

# Polymer clay miniatures

A short introduction by Petra Kokol (a.k.a. p.kok)



## Introduction

I wanted to say some words about polymer clay in general and some other general stuff before we go to the tutorials.

Polymer clay is a wonderful medium. I guess we're all drawn to it, because it reminds us of our first experiences with making something creative with our own hands- it probably reminds us of Play dough and other colorful clays we played with as little children. Polymer clay is similar to them in many ways, but, unfortunately, quite different in many others.

The main and most important difference is its toxicity - when making anything out of polymer clay you should pay close attention to safety- you should never let little children play with it and you should always wash your hands thoroughly after use. I sometimes scrub them with a simple sugar (or other hand) scrubs when I have been using polymer clay for a long time. You will probably notice some rests of polymer clay on your palms after making lots and lots of tiny cakes, but don't worry, polymer clay won't harm your skin, it's just not really healthy for eating:)

Another difference from play dough, of course, is the fact that polymer clay gets hard when you bake it and you can keep your little works of art forever. I still remember the sad moments when I made something out of play dough and accidentally stepped on it:) I always bake the clay exactly as it is stated on the package and it never burns or isn't baked enough. After baking I leave the oven open for some time and open the window in the kitchen, so that the fumes (which are probably toxic) get out. I don't use a different oven like some people suggest and I don't think it's really necessary if you don't make tons of polymer clay crafts.

Another obvious difference is the softness of the clay when raw:). Different brands are differently soft and for some projects you will want to use really soft clay (for those I use FIMO soft) but for others, you will want a sturdier clay (for those I use FIMO classic). I use FIMO because its more or less the only brand you can buy in our craft shops (except for the more natural clay, which I don't like that much); there might be something better out there:)

Before you start making anything out of polymer clay, you have to prepare it - it's usually hard at first but gets softer with kneading. Some people run the clay through a pasta machines until it gets soft, but I just knead it, mainly because i don't own a pasta machine for polymer clay. It might take some more time, but it still works.



*random charms I made for a swap*



## **A little something about colors**

You can buy so many different colors of polymer clay that you don't really have to mix them if you plan on making lots of different things in a specific color. But because you usually don't need a whole package of baby blue or hot pink, it is best that you buy primary colors of polymer clay and just mix the colors you need. The colors mix and blend very well and you have probably learned the basics of color mixing in art classes in primary school, but in case you forgot, I will give you instructions on how to get the colors you need with every project.

So, the colors that's smart to always have at hand are:

- red
- blue
- yellow
- green(even though you get green from mixing yellow and blue, green is quite a popular color and it's easier if you don't always have to mix it first)
- black
- white
- brown (you can also mix brown, but it's not that easy, so it's good to have it)
- translucent - this is obviously not a color:) but you can mix translucent polymer clay with other colors to give it a special look. It's especially useful for making mini fruits and vegetables.

But then again, if you go to a craft store and see a color you really love (this usually happens to me with shades of purple:)) just buy it, because sometimes it's hard to get a specific tone by mixing. It's also smart to buy very pure colors (so no light reds or dark blues or mellow yellows), because you can always tone down colors with white or make them darker using some black, but you can't do it the other way around.

Another thing that also comes in handy is liquid polymer clay. You will need it for glazes and soups and stuff like that.

## **Tools**

You don't need special or fancy tools for making polymer clay miniatures. I just use stuff that I find around the house. The only tool I sometimes use is a polymer clay extruder (kinda looks like a huge metal syringe) for making cream, but you don't need it necessarily. If you want to make other stuff with it, you can buy it, but otherwise, you really don't need it.

You will definitely need:

- something sharp to cut, like razor blades;
- something to flatten your clay like a pasta roller or acrylic rods;
- needles- to make spongy textures in cakes;
- old hard toothbrush - also very good for spongy textures
- cookie cutters or other things that will help you make small round shapes;
- other things that have interesting surfaces to emboss the clay.



# Project 1: Tiny tiny cupcakes

## You will need:

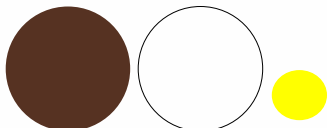
Polymer clay in the colors:

-your favorite color for the cups

- difreent shiny colors for the decoration



- colors for mixing the the color of the dough



- color of the frosting



## Step 1: Make the cups

Decide what color you would like the cups of your cupcakes to be, and make a small cane out of the clay. The cane should be approximately as thick as your little finger.

Now cut the cane in equal pieces and shape them in the shape of a cup (a bit thinner on the bottom than on the top). Put them in a refrigerator for a few minutes - this will harden the clay a little bit.

With a needle or a razor or any other object that leaves thin marks, make little lines in the sides of the tiny cups.



