
Ceramic Spoons with Diana Fayt

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- Today we're gonna make these awesome clay spoons. And what's wonderful about making your own spoons is you can make them to any shape or size that you'd like. And you can also make them as gifts. I put holes in the ends of this spoon so that it makes it easy to hang them up on the wall when I'm not using them. It's a super wonderful project to make, they're super easy, they don't require a lot of materials to make so if you don't have a lot of experience with clay, this is a great project for you.

Chapter 2 - Create Spoons

Materials

- We're going to be using clay, and I'm using a red clay. This is a mid-fire clay, Cone 5, but you can use any kind of clay you want for this project. You can use low-fire clay, high-fire clay, use whatever clay you would like. We're also going to be using some really basic tools that you'll find in your toolbox, in your ceramic toolbox, and some just things that you might have around your house. I'm gonna need a rolling pin of some sort. I like to use these dowels that are cut down. They're smaller and they're easier to handle so you can just go to the hardware store and get a dowel and cut it down. This one is about a 3/4 of an inch dowel. You are going to need some sort of wire cutting tool. You can also use a piece of string if you don't have a wire. This is also very common in your ceramic toolkit. An X-Acto knife. The X-Acto knife just with the pointed blade on it. A wood-blending tool with a rounded tip on the end. Some sort of hole-punching tool. This is a square brass hole punch. You can buy this at any ceramic supply store. And I like to get one with a wide opening. Some of them come really small. You want to get one that has a nice wide opening. A Surform Rasp. You can get one of these at the hardware store as well, but we're gonna be cleaning up our clay spins with this. And, you will also need a rubber rib. You will also need a bowl of water on hand, a sponge, you can use a natural sponge or a synthetic sponge. Once again, this is something that should be in your clay toolkit. Another small, empty bowl. And an empty bowl for catching your clay shavings in. You're also going to need some underglaze or slip. I'm going to be using Ivory underglaze to dip the ends of my clay spins in to add a little decorative element. And, last, we're going to need clay slip, which is just clay and water mixed together. It's very common in ceramics and we'll be using that as well.

Make self-handle spoon

- You wanna start off with a ball of clay. This is about a pound and a half of clay in my hand, maybe a little bit less, a pound of clay, but it depends on what size spoons you wanna make, and so this is about right, so you can see how it fits in my hand, and you just wanna start with a nice, round ball, and if you're familiar with making a pinch pot, it's very similar to making a pinch pot. I have mine kind of rolled into a fat sausage shape here so that I can have the part of it for the head of the spoon and part of it for the actual handle, so what I'm going to do is I'm going to stick my finger straight down, about a third away from the top of the lump of clay, and I'm just gonna go ahead and stick my thumb straight down, leaving about an inch between, when I'm pinching my fingers here, there's an inch between my thumb on the inside and my finger out here, and then I'm just going to

