



Zishta®

Traditional Wisdom in Practice

A Complete Guide to

Clay Cookware

Bodha – A Knowledge Sharing Initiative by Zishta



Rich in
Traditional Value



Hand Crafted by
Traditional Artisans



Direct From
Authentic Craftsmen



Preserve And Share
Traditional Wisdom

Clay Cookware

Cooking in clay pots has been a part of Indian tradition since ancient times and is a preferred utensil for nutritious and an even cooking process. An authentic clay pot is unglazed and created with good quality clay by experienced artisans.

Clay cookware is versatile and any type of food can be cooked in it ranging from a wide variety of cuisines be in vegetarian or non-vegetarian. Many dishes taste awesome when cooked in clay cookware like kadi, varieties of sambhar, palak paneer, paneer butter masala, dal tadka, biryani, fish, chicken gravies etc.

1. Benefits of Cooking in Clayware

- **Health Benefits:** Clay releases Iron, Calcium & Magnesium to food which are essential minerals for our body. Additionally, delta region clay are rich in bio-minerals.
- **Tasty & Nutritious Food:** porous nature of clay allows heat to circulate uniformly. It retains 95-97% of the nutrients of the food cooked in it. The taste of the food also enhances.
- **No Acidity & Easy to Digest:** Alkaline nature of clay interacts with acidity in food and neutralises it.
- **Acidic Food:** One of the best vessels to cook acidic food like tamarind or citrus based food as it is resistant to acids & alkalis.
- **Lesser oil:** Usage due to heat resistance & slow cooking.
- **Convenience - saving of fuel & cooking time:** cooks food in 15% lesser time than modern cookware. Food continues to boil for 3-5 minutes after the stove is switched off.
- **Safe:** Good quality clay are natural, from the earth, with no harmful chemicals.

2. How to season Clay Cookware?

Once you buy the traditional clayware: It's time to season it well to ensure you can extract the maximum benefit from the vessel while cooking.

Let us first understand why we need to season clay cookware. We season clay for 2 reasons:

1. To remove the smell of clay
 2. To ensure food does not get stuck to the bottom while cooking.
- Soak the vessel for 8 hours in starch water in order to remove the smell of clay. For starch water, either use rice washed water or mix arrow root powder in water and use this.
 - After drying, apply a coating of any cooking oil and leave it for 8 hours. This step is optional. The clayware is ready to be used directly on the stove after this.



Check Youtube Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQCq2Og6Mrk>

3. How to maintain a Clay Vessel?

Clay pots are simple to clean. Ideally, wash them with lemon and salt or any organic cleaning powder. If this is not fitting into your kitchen process, then use any regular dish washing soap or liquid. If the smell of the food remains in the clay pot, fill the vessel with hot water and keep it aside for half hour. Else, keep the clay pot under sunlight for 30 minutes. Steel scrubbers should be avoided. Yes it would break if dropped & care needs to be taken.

4. When should you change your Clay Cookware?

Clay cookware needs to be changed once in 1-3 years depending on the extent of usage as clay loses its properties. How do you know that it is time to change your clay cookware?

Here are some ways:

- If clay cookware starts to have minor leakages, or if food starts to get burnt it means that there is a crack developed due to usage.
- The enhancement of taste & aroma becomes obviously less and it is time to change the clay.

5. What needs to be considered while buying a Clayware?

1. Clayware many a times are glazed in order to give a glossy look. Glazing clay can impact it in 2 ways
 - Glazing closes the pores of the clay and hence the benefits that clay derived from its natural porous nature is lost.
2. Since clay vessels are hand-made, there could be errors in terms of clay not well integrated during the making process. This may lead to air pockets or minor internal cracks.
 - To test the integrity of clay, tap the bottom of the vessel (not the sides) with knuckles. A 'metallic' sound indicates good quality and a 'thud' sound indicates issues.
3. There could be possible contamination in the soil from which clay is extracted. The contamination can be around lead, arsenic, hexavalent chromium, cadmium etc. Ideally ask for the source of clay and verify if any tests have been performed to eliminate these risks. Clay from delta regions are supposed to be rich in bio-minerals, Iron etc.

6. Other points on using Clay Cookware

- If the smell of the food remains in the clayware, just fill the vessel with hot water. Or keep the vessel in sunlight for 30 minutes.
 - Tadka can be done directly in it.
 - It can be used to cook in high flame as well.
 - It takes 10-15% shorter time to cook in clay vessel.
 - Clay does not take longer time to get heated.
 - Clay vessels can be directly kept in the refrigerator.
 - Any type of ladle can be used. Recommended ladle is wood to avoid any possible cracks in the clay pot.
 - Clay is microwave friendly.
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Zishta Clayware

The clay cookware of Zishta is unglazed. The soil is from Cauvery delta region and is rich in Iron and Magnesium and bio minerals. Zishta clayware is tested in NABL accredited laboratory and comply with EU standards for Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS).

The artisans Zishta collaborates with, follow the traditional technique honed over ten generations working on clay from the Cauvery river delta region. The only mechanisation that has happened till date is the motorised rotation of the wheel. Everything they do is rustic and authentic: from mixing the clay, hand-moulding the cookware to following the traditional way of baking the cookware under heaps of leaves covered with clay.

Zishta works directly with the community making these clay vessels in order to revive the livelihood for this community.

Different Type of Clay Pot Vessels



Kadai



Water Bottle



Cooking Pot



Mukhwas Dappa



Water Jug



Biryani Pot

About Zishta

Zishta was started with a vision to revive traditions from where it originated centuries earlier and those that have immense utility value in our day to day lives. Our approach is to leverage traditional wisdom in making our homes more environmentally friendly and holistic. Zishta is authentic to the traditions by working with the same cluster of rural artisans who have been handcrafting these products using traditional techniques mastered by their ancestors and passed along.

Zishta is about building a family of believers who will be the future “Guardians of Traditional Wisdom”. We travel to nook and corner of our country, spend time with the artisans and the local people, understand the traditional value and authenticity and document to make sure such wealth of knowledge is available for everyone.

We take the authentic traditions to the next level by testing the products for its purity in the modern world. We test all our products in an independent NABL accredited lab and all the traditional products brought out by Zishta comply with RoHS standards (Restriction of Hazardous Substances).



Traditional Wisdom in Practice



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