## Step 2: apply the "dough"

Mix some clay in the color of dough. I suggest you mix a lot of dough, since you'll need it for most of the projects. To make dough, use some brown, almost an equal amount of white and some yellow. If you want dark dough (looks chocolaty) don't use white at all and if you want vanilla dough, use a lot of white and add more yellow.

Form balls with the same radius as the tops of the tiny polymer clay cups. Press the balls on the tops of the cups until they look like tiny muffins. (If you want to make tiny muffins in colorful cups, you can use a tooth brush to get a spongy texture on the dough colored clay and just leave out step 3)



## Step 3: Frost the cupcakes

Choose the color of frosting you prefer. I usually use white, so it looks like tiny whipped cream, but you can use any color you'd like. If you don't have a polymer clay press, roll out a thin cane of the clay and cut it in half. Now put the two thin canes together and twist them around each other. Put the cream on top of the cupcakes, starting on the edge of the dough and going around, forming a neat dollop.

If you have a polymer clay press, press some clay in the shape of a flower and twist it to make a cream cane.



## Step 4: Decorate

To make sprinkles, roll out thin canes of different colored clays and cut them in very very short stripes, put them on top of the cupcake. You can also form tiny colorful balls or any other decoration you like.





# Project 2: kawaii sushi plate

## You will need:

Polymer clay in the colors:

-your favorite color for the plate

-different shades of pink for the salmon



- white for the rice



-black for the seaweed



- green for the wasabi



- orange for caviar



- different colors of vegetables and fish (3 or 4)



## 2.1. Nigiri sushi

### Step 1: Make some tiny salmon

Roll out 3 sheets of polymer clay in three different shades of pink, cut them in smaller sheets and stack them randomly on top of each other. Once you used all of them, cut them in stripes length wise and stack them on top of each other again. Press them together gently. Continue pressing until the cane is the appropriate size (approximately 5mm tall). Cut thin sheets of the cane, like you would cut tiny salmon fillet. Press the edges of each slice gently with your finger tips to form tiny rectangular salmon pieces with soft, rounded edges.

### Step 2: Make some rice and cut some seaweed

Roll out a square of white clay, a bit thicker than the slices of salmon. Cut into tiny rectangles a bit smaller than the pieces of salmon. Press the edges of each rectangle with fingertips to make them rounder and softer.

Roll a thin sheet of black clay. Cut into thin bands. Place a piece of salmon on top of a piece of rice and wrap them both with a band of black clay-seaweed.



## 2.2. Maki sushi

### Step 1: Make the sushi (this one is really easy :))

Make three or four different colored canes. You can choose any color that resembles vegetables and fish. Roll out a white sheet, around 3 or 4 mm thick. Roll out some black very thinly to make seaweed. Place the colorful canes on the edge of the white sheet and wrap the white around the canes. Cut off any excess. Wrap the black around the white, cut off excess. Roll to the thickness you'd



## 2.3. A kind of sushi I don't know the name of:)

Make tiny oval shaped flat rice pieces, the same size as other sushi. Make really tiny orange balls. Place them on top of the rice, like caviar. Wrap all of the pieces in seaweed. (i'm sorry, I don't have any pictures for that :))

### Assemble

Make a tiny rectangular plate out of any color you'd like. Make tiny wasabi dollops by rolling some light green into thin canes and then spiral them. Assemble everything on the plate any way you like.

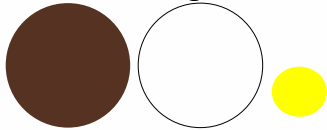


# Project 3: Piccolini pizza

## You will need:

Polymer clay in the colors:

- colors for mixing the color of the dough



- liquid clay + red acrylic paint or just red clay

- green, red or yellow

- more red, more white/translucent

-gray

-black

## Step one: The pie dough

Shape the dough colored clay into a ball. Now flatten the ball to a small disc. Take a needle or something similar, and flatten the center of the disk a little more, so that you get a nice crust all around.



## Different toppings

### Mozzarella

Mix some white with a tiny bit of yellow. Rip small thin pieces from the clay and put them directly on the sauce.



### Olives

Make tiny black balls. Make a hole in the middle of them with a needle.



### Peppers

Roll a thin cane in any color of peppers you like (green, red or yellow). Cut short pieces and curl them on the sides.



### Mushrooms

Roll two thin black canes and a grey cane of the same thickness. Put them together, the grey in-between the black. Now roll a thick grey cane that has the same diameter as the other three together. Flatten the thick grey cane on one side, so that you form the cap of the mushrooms. Place the thick one on top of the other three. Press gently and cut in thin slices.



## Step 2: The secret sauce

There are two ways of making the sauce. The first one is mixing the liquid fimo clay with some red acrylic paint. If you want to make it this way, make sure to mix it thoroughly. Apply it on the dough with a small flat object - I used an old hair clip because I couldn't find anything else :)

The second way you can do it is just flattening a small piece of red clay until it's really really thin and then putting it on the dough. I like this one more, because it's easier and it doesn't make a big mess.

