

HOMEMADE: THE HEART AND SCIENCE OF HANDCRAFTS
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Technique: Making a Container
Candle with a Teacup



Warm a delicate china teacup with a heat gun or in a warm oven before introducing hot liquid wax to prevent cracks from a sudden change in temperature. Another precaution is to coat the inside of the cup with a thin layer of hot wax before doing the full pour.

MATERIALS AND TOOLS

China teacup, with or without a saucer
½ pound (0.2 kg) preblended wax with additives, suited to container candles
Additives: color chips or dye, candle fragrance oil*
Primed 6" (15.2 cm) wick, suited to container candle, with wick tab
Mold sealer
Double boiler with wax-pouring pitcher
Wax or candy thermometer
Wooden skewer
Oven mitt
Wooden spoon
Metal spoon
Soup ladle
Pencil
Heat gun or warm oven

*Omit fragrance if candle will be used where food is served.

Step 1

Prepare the teacup and wick.

Rinse and thoroughly dry the china teacup. Press a small blob of mold sealer in the bottom center of the cup. Tie the free end of the wick to a skewer. Push the tab end of the wick into the mold sealer, pressing it with the eraser end of a pencil to help it stick. Rest the skewer

across the top rim of the cup, rolling it so the wick is straight, taut, and centered.

Step 2

Melt the wax.

Set up the double boiler, melt the wax, and blend in the additives, saving the fragrance oil for last, if using. Use the thermometer to monitor the temperature of the wax as it heats and melts.

Step 3

Preheat the teacup.

Use a heat gun to warm the teacup to approximately 120°F (48.9°C), which will improve the adhesion of the wax to sides of the cup. The cup can also be placed in a warm oven.

Step 4

Coat the inside walls of the teacup with wax.

When the wax has reached the proper pouring temperature, put on an oven mitt and grasp the teacup, holding the skewer steady. Tilt the cup at an angle over the double boiler. Use your free hand and a ladle to scoop up some hot liquid wax and empty it into the cup. Swirl the cup very gently to lightly coat the inside walls.

Step 5

Fill the teacup with wax and let it cool.

Stand the teacup on a level, protected work surface. Ladle in more liquid wax, filling the cup to within ¼" (0.6 cm) of the rim. If the wick becomes slack, gently reroll the skewer to make it straight and taut. Watch for the depression that forms as the wax cools. Pour in more wax, heated 10°F (5°C) higher than the first pour, to fill the sunken area. Let the wax cool completely, 2 or 3 hours or overnight, depending upon the size of the candle.

Step 6

Trim the wick.

Use scissors to snip off the skewer and trim the wick, leaving a ¼" (0.6 cm) length. Keep the skewer for another project.

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