



Zishta[®]

Traditional Wisdom in Practice

A Complete Guide to

Kalchatti (Soapstone)

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

Kalchatti (Soapstone)

Soapstone vessels are extensively used for cooking in regular stoves. In India, soapstone has been in use for thousands of years making cooking pots and for carving purposes.

Versatility of Kalchatti

The best part of soapstone vessel is that any type of food can be cooked in it. One need not worry about the food being high in citric content (citric content elements in food like tamarind, tomato, curd, lemon etc).

Soapstone is one versatile vessel which can be used for everyday cooking. Indian delicacies like mor kuzhambu (kadi), vatha kuzhambu, regular sambhar, avial, keeraimasiyal, molakootu, appam stew, tomato pappu, gothsu, rasam, palak paneer, paneer butter masala, rajma masala, dal makhani, dal tadka, chicken, fish etc. - name the dish and it can be cooked in soapstone. Soapstone cooking vessel can also be used to make rice, biryani, pulao & other varieties of flavoured rice.

One can use kalchatti for cooking in regular gas stove, glass top and electric stove. It does not work on induction stove.



Check Youtube Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qW8fSsjMhwk>

1. Benefits of Cooking in Kalchatti

What is special about cooking in soapstone vessels? Cooking food in soapstone vessels has immense benefits for our health as well as for improving the taste of our food.

Yogic & modern science say that food should not be over cooked, nor re-heated & to be consumed warm. Kalchatti is one such vessels which enables all the above.

- **Health benefits:** Cooking in Soapstone retains 98% nutrients & micronutrients of the food cooked in it. They release calcium & magnesium to food which are essential minerals for our body.
- **Saving of fuel & cooking time:** Kalchatti cooks food in 15% lesser time than modern cookware. It continues to cook for 5 minutes after the stove is switched off. It saves fuel as well as saves time of cooking.
- **Never to re-heat food:** The vessel keeps food warm for 3-4 hours after cooking.
- **Taste & Aroma:** The taste of food enhances & the difference is quite visible. The aroma of the food cooking in it cannot be explained in words.
- **Acidic Food:** One of the best vessels to cook acidic food, resistant to acids & alkalis. Acidic elements of food include tomato, tamarind, curd, lemon etc.
- They are known to **Kill Harmful Germs.**
- Soapstone Heats & **Cooks Food Evenly.**
- **Safe:** They are natural, from the earth, with no harmful chemicals.
- Memories shared by generation who are 70+ mention that food cooked in it does not get spoil for the entire day. Hence refrigeration is not required.

2. What are the various types of vessels made in soapstone ?



Kalchatti or The Soapstone Cooking Pot

This is the traditional vessel and is used for cooking gravies.

Kalchatti Kadai

This is predominantly used for making gravies or dry sabjis



Soapstone Container

Storage

These containers are the best to store salt, tamarind, pickles etc.

Curd jar

Curd gets set in soapstone jar within 5 - 6 hours. This is due to high heat retention capacity of the vessel. Curd set in this jar is thick and tasty.

Casserole

As the vessel has heat retention capability, cooked food can be stored in it and it keeps the food warm for 3-4 hours.



3. How is Soapstone (Kalchatti) Vessel Made ?

- Geologically, soapstone or steatite, is a naturally occurring metamorphic rock which occurs at areas where tectonic plates are subducted, changing rocks by heat and pressure. In India, it has been in use for 1000s of years for carving purposes & to make cooking pots.
- More than 16 hours of labour results in two to three pieces of the vessel. This starts from extracting the rough small block of soapstone from the mine and chiselling the utensil out of it. As soapstone is very delicate to heavy machinery, all of this has to be done manually with a chisel and wooden block. Even hammers cannot be used as they can undermine the structural integrity of the stone.
- The sheer intensity of labour and hours to make one soapstone cookware makes it difficult to get more workers when easier options are available in the market.
- As each of the vessels are carved out of a block of soft soapstone, it is very difficult to produce standard and consistent sized products.

4. How to Season a Kalchatti ?

Soapstone once mined are chiselled into the desired shape. Unlike clay, they are not heated. Hence the stone is not used to any form of heat. This is the reason for treating a soapstone vessel before using it. The treatment process is a simple one and takes around 10-12 days. During this period, the vessel is slowly exposed to heat.

Step 1: Mix castor oil and turmeric and apply all around the kalchatti, inside and outside, and leave it aside for 4-5 days. Leaving it under sunlight is a myth. Just leave it in any corner of your kitchen.

Step 2: Wash the vessel on day 5 and fill it with rice washed starch water. Repeat this process for 4 days. Throw the water every morning and fill it with fresh rice washed starch water every day. Do not leave the vessel with the same starch water for 5 days as it would create a bad smell.

Also, if you do not have rice washed water, arrowroot powder or rice / maida powder can be used as an alternate.

Step 3: On day 9, fill the vessel with rice washed starch water and heat it in the stove in low flame. Switch off the gas once the water boils. Repeat this process for 4 days.

Now, the Kalchatti is used to heat and ready to be used for cooking.

Do not do seasoning / tadka directly in the vessel in the initial days of cooking, for around 10-15 uses. Post this, direct seasoning / tadka can be done. Ensure there is oil in the vessel before keeping on stove.

Ensure that in the initial usage, the cooking is done only in low or medium flame and not in high flame.

The alternate method of seasoning is to just use rice washed starch water for 20-25 days. Replace the starch water every day. In this case, sauteing / doing tadka should be avoided for 6-8 months.



Check Youtube Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRZZ1-P-fMY>

5. How to maintain a Soapstone Vessel ?

- It is simple to clean. Like every other vessel, Soapstone vessels can be left in the sink overnight. One can use any regular dish washing soap or liquid. Steel scrubbers should be avoided. It would break if dropped & care needs to be taken.
- If there is any smell of food cooked in it, fill the vessel with boiled water and leave it aside. This removes any residual smell.
- One can directly refrigerate the vessel. Ensure once taken out of the fridge, the vessel is brought to room temperature before heating.
- Avoid using dishwashing machine for cleaning.

6. What is Special about Zishta Soapstone Vessel ?

- Zishta was one of the very first organization to work with the rural community to bring back the Soapstone vessel. Zishta works directly with the community making these Soapstone vessels to revive the livelihood for this community. There are no middle men in the process
- In order to reap the benefits of Kalchatti, it has be mined from the right depth & right place. Zishta Soapstone vessels are made of the highest quality stone, has the right density and structure, higher content of calcium, hard and no artificial colours used.
- Zishta is the only known company so far who tests these products for quality. Testing is done in a NABL accredited lab for RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances) - lead, hexavalent chromium, arsenic and mercury. Every product is launched post compliance with RoHS testing.



Check Youtube Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJw86s-WPbc>

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).

For details, go to

 <https://zishta.com/collections/soapstone-kalchatti-cookware>

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