### Pepperoni sausage

Roll out a thick sheet of dark red and then make thin white/translucent canes. Wrap each tiny white cane with some red and cut off excess. Put all of the canes together and join them into one cane. You can put some thin white canes in-between the red ones. Wrap some more red around it. Roll it until it has the thickness you want and cut in tiny pepperoni slices.



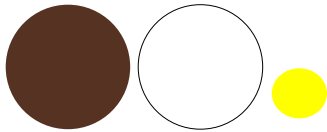


# Project 4: Delightfull doughnuts

## You will need:

Polymer clay in the colors:

- colors for mixing the the color of the dough



- any color you want for decoration

## Step 1: Make the doughnut

Make a small ball out of dough colored clay. Flatten it, until it is a 5 mm thick disk with round edges. Make hole in the middle with something rounded- like the tip of a paint brush, the tip of a pen, pencil, etc.



## Step 2: Glaze the doughnut

Decide on a color of the glaze. If you want, you can mix it with a tad of translucent clay for a frosty effect. Form a circle like flat shape with uneven edges (as on the picture, I have no clue how to call it:)) Cover the underside of the doughnut with it. Make a whole with the same object, where the original



## Step 3: decorate!

Make sprinkles the same way as shown in the cupcake tutorial. You can also make small colorful balls (like nonpareils) or even put some glitter on top:)

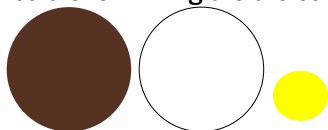


# Project 5: Cutesy cake

## You will need:

Polymer clay in the colors:

- colors for mixing the color of the dough



- many colors you would like to decorate

\*red and green for strawberries

## Step one: The sponge

Make a sheet of dough colored clay half a centimeter thick. Cut out 2 round shapes with anything you can find:) As you can see in the photo, I'm using an old piping tip.



## Step 2: The filling

\*If you will not cut the cake, you can leave this step out\*. Now decide what color you want your "cream to be" (like brown for chocolate, white or cream, red for fruits, etc). Roll it very thin and cut out a circle. In the cake in the photos, I decided to cut out two different colored circles to make it look like strawberry and cream fill. Take one of the dough circles, place a cream circle on top and another dough circle on top of that. \*Some people pre-bake the dough, but I have never tried that and I also think it's not necessary for simple cakes.\* Press on top gently.



## Step 3: Frosting

For the frosting, roll a thin layer of clay. It shouldn't be too thin, because it could rip in the process of covering the cake, but it shouldn't be too thick either. Put the sheet of clay on top of the cake and start pressing down the edges all the way around. Once you pressed it all the way around, cut off the excess clay. If the bottom is not covered completely, don't worry. I usually put some cream around it to make it look nicer.



\*\*Another way to decorate it to make it look fluffier is to use liquid clay mixed with the color of clay you want. Mixing liquid clay with colorful clay is quite hard and I don't really like doing it :). In this case it is probably wise to prebake the rest of the cake.



## Step 4: decorate

Decorate the cake with some cream- how to make cream is shown in the tutorial for the cupcakes. You can also put some tiny fruit on top. I usually make strawberries. To make them, make a small red ball and press one side of it to make a tear shape. Make tiny holes in it, to make it look like seeds. Put a tiny bit of green on the top of the strawberry. Cut strawberries are harder to make, I have actually never succeeded to make a strawberry cane, but if you want to try, there are a lot of tutorials on the Internet (mainly on youtube). I will try and find some useful ones and list them.



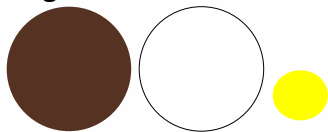


# Project 6: Breakfast in bed

## You will need:

Polymer clay in the colors:

- colors for mixing the the color of the dough



- more white and yellow

- red, white translucent



## Step 1: make a plate

You can just make a thin sheet out of any color you like and cut out a circle, or try and make one with an interesting edge like I did (and failed quite severely;) by cutting two different circles and combining them. (sorry, no pictures of that:))

## Step 2: the waffles

Make small cubes out of dough colored clay. Flatten them to make tiny squares approximately 3mm tall. You can make the edges straighter by pressing the razor (or any other straight object) against them. With something that makes tiny square marks (I always use a match.) Put a tiny tiny bit of yellow on top as butter. I also put a drop of liquid clay on top of that. (I didn't take the pictures of that sorry!)



## Step two: eggs

Make a flat uneven piece of white clay. Make a tiny dark yellow ball, put it on the white clay and press down gently to make yolk. Put some liquid clay on top of that.



## Step 3: bacon!

Make bacon the same way you make the salmon in the tutorial for "kawaii sushi", only this time use white, red and also some translucent (I forgot about translucent when I was making it). Cut thin strips and flatten them unevenly.

