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Wild at Heart

Make a Mandala

Create a unique design made of leaves, twigs and petals as a meditative piece of artwork, before sweeping it away in an ancient tradition.



Mandala simply means 'circle' in Sanskrit, and is also an ancient practise used in Hindu and Buddhism, but the concept is also found across the globe in Christianity and in Native American traditions.

The spherical mandala represents Earth, life, the universe, and everything in it.

Mandalas are traditionally made with coloured sand or crushed glass and are arranged into a circle, or into any symmetrical shape. A mandala can be created using a geometric blueprint, or can be made up on the spot as simple as a spiral design. They can be large or small, and can take a few minutes, several hours, or a whole week to make.



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Once the mandala is created, the whole thing is swept away. The aim of a mandala is not the end result, but the process itself. The object is not to create a permanent structure, but to experience the meditative process and to learn a lesson in impermanence.

Traditionally, mandalas are created as a spiritual practise by monks, as the relaxing process of building up an intricate design over several days allows for a lot of time to contemplate. The destruction of the mandala serves as an important lesson about the impermanence of life, and to appreciate being in the moment.

Create your own Mandala

To create a mandala of your own, the aim is the same: as a meditative process in creating your mandala, knowing as you create it that it is a transient formation and to enjoy the process itself, and learning to come to terms with impermanence. Finally at the end, sweep your mandala away, or relinquish it to the elements.



1. Choose the design for your mandala.

A mandala can be a simple pattern, or an intricate design – the basic idea is something symmetrical: a circle with repeating patterns. How complex you go may depend on how much time you have to create your mandala. Take inspiration from a flower, a spiral, or a sun shape. Or, simply make up a pattern as you go based upon the materials you collect.



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2. Collect materials for your mandala. Here are some materials you can collect to make your mandala:

- Sand
- Soil – wet and dry soils makes for different shades
- Pebbles
- Leaves
- Flowers or petals
- Foraged berries
- Fallen fruit
- Grass
- Twigs
- Cones – try different sizes
- Catkins
- Acorns and nuts
- Sea shells
- Snail shells



Make a mandala at different times of the year using seasonal materials, they will look very different depending upon when you make them!

3. Find a flat surface to make your mandala.

Find a space in your garden, a park, the woods, or a beach. Look for a flat area of ground, or even a level tree stump. You may need to brush away fallen foliage to create a flat surface to work on.



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4. Make your mandala.

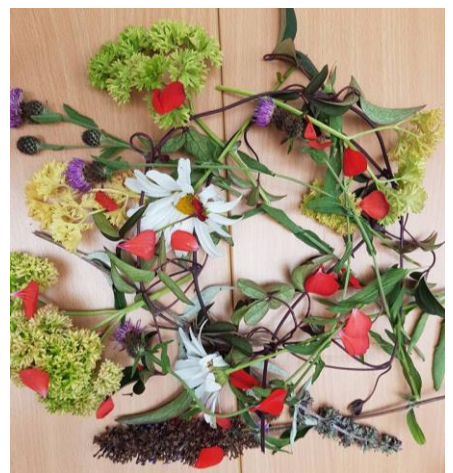
Place your materials to make up your design: it can be easiest to start from the middle and work outwards.

As the design comes together, make sure to be in the moment and appreciate the time you are getting to relax, be absorbed in your art, and be creative.

5. Sweep it away.

Once you have finished your mandala, take a moment to take in what you have created, before sweeping it all away. If you prefer, you can leave it up to nature to sweep it away in time – the wind will blow, and creatures will investigate it and run over it, and eventually it will be gone.

Whatever you chose, remember the feeling of joy of creating your unique design, and remember what you learned in the process.





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Contemplating impermanence:

Change is inevitable, and nothing lasts forever. We may wish that nothing will ever change and try to stop things ending, but this can stop us enjoying the moment.

When we accept that something will not last forever, we come to terms with change and enjoying being in the moment. It will always be sad to say goodbye to someone, but if we accept change and impermanence we can take comfort in knowing that the time spent with them was truly appreciated and not wasted.



Accepting, and even embracing impermanence can help make us live in the moment and not worry about change. This can help us understand that everyone



and everything is always changing, including ourselves, which can help us be more forgiving of others and ourselves.

The result of such mindfulness can help us to realize what is really important and live in the moment, appreciating life as it happens.

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Be wild, whatever your age

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