

## DIY Clay

Further research on DIY clays, has highlighted that the most likely commercial binder used in PMC and Art Clay is 'rice starch', which is abundant in Japan . This is a traditional binder and glue which has been used throughout Japanese history, particularly in paper making. As a natural seize, binder and adhesive, it is also very cheap. It is made by soaking rice in water, steaming it, and then pounding the material into rice cakes, which are then heated and ground. This would most likely also explain PMC's Origami like paper folding qualities.

I have tested making a batch of rice starch and the quality is much better and closer to that of PMC than using wheat based starch. It is stickier and moulds more like clay. It can be rolled very thin like paper and holds its form much better with larger amounts. It also has better 'imprint' and texturing qualities than wheat based mix.

Don't use too much water when cooking the rice. Add just enough to cover the rice and add a little more water if it starts to dry out. Adding too much water will result in having to pour away excess water along with the starch, which is the vital component we want to keep.

When the rice is cooked, (steaming it will be better) mash the rice into a paste. You can use the mixture fresh from the pan or form it in to cakes, bake it in the oven until dry but not brown and then grind it up with a pestle and mortar to make a powder. The rice will keep better if baked and wrapped in paper.

You can also buy 'rice starch' from Steve Hall at [Inoxia.co.uk](http://Inoxia.co.uk)

### A Health Warning!

Mixing clays yourself can be a hazard to health!

Although we will probably never see a health hazard warning label on a bag of flour, please be sure to take proper safety precautions with any experimentation. As with any dust, breathing fine metal and flour powders can cause lung disease and can also be explosive under certain conditions. Including very fine nano metal powders!