



Make your own giant ammonite fossil

Ammonites were tentacled predators of the ancient ocean. They're related to today's squid and octopuses.

The giant ammonite (*Lytoceras taharoaense*) is part of the GNS Science National Paleontological Collection. You can see it on display at Te Papa. It's very rare to find ammonites in Aotearoa, so that makes it even more special.

Use the instructions on the other page to make your own replica of this taonga using salt dough.



STATUS: Biggest fossil found in Aotearoa; third-largest ammonite found in the world

DISCOVERED: February 1977 at Taharoa, near Kāwhia Harbour, on the Waikato Coast

DISCOVERER: Jean Gyles

AGE: Late Jurassic (around 140 million years old)

DIAMETER: ←1.42m→

WEIGHT: A whopping 1200kgs!

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You'll need:

- Salt dough ingredients – flour, salt, and water
- Mixing bowl and spoon
- String
- A baking tray with baking paper
- Oven
- Timer
- Paint and paintbrush
- A hard surface to sculpt on



- 1** Mix 1 cup of flour with ½ cup of salt. Add ½ cup of water (give or take) to the mix. When you can form a smooth ball, the dough is ready.
- 2** Roll your salt dough into a long sausage shape. To match the giant ammonite, make your sausage thick at one end and thin at the other.
- 3** The giant ammonite shell has ribs. To recreate these, wrap string around the dough and pull gently to make an indent or mark. Space them out evenly, matching those of the giant ammonite.
- 4** Gently coil the dough into the shape of the giant ammonite, starting from the thin end.
- 5** When you're happy with how it looks, put your replica on a lined baking tray. Bake it in the oven at 120°C for 3 hours.
- 6** Once cooled, paint your replica to match the colouring of the giant ammonite.



Activity by Rebecca Hatch