

Ball in a Ball



Ball in a ball, Osage Orange



ultimate golfer gift, camphor

A ball in a ball is fun project that amazes everyone. A golf ball in a ball is a great gift for any golfer. Once you know the “secret” and have the skill to turn a natural edge bowl you can turn a Ball in a Ball. The smaller ball can be any round ball. A golf ball is an excellent choice for your first try. The golf ball is a bit more slippery than wood and goes in easier. Also it is a good size and turning a ball that small is more difficult than turning the larger ball.

The Demo Process:

- Turn a ball about 3 inches in diameter from a nice dried hardwood and apply finish.
- Make a template the size of the golf ball using “fun foam” available at most art supplies stores.
- Mount the larger ball on the lathe using a Straka chuck (Spring 2008 *American Woodturner*). A jamb chuck or vacuum chuck work too but are less forgiving.
- Position the ball so that the hole will be cut through the face grain. This is the grain that easiest to hollow and least likely to split when the smaller ball is pushed through.
- Use the tail stock center to line up the ball in the chuck as you tighten the chuck.
- Set your dividers or calipers to 1/8” less than the diameter of the golf ball and mark the ball.
- Use a bowl gouge cut the ball flat to the scribed line. The flat surface on the ball makes it easier to mark and drill and also easier to hollow
- Fold over the template using 3/4 of it to mark the depth on a drill bit and drill to depth.



- Use a small bowl gouge to hollow and deepen the opening to hold the ball. The rim of the opening should be at the scribed line. Set the tool rest so you cut slightly below center. Hollow the interior first leaving the rim for last and undercut the rim so that the ball fits loosely.
- Stop frequently to test the hollowed space with the template. I keep taking wood off the sides and deepen the hole until the template fits inside and can be turned without binding. The template gives preview of how much the golf ball will protrude. The template should not bind or the ball will bind.



Now for the fun part! The opening has to be a bit wider but still less than golf ball's diameter. This is a cut that goes from too small to too big in a hurry. I sharpen my gouge and use my best bowl hollowing techniques, beginning each cut a little below center height, and I test fit the actual ball after every tiny cut.



When the opening is the right size, the ball will stick in place when gently inserted in the opening. Don't wedge it into the opening. Also be prepared that it might just pop in. At first it will just roll out. As the opening gets close to the right it will begin to grip the ball and let you pull it free. At this point stop. The diameter will be 1/16 to 1/32 less than the diameter of the ball.

At the left the ball is gripped by the opening. On the right after a tiny hit with the palm popped the ball through the hole the in on the left. It is just like magic, the wood stretches open, the ball drops through, the wood close and traps the ball before it can bounce out. If the ball sticks but a gentle hit does not pop it in, gently widen the opening by hand sand the with



400 grit paper.

Apply a finish taking care to keep the inside ball clean. I usually finish the larger ball before hollowing. Turn a little stand and find a golfer to make happy.



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