

# Petrified Forest



## At Home Activity



**Impress Yourself!**

The words paleontology and fossils are part of the daily vocabulary here at Petrified Forest. Scientists have been studying the Triassic fossils here for over 100 years!

Sometimes fossils are bones of ancient creatures but there are also some called impression fossils that are only the picture of something set into the stone.

These fossils are formed when an object like a leaf is sandwiched between layers of sediment such as mud. As the object decomposes the stone is left with the impression of that object inside it.



A footprint preserved in rock is a trace fossil because it shows that an animal existed or how an animal lived. You can make your own impression fossil replicas using ingredients from your kitchen and objects from your backyard, or even your toys, with this fun activity.

### What you need:

- 1 1/3 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 3/4 cup water
- Mixing bowl and spoon
- Shells, leaves, or small sticks
- dinosaur, reptile, or plant toys



Permian age invertebrate shell impression



### Step 1:

Mix together the salt and flour in your mixing bowl then add the water and stir, or knead with your hands, until a soft dough forms.

### Step 2:

Grab a handful of the dough and roll it into a ball. Place the ball on your table and flatten it with your hand until it is half the height.



### Step 3:

Take one of your natural objects or toys and gently press it into the dough then gently lift up the object to reveal the impression you've made.



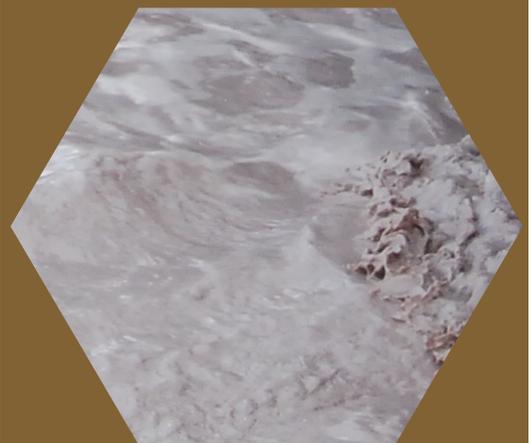
### Step 4:

Let your impression fossils dry overnight or until completely hardened. You may need to flip them over so that the bottom dries as well.

### Activity tips and brain teasers:

Try pressing many different objects in your dough. What objects make the best impressions? Why is this?

Since a fossil is evidence of past life that is preserved by a geologic process, what can you call rocks that have preserved water ripples?



water flowing in a wash