start pinching and squeezing, creating the head of my spoon, and this is freeform; you're gonna clean it up. It's gonna look really rough at first, and heavy and clunky. Don't worry about that, and you wanna leave plenty of thickness in your clay to work with. You don't want it to be too thin because we're going to be shaving them down, so if you continue to pinch and you pinch them too thin, you won't have much to work with, so you wanna keep them kinda rough. As you can see, I'm pinching it and you can already see the shape of the head of the spoon, then you wanna just go ahead and squeeze that between your fingers and create your handle. Once again, it's gonna look really rough. If there's too much on there, it's too big, you can always just take a piece off, like this. Just pull it off, put the clay aside. I like my handles to be kind of small. I like the way they look, but you can have them as long or as short as you'd like, and I'm just gonna keep forming them, creating a nice shape and pinching the handle into a vaguely similar shape as to what I want the end product to be, but I'm going to change this when I clean it up, but I just wanna get the basic form down. That's gonna crack a little bit on the sides. If it's feeling too dry or cracking a lot on the edges, you may wanna just put a little bit of water on there, but not too much. You don't wanna add too much water to your clay, and you just keep pinching until you get your basic form with your handle. It's going to look very primitive, but don't worry. You can refine it in the next step. I'm pretty happy with this shape right here, so once I get my shape in a place where I'm comfortable with it, I need to leave it out and let it become firm leather hard before I start to continue onto the next step. I have another spoon here that I've waited till it's firm leather hard, so I can go ahead and continue and show you how to clean up the spoon. As you can see, it's very rough. You can see my finger marks in here. You can also leave it like this, if that's how you like it but I'm gonna clean this up. I'm going to take an empty bowl so that I can catch my shavings in it, and I'm going to use the surform rasp, and I'm going to just go ahead and start shaving. I need to make sure that that's going in the right direction and I'm also thinning out the spoon. You don't want your spoon to be super heavy. You want it to feel really good in your hand. I'm shaving off all the excess clay. These small rasps are really nice for getting into the nooks and crannies. I'm also cleaning the lip of the spoon right here, evening it out, smoothing it out. I'm not going for perfection here, but I do want it to look nicely trimmed. I'm trying to retain the handmade look while cleaning it up and making it something that's gonna feel good in the hand to hold. Also, keep in mind as you're working with your clay that clay shrinks when you fire it, so one size, it's going to be about 11% smaller when you fire it. Make sure that you make your spoon a little larger than what you actually want. I'm gonna clean it up a little bit more, removing just a little bit more of the excessive clay. Clean up all my fingerprints, clean up the handle a little bit more, kinda pushing my rasp down in there to even out the handle. You can see that I didn't shave off any of the inside. We can go ahead and smooth that out with a sponge later. I don't worry about the inside of the spoon, just the outside, so shave off all the excess from the outside. If you wanna get really crazy with this, you can carve an elaborate shape on the end. I like 'em really simple, simple and functional, and if you're feeling it's a little bit thick, you can go ahead and pinch it a little bit. It will soften up as you're shaving. The clay will soften up a little bit and you'll be able to pinch it a little bit thinner. Just futz with the shape until you get it just how you like it. So I think that's pretty good. I'm feeling one more thick spot here. I'm just gonna go ahead and give it a little shave. I'm happy with this shape. I'm ready to move on to the next phase.

Smooth self-handle spoon and add hole

- I have a bowl of water here with a sponge and I'm just going to take my sponge and squeeze all the water out. I don't need to use a lot of water on this, you don't want to introduce a lot of water to

