

Homemade Patina for Metals

A patina is the antiqued look or tarnish that appears on copper, brass and bronze when it has been naturally exposed to elements. A good example of copper patina is the Statue of Liberty. Household chemicals that contain sulfur, chlorine or acetate will react with the copper found in some metals. Vinegar-based recipes will result in a green patina, while ammonia-based recipes will produce a blue patina.

Most of these recipes include items that I found in my cupboards at home. Make sure to use caution when handling these products. Even though they are household items, they are still chemicals. Mixing certain ingredients together can produce harmful fumes. Do not mix recipes without properly cleaning the metal between applications. Make sure to work in a well-ventilated area (preferably outside) and wear protective gloves and safety glasses, especially when using ammonia. It is important to form or shape the metal before preparing it for the patina. If you add the chemicals before you form or shape the metal, you risk damaging the patina. Once the metal is formed, it needs to be cleaned to remove any dirt and oil from the surface. Lightly sand the metal piece with steel wool and then dip it in a saltwater bath. You can also use a grease-cutting dishwashing soap like Dawn. Dry the metal completely after cleaning. Make sure to not touch the metal with your bare hands. The oil from your hands will create a resistance to the chemicals that will result in the patina.

You are now ready to begin!

Please note that these homemade recipes will only work on copper, brass and bronze. All photos are shown using copper.

Annie's[®]
Simply Beads
Kit-of-the-Month Club[®]

Hard-Boiled Egg Patina

This is one of the easiest ways to add a patina to metal. All you need is a hard-boiled egg and a plastic bag or container. Hard-boil the egg. While the egg is still hot, cut it in half with a knife, shell and all. Place the egg halves and the jewelry into a plastic bag or bowl, and seal tightly. Let the items sit for a few hours. You will end up with a soft, subtle patina from the sulfur of the egg yolk. If you would like a darker patina, remove the jewelry from the bag or bowl, reheat the egg in the microwave and put the jewelry back in. Repeat this process until you have the desired color. Make sure to seal the patina (I'll cover sealing at the end).



Ammonia & Saltwater Patina

Ammonia and saltwater combine in this method to create a beautiful bright blue patina. Start by pouring 1/2 inch of ammonia into a small bowl (make sure to use bowls that you do not plan to use in food prep later); then place the bowl into a larger resealable container. Lay a piece of plastic mesh (found in home improvement stores) on top of the inner bowl. Lay the metal piece on top of the mesh or suspend the piece from the lid to dangle over the small bowl without touching the ammonia.

Spritz the metal with a 50-50 mix of saltwater. The more salt used, the more color you will see. Close the lid tightly and allow the patina to develop. The longer you leave the patina to develop, the more colorful it will become. Remove the metal component from the container. It will have a dark brown hue with subtle hints of blue. Allow it to air-dry, and the bold blue color will appear. Seal the patina (see instructions below).



Another option is to dip the metal in vinegar, sprinkle with sea salt, and then place into the container with ammonia as mentioned above. This is the method I used.

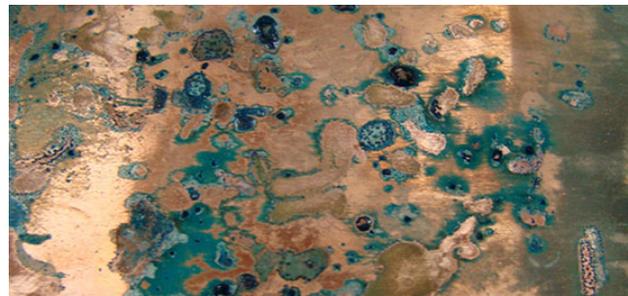
Vinegar Patina

As I mentioned earlier, vinegar will produce a nice green patina. Unlike ammonia, where the fumes react with the metal, vinegar needs an additional item like sawdust to hold the moisture next to the metal. Fill a small resealable container with sawdust (pet bedding works too). Pour a liberal amount of white vinegar on the sawdust and mix. The sawdust will become paste-like. Bury the metal in the saturated sawdust and seal the container. Allow to set overnight. Remove the metal from the sawdust and let it air-dry. Once dry, gently brush off the excess sawdust with a soft-bristle brush. Seal the patina (see instructions below).



Potato Chip Patina

Did you ever think a tasty snack like salt-and-vinegar potato chips could patina metal? Well it can. Simply crush several handfuls of salt-and-vinegar potato chips into a resealable container. Pour white vinegar over the chips and mix them until they are moist and mushy. Bury your metal in the chips, making sure the metal is completely covered. Seal the container. Allow the patina to develop overnight for the greatest coloration. Remove the metal from the chip mixture and allow it to air-dry. Brush off excess crumbs with a soft-bristle brush. Seal the patina (see instructions below).



Miracle Gro® Patina

In this method, Miracle-Gro is used instead of ammonia. Mix a tablespoon of red wine vinegar and a teaspoon of Miracle-Gro. Place the metal in the mixture and allow the patina to develop. Remove the metal and allow it to air-dry. You can also try mixing the Miracle-Gro with water for a more intensely blue-color patina. Seal the patina (see instructions below).



Sealants

There are many great sealants available. You can use an aerosol spray sealer such as Permalac or Krylon, which can be found at most home-improvement stores, to get a nice even finish on the metal. Both items can be used on any patina and are also a good option to use for people who have allergies to metals. Mod Podge® can also be used as a sealant. This is a water-based product, and is not recommended for use on ammonia-based patinas.

Annie's Simply Beads Club

https://www.simplybeadskitclub.com/newsletters.html?mode=article&article_id=3115