



Making a Pinch Pot or a Coil Pot

Supplies

- Ball of air-dry clay (or make your own salt dough—directions below!)
- Paper plate or piece of cardboard for drying clay
- Table covering (*optional*)

Overview



In the 3D tour, you watched a video of the potter using a pottery wheel. The pottery wheel was invented about 4500 years ago, but people have been hand-building pottery for much longer than that.

During this activity, you will have the option to make a coil or pinch pot. Coil and pinch pots are very old forms of pottery that people could make without pottery wheel. Many Native American pottery pieces were made in this way.

Typically, pottery is made from clay. Clay is a soft, earthy, muddy material that forms through weathering and erosion. It is commonly found in river beds. It is inexpensive and can be found all around the world. Potters in the 1830s used a kiln—like the one you saw in the 3D tour—to harden their clay. Today, we will use clay that will dry on its own over time.

Directions

Making a Pinch Pot

1. Roll your clay into a ball.
2. Create a hole in the center of the ball. Stick your thumb into the center of the ball, making sure to leave about $\frac{1}{4}$ " of clay for the base of your pot. If you poke your thumb all the way through, start again.
3. Use gentle pinching motions to work on the side of your pot. It helps to turn your pot as you pinch it to keep the walls even in thickness.
4. The walls of your pot can be as thick or as thin as you like, but try not to make them too thin or the pot will collapse.
5. Set the pot aside to dry in a warm place. If you want to embellish it with grooves, you can add them after a couple hours when the pot is partially dry.

6. Continue to let the pot dry until it is rock hard.
7. Decorate with paint, if you want!

Making a Coil Pot

1. Take a small piece of your clay from the clay ball.
2. Roll this small piece into a ball, and then flatten it with your palm. This is the base of your coil pot.
3. Take another small piece of clay and roll it into a snake. Keep the snake the same width all the way around.
4. Repeat step 3 two or three more times so you have several snakes to use in your coil pot.
5. Wind one snake around the base of the pot along the edge of your circle.
6. Add another snake, pinching and blending the two snake ends together.
7. Make the coil pot as tall as you like. When you are finished, set it side to dry!

Making Salt Dough at Home

Supplies

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 cup salt
 - 1 ½ cups water
1. Mix the ingredients together in a large bowl.
 2. Knead for 3-5 minutes until the dough is soft and pliable.
 3. Proceed with directions for making a coil or pinch pot.
 4. Salt dough can be hardened by baking for 2-3 hours at 250°.