the clay surface 'cause it's going to get very soft and distort the shape of your clay spoon and I'm going to go ahead. Just a little bit to help with the smooth and I'm just going to go over the whole surface of the spoon. Cleaning it up and there's still going to be marks, the water adds a little bit of a lubricant because we're going to smooth it up with the rubber rib. So once I've gotten it semi smoothed out, still got some texture, I'm going to get my rubber rib, I'm using a soft rubber rib, as you can see it's pliable. And this is really nice to use because they're bendable and they will take the form of whatever you're working on. I'm going to go ahead and begin smoothing the outside of the clay spoon. Smushing all the clay down, clay particles down together and smoothing out all of the marks that I made with my fingers and the rasp and the carving. But I'm still leaving the basic integrity and shape of the spoon. I'm not smoothing out every little detail, if it's feeling a little soft as you saw right there, you can just go ahead and push it back and I'm going to take the rounded part of my rib and go ahead and smooth out the inside. I like to leave a few finger marks in there we want them to look handmade. And that's the ultimate signature is a fingerprint. So smooth that out. If you have extra clay on the rib just clean it off as it starts to get in the way. So you can see the clay is peeling up, you can just smooth it and get as much as you can off, we'll go back over it with a sponge in a moment to clean it up and do a final clean up on it. I'm going to smooth the handle out a little bit more. It's a little lumpy, I don't want lumpy. And that tip is looking pretty rough there so I'm going to clean that too. It's going to seem like you might be creating more roughness it's okay like I said we'll do a final cleanup in the end smoothing it all out. Now this is such a personal thing if you like leaving marks and leaving it rough please go ahead and do that. That's totally okay. These are supposed to look handmade and not manufactured. So I'm giving it a final smoothing out, really compressing that clay down, this feels so good to do, feels good in the hand. And yeah so there we go, we've got a little bit here. A little bit of that rough edge there, it's looking pretty good. So I'm going to put the rubber rib down, I see a little lump here it's kind of bugging me so I'm going to smooth it out my little neurotic self. There we go, okay now that's perfect. I'm going to get my sponge, once again squeezing all the water out, we're just going to smooth, we don't want to get the spoon wet. I'm going to go ahead with a light touch and smooth out those edges, tender loving care cleaning it up. I'm going to go on this inside a little bit and smooth that out. But I want to leave some of the marks so I'm going to leave it alone, which is hard for me to do. And I'm going to smooth that out, any big nicks or dings you want to clean up. Okay I think that looks really good. So final I'm going to go ahead and smooth this out with my fingers just to smooth the clay. And I think that's looking pretty good, there's a little bit of roughness here in this inside, smooth that down with my finger. The best tool in the box are your hands. And I give it a little squeeze here just to give the spoon a little more shape so that the handle doesn't look really stumpy. There we go and that's perfect. And now for the final part I'm going to put a hole in the handle of the spoon so that when I'm not using it I can hang it up on a nail. I want to take the spoon and turn it over so that it's resting on its lip, we're going to be putting some pressure on the handle so we want to have the head of the spoon have some support. We're going to go ahead and take my hole punching tool, this is a square hole punching tool, but you can use anything, you can use something round, you can use your needle tool. But you want to make sure that whatever you use is going to punch a large enough hole in the end of your spoon so that when the clay shrinks it's not going to shrink so small and close up in the fire. You want to be able to hang it up on the nail. So make sure it's a tool that's going to make a large enough hole. What I'm going to do is eyeball it. And just push directly down through my handle. All the way through pushing towards the table surface and then push it through the clay. Once I've pushed the tool through I'm going to pull it back out, it didn't rip too much it

made a nice clean hole but it did crack a little bit here, it's okay I'm just going to go ahead and smooth that out. But as you can see, the hole is plenty big so when it shrinks it's still going to fit over the head of a nail or whatever I put in the wall. And I take my sponge one more time just get that a little bit wet where it cracked, not too wet. Then I'm going to take my fingers and smooth that out. My hand's a little bit wet, it's a little too wet. I'm at a place where I like it and I'm really happy with the shape and that's our self handled spoon.

