Inkodye Basics

What is Inkodye?
Inkodye is a range of mixable, water-based, photosensitive dyes that make it easy to print images and patterns onto t-shirts and natural fabrics. Its color develops and binds permanently when exposed to bright sunlight or UV.

How much area does one Inkodye bottle cover?
One fluid ounce (30 ml) of Inkodye prints approximately one 12x12 inch square (30x30 cm), that means one 8 ounce bottle makes about 8 prints. Inkodye can also be diluted with water to extend its printing power and create pastel shades.

How do negatives work?
Negatives are black-and-white transparency sheets that make it easy to selectively block light from activating Inkodye's color. With negatives you can create detailed photographic or vector artwork with continuous tone going beyond what traditional screen-printing can do.

Negatives are not required for shadow prints, Sunfold prints, dip dye, and many other Inkodye techniques.

You can order custom-printed negatives through the Lumi app, or print them at home using inkjet-printable Inkofilm transparency sheets. For best results, the black areas of your negative must be opaque to sunlight.

Negatives can be reused, if you take care not wrinkle them. Use a small amount of water or window-cleaning solution on a paper towel to wipe it clean. This method will allow you to reuse a negative dozens of times.

Does Inkodye work in cloudy weather? How about UV lights?
Inkodye reacts primarily to bright UV and full-spectrum light, such as sunlight. There are many things that can affect how much sunlight your print is receiving: time of day, seasons, altitude, latitude, cloud cover, even placing glass or acrylic over your print will dampen the sun's rays. For best results we recommend printing around midday on a sunny day. If you're printing in overcast weather, double your exposure time, or wait until the color appears fully saturated. If it is too cloudy, Inkodye might not be able to fully react.

You can also invest in a UV exposure unit such as the ones used for screen-printing. Follow our step-by-step guide for how to print Inkodye with UV light.

What materials does Inkodye work on?
Inkodye binds to any absorbent natural fiber such as cotton, linen, raw silk, jute, hemp, raw canvas, burlap, bamboo, muslin, wool and even raw leather, suede, untreated wood and unglazed ceramics.

For most applications we recommend untreated materials that can be rinsed and washed using hot water and textile detergent. This allows the light areas of the print to remain undeveloped.

Inkodye can also be used on cellulosic semi-synthetics such as modal, viscose and rayon. We do not recommend Inkodye for use on synthetic fibers such as polyester or nylon, however blends (e.g. 50% cotton and 50% polyester) may yield good results. When printing on blends Inkodye will adhere to the natural fibers and wash out of the synthetic, giving the final print a lighter shade of color than you would see on 100% natural fibers.

Note that Inkodye does not work on purely synthetic materials such as nylon, acrylic or polyester, and cannot be absorbed by non-fibrous materials such metal and glass.

Does Inkodye work on dark materials?
Inkodye is a subtractive color process that works best over light to medium tones. Because it is a dye, it does not coat the fabrics like a paint would. Inkodye actually becomes part of the fiber and therefore will not noticeably print on a black or dark-colored material.

Are Inkodye prints machine-washable?
For best results machine wash your Inkodye prints twice using Inkowash Detergent. This helps remove unexposed Inkodye molecules from your fabric.
Once this step is complete, your Inkodye prints are permanent and can be worn and washed normally.

Is Inkodye suitable for children?
Printing with Inkodye is an exciting educational activity for all ages. Kids love to watch Inkodye's magical color-changing reaction. This can be done safely by educating children on the importance of reading precautionary labeling.

Children who are not old enough to read and understand the safety precautions on our packaging must be supervised while using Inkodye. Our products do not feature child-safe packaging.

Inkodye can safely be used on baby and children's clothing by following our standard printing instructions, and washing your prints with Inkowash. After the final wash, no chemicals will be left in the garment that would negatively affect a baby or child's skin.

How safe is Inkodye?
Inkodye is a water-based formula, designed for household use. Once washed, printed garments are safe to wear. Unlike plastisol inks, cyanotype and many alternative photochemicals, Inkodye does not use PVC, toxic solvents, iron or silver in its formula.

Our products are intended for adult use, they do not feature child safe packaging. The chemistry of Inkodye is based on the same family of dyes used to color blue jeans and service uniforms. Please follow the safety precautions indicated on our products for optimal use.

Inkodye has been certified as having no chronic toxicity by a certified toxicologist. Our products conform to the Labeling of Hazardous Art Materials Act (ASTM D-4236). We are committed to the health and safety of everyone who enjoys Inkodye, which is why we recommend using normal precaution to prevent unnecessary spilling, skin contact and ingestion.

Our dyes are water-based and only require household soap and water cleanup. We recommend that you wash your hands thoroughly after use and/or use gloves to prevent prolonged skin contact and staining.

Is Inkodye environmentally-friendly?
Inkodye develops its color using the power of sunlight and can be effectively used to reduce the amount of electricity and chemicals necessary to print and dye a variety of materials.

Inkodye is designed to create durable prints on renewable materials made from vegetable and animal fibers. Due to its chemistry Inkodye does not bind permanently to synthetic materials.

Inkodye is water-based and requires no additional chemicals or solvents for development or clean up. Inkodye is part of a family of dyes known as "vat dyes" which includes dyes used in coloring military and service uniforms.

We strive to source all of our ingredients in the most environmentally responsible manner possible. Note that due to the nature of Inkodye's formula it is not a 100% natural product.

Where is Inkodye made?
Inkodye is made in the USA—at a workshop in sunny Los Angeles, California. We strive to support our local economy and source the best ingredients we can find.

When will green and yellow Inkodye be available?
They're in development! Unfortunately it's not as easy as you might think. Because of Inkodye's photosensitive properties, each new color requires its own research and development. Rest assured, we're just as eager as you are to get our hands on it!