

# Pottery Terms & Definitions

## General

**Pottery** is fired ceramic wares or materials which, when shaped, contain a significant amount of clay. Also, it is the term for the art and wares made by potters and a place where pottery wares are made.

**Clay** is a general term including many combinations of one or more clay minerals with traces of metal oxides and organic matter.

A **Kiln** is a furnace for the firing of ceramics.

**Firing** is the process of heating clay pottery in a kiln to bring the glaze or clay to maturity. Bisque firing of stoneware clay: 1945 degrees or Cone 04. Glaze firing depends on glaze and can be up to over 2000 degrees.

## Stages of Production

**Wedging** or Kneading is a step in preparing clay for shaping to remove air and ensure the even distribution of moisture. It is somewhat like kneading dough for bread.

**Shaping:** forming the clay into shapes by hand building or throwing on a potter's wheel.

**Leather-Hard** is the condition of the when it has been partially dried to the point where all shrinkage has been completed.

**Bone-Dry** is the final stage of the clay when it has dried to a completely dry state and ready to be fired. In this stage, the clay is very fragile, non-plastic and porous. It is also called **Greenware** at this stage.

**Bisque Fire** is the first firing prior to glazing. **Bisque** is pottery that has been fired but not yet glazed. (Also called **Biscuit**.)

**Glazing** is coating the bisque with a mixture that will mature to a glassy state when fired.

**Glaze Firing** is a firing cycle in a kiln to the temperature at which the glaze materials will melt to form a glasslike surface coating.

**Source:** Adapted from Wikipedia