

## Making a Food Ring with Wire Shank by Carmen Alvarez-Keefer

Why use wire in a shank of the ring?

First, using silver or copper or nugold wire will help you create a ring that fits EXACTLY, because the wire will not shrink in the kiln.

Secondly, you will be able to create a ring that has a very thin band, which you may prefer, rather than a heavy thick band.

And finally, you will create a sturdy, durable and light ring using a small amount of silver. The wire core will give the band added strength that you could not have using that thin of a band of PMC.

This method gives you more options in ring making, rather than always having PMC rings looking big and bulky.

Here are the steps and materials:



You will need a package of either PMC+ or PMC 3, 3-4 inches of 18 gauge wire (can be silver, copper or NuGold) or thicker wire, a cereal item of your shape and choice, and some sort of setting if you want to set a stone, I used a sterling spacer ring, but you could even roll out a coil of clay for your setting.



1. Wrap the wire around your knuckle snugly and twist it about three times. This will insure an exact fit, since your knuckle is the largest part of your finger. You could also do this part on a ring mandrel if you know the size. Test to see if it fits by slipping off and on again, then cut off the excess wire, cutting right above the twists so that you have some poking out above the ring.



2. Select a food item with an appropriate shape and cover it with clay. You may coat it with a thin layer of Elmer's glue to prepare it to stick to the clay, but I usually just wrap it without. Roll out the clay about three cards thick if you are going to press in a design and a little more than twice as large as the shape you are doing. Press in your pattern or design. if you are using a stamp, sprinkle talcum powder on the tool to release the clay.
3. Start at one end, wrapping your cereal shape and wrap around the back, using a craft knife to trim off excess clay. Seal with a Color Shaper and water, smoothing the edges. Decide where you want your stone and use a coffee straw to poke the hole and insert your silver spacer below the surface.



4. Now its time to add the ring shank or band. Find the center of your shape and carefully begin to insert the band until the cut end is well inside the all that is showing is the band. Try to do this carefully because your food item is fragile and could crunch if pushed hard. So wiggle it in. Then cover the whole up with a bit of PMC and smooth the surface with a Color Shaper and a spray of water.



5. Roll out a thin snake of clay log enough to cover the wire band. I always have about 1/8 tsp. of glycerin in my spray bottle of water, because it prevents cracking in the clay especially when I roll coils.



6. Begin to push the coil onto the wire band starting at one end of the band, making sure to attach the coil to the food piece first. Carefully and slowly, press around the outside and wrap to the inside to completely cover the wire band.



7. It's VERY IMPORTANT, that you push the inside band of clay back to the outside and yet cover the wire. If you add too much clay to the inside of the ring it will no longer fit, so try it on again to confirm the size. If it is too tight, carve away the excess the clay on the inside with a craft knife and rewet and smooth with Color Shaper. There should be just a very thin layer of silver on the inside. You can press in a pattern or make a design by pressing in an object to the outside of the band.



8. After smoothing all bumps, fire the ring according to proper firing cycle for the clay you are using. I added swirls and small bead shapes of clay to the sides of my band before firing, for interest. I also use a tumbler to polish my rings after they come out of the kiln, which is pretty successful at quickly getting a high shine in the nooks and crannies. I am ready to pick out a gemstone to either add to my setting with PMC and re-fire or just glue in.



Here are some other rings using the same method, just different food shapes.

