

Ceramic Tile Creation

This playbook describes the series of steps involved in the creation of ceramic tiles, starting from the initial clay preparation through to the final kiln-firing process that solidifies the design.

Step 1: Clay Preparation

Begin by preparing your clay. This involves wedging the clay to remove any air bubbles and to ensure it has a uniform consistency. Once wedged, roll out the clay into slabs that match the thickness desired for the tiles.

Step 2: Shape Tiles

Cut the slabs into tile shapes using either a sharp knife or a die-cutter for uniformity. Ensure to smooth out the edges.

Step 3: Design Application

Allow the tiles to reach a leather-hard consistency, firm enough to add designs. Carve or stamp your designs into the tiles at this stage.

Step 4: Drying

Dry the designed tiles slowly and evenly to prevent warping. The drying process can take several days, and the tiles should be bone dry before firing.

Step 5: **Bisque Firing**

Once dry, the tiles need to be bisque fired in a kiln. This initial firing will set the shape and is typically done at a lower temperature.

Step 6: **Glazing**

After bisque firing, apply a glaze to the tiles if desired. This can add color, sheen, and make the tiles water-resistant.

Step 7: **Glaze Firing**

The final firing, known as glaze firing, melts the glaze onto the tile and vitrifies the clay to its finished form. The temperature and duration of this firing depend on the clay and glaze materials used.

General Notes

Safety

Always wear safety equipment such as gloves and masks when working with clay and during firing to protect against dust and fumes.

Consistency

Maintain a consistent thickness of your tiles to ensure even firing and to prevent breakage.

Temperature Monitoring

Carefully monitor kiln temperatures and use a pyrometer if needed to ensure accurate firing conditions for your specific clay and glaze types.

