

Ice Play

Dig or paint with ice as it melts into liquid water!

Materials Needed: Set up these activities 1-2 days in advance.

Ice Dig: small mixing bowl, water, plastic toys, salt, spoon, tray, cups.

Ice Paint: ice cube tray, mixing bowl, water, 2 teaspoons flour, food coloring, short popsicle sticks (or sturdy twigs), paper.

Instructions:

Ice Dig

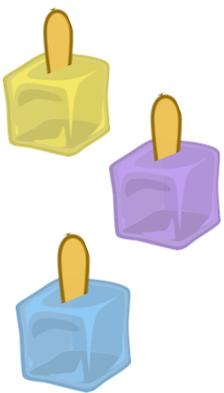
Step 1: Set up by filling part of a mixing bowl with water. Add various small plastic toys to create an exciting ice dig. Place in freezer for 2 days.

Step 2: Bring out the frozen bowl. Run water on the underside of the bowl to make the ice pop out in one piece. Set up the ice dome on a tray. Fill one cup with water and one with salt.

Step 3: Let children dig out the toys! Sprinkle salt and run water over the ice dome to help it melt. Use tweezers, spoons, eye droppers, or toothpicks to help excavate the toys. This activity can last an hour or two!



Ice Paint



Step 1: Fill the ice cube tray with water. Empty the water into a mixing bowl and mix in 2 teaspoons flour. Drop different colors of food coloring into each section of the ice cube tray, then pour in the flour-water mixture. Place a short popsicle stick (or sticks from a tree branch) in each section. Place tray in freezer overnight.

Step 2: Run water on the underside of the ice cube tray to release your ice paints. Let your children paint with the cubes. Explore colors and patterns as the ice melts on the paper.

Frozen in the Ice Age

Blue Babe and other Ice Age Mummies



"Blue Babe". Steppe Bison. University of Alaska Museum of the North.

In 1979, a family of miners near Fairbanks discovered the frozen carcass of a steppe bison.

University of Alaska paleontologists excavated the fossil very carefully. They washed the frozen soil around him to slowly melt away the icy soil. The animal was coated in a mineral that turned its skin a blue color, so scientists named the bison "Blue Babe".

Blue Babe is a well-preserved ice age mummy! The steppe bison is on exhibit at the UA Museum of the North.

Radiocarbon dating showed that Blue Babe lived about 36,000 years ago, during the last Ice Age. Tooth marks and blood under his skin also told scientists that an American lion killed it. The frozen ground preserved clues to tell the bison's story.

Other Ice Age animals have been discovered in northern places like Alaska and Siberia. The frozen soil (permafrost) in these places can preserve animal carcasses for tens of thousands of years. The animals' insides, like their stomachs or brains, are sometimes preserved too. Looking inside an animal's stomach, scientists can even tell what the animal had for dinner before it died!

Examples of ice age mummies recently discovered include a woolly rhinoceros, woolly mammoths, steppe bison, cave lion cubs, Arctic ground squirrels, and a Paleolithic dog.



"Effie". Cast of a woolly mammoth calf. University of Alaska Museum of the North. Original fossil is on exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History.