

A Papyrus Recipe

Gather papyrus reeds. ❖ Remove the tough outer fibers of the reeds and slice the remaining pith thinly - into broad strips. ❖ Submerge the strips in a water bath with a weight positioned to hold them down. Soak the strips for two to three days to remove the sugars (the water should become milky). ❖ Remove the strips from the water and either pound them flat or use a rolling pin to flatten them out. ❖ Put the strips into a new, fresh water-bath and leave submerged for another two days. ❖ Remove the strips from the water and flatten them again, this time using less force so as not to tear through the strips and then place the strips back into the same water-bath for three more days. ❖ Eventually, the strips will be saturated with water and sink to the bottom of the tub, also turning from their original white to a shade of cream, both of which are indicators that they are ready to be made into papyrus. ❖ Lay a towel on your working surface and lay a piece of linen on top of the towel. Take the wet strips and place them parallel to each other, overlapping them slightly, leaving no gaps. ❖ Make a second layer of the strips on top of the first, laying them perpendicular to the first layer. These should overlap slightly as well, also leaving no gaps. ❖ Place a second sheet of linen on top of your wet papyrus sheet and then lay another towel on top of that. ❖ Use a rolling pin to squeeze out as much water as possible. ❖ Remove the towels and place the sheet of papyrus, still wrapped in the linen, between several layers of newspapers. Lay heavy books on top of the newspapers for compression. ❖ Change out the damp newspapers with dry ones after about 2 hours, 8 hours and 24 hours. Leave this last set-up for about 7 days until the papyrus sheet is dry. ❖ Polish the finished sheets with a smooth stone or spoon. ❖ To ensure your papyrus stays flat and ready for use, store your sheets beneath a stack of heavy books.