



Natural Pottery

Natural clay can be found in almost any region of the planet. These clays can be used for making pottery. In this lesson we will teach the basics of processing clay and creating small pinch or coiled pots.

Materials

- Soil with a high percentage of clay
- Shovel
- 2 X 5 gallon buckets
- Old bedsheet for straining clay

Processing the clay



1. After you dig up some clay soil, break up the clay as much as possible. This can be done by hand or using sticks or shovels.

2. Fill a 5 gallon bucket 1/3 full with the clay soil.

3. Add water and fill the bucket 2/3-3/4 full. Use your hand to reach into the bucket to break up the soil particles as much as possible (this is the fun part with kids). Remove any rocks/sticks that you feel.

4. Once you have broken up the particles, give the bucket a good stir with your arm

or a shovel.

5. Allow the particles to settle for about five minutes. The rocks and sand will settle very quickly, followed by the silt, leaving the clay in suspension.
6. While the slurry mixture is settling, get your filtering bucket ready by draping your shirt or bedsheet inside of your second bucket. If your sheet is a relatively loose weave, double it over.
7. When 5 minutes is up, slowly pour your clay liquid into your second bucket. Avoid pouring the rocks/sand from the bottom of your first bucket.
8. Gather the corners of the bedsheet and tie it to an overhanging branch (or nearby horizontal structure) and allow it to drain completely. This can take up to 24 hours depending on the weather.
9. After 24 hours, open the bedsheet and expose the clay to sun for 1-2 hours. At this point it should be ready to use.



Making a pinch pot

Materials

- Glass of water
- Handful of clay
- Hard surface to work on



- 1. Grab a small handful of clay and form into a small ball.**



2. Push into the center of the ball with your thumb.



3. Begin forming a bowl by pressing downward and outward from the inside of the bowl.



4. Continue pressing down and outward while slowly moving around the inside edge of the bowl until you have the desired shape.



5. Dip your fingers into water and smooth the rim, inside, and outside edges of your bowl.



6. When you are done, place your bowl in the sun to dry for a day or longer until it feels dry.

The Coiled Pot



1. Roll your clay into a long “worm”. This can be done between two hands or on a solid surface.



2. Coil your clay into a spiral, gradually rising upward from the center.



3. Repeat the process, adding more clay onto your coil until you get the desired bowl size.



4. Smooth the outer and inner sides by wetting your finger. Pull down between rows slightly to blend the rows together.



5. Continue until the sides are smooth and you have the desired shape. Put the clay in the sun to dry completely.



6. When your clay bowls are dry, apply paint to them.

