

Credits: Extracted from *Indigo: Cultivate, Dye, Create* by Kerstin Neumüller and Douglas Luhanko, published by Pavilion.  
Photographs by Fredrik Ottosson.

## DYE BATH FOR CELLULOSE FIBRES

For use with plant fibres including cotton and linen.

### **Time**

- 20 minutes

### **Equipment**

- 15-litre/26-pint dye vessel
- spoon
- measuring beaker
- scales
- protective mask
- plastic gloves
- safety goggles
- thermometer

### **Ingredients**

- 10 litres/17½ pints water at 20–24°C (68–75°F)
- 2 sheets of gelatine
- 100ml/3½ fl oz warm water
- 200g/7oz salt
- 0.5g sodium hydroxide
- 2–3g sodium hydrosulfite

### **Stock solution for varied results**

- 10ml/2 tsp for light tones
- 50ml/2fl oz for medium tones
- 250ml/9fl oz for dark tones

Add the 10 litres/17½ pints water to the dye vessel.

In a separate container, melt the gelatine into the 100 ml/3½ fl oz warm water. Stir thoroughly and make sure all the gelatin has melted or it can stick to the fabric and create stains. Add the gelatine solution to the dye vessel.

Weigh the salt, add to the vessel and stir. Measure and add the

sodium hydroxide. If you do not have a scale that measures 0.5g, you can weigh your scales's smallest increment, then divide the pile into equal parts until each part is 0.5g. Remember to use protective mask, gloves and safety goggles.

Weigh the sodium hydrosulfite and add it by sprinkling it over the surface of the bath. Stir carefully.

Measure the amount of stock solution that you want to use and add. Stir carefully.

Wait for a few minutes until the dye bath is ready. The bath should be kept at 20–24°C (68–75°F) during the whole dyeing process. The first dip can be left for up to 10 minutes, then the following dips should be 1–2 minutes long.