

The **FRIPPERY FACTORY** presents

a "Pretty Good for Being Free" Tutorial:

Miniature Plates without Buying a Mold

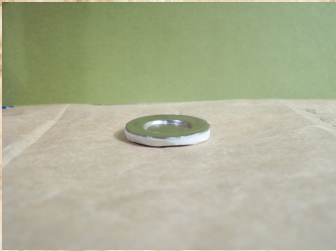
Tired of seeing all those gorgeous plates in other people's photos, but not owning them? Reluctant to pay upwards of \$0.50 a plate or to buy a \$20 silicone mold? Well, then this is the tutorial for you! Here we will show you how to make your own mold out of scrap polymer clay, and then how to go on and make your very own beautiful, scaled dishes. All you need is a pre-made dollhouse-sized plate, or two correctly-sized objects (such as two different diameter markers) for making your own.

The **FRIPPERY FACTORY** creators make and sell miniature food and food jewelry with old-school flair on Etsy and blog about their adventures on the beautiful, world wide interwebs. We'd love to hear what you thought of this tutorial, and we'd also love suggestions for new ones (no one can come up with their own ideas *all* the time). Drop us a line at frippersfactory.wordpress.com or check out our stuff for sale on frippersfactory.etsy.com. Cheers!

Stuff you'll need:

- A **sharp craft knife**. It should be small enough that it moves easily and dull enough that you feel safe with it near your fingers.
- A **3/4" blob of polymer clay**. Fuzzy clay and other scraps work marvelously. The white clay I used has a habit of turning bruise-purple in the oven. I don't know why.
- A **miniature plate** in the scale you are working in. Plates with smooth edges work the best. Be sure your plate is sturdy enough to stand up to lots of pressure and a knife!

Instructions for the Molds:



1. Roll half of the clay into a 1/4" thick shape. Be sure that it's big enough to cover you plate with ease.



2. Press the bottom of the plate very firmly into the clay. We're shooting for a solid depth transfer here, so be sure you don't wimp out. Aim for a evenly flat clay base, although perfection isn't crucial.
3. Trim the clay to the edges of the plate with your craft knife.

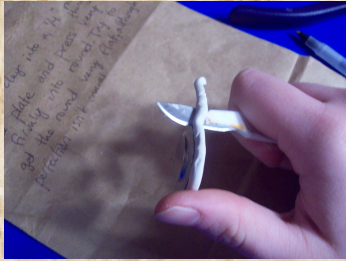


4. Pop the plate away from the clay, using your fingernails if necessary. Set the plate gently back into its new crevice and trim again, if you need to. These edges will be the guide for all the future plates you cut out, so try for fairly accurate.

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5. Set this half aside. Roll out the remaining clay to 1/4" thick. Be sure it's big enough to cover the plate.



6. Press clay very firmly into the top of the plate. Press your fingers into the hollow to be sure you get another clear depth transfer.

7. Trim the clay to the sides of the plate.

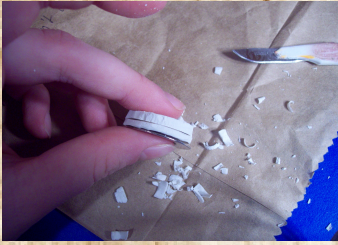


8. Pop the plate away from the clay and trim again if necessary.

9. Name or date the blank sides of the two halves, so that you can find the match in case you make multiple molds.

10. Bake the molds for 1/5 the recommended baking time for the brand and thickness of the clay you are using. With my Sculpey, that was 3 minutes. Be ready for action as soon as they come out of the oven.

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11. As soon as the molds come out of the oven, *do not* put them in cold water, but trim the edges to match with your craft knife.

12. Bake for the other 4/5 of the recommended baking time (12 minutes in my case). When they are finished, plunge them immediately into cold water. This increases their durability. You are now ready to make your first plate in your new molds!

Making Some Plates

For your first plate, pick some clay you don't care about (the color I chose I call "Revenge of the 70s-Era Public Restroom", and has recently become illegal for its sheer hideousness). Roll it out to the correct thickness for whatever scale you are working in. I went to about 1/16". Sandwich it between your two molds and give it a good hard press. Pop off the molds and loosen the plate up. (If the baby plate breaks or sticks, you can dust the mold with talcum powder or line it with plastic wrap. Bear in mind that you will have to remove the plastic wrap before baking, however.)

After loosening the plate, set it back into the bottom mold and give it a gentle press with the top one if it needs it. Stick the plate and the bottom mold into your hot oven for 2 minutes. Immediately pull the mold out of the oven and plunge it and the plate into cold water. As soon as you can stand it, remove the plate quickly but gently from the mold and bake it for the remaining time. You now have a cheap-to-make, good-looking plate you can sand, paint, and fill with food. Send us pictures of your plates; we'd love to see them!

So, to wrap things up, we started with a plate, made a mold, and then made a bajillion other plates! Hurrah for us and our thrifty, crafty skillz. Let us know what you thought on the Frippery Factory blog (fripperyfactory.wordpress.com)! Bon appetit and happy plate making.

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