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POTTERY

A Beginner's Guide to Pottery Making

by: **STEVEN LUNA**SHARE [f](#) [t](#) [p](#) [r](#)

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the same as what our ancestors followed: shaping clay into something lovely and useful.

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studied the idea that engaging in an artistic way can affect mood, behavior and general well-being.

Their conclusion: "Through creativity and imagination, we find our identity and our reservoir of healing." If you've ever wondered how to make pottery yourself, the article below will give you some ideas for getting started.

By learning [pottery for beginners](#), you might find that pottery making is the right creative hobby to spark your creativity and elevate your mood!

Jump to Section

- [How to Make Pottery](#)
- [The Pottery Making Process](#)



How to Make Pottery

Learn Hands-on in a Pottery Class

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NYC where you'll have talented artisans at the ready to teach you, in studios that provide all the necessary elements for pottery making as part of your course. If you're not in those cities, browse

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Choosing Glazes

Glazing pottery involves covering your pottery in crushed glass and minerals suspended in water that solidify and bond with the clay when heated. You can choose from a variety of different glazes to use for pottery making, depending on the purpose of your piece.

There are a variety of artistic and functional glazes available in a dazzling selection of colors and finishes. If you're making dishware, make sure you choose a glaze made for that purpose.

Because the glaze and the clay will need to reach the right temperature to harden both at the same time, you should make sure both have matching cone ratings, which determine the level of heat required.



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Using a Kiln



Firing is the final step in pottery making. This is where your piece is heated to a specific temperature to solidify (or cure) both the clay and the glaze. The oven temperature will vary depending on the type of pottery you are creating.

The clay and the glaze you choose will determine the temperature at which the pottery needs to be fired. To ensure safety factors involved in pottery making, it's best to work with a professional kiln operator or a certified pottery studio to make sure your pottery is fired properly and safely.

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food-safe materials in these instances. Once you know what you'll be making, you can choose the right type of clay and glaze to use. You can also decorate your pieces by **painting ceramics** with fun and

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And when you're ready to be adventurous with your pottery making, you can try carving delicate patterns into the surface of your pieces by removing small sections of clay.

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Using a Pottery Wheel

The most familiar element of pottery making is the pottery wheel! Older versions are operated by pushing your feet along a wheel at the bottom to spin the table at the top. Newer versions are electric and allow for various speeds.

With a pottery wheel, a vessel is built up using the coiling method, then spun on the wheel and smoothed with your hands or various tools. This allows you to thin the walls of the vessel by gently pulling the clay to expand the size and shape. It can be thrilling to watch — and even more thrilling to actually turn the wheel yourself!

You may also hear the term “[wheel throwing](#)” used with this process. There’s no actual throwing involved; it’s just another term for using a wheel in pottery making.



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Smoothing



Once the shape of your piece is set, the next step in the pottery making process is smoothing. There are several ways of smoothing pottery. In the most basic process, a wet sponge is used to smooth the outside of the vessel while it turns on the wheel.

As it spins, the sponge is dragged up gently from top to bottom. This process creates a smooth surface. A more advanced version of this process involves using a tool to burnish the clay before firing. After smoothing, you can use a

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Drying

When your piece is completely shaped and smoothed, you'll need to let it dry for a while. Clay that isn't dry enough before firing in a kiln can explode, destroying hours of hard work.

To prevent this, your piece should be air-dried for at least seven days, until it becomes "bone dry." It will be pale and solid, and feel warm and dry to the touch rather than cool and damp. Before it goes into the kiln, you'll want to apply glaze to create brilliant color and add shine to your piece.



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Glazing

Once your clay is bone-dry, it's time for the glazing process! Based on the type of clay you've used, you can choose from a number of colorful glazes in different finishes, from velvety matte to supergloss. Low-fire glazes are economical and produce vibrant colors when fully fired, while mid-fire glazes create subtle, earthy finishes.

The glaze itself is made from finely-ground minerals in liquid that adhere to the surface of your piece. When heated to the right temperature, the minerals melt and fuse with the clay, forming a bond and bringing out the final finish.

To mix your glazes, add glaze powders to water, mixing and straining until you reach the proper consistency. Be sure to wear gloves, a mask and proper eye protection to keep from accidentally consuming the powders. After mixing, let your glaze stand for a full 24 hours before using it.

Then, you can brush it on or dip your piece into the glaze to achieve the intended design. Add water to improve the consistency if it gets too thick. Once you've finished adding your glaze, set your piece aside to dry fully before firing.



Firing

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Once you know how to make pottery and try it for yourself, don't be surprised if you get hooked! Seeing the finished piece from your adventures in pottery making is one of the most exciting creative moments you can have.

And turning raw clay into a beautiful and possibly usable piece of art will give you a sense of accomplishment you'll want to have again and again.

For even more creative ideas and inspiration, check out other experiences happening on Classpop!

by: **STEVEN LUNA**

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The advertisement features a quote from Kate Pluth: "We need to punch above our weight. Writer is a way to help us scale." Below the quote is a photo of Kate Pluth, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a pink and white striped shirt. The word "WRITER" is prominently displayed in large, bold, black letters at the top right. The "Dropbox" logo is at the bottom left.

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**Instructor Alexandra and Team**

New York

10 reviews

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Pottery Class

\$ 90

**Instructor Alexandra and Team**

NYC

10 reviews

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**Instructor Alexandra and Team**

Brooklyn

10 reviews

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