



Make an Easy Lava Lamp

Learn how to make an easy lava lamp with this fun science experiment for kids. Use simple household items such as vegetable oil, food colouring, Alka-Seltzer and a bottle to create chemical reactions and funky balls of color that move around like a real lava lamp.

YOU WILL NEED:

1. Water
2. A clear plastic bottle
3. Vegetable oil
4. Food colouring
5. Alka-Seltzer (or other tablets that fizz)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pour water into the plastic bottle until it is around one quarter full (you might want to use a funnel so you don't spill when filling the bottle).
2. Pour in vegetable oil until the bottle is nearly full.
3. Wait until the oil and water have separated.
4. Add around a dozen drops of food colouring to the bottle (choose any colour you like).
5. Watch as the food colouring falls through the oil and mixes with the water.
6. Cut an Alka-Seltzer tablet into smaller pieces (around 5 or 6) and drop one of them into the bottle, things should start getting a little crazy, just like a real lava lamp!
7. When the bubbling stops, add another piece of Alka-Seltzer and enjoy the show!

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The oil and water separate from each other. The oil sits on top because it has a lower density than water. The food colouring falls through the oil and mixes with the water at the bottom. The piece of Alka-Seltzer tablet you drop in after releases small bubbles of carbon dioxide gas that rise to the top and take some of the coloured water along for the ride. The gas escapes when it reaches the top and the coloured water falls back down.

The reason Alka-Seltzer fizzes is because it contains citric acid and baking soda (sodium bicarbonate). The two react with water to form sodium citrate and carbon dioxide gas (those are the bubbles that carry the colored water to the top of the bottle).

Tip: Add more Alka-Seltzer to the bottle to keep the reaction going and enjoy your funky lava lamp longer.

