

Tips On Baking Polymer Clay

A lot of questions arise when baking polymer clay, especially for the first time. While a lot could be written on baking polymer clay, I will stay within the ambit of baking miniatures using ®FIMO, ®Sculpey and ®Cernit polymer clay.

- Bake your polymer clay between 110° and 130° Celsius (230°- 266° Fahrenheit). Recommended temperatures vary between these two figures from brand to brand. If mixing different brands, bake the clay at the lowest recommended temperature.
- Do not exceed 130° Celsius/266° Fahrenheit, or the polymer clay will start to burn.
- Bake your polymer clay for the recommended time specified in the packet. Recommended times may vary from brand to brand and depending on the size of the polymer clay piece. I like to part-bake my pieces for at least 15 minutes and fully bake them for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
- Use an oven thermometer to double check you're not underbaking or burning your pieces.
- I personally bake my pieces on the same tile I sculpt them on. The tile also helps distribute the heat evenly.
- I like to place all my polymer clay work in a cool oven first and then turn the oven on and start timing when the oven reaches my desired temperature. This way, none of my polymer clay pieces suffer a thermal shock.
- Cover your pieces with an oven-proof dish to protect them from direct heat, grease or from being blown away by the oven fan.
- In the case of really tiny things like strawberries or sprinkles, I like to place the tile with my pieces on inside another dish like a glass Pyrex dish so if they happen to be blown away or roll off the tile when I remove it from the oven, they'll remain inside the dish.
- Wait for your polymer clay to cool down before taking it out of the oven and handling it. Hot/warm clay is still weak so it might break during handling.
- You can take it out when it's warm to speed up the cooling process, but wear oven gloves to protect yourself.
- Warm polymer clay feels soft/flexible when you handle it. This is normal. Let it cool down completely for it to reach its final hardness.
- Wait for the polymer clay to be completely cool before painting it or glazing it as the paint and/or glaze may dry on the polymer clay or your brush before you get a chance to spread them.