

Why should you cook in earthen pots?

Earthen pots were widely used in Indian households before many years, but now people have shifted towards utensils which are new, trendy and easy-to-maintain. Clay pots have been a part of Indian cooking for many centuries. It offers various health benefits and helps contain the natural flavor of the food and its nutrients, making the food taste more delicious.

Traditional practices

Our ancestors had used cooking clay pots before many decades. Cooking clay pots had been a natural part of every household. But as times changed, people slowly started using nonstick utensils. But what brought this change? People wanted utensils which were easy to maintain in their busy lives. But are these utensils any good for our health? These cookware have health hazards. When these utensils are overheated, it may release toxic fumes and particles. Even though these cookware may seem easy to use and maintain, they slowly affect our health. It is really important to use natural utensils to protect our health.

Clay pots are really beneficial for keeping the nutrients and minerals present in the food. Some earthenware were also used for storing water, retaining its natural properties and keeping it cool. For people who want to keep the benefit of pot water, clay water bottles are available these days. Before a decade or so children used to play with clay kitchen set toys, which were environment friendly as well as looked beautiful. These days, majority of the kids play with plastic toys. Clay kitchen set toys are available, which contain clay serving sets like clay plates, tumblers, pots for children, which are free from chemicals and plastic.

In recent times, many people use sprouters to grow nutritious sprouts from the comfort of their homes. But plastic sprouters are hardly helpful for our health. Clay sprouting pots helps us to grow sprouts in a natural way. These clay sprouters ensure natural germination process and help the seeds grow healthily.

Types of pots

There are different types of cookware like earthenware, clayware and earthen pots. Earthenware is glazed or unglazed pottery which is non-vitreous; i.e. highly water absorbent. Clayware, as the name suggests, is made from clay and baked in a kiln and is a type of ceramic ware. Earthen pots are widely found in India and have been used for many years.

Unglazed and unpainted pots

There is a variety of cooking clay pots available in the market, where both glazed and unglazed pots are found. Glazed clay pots may be easier to clean, but it takes away some of the main benefits of clay pot cooking. Glazed clay pots, cover the porous surface of the pots, taking away

the steam circulation and water absorption qualities of it. Some of the glazed clay pots contain harsh chemicals that may produce dangerous toxins during the cooking process. The use of unglazed pots is recommended since it ensures that all the benefits are present, adds to the goodness of the food and does not contain any chemicals. Similarly, painted clay pots may contain artificial colors, making it useless to keep the natural benefits of the clay pots. Unpainted clay pots are better than painted ones.

How are cooking clay pots made?

Making cooking clay pots is a long process, which takes many days. Cooking clay pots are made from natural clay which are mixed with water and then shaped. After the desired shape is attained, it is further sharpened to get the perfect look. It is then dried and baked in a kiln for a few days, completing the process.

How to clean clay pots?

Before a clay pot is used for the first time, it needs to be completely soaked in water for one day. After the first use, the clay pot can be cleaned with water and a scrub. Any kind of soap or detergent is not needed to clean the clay pot, since it can absorb the detergent due to its porous nature. Soaking the clay pot in hot water for 30 minutes and using a scrub pad removes tough stains. Soaking the clay pot in water with a few spoons of baking soda helps remove pungent odour from the pot.

Newly bought clay pots have to be seasoned before cooking. Seasoning a clay pot is not that hard. The new clay pot can be soaked completely in water for one day. Rice water, which is the leftover water after rice is cooked, can also be used. After this, wash the clay pot well and let it dry in the sun for a few hours. The cooking clay pot is now ready to be used.

Benefits

Clay pots provide various benefits for good health. Since clay pots are porous, it ensures that the heat is evenly spread while cooking. The slow cooking increases the natural flavor of the food, and produces a tasty dish. It also holds on to the moisture and nutrients present in the food and retains the natural juices, which further makes the food more flavorful and nutritious. It also has an earthy flavor, found only in these pots. Food prepared in clay pots are not spoiled easily and can be stored for a good amount of time. The clay used to make these pots are alkaline in nature and provide essential nutrients like iron, zinc, calcium, magnesium that are good for our body and increases our immunity. It also neutralizes the pH balance, making the food cooked in it, healthier. Clay pots reduce the usage of oil, since the ingredients are cooked in the natural steam that is present in the closed pot. This is really helpful for people who wish to keep their oil intake in control. Cooking clay pots are really affordable and are not as expensive as other utensils. It is available in a variety of shapes and sizes, each serving a different purpose. It is completely

environment-friendly as they are made from a natural substance and is bio-degradable, causing no harm to the surroundings.