

Preparing Your Pottery for the Pit Fire – Checklist

- Best clay to use: A stoneware clay cone 6 or higher with some grog to withstand thermal shock.
- After you make your pot, use a metal rib to smooth out the clay. (Any distortions in the surface of the clay will show up when you burnish and fire your pot.)
- Burnish your pot before you bisque to create a glossy surface.
- Burnishing with Terra Sigillata (3 coats) – When bone dry, you can spray or paint each coat on your pot. Polish with a soft rag, car polishing glove or soft plastic bag between each coat. Best to polish while the Terra Sig looks dark and not shiny.

Terra Sigillata Recipe:

3-1/2 gallons water
1-1/2 tablespoons soda ash
1-1/2 tablespoon sodium silicate
15 lbs. clay (Hellmer kaolin, ball clay, C-red or other)

Mix the first three ingredients (make sure soda ash is dissolved)
Add the clay
Let sit overnight
Pour off any water on top and discard
Pour off middle layer - *This is the Terra Sigillata*
Discard sludge on bottom

IMPORTANT: Bisque your pottery at cone 010 for best colors.

More information on preparing Terra Sigillata.

Bay Area Artist - Linda Mau's Basic

Terra Sigillata

(by weight)

70% Water (1400 grams)

30% Dry Clay (600 grams)

5-7 % Sodium Silicate, Darvan or Calgon (14 grams)

To establish a recipe by Volume, carefully weigh the ingredients and then measure them by volume...i.e. cups. Remember, different clays may have different weights.

White Terra Sigillata

6 cups Water

5 1/2 cups EPK or 4 1/4 c. OM4 Ball Clay

1 1/2 teaspoons Sodium Silicate

Newman Red Terra Sigillata

(by Volume) (by Volume)

6 cups Water

3 cups Newman Red Clay

1 1/2 teaspoons Sodium Silicate

MIXING INSTRUCTIONS

Carefully measure the liquid ingredients and then add the measured dry clay by sprinkling it into the water. Mix thoroughly! A blender is excellent for small batches. The better the ingredients are mixed, the more Terra Sig your batch will produce.

Let the mixture stand undisturbed for at least 36 hours with the lid off to help evaporate the very thin layer of water on top. There is then a large area of Terra Sig and a layer of very solid slip on the bottom. I do not siphon off the Sig. I just pour off the top layers leaving the sludge. I have found that the thick slip will stay on the bottom of the container and can be discarded.

HOW TO USE TERRA SIGILATTA

Terra Sig works best if brushed or sprayed on *bone dry greenware*, but it can also be applied to bisque ware and then re-bisqued. Several thin coats are better than one thick one. It should look waxy when the necessary coats are applied. At that stage, it can be buffed with a cotton ball or your finger tip to produce increased shine, or it can be burnished.

Videos with more information on mixing terra sig ...

Here are a sampling of Youtube videos for your information. There are lots of videos on preparing your pottery with terra sig for a pit fire on Youtube.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=lixYfoVB2A0

www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Uqco3QKLPO

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tkw14F18ZZ8

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouhhoyH24P0