

## **The Invention of Pottery**

It is difficult to determine exactly when the first pottery was created. Perhaps 10,000 years ago, after the discovery of fire, humans first learned that clay would change colour and undergo hardening when heated, thereby creating rigid objects for simple daily activities, such as storing drinking water or food.

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The oldest earthenware yet found is from the Middle East and dates from around 7000 BC. The objects' shapes are modelled on woven baskets. It is possible that people first plastered clay onto baskets and allowed them to thoroughly dry, but subsequently devised ways to use only the clay for shaping and heating. The invention of the turntable around 3000 BC was a revolutionary technical advancement in pottery-making, facilitating the development of countless design variations as well as decorative techniques.

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The word "ceramics" is derived from the Greek word "keramos" meaning "baked material". Modern-day Athens still has a neighbourhood called Kerameikos, which was once home to many pottery workshops. The technique for making Greek ceramics was later adopted by the Romans and spread throughout the Roman empire, thus making pottery common throughout Europe.

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Where was the oldest known pottery found?

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What great invention revolutionised pottery-making?

What Greek word is the origin of the English word "ceramics"?