

20 - 30  
Minute  
Activity  
For  
Everyone

## The Roots of Painting

Our unique connection to colours and shaping our environment has crafted a history of vibrant expression. With the average Canadian using 13.7 litres of paint annually, it is no surprise that we are drawn to painting for several reasons. In today's market you can find a variety of different types of paint such as acrylic, enamel or latex. As you may know, some pictographs and paintings in Canada dating approximately 500 - 1300 years old, were created with paints that came from the natural environment. Here is an activity for you and your family to explore how paint can be made using a variety of food items from your kitchen.

Throughout history, paint has been made from a number of different natural components, from egg yolks to seeds and spices. Here are a few examples to help get you started:

- **Yellow:** Turmeric, Yellow Onion Skins
- **Orange:** Orange Peels, Carrots, Cayenne
- **Red:** Beets, Raspberries, Paprika
- **Green:** Spinach, Kale, Swiss Chard
- **Blue:** Blueberries, Blackberries
- **Purple:** Purple Cabbage, Concord Grapes



### Materials Needed:

- Paint Brush
- Paper
- Several small containers to hold your paints
- Fruits, Vegetables and Spices from your kitchen
- Water

### Activity:

- Using a colour wheel, start by searching your kitchen to find different fruits, vegetables and spices to match each colour.
- Next, add about a tablespoon of each food item to their own separate container.

*If it's a spice, make sure it is ground up. If it is a vegetable or fruit such as spinach, beets or blueberries, make sure to finely chop or squish the ingredient until it is all mushed up.*

- Next, add about a teaspoon of water to each container and start mixing to create your paints. *Observe the consistency of the paint, if it is too thick add a little more water, if it is too thin add a bit more of the ingredient. Continue to adjust the consistency of each natural paint until you feel they are ready to be used.*
- Once all your paints are ready, get creative and use these paints to craft your own unique piece of art.

### Reflection Questions:

- How did you feel about creating your own natural paints?
- Do you feel more connected to artists from the past?
- What differences did you notice in the various paints' textures, tints and scents?
- Did every ingredient create the colour you were anticipating? Why or why not?
- What impacts can using natural ingredients to make paint have on our environment?