Make and join handles for 2-part spoon

- So we're gonna go ahead and start making our two part spoon. You wanna go ahead and make the head of your spoon, same way that you did your self-handled spoon. Cleaning it up, getting it all ready. But this one doesn't have a handle. As you can see, it's just the head, it's like a little shallow bowl. And I have mine ready here. And now I'm gonna show you how to make the handle. We're gonna go ahead and take a slab of clay, doesn't need to be a big slab of clay. I'm gonna pound it down. Time to get out all your aggressions. Flip it over, pound it down. Gonna eventually roll this out to be about a thick quarter of an inch thick. That's looking good. I used to make pizzas so when I do this, it's my old pizza making days coming through. And I'm gonna use my dowel that I talked about. I'm gonna go ahead and roll out my slab. Once again, we're not going for perfection. Just roll it down, get it to about a quarter inch thick. Turn it over and roll it from the other way. I'm gonna try and make it as even as possible. Doesn't matter if the edges are rough, we'll cut on the nice, thick even spots. Gonna go ahead and flip it over. That looks good. Gonna take a little bit of water and just go over the top very quickly, go over the top with my rubber rib and smooth it out. You don't need to smooth it out too much, we're just smoothing it out so that we can see where we're gonna draw our lines. I'm gonna go ahead and just cut my handle out freeform with my X-Acto blade. I'm gonna cut a few of them out so I can choose which one I like the most. Some bigger than others, some smaller. That looks good. Then I'm just gonna go ahead and pull the clay up. And I have my handles. They are kind of rough, but like with the self-handled spoons, we're gonna go ahead and clean those up at the end. So you need to move these aside, lay them on a flat surface, let them get leather hard before you attach them to your spoon heads. I have some leather hard handles here that are ready to go. I've cut out a few different shapes so that I can match the handle that I like to my head, so I have some options here. It's really nice to have a few different ones. So let a few of them get leather hard. I'm gonna go ahead and turn my spoon so that I'm looking down into the bowl, and I'm gonna hold up the different shaped handles to them to see which one I like. This one looks kinda good. But you can also try it from the narrow end of the head, move it around, see what you like. Or this one. See it in different configurations. Here's a small one. Yeah, I kinda like the small one here. So I'm gonna go ahead and use this one. I'll put these other ones aside because I'm not gonna use them and then I'm gonna go ahead and flip the spoon head over and I'm gonna lay the handle approximately where I want it to attach to my spoon head. Once I have it in place, I'm gonna go ahead and take my X-Acto knife. And make sure you remove any bits of clay. And echo the shape of the spoon head with my cut, cutting at 90 degree angle, and I'm going to go ahead and press the X-Acto knife down through the clay and cut it into a slight curve, that way it will join up with the head of the spoon. So once I get the handle cut, I'm going to lay the spoon down with the handle where I want it to be, gonna take my X-Acto knife and I'm going to make a little mark on each side of where the spoon is gonna join and the top. And that's just a delineation mark so I know where to score and slip. Once I've done that, I'm gonna go ahead and score my surface, creating a nice rough texture. I'm gonna just make a nice crosshatching type of pattern on the surface, then it

just roughs up the surface. I'm gonna do that between the marks that I made from where the handle is gonna join and also on the handle where it's gonna join to the spoon head. And I'm gonna rough that up really nicely as well, 'cause we want to create a nice secure join. And so that looks good, it's nice and rough. Because this is a two part handle, you really want to make sure you score and slip this really well so that the handle doesn't crack and break off later. I'm gonna go ahead and take my slip, which is some dry clay and water mixed to a thick paste. And I'm gonna go ahead and slather that slip on there. It's nice and luscious. On the end of the spoon where it's gonna join where I scored it, and also on the end of the spoon head where I scored the slit where it's gonna join. It looks all messy and full of squishy clay. I'm gonna go ahead now and take the handle of the spoon head and they're going to get married. Push it together and it's a firm but gentle push. You don't wanna push too hard, distorting the shape of your spoon, and as you can see, I have my hand cupping the top of the spoon head, to support it. I'm gonna go ahead and push that in. It's gonna be a little bit unstable, so you wanna make sure that you rest the handle on your hand. You wanna push that handle in and push on the spoon head towards the handle so that you see all that slip come oozing out and then it gets a nice secure join. Once that feels good, grab your wood blending tool and smooth that out. Just gently flip it over and let the table support it. It's a little easier to work on this side. I'm gonna go ahead and smooth this out and I'm not going to leave any seam marks on the spoon. It's looking pretty good. I'm gonna take my finger in there, do some more smushing and blending. I really, really wanna make sure that that handle is securely attached. These spoons are a little bit more delicate to make because we're attaching a handle, not like the self-handled spoons, so you need to be a little bit more careful and not turn them over too much or handle them too much because the spoon handle can just come off. So this one's looking pretty secure. I'm gonna go ahead and flip it over. And I'm really letting it just gently rest here. Gonna get a little bit of water and just smooth that joint out a little bit. I'm being very gentle here. I'm not gonna handle this too much. Not gonna handle the handle too much. Clean that up. It's looking pretty good. Yep, I'm happy with that. I'm gonna do a little clean up. I'm gonna be very careful not to move my handle around, as you can see, I have it resting on my work surface here. And then go ahead and turn it over again, clean that up. Once again, taking care not to overwork the spoon. Feels like my spoon is set up and ready to go. The handle feels securely attached. I think we're ready to go ahead and punch the hole in the handle. I'm gonna go ahead and take my hole punching tool, same tool that I used for the self-handled spoon. And you really wanna be careful when you punch your hole in your handle not to punch it too close to the edge, because you could crack it. So you wanna come in, I don't wanna come in that deep, but I'm gonna come in. So I'm gonna give you an approximate measurement. Looks like about a generous quarter of an inch in from the edge of the handle to the edge of my hole punching tool. Gonna center it as best as possible. Once again, I'm gonna push it directly down through, pushing the brass hole punching tool towards the work surface. Gently lift up my spoon. This is also very fragile, so you really wanna secure the spoon and the handle so that you're not gonna push. Just gonna push this through. And then I'm gonna go ahead and lay that back down and gently ease that hole punching tool out of there, really trying hard not to put any tension on the joinery between the handle and the spoon. Gonna turn it over gently, have a look at my work, smooth that out a little bit but that looks good. I kinda like the way that makes that look. We're ready to move on to the next step.

