

How to make a prehistoric pot



A step by step guide



Types of clay

1. Oven baked polymer clay—once the pot is made you can easily cure the pot by baking it in the oven. However, polymer clay is not food-safe.
2. Air drying clay—this cures on its own without having to be baked or fired in a kiln. You can paint a varnish onto the surface to make it safe for dry foods. However this type of clay can't be submerged or filled with a liquid as it will disintegrate.
3. Pottery clay—this type of clay needs to be fired in a kiln. To make it food and drink safe you will need to glaze it.



There are two different techniques to make your pot, a pinch pot or a coil pot. We will illustrate both although you could utilize a combination of both techniques to make your pot.



Making a Pinch Pot



With a lump of clay, roll it into a tennis ball size, either in your palms or on a work surface. Try to keep the surface of the clay as smooth as possible.

Cup the ball in your hand, gently press your thumb into the centre of the ball to create an opening. Leave 1cm of clay at the bottom to form the base.



Use gentle pinching motions to thin out the walls. Work around the pot to thin walls at the same rate.



Smooth out any cracks in the clay with your fingers once the form of the pot is finished. Think about the shape of the pot you are trying to make and remember not to make the walls of the pot too thin or they may collapse.

Allow the pot to become 'leather hard'. Let the pot dry for a few hours until it is cool to the touch and firm. If the pot looks chalky it is becoming too dry.



Once the pot is leather hard you can smooth the surface and add decoration. Use can use your fingers, wooden stick , bone or comb.



Allow the pot to dry completely. During this stage the pot will become brittle and chalky. It need to be 'bone dry' before firing the pot.



Making a Coil Pot



Make a flat, round base for your pot. With another lump of clay, roll it out to form 'sausages', these will be your coils.

Score the edge of the base and the edge of the first coil. This will create a rough surface to allow the coils to adhere better.

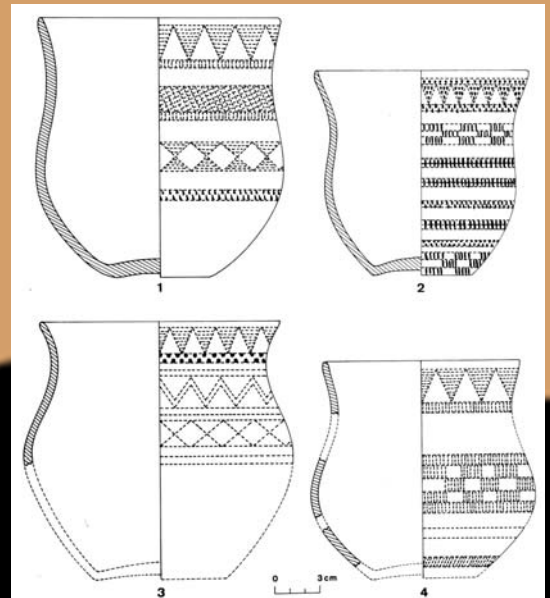
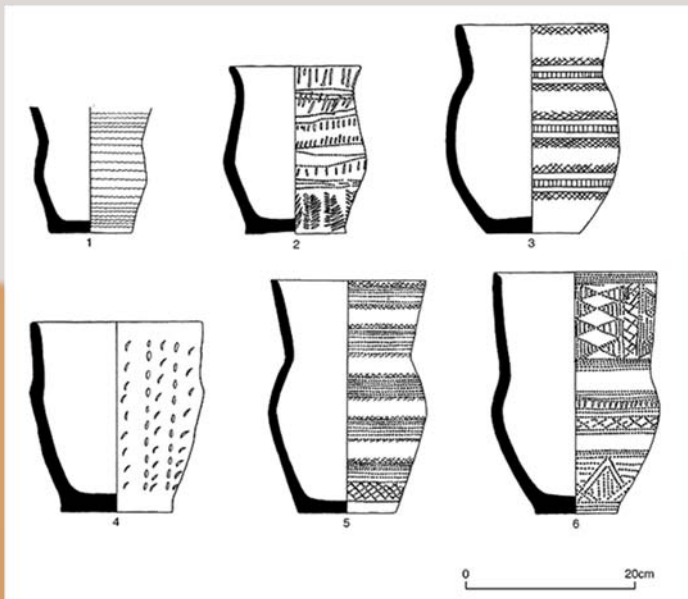


Before laying the first coil dampen the base to act as a glue. Score and dampen successive coils as you add them. Blend in the coils using your fingers or a stone and support the other side of the pot with your hand.





Carry on building up your pot. If you want it to widen out you will need to allow the pot to dry a little before continuing.



Once your pot is finished and been allowed to become 'leather hard' you can add decoration. To do this you can use a piece of comb to incise the pot, a piece of bone or stick or cord to make an impression on the surface.

