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Cassava Paint

In Uganda, cassava flour and ginger are affordable and easily found in the market. Cassava starch works better than cassava flour for this recipe, and it can be made from the flour (see recipe at end). This paint works well on exterior walls, and it works well to paint a traditional Ugandan hut.

Cassava/Ginger Starch

10 g (2 tsp) Ginger juice

150 g (1 cup / 5.3 oz) Cassava starch (not flour)

200 ml (3/4 cup) Cool water

1. Cut some ginger into pieces, then grind and pound well to extract the juice.
2. Prepare the cassava and ginger mix by adding ginger juice to the cassava starch and water.
3. Stir well, then let rest for 5 minutes, for a total of 30 minutes (six times).
4. Strain all through a tight-mesh sieve (200 mesh) into a clean, shallow drying tray.
5. Leave in the sun until all liquid has evaporated and the starch is dry. This may take a couple of days.
6. Grind the hard, dried starch to a powder and store in a dry container.

Paint Cakes

200 g (7 oz) Pigment

100 ml (1/3 cup) Dry cassava/ginger starch (dry)

5 drops clove oil (antimicrobial)

1. Mix all ingredients in a bowl.
2. Add more water, 5 ml (1 tsp) at a time, until the paint is like toothpaste (to make cakes), or to the thickness of paint you like.
3. Pour the paint into the paint molds, or use the paint. We used molds about 5 cm (2 inches) wide, and 1.3 cm (½ inch) deep.

Note: The amount of water will probably be different for each pigment. Write down the final amount of water used for each color in your notes.

How to Make Cassava Starch from Cassava Flour:

1. **Mix Cassava Flour with Water:** In a large bowl, combine the cassava flour with a significant amount of water. Stir well to ensure all the flour is fully hydrated and suspended in the water. Use about 4-5 times the volume of water to flour.
2. **Let the Mixture Settle:** Allow the mixture to sit undisturbed for several hours, or overnight. During this time, the starch will separate from the fibrous material and settle at the bottom of the bowl. The water will become clear as the heavier starch particles sink.
3. **Decant the Water:** After the starch has settled, carefully pour off the water, leaving the starch at the bottom of the bowl. You might want to pour through a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth to catch any floating bits.
4. **Repeat the Process (Optional):** For a purer starch, you can repeat the process by adding more water to the settled starch, stirring, and letting it settle again. This helps remove any remaining impurities.
5. **Dry the Starch:** Once you have the settled starch, it will need to be dried. You can spread the starch in a thin layer on a baking sheet and let it air dry in a warm, dry place. Alternatively, you can dry it in a low-temperature oven (below 150°F or 65°C) until completely dry.
6. **Grind the Dried Starch (Optional):** If the dried starch forms clumps, you can grind it into a fine powder using a food processor or coffee grinder.