

# MAKING TACOS 15 Oct 2024 (Barb Striethorst)

## Kit Contents:

Taco Shell circles  
Tortilla circles  
Coffee Grounds for 'meat'  
Pencil leads (red, green, gold)  
Green fake snow for 'Lettuce'  
Orange-Red foam for 'chopped tomato'  
Orange paper for 'cheese'

## Note:

This workshop was inspired by an article in the August 1991 issue of 'Nutshell News', by Joanne Swanson ("The Food Court"). I generally followed her methods but modified them as necessary due to product availability. ["JS" reflects her directions]

The article states "So as a challenge and for those of you who say you cannot work with clay other ways were devised to make foods for this project"

Sadly, Joanne is no longer with us. But her blog is still available. She was a master at using everyday materials for her projects.  
<https://joannswansondiyminiatures.blogspot.com/>

## Tools Required:

Round toothpicks (forming the taco shells and general gluing or mixing) or paperclip  
Matchstick or small piece of wood (forming stand up shell)  
Tacky glue  
X-Acto knife  
Single edge Razor blade  
Small scissors  
Tweezers  
Brown , reddish-brown paints  
Small paint brush  
Old toothbrush (for spattering)  
Gloss acrylic medium  
White Gesso  
Small piece of glass (for mixing filling ingredients with glue, letting dry and then scraping/chopping)  
Plate to 'serve' filled tacos/tortillas and small bowls for condiments (salsa and sour cream) OR a piece of sturdy aluminum foil (such as dollar store foil cookie sheet) to make a tray for empty shells and bowls/containers for fillings and condiments  
Paint Palette to hold components (optional)

**The kits include finished hard taco shells and soft flour tortillas, but here are directions for both.**

### Hard Taco Shells:

JS used deep yellow on manila paper, blotted over with a golden color. My method was different.

I used a piece of 135 lb Creatology paint paper pad for the shells



In order to get the color right, I used some real life shells for comparison.

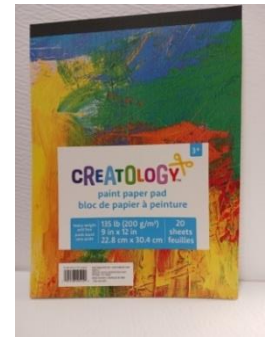
After much trial and error, I ended up using equal parts of these three paints, thinned with a little water.

- Dollar Tree Rich Art Acryology Yellow Oxide
- DecoArt Americana Sunny Day
- Decoart Americana Dessert Sand

Then make a thin wash of brown paint and flick tiny splatters on the paper.

Rounds were then punched:  $7/16''$  for  $1/12^{\text{th}}$ ,  $1/4''$  for  $1/24^{\text{th}}$ , and  $1/8''$  for  $1/48^{\text{th}}$

Shape these rounds by bending over the appropriate sized item (toothpick, wood, paperclip)



## Soft Flour Tortillas

JS : Paint both sides of a piece of white cardstock (*I recommend using a cheaper brand*) with very watered down Antique White acrylic paint by Americana. (*I used a watery 2:1 mixture of Americana Snow White and a Warm White*)



Wrinkle paper up and squeeze into a ball. Unfold and smooth out as much as possible. With a wad of paper towelling blotch full strength Antique White over paper. (*I used full strength of my mixture*)

*Rounds were then punched: 5/8" for 1/12<sup>th</sup>, 5/16" for 1/24<sup>th</sup>, and 3/16 for 1/48<sup>th</sup>*

**AS THE COMPONENTS ARE MADE, EITHER PUT THEM IN A STORAGE PLACE FOR NOW (PAINT PALETTE FOR EXAMPLE) OR INTO YOUR SERVING CONTAINERS.**

## Taco Meat

*JS used actual dirt as the basis of her taco meat. I have used coffee grounds (for 1/24<sup>th</sup> and 1/48<sup>th</sup>, I ground them finer in a mortar and pestle).*

Mix some coffee grounds with a bit of brown paint, fine red pencil shavings (*do not use watercolor pencil*) and a glob of tacky glue on a piece of glass.



