

# **CLAY KNOWLEDGE**

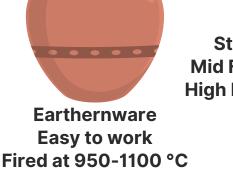
## **CHOOSING POTTERY CLAY**



Kaolin Used in porcelain & difficult to work clays Near - white

**Stoneware Clays** Mid Fire 1160-1240 °C High Fire 1200-1280 °C

**Ball Clay** Good for adding plasticity to other clays-grey



**Fire Clay** Often added to stoneware Adds insulation & strength

### **WORKING WITH CLAY**



**PINCH - Use your fingers to pinch and** poke a single lump of clay into any shape.



## **HOW TO FIND LOCAL CLAY**

Approximately 80% of the Earth's land surface contains clay, so there's a good chance that local earthenware clay can be found near where you live.

#### Where to look for clay:

- Riverbanks
- Naturally exposed earth (such as canyons or gullies)
- Stream beds
- Road cuts
- Construction sites

Always get written permission from the landowner before digging clay. This is especially important on construction sites, where safety and legal considerations apply.

#### Follow safe practices:

- Avoid unstable or dangerous terrain
- Stay clear of active construction zones and machinery

**Important:** Never collect clay from National or State Parks or Monuments. Disturbing these protected natural areas is often illegal and can result in serious consequences.

## **CLAY TOOLS**



**WIRE CLAY CUTTER** is used to slice through blocks of clay or remove pieces from the wheel. It has a thin wire with handles on each end, allowing clean, even cuts without distorting the clay.

**SLAB - Roll the clay into flat sheets** (like a pie crust) to cut apart and assemble.



**COIL - Roll out long snakes of clay and** weist them into coils and shapes.

WHEEL - Spin clay on potter's sheel to form pots and vases.



## **6 STAGES OF CLAY**

**1 SLIP:** Clay suspended in water. It can be poured into moulds, used as a bonding agent between clay pieces, or applied for decorative purposes

**2 GREENWARE:** Workable clay. It's firm enough to hold its shape but flexible enough to be shaped or molded without breaking.

**3 LEATHER HARD:** Partially dried clay that retains a bit of flexibility. It may crack but won't fully break when bent. It feels cool to the touch and is ideal for carving or refining surface details.

**4 BONE DRY:** Clay that has completely dried and is ready for firing in the kiln. It has no flexibility and is extremely fragile.

**5 BISQUEWARE:** Clay that has undergone its first firing. It appears lighter in color and has slightly shrunk. The piece is now hard and durable, though still porous and not yet waterproof.

6 GLAZEWARE: Clay that has been fired a second time with a coat of glaze. The glaze melts to form a smooth, glass-like surface, giving the piece a glossy finish and making it waterproof.

**BOXWOOD OR OXBONE TOOLS shape,** 

detail and refine clay. Their smooth surface helps prevent deep gouges or other issues, making them ideal for sculpting, trimming, and smoothing without damaging the clay.



LOOP, RIBBON & WIRE TOOL are often used on greenware (workable clay) for refining and detailing.

**NEEDLES** are among the most versatile tools in pottery. They can be used for various tasks, such as scoring slabs and coils when handbuilding.



**BRUSHES** are used to apply water and slip to specific areas of clay, as well as to paint and design with slips, underglazes, and glazes.

**RIBS:** Used for shaping, smoothing and finishing clay vessels.

