

# Oobleck Dig Site

Turn a sensory oobleck activity into excavation fun!



## Materials Needed:

Corn starch, water, mixing bowl, plastic animal toys (or play kitchen utensils for an archaeology dig), paintbrush, toy knife, spoon. *Optional:* cocoa powder, toothpicks.

## Instructions:

**Step 1:** Mix 2 parts cornstarch to 1 part water to make oobleck. The mixture should feel both liquid and solid depending on how fast you stir it. Add more water or cornstarch until you achieve the desired consistency. To make it earth-colored, mix in  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cocoa powder for each cup of cornstarch.

**Step 2:** Play with the oobleck. What does it feel like? What happens if you let it run through your fingers? What about if you poke at it quickly?



**Step 3:** When you are ready, bury the plastic toy animals or play kitchen utensils inside. Leave the container in a warm area to dry for 2-3 days.\* When the oobleck gets dry and starts to crack, your dig site is ready to be excavated!



\*You can also put the oobleck in an oven-proof dish and place it in the oven on the lowest heat setting for 2-3 hours.

**Step 4:** Excavate your dig site! Use spoons, toy knives, or toothpicks to crack the dry oobleck and dig out the toys. Brush off dust with the paintbrush. What did you find?



Remember that fossils can be fragile, so be gentle!

Activity adapted from [cubscoutideas.com/8150/dinosaur-dig-activity/](https://cubscoutideas.com/8150/dinosaur-dig-activity/)

# Exploring Alaska's Past

**Paleontologists and archaeologists at the Museum of the North (UAMN) explore Alaska's past through fossils and artifacts.**



**Paleontologists** excavate sites around Alaska to study plants and animals that lived long ago. Fossils, often buried underground, can teach us about the climate, environment, ecosystems, and living things of the past to help us better understand the Earth's history.

*Left: Excavating a fossil on the Colville River. Photo by Roger Topp.*

The UAMN Earth Sciences collection houses the world's largest collection of polar dinosaurs, as well as a large collection of Ice Age mammals. In the main museum gallery, you can see Blue Babe, the world's only known display of a Pleistocene steppe bison recovered from permafrost.

Archaeologists also dig for clues to our history. They study how people lived in the past through the things they left behind, including tools and houses. UAMN's archaeology collection is home to over 1 million artifacts. The collection helps us understand the history and culture of peoples who lived in Alaska as far back as 14,000 years ago! Archeologists continue to explore and excavate sites to learn about Alaska's heritage.



*Archaeological artifacts at the UA Museum of the North. Photo by Theresa Bakker.*

**Plan a visit to the Museum of the North or explore the virtual museum:**

[www.uaf.edu/museum/virtualmuseum/](http://www.uaf.edu/museum/virtualmuseum/)