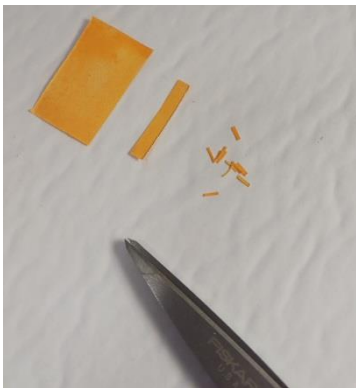
Spread thin and let set. Chop up.



## Grated Cheddar Cheese

JS used shavings from a golden orange (not watercolor) pencil. I chose to use color paper.

I painted both sides of a piece of copy paper with DecoArt Squash Blossom.



Cut a strip, width depending on scale, and cut fine pieces.

## Chopped Tomatoes

JS picked out the red stones from fine terrarium gravel.

However, I used slices of a red eraser!



Take a slice of the eraser piece and chop into small pieces.

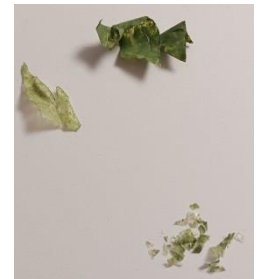
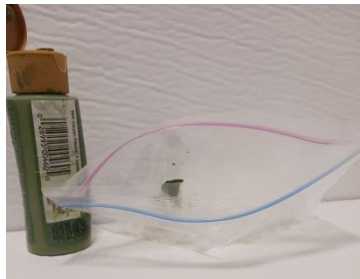


## Lettuce

JS mixed pale green paint with equal part matte acrylic medium, painted a thin coat on glass, and let dry. Then she mixed a darker green with matte medium, painted over the lighter coat on glass, let dry. Peel off glass with razor blade. For chopped lettuce, she scored the paint on glass in an irregular pattern before peeling off.

I, however, have used the Maureen Heuchert method – painting fake snow. (*You can make your salad greens in all sorts of colors with this method, even red for radicchio!*)

Put some fake snow in a snack bag, add some green paint (you don't need much – you can always add more), squish around until all pieces are coated, pour out on a paper towel to dry, then put on your glass and chop with an X-Acto or single edge razor blade.



## Sour Cream

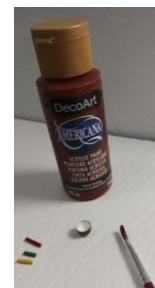
Fill your chosen 'bowl' with Gesso. My brand shrank quite a bit when dry, so I added more. Gloss top when set.



If you want a spoon, add before the gesso sets up.

## Salsa

JS directions. Fill your chosen container two thirds with Gesso. Let dry. (*Again mine shrank, so I had to add more*). Paint top with a brownish red paint. (*I used Burnt Sienna*) Let dry. Mix this same paint with gloss acrylic medium in the same amount. Drop on top of dried paint in container. Sprinkle lightly with very fine shavings from deep red, green and gold colored pencils [not watercolors]. Mix slightly to get shavings into rather than on top of salsa. Add a spoon (*if desired*).





## Filled Tacos

Fill your hard taco shells and soft flour tortillas as desired.

JS – Glue the various foods into taco shells and top with sour cream. For burrito, roll soft shells and hold with glue. Add a bit of cheese or meat to the ends to look like they are filled.

Below are some samples:



There are two 1/12<sup>th</sup> scale shown – one regular and one stand up.



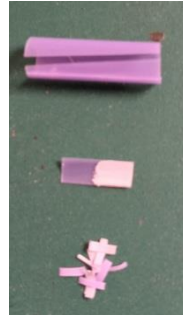
## Other Ingredient Ideas

These items are not included in the kit, but can be made for extra ingredients for your tacos.

Peppers For green/red/orange/yellow peppers, cut off a short piece of colored plastic straw (IF YOU HAVE SOME IN YOUR STASH AS THEY ARE HARD TO FIND NOW). Cut a strip lengthwise and snip off small curved pieces.



Onions For onions, cut off a short piece of purple straw. Cut a strip lengthwise. Paint inside white. Let dry. Cut into smaller strips and snip off curved pieces.



Queso Mix some orange paint with Gesso and fill a bowl.

