

MAKE AN A-BOMB!

Inspired by Policy on the Rocks Culinary Institute

Follow this easy how-to guide to learn how to make an A-Bomb. You'll get to practice at the same time—no, not with real fissile material, 'cause that would be dangerous. At the end you'll be rewarded with a bombalicious treat!

STEP 1 - GET SOME URANIUM

—about 1,000 pounds. (Plutonium would work too, but it's a little trickier to turn into a bomb, so we'll start off with baby steps.)

Natural uranium is actually made up of two types—U-235 (about 1%) and U-238 (99%). We like the U-235 kind because it is unstable and tends to split apart (fission), in the process shooting out lots of energy. If you get enough U-235 together in a tight space, you can set off a chain reaction and so shoot off a really, really, lot of energy.

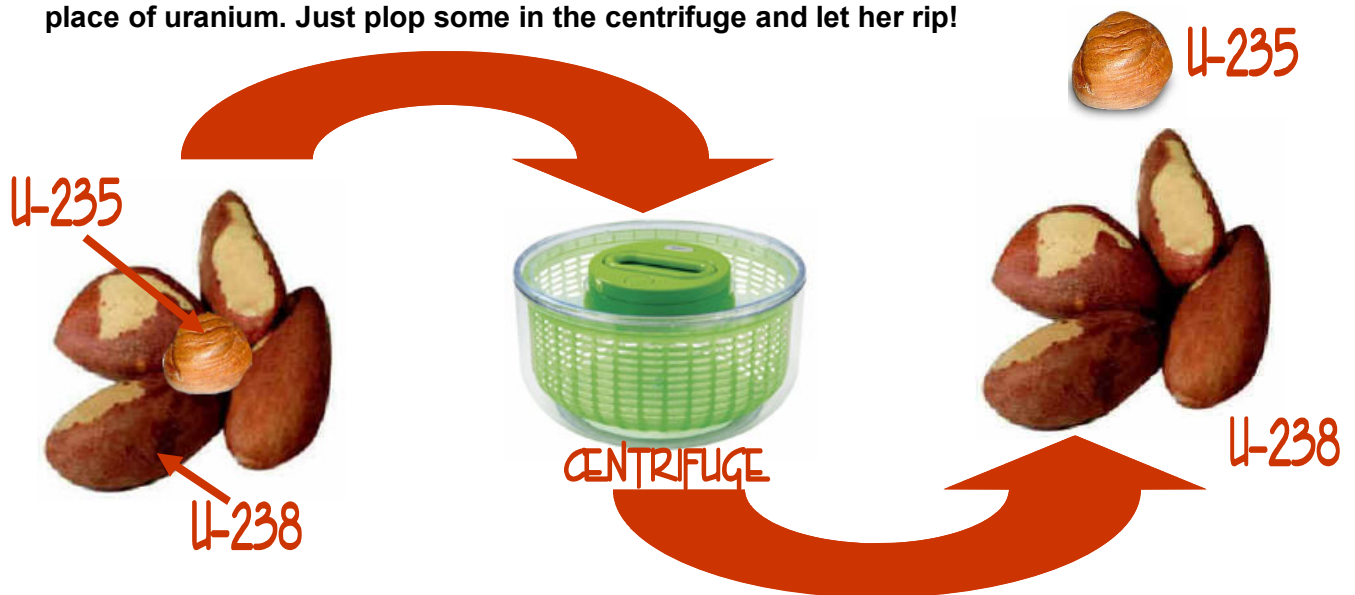
To get all that U-235 together, you need to get most of the U-238 out of the way—until you have about 90% U-235. They call that enrichment. It's kind of the toughest part.

STEP 2 - GETTING ENRICHED

This actually is a few steps. You'd normally first have to use a few highly corrosive and poisonous chemicals in a multi-step process to turn your uranium supply into uranium hexafluoride.

Once you have your batch of uranium hexafluoride, though, you're ready to roll—or whirl. By putting your uranium hexafluoride in a centrifuge, you'll separate out the U-235 (which is lighter) from the U-238.

Now you can practice! We have supplied hazelnuts and brazil nuts in place of uranium. Just plop some in the centrifuge and let her rip!



STEP 3 - MAKING YOUR BOMB

Once you've made about 10 lbs of 90% U-235 hexafluoride solution, you'll just want to convert it into a solid form—which makes it less sloppy going into the bomb. Just mix up your liquid with calcium and you'll get some calcium fluoride salt, ready for the lading into your bomb encasement.

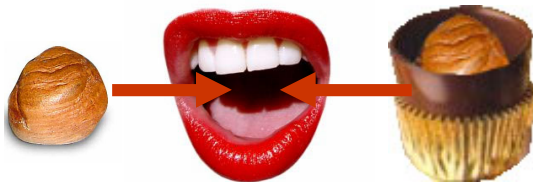
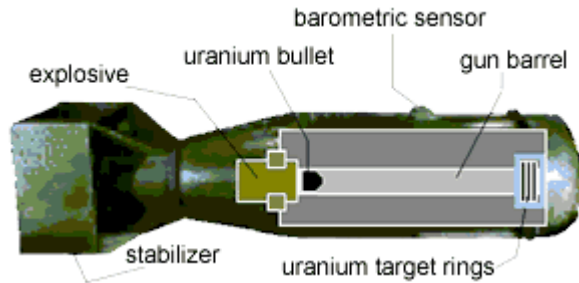
Here's the trick—you want to divide your uranium into two halves that add up to "critical mass" - that's the amount that will assure you'll get a chain reaction going (about 10 pounds). You should be careful up to this point to make sure the uranium is in separate batches (if you're still reading, we assume you have).

Now you get to try:



STEP 4 - DETONATE

There are many ways to get the two sides of critical mass to come together. One of the first tried was to set up a simple gun type structure with two halves at either side of a barrel. With a little gun powder you get critical mass and a little punch to get things going.



Since guns are complicated—not to mention dangerous—we'll use a simpler, yet effective method. Simply pop one half of critical mass (again, for those with ADD, a hazelnut) in your mouth and toss in the other hazelnut/nutella/chocolate cup apparatus in after it. A few chomps should set the necessary explosion in motion.