



Panning for Gold in Britain



What is gold panning?

The art of gold panning is the process of separating gold from all other materials in a river, such as sand, rocks and moss by using a gold pan. The plan is to dispose of any dirt at the end of the day and be left with a pan full of glittering gold!

What do I need?

In order to pan for gold the most important thing you need is a gold pan! These are obtained either online or from specialist stores. You will also need a location for you to make your fortune; many rivers throughout Britain are home to great amounts of gold just waiting to be found.

Step one

The first thing you will need to do is descend your pan into the river and fill it up until it's $\frac{3}{4}$ full of sand and rocks. A little trick is to pick out rocks (make sure they're not gold!) so your pan is left with mostly sand.

Step two

Submerge your pan under the water and sieve through the contents with your hands and remove any moss or roots, but make sure you check the moss before disposing of it as gold likes to hide in it. Now with the gold pan just beneath the surface of the water begin to move it left to right breaking up the contents even further, moving the gold to the bottom of your pan, and all the dirt to the top.

Step three

Now you must tilt the most forward edge of your pan downward and with the pan in this position repeat step two. This will sink the gold lower into your pan and continue to make the lighter sand and rocks rise to the surface.

Step four

Then it's time to rinse and repeat (getting rid of anything in the pan that isn't gold and starting again). With the pan just below the surface move it back and forth to let the water do the work for you and the lighter materials should begin to float away and you will be left with the gold.

Step five

At this point your pan should consist of gold (if you're lucky) and black sand. Now it is just a matter of separating the gold from the sand. If you have a plastic gold pan you can use a magnet to dispose of the black sand, but if you haven't, you can just repeat step four until the black sand has gone. When the pan has little black sand left, proceed with tweezers to remove the gold from the pan and place into another container. Once completed you should have a nice collection of gold!



Thank you to Kit Andrews of Ross-on-Wye for sharing this great activity.