

SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM

Art Quest: Clay Creations

Art: [Vessel with Incised Motifs](#)

[Spouted Vessel with Painted Motifs](#)

[Vessel with Incised Motifs](#)

The clay containers linked above were made by ancient Indigenous peoples in present-day Missouri and Arkansas. Learn various clay techniques and make your own vessel with materials found at home.

Salt Dough Vessels



Suggested materials

For the salt dough: flour, salt, water and container and spoon for mixing

Small piece of cardboard to use as a display surface, plastic knife, fork, cap of a pen or marker, blunt pencil

Homemade salt dough recipe

1 cup flour, 1/4 cup water, or more as needed, 1/4 cup salt, food coloring (optional)

Instructions for making your own salt dough vessel

Mix the flour and salt in a bowl. Add the water to the dry mixture a few tablespoons at a time. If you'd like to have colored dough, add a few drops of food coloring. Knead the dough with your hands for about five to seven minutes. If the dough cracks or crumbles when you are kneading or shaping it, add a few more drops of water until you have the right consistency.

Divide the salt dough into two halves. Take one half and roll it into a ball. Using one of your thumbs, press down on the center of the ball of dough, creating an indentation. Now put both thumbs into the indentation and gently pinch or press the sides as you are turning the ball of dough in your hands or on the surface of a table.

Flatten the bottom of the vessel by gently tapping it on the table or work surface. This will create an even, sturdy base or bottom to your vessel and keep it from rolling around. Now use the other half of your salt dough to add decorative elements such as handles or other shapes.

Let your vessel air dry overnight. Once the dough is dry, you may choose to color your vessel using markers or acrylic paint.

For the vessels in this photograph, we first made yellow salt dough. Then we added red food coloring to half of the dough to make orange and used the orange dough for the decorative elements.

