

## Chupadero Black-on-White Pottery

The bold style of Chupadero Black-on-White pottery is just as attractive today as when it was originally created hundreds of years ago. You can make a piece of pottery in the Chupadero Black-on-White style with a minimum of special equipment, since this coil technique doesn't require a potter's wheel. You will need clay, white and black slip, brushes, and a means to fire the finished pot.

Chupadero was made from grey clay. It would be best to use this color for your pot, but if it isn't available you can substitute another type of clay since you will be covering the entire pot with a coating of slip.

First decide what type of vessel you'd like to build. The two most common pieces found are globular jars (69% of pieces found) and flat-bottomed bowls (30% of pieces found). Form the base by rolling out a slab of clay and cutting a circle from the slab. Place the clay disc on a portable surface that will be easy to rotate—a plaster bat, a wood slab, or even a piece of thick cardboard will work.

Prepare a small container of slip by mixing a piece of your clay with water until it is a thick liquid. Every time you join two pieces of clay, you should score both surfaces and paint them with the slip mixture. If you do not do this, the coils may come apart as the pot dries.

Score and slip the top of your clay slab all around the edge. Roll out



coils of clay and begin winding them around and around to build up the walls of your vessel. You can make a continuous spiral as in the illustration to the left or you can build up row after row of circles. In either case, you should continue the process of scoring and slipping all areas where the clay joins.

You will also need to smooth out the coils. This can be done by hand as in the illustration to the right. You can also use pottery tools designed for the job or improvise with plastic utensils, craft sticks, or other available tools. Make sure that you are continuing your intended jar or bowl shape as you add coils and smooth them out.



Jar handles were made either of a strap of clay with rounded edges or two joined coils of clay, although the number can vary from one to four coils. Be certain to carefully score and slip the handle so it attaches firmly.

You will be decorating your piece with painted slip. The slip needs to be added while the pot is still leatherhard for it to adhere properly. Since the Chupadero style calls for black designs painted on a white background, you will need to first paint a layer of white slip over your entire piece. Once you have the white surface in place and it has dried enough to paint over, it is time to add your designs using black slip and a fine brush for details.

You should sketch your designs out on paper before attempting to paint your jar or bowl. You can review the photos in this book, look at the designs to the right, or search the web for “Chupadero pottery” or “Chupadero Black-on-White.” Designs on jars are frequently placed between horizontal bands that ring the piece. Designs on the inside of bowls often appear within four panels around the bowl.

Typical motifs include alternating solid and hatched areas, checkers, spirals, diamond shapes with corners touching, and sun symbols similar to what was adopted on the New Mexico state flag. Representational art is rarely found on Chupadero ware.

*Reference: Alden C Hayes, Jon Nathan Young, and A. H. Warren. “Excavation of Mound 7.” Publications in Archeology 16. 1981. National Park Service.*

