

Gourd Doll Head (Gourd Crafting Project)

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This project is for a gourd doll head with soft body. Supplies needed for this project are muslin or cotton fabric for the gourd body, fiberfill, paint, a small gourd, a saw for cutting the gourd and whatever accessories you choose to dress the doll. I like to use a small bottle gourd for this project. The bottom portion of the gourd turned upside down becomes the head, neck and a portion of the shoulders.

After cleaning and scraping the outside of your gourd clean, make a line with a pencil for cutting, somewhere in the mid-section of the smaller lobe and then cut the gourd in two. You will not need to be too particular about cleaning the inside of your gourd out but do remove the main bulk of the seeds and loose debris.

Next, you will paint the gourd face. You may paint the face directly on the gourd or first paint the gourd a solid color. I prefer acrylic paint for the ease of clean up and quick drying time. A clear acrylic spray sealant will protect and preserve the painted doll head. Hair can be painted on the gourd, or other options are putting a scarf or hat on the gourd or you could try brushing out some yarn and gluing on the doll head. Use your imagination; jewelry, glasses, a bow tie or moustache could be painted on also.

The gourd body is sewn in five parts. It is helpful to make a pattern if you intend to make more than one doll. Cut two identical pieces of cloth for each part. The head and body trunk are cut in one section (two identical pieces), with the head in the shape of a balloon similar in size to the gourd head and the body rectangular shape. This first part will resemble a bowling pin with larger head when cut out. Sew the front to the back and leave open at the trunk bottom. Push the cloth head shape into the gourd head and fill with enough fiber that you can't pull it out again. Continue filling until the trunk is stuffed and stitch bottom closed. Cut out the arms and legs with suggestion of mitten shaped hands and feet on the ends. Sew fronts and backs, leaving open at the ends. Stuff each arm and leg with fiberfill, sew shut and then sew to the body trunk. Shoes can be painted on. The final step is dressing the doll.

You can dress the doll in something as simple as a dress cut with raw edges and gather it about the doll's neck or very detailed with layers of Clothing. There are many styles you can choose for your doll. Some suggestions are Raggedy Ann and Andy (try painting on the striped socks), clowns, Indians, colonial or dolls of ethnic origin.

I hope you have fun and success with this project.