



Naturally Dyed Easter Eggs

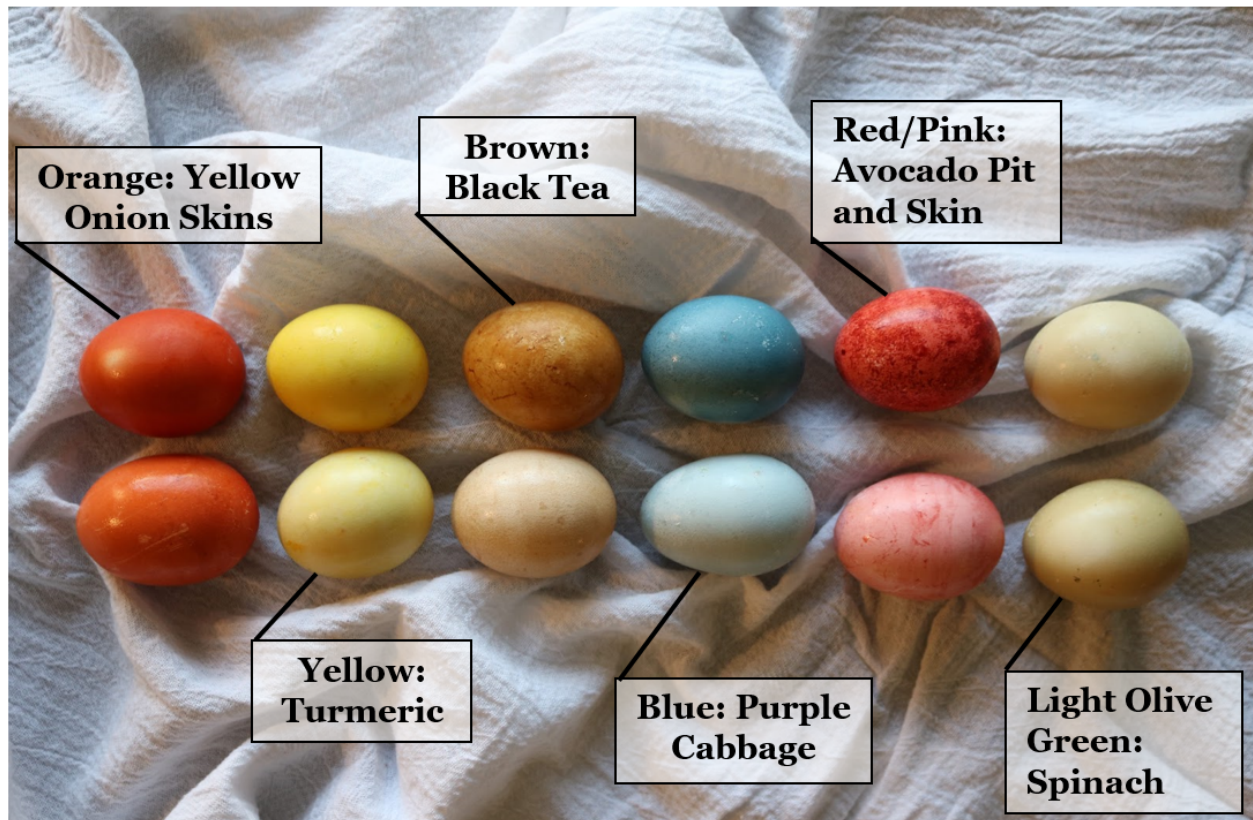
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I have always had a fascination with the colors that come from plants. As a kid I would play in our pasture, mashing up berries and flower petals to paint on the surrounding rocks and trees. I have even made my own watercolor paint from pokeweed berries. One of the many items on my craft to-do list was dyeing fabric with homemade, natural dye from plants. So, I gave it a shot and in the spirit of Easter I decided to also dye eggs... on the same day. While I did manage to dye some fabric, I started running out of time and ended up mostly dyeing Easter eggs. I want to share my experience and process of naturally dyeing Easter eggs with you!

Before I begin, I want to encourage you to look around your house for dye ingredients before you take off running to the store. You can even check your compost bucket. Some of my favorite colors came from vegetable scraps— talk about a creative way to recycle!

I used purple cabbage, spinach, yellow onion skins, turmeric, avocado pits and skins, and black tea. Can you guess which ingredient yielded which color?





Are you surprised? Me too! I was fascinated by the vibrant colors that I was able to get from these ingredients. The cabbage, onion skins, and avocado really blew me away!

Now I know that you are dying to get dyeing, so let me share my process with you.

First, gather your ingredients.

There are so many options for different colors. I will list the ingredients I chose to use below, but if you search the web (or experiment!) you are bound to find more.

Red/ Pink: Avocado skins and pit

3 small avocados skins and pits (I cut mine into large pieces)
2 cups water

Orange: Yellow onion skins

About 2 cups of crumpled skins
2 cups water

Yellow: Turmeric

3 Tbs ground turmeric
2 cups water

Light Olive Green: Spinach

2 cups of spinach leaves and stems chopped
4 cups water

Blue: Purple Cabbage

2 cups of cabbage chopped
4 cups water

Brown: Black Tea

3 tea bags
4 cups water

You can change the ratio of ingredients to water, just remember that the more water you add, the more diluted the dye will be. Be sure to add enough water to be able to submerge your eggs completely when dyeing them.

After you have gathered your ingredients, you can get right into making the dye!**For the avocado, yellow onion skins, spinach, and purple cabbage:**

Put the water and ingredients into a pot and bring the water to a boil. Once the water starts to boil, turn the temperature to low and simmer for about 30 minutes.

I simmered the avocado pit and skin, the purple cabbage, and the spinach for about an hour because I used the same dye for fabric and wanted it more concentrated. Just like with the amount of water you add, the time you spend simmering will factor into the depth of color you will achieve.

For the turmeric and tea:

Bring a pot of water to boil. After it is boiling add your ingredients. For the tea, I put the water and tea bags into a jar, screwed the lid on, and let it steep for 30 minutes. For the turmeric, I just mixed it into the water.

For all of the ingredients add 1 tablespoon of white vinegar for every cup of water you used. Let the dye cool to room temperature before dyeing the eggs.

While the dye is cooling you can hard boil your eggs if that is what you prefer. Since I cannot even think about eating 12 hard boiled eggs, I dyed fresh, raw eggs.

It's time to dye the eggs.

After the dye cools, put it into jars, dishes, or tupperware. You can use anything you have laying around, I used an old Cool Whip container and jars for mine. Just remember that it needs to be deep enough to submerge the eggs. Also, the dye may stain your dishes, so don't use your favorite things. Place the eggs into the dishes, being sure they are fully submerged.

Now, you wait... Dyeing eggs naturally can take longer than synthetic dyes, but it is worth it to see the white eggs magically change color with the use of common plants! Depending on the dye ingredient and the color you want to achieve, it may take anywhere from 20 minutes to overnight for your eggs to come out the way you want them. The sooner you take the eggs out of the dye, the lighter the color will be. Put the eggs in the refrigerator to keep them cold while you wait.

Try out different methods and get creative! If you have brown eggs, dye some of those to see how that changes the color. You can also dip your eggs into multiple dye colors to make different shades and colors. Add stickers, wrap them with rubber bands, the sky is the limit!

You can see the differences in dyeing time in my picture below. The darkest egg of each color was left in the dye overnight.



I had a lot of fun the next morning seeing the great reveal of colors. Plants are amazing, aren't they!? This eggs-periment was a fun introduction into the world of natural plant dyes and has made me all the more egg-cited for dyeing fabric next time!

You can never have too many egg puns at Easter time, right? ;)