

Supplies

- Black Polymer Clay
- String or fishing line
- Bat Pattern(s)

Tools

- Roller (Acrylic rod, brayer or Pasta Machine)
- Craft knife such as X-Acto brand blade
- Cutting blade or steel rib
- Folded index card
- Needle tool

click on thumbnails to see larger images



Step One: Find a bat pattern you like from a book on Halloween or one of Halloween clip-art or draw one of your own. I copied this one from a Halloween book from the library. Cut it out and lay it on a sheet of well conditioned clay rolled to the #3 or #4 setting on the pasta machine.



Step Two: Trace around pattern with needle tool.



Step Three: Remove pattern and cut out with craft knife.



Step Four: Cut into surrounding clay and remove pieces to avoid distorting shape. You could even use these pieces to make a negative image of your bat for another project.



Step Five: With needle tool, poke two eyes between the bat's ears. These will be eyes, but will also be used for hanging.



Step Six: Use a steel rib or cutting blade to lift the bat up from underneath to place onto baking surface.



Step Seven: I like to pleat some of the index cards to make the bats look like they're flying. Now cure for 15 minutes at the temperature on the clay package.



Step Eight: Let the bat cool on the index card, then put your string through his eyes or wings, whichever you chose. Here's my bat all ready for hanging.



A gaggle of bats? A flock?

Ah, according to the dictionary, it's a colony of bats.

Warning: these are addictive.

To date, my roommate and I have made 73 of them.

Some of them seem to find homes in friends' pockets.

Tips: If you don't want the bat to look like s/he's flying, bake it flat. Or vary how deeply you pleat the index card. Or bake over something with a gentle curve, such as a dinner plate. If you absolutely don't get along with craft blades, you can use a cookie cutter instead.

Photography by Kim Kennedy