Conclusion

- I have my spoons all finished but, and they look wonderful, but they need a little something extra,

so I'm gonna go ahead and add a little bit of a decorative element, and I think what I wanna do is dip them in some underglaze, some ivory underglaze just to make the handle stand out a little bit. You can dip your spoons anywhere. You could dip the head of the spoon, the handle. I think I'm gonna dip my handles. I'm gonna take my underglaze. This is ivory, fire's ivory. Nice contrast to the red clay. I'm gonna go ahead and pour it into a bowl and I think I'm gonna pour it to be about an inch deep. It's like a pool of melted ice cream. And I'm gonna go ahead and take, I'm gonna take the soft-handled spoon and I'm gonna dip it into the underglaze and it creates a nice coating on there. Let all the underglaze drip off. Don't touch it because it'll smear. So you wanna make sure that the underglaze clears out of the hole in the spoon, so you wanna go ahead and blow on it a little bit. And that clears the underglaze out. You wanna make sure you don't clog up that hole. I'm gonna go ahead and lay this down and I'm gonna dip my handled spoon in the underglaze. Just accenting the tips of the handles. Gives 'em a little bit of pazazz. Once again, blowing through the underglaze so it clears that hole out so it's nice, and if it gets a little drip mark, you can actually let it drip. It looks nice. If it's up to you if you want a clean line, but you can play with that. Okay, I'm gonna go ahead and set this down. I set it down this way so that I don't mess up my dip. Gently. You wanna go ahead and let your clay spoons dry until they're green, bisque them to whatever temperature your clay requires, and then you're gonna have a wonderful set of handmade spoons. Once you've fired your spoons, they should look something like this. Of course there are lots of variations and yours will look unique. Here are mine that I've dipped in the ivory underglaze. Here are some other ones that I've made that have a few variations. I put a clear glaze on the inside. This one's dipped on the spoon end, on the head of the spoon end, and I dipped the end of the handle in glaze. Also, this is a much thinner handle. Here's another one that's got the wide spoon head and I dipped the handle in, but I also dipped it in glaze so that the chocolate brown clay changes color underneath the glaze, so I used the glaze as a way of creating a variation. And here, I have the soft-handled spoon and this also has glaze on the inside, which just kind of brightens up the brown clay and I have dipped the end in glaze as well as the ivory underglaze. This is a great first time project if you're new to ceramics or working with clay. You'll have a lot of success and you'll really enjoy the process and get a sense of what the clay is all about.