



Cookie Excavation

Adapted from “Cookie Excavation” Museum of Ontario Archaeology.

Tools needed:

Toothpick
Tweezer
Paper towel

Activity sheet
Pencil

Note: For this activity, the cookie is your “site” and the chocolate chips or raisins are your “artifacts.”

Step 1: Assemble your tools and activity sheet.

Step 2: Place your cookie on Grid A.

Step 3: On Grid B draw the cookie, with all of the visible artifacts (raisins or chocolate chips).
This will be your record for the excavation site.

Step 4: Use your toothpick to carefully begin excavating the cookie, chipping away at the dirt to reveal any “artifacts” hidden from view.
(Try not to pick up the cookie since you cannot pick up an excavation site!)

Step 5: Remember to draw every artifact you find within your site onto your map in Grid B.

Step 6: Using your tweezers carefully move the excavated artifacts to the box next to Grid B and record how many artifacts you were able to find.

At the end you should have a pile of back dirt (cookie crumbs) and artifacts (chocolate chips).

Cookie Excavation



Grid A: Dig site : Place your cookie here.
Place any back dirt in box below.

Back Dirt Pile!

Grid B: Draw the record of your cookie here and place the artifacts in the box below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing the record of the cookie and any artifacts found during the excavation.

How many artifacts were found at your site?

Excavation Challenge:

For an additional challenge try the activity below. This activity has been adapted from the Badlands National Park activity.

Archaeology involves fieldwork, including excavation –the digging of ancient or recent artifacts from the ground. The work is very painstaking and detailed, requiring patience, skill, and the ability to focus in on a small area for a long period of time.

Archaeologists typically use tools like trowels and brushes for their work. They use the trowels when they are sure there are no small artifacts in an area that could be damaged.

Tools needed:

1 Hard chocolate chip cookie
1 soft chocolate chip cookie
1 Hard raisin cookie

1 soft raisin cookie
6 toothpicks

1. Take one of the hard cookies and carefully remove the raisin or the chocolate chip using only the toothpick. If you break the toothpick and it is no longer sharp then you must discard it.
2. After 3-5 minutes of excavation, stop. Were you successful? Were any of the artifacts broken? Are the artifacts clean or do they have pieces of cookie still attached to them? How many toothpicks did you use?
3. Now pick one of the soft cookies and excavate using the same rules listed above.
4. After 3-5 minutes of excavation, stop. Were you successful? Were any of the artifacts broken? Are the artifacts clean or do they have pieces of cookie still attached to them? Was it easier working with the soft or hard cookies?

Archaeology Words to know

Excavation: the careful process of digging into the ground to uncover cultural and skeletal remains. Archaeologists take careful notes and photographs during excavation.

Artifact: Any objects that have been made or modified by humans are called artifacts, whether they are from the ancient past or from more recent times. Examples of artifacts can be tools or pottery. Artifacts are often characteristic of a certain time period or cultural stage; when they are found in an archaeological excavation, they can tell us about the time period of the site and the culture of the people who used or owned the artifacts.