

1. **Save your pomegranate skins!** Eat the yummy seeds, then freeze, dry, or work with fresh skins in the dye pot.
2. When you have enough skins to dye with (at least 20% of the weight of your fiber), **brew them like a tea.**

I like to tie mine up in cheesecloth, submerge in hot water, and hold at an active simmer for at least 1 hour. You can repeat this process again and again with fresh water, collecting each batch in a bucket or bigger pot\*, until no more color is released.

3. **Submerge your mordanted fabric** in hot (180°) dye, stirring often for even color. There is no rule for how long to leave it in the dye pot: 5 minutes, overnight, or anywhere in between.

Most fibers will dry a couple shades lighter than they appear when wet. Take your fabric out when it looks a shade or two darker than you'd like.

4. Once out of the dye pot\*, let your fabric cool to room temperature, then rinse. Wash in cold water with gentle liquid laundry detergent and air dry in the shade.

**\*Always use a pot reserved only for dyeing.**

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