

Jomon Pots

Hand building and Combined Methods.
Meetinghouse Clay Center Spring 2020
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Jomon, or cord pattern pottery, was created in ancient Japan between 14,000 BCE and 1000 BCE and was first excavated in modern times near Tokyo in the 19th century. It is believed to be based on earlier (18,000 BCE) Chinese pottery. See examples below.

The earliest known examples were fired in bonfires at around 1110F and later examples were fired at about 1650F. They were used for storage and cooking and eventually for ceremonial functions. Later examples got more complex and include pouring vessels, pieces with complex rope-like designs, and figures and masks. They were made by the coil method.

Project

Create several Jomon-style pots of varying proportions and with a range of decorative elements.

1. Research examples online and note the body types, rim shapes, and decorative elements. Choose one to copy or follow your own path.
2. Use the Peruvian paddle or pinch method for a base of about 1/3rd the height of your final piece. Then make small coils to build the top 2/3 of a vertical vessel.
3. Starting with about 3/4 or 1 lb of clay, either **paddle or pinch your base section**.
-**Flatten the bottom** if you want a free standing vessel.

-You will notice that many of the examples have a rounded base that were probably supported by rocks in a cooking fire. If you plan to make a rounded base, you will need to support it while you are building. Just use a small bowl and make a nest with an old hand towel or other fabric. Or you can make a supporting nest like a chuck from clay and line it with a piece of fabric. Or you can create hollow clay rocks for an interesting display.

4. **Roll out small coils.** Dampen your work surface, spread your fingers apart, place your pointer fingers together at the center of the coil, and roll your hands away from each other with light finger pressure until the coil is thin for building. Roll up in spirals to create a rounded memory in the clay. Cover with plastic to keep them damp.



5. **Score and lightly dampen the top edge of your base and one side of a coil.** Put a coil in place and gently push down. **Overlap** the ends, **cut** at an angle, score and dampen cut sides, and press together. Attach the coil firmly to the base by using your thumb or finger to move clay down from the coil to the base on the interior of the pot.



With this style of coiling, the exterior shape of the coils remain unchanged, but the interior edges are well blended with the clay below. After the coil is attached, slightly score the top and add the next scored coil, starting at a different area from where the first coil came together. **You can also smooth the exterior if you like.**

6. If you want the pot to be vertical, **continue to add coils directly to the top of the previous coil.** If you want to build out, **start the coil toward the outside of the one below.** And likewise, if you want the pot to go in, start the next coil on the inside edge of the coil below.



7. Join each coil with the one below as it is placed, and then go back and join more thoroughly after 3 coils are set in place **Use a piece of rope to impress designs.** Use your fingers or other tools to create texture.

8. Keep it simple or go wild with your decorative elements.



Incense burner

