

Coiled Pottery with Salt Dough

The Kumeyaay made pottery with materials found in nature. The pottery was made with clay that was dug from the ground. Pots were made by hand using a coil technique. After stacking the coils, the sides would be smoothed and dried in the sun before firing.

There were many different uses for pots and the shape depended on how it was going to be used. They were often used for food and water storage or for cooking.

Using the salt dough recipe and coil techniques listed below, you can make your own coil pot and grow an appreciation for the skill and artistry of the Kumeyaay!

Salt Dough Ingredients and Materials

Table Salt

All Purpose Flour

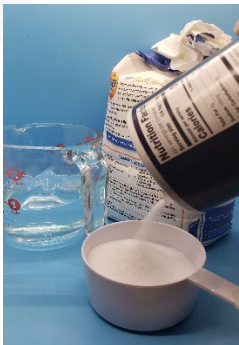
Water

Measuring Cup

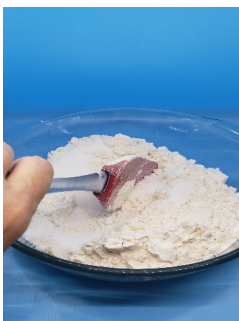
Mixing Spoon or Spatula

Mixing Bowl

Preparing the Salt Dough



1. Gather ingredients and set up your workspace. Cover your workspace with a plastic mat or sheet for easy clean up. Ask an adult for assistance.



2. In a large mixing bowl, stir together the 2 cups of flour and 1 cup of salt.



3. Gradually add 1 cup of water while stirring and mixing to form a dough with a Play-Doh like consistency.



4. Form the dough into a ball and knead for approximately 5 minutes, adding a bit more flour if the dough is too sticky or a bit more water if it is too dry.

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Coiled Pot Instructions:



1. Take a small piece of clay about the size of a plum. Roll it into a ball. Press down with the heel of your hand to flatten it into a circle until it is about as thick as your small finger. This will be the base of your pot.



5. Use a toothbrush or your finger to apply slip to the score marks. Make slip by adding some flour to water until it is creamy like milk. Place a coil on top of the scored clay.



2. Take a small amount of clay and squeeze it into a long sausage shape. Spread your fingers and apply even pressure as you roll the clay into a long cylinder. Keep the thickness of the coil even and round.



6. Blend the coils together on the inside of your pot. Support the outside with one hand when you are smoothing the inside. Once smooth inside you can smooth the outside. Wet your fingers with the slip to help smooth.



3. Roll several long, smooth coils and place them aside.



4. Take your base and use a pin tool to make some scratch marks on the outer edge of the base. Make a pin tool by taping an open paperclip to the end of a pencil. Making scratch marks is called scoring.



7. When you are satisfied with your design set the pot aside and allow it to dry. It may take one or two days to fully dry. You can paint or decorate.

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Finishing Touches

Though the Kumeyaay did not always decorate their pottery, they sometimes added designs by incising (engraving into the clay) or adding a red paint. Get creative and have fun!

