

Chengwei Xia - How to Make Charcoal

My grandmother taught me how to make charcoal from the fire in our kitchen while we cooked our meal over a wood-burning stove. Charcoal is produced by strongly heating wood in minimal oxygen so you can make charcoal for drawing while cooking so that the heat produced can be utilized ultimately for two results – food and art!

MATERIALS:

- Dry wood
- Saw or wood chopper to cut the wood
- Hay or paper
- Lighter or matches
- Clay jug
- Lid for the jug. If the jug does not have a lid, you can use a bowl or another object to seal the jug
- Fire-tongs

GUIDELINES:

Make sure there are no inflammable objects around your stove or fireplace. After ensuring safety, we can start to make charcoal.

1. Cut up the wood into small pieces that can be placed easily into your stove or on the fire, and eventually fit inside your clay jug.
2. Start a fire and burn the wood in your stove or fireplace. You can use hay or paper to start the fire. You can do this while cooking so that the heat can be utilized for the purpose of making charcoal as well as preparing a meal. Make sure your clay jug with a lid is at hand.
3. When the wood is burning well, use the fire-tongs or another tool to remove a stick of burning wood from the fire and put it directly into the clay jug. Seal the jug with a lid or bowl or other covering. As the oxygen supply diminishes inside the sealed jug, the stick of wood will stop burning and begin smouldering. Wood that is not fully burned produces carbon residue.
4. Repeat No. 3 until you have enough wood in the clay jug. It's OK to open the jug each time you add a piece of burning wood to it, but remember to seal the jug up immediately afterwards. It really doesn't matter how many times you open up the jug to add a stick of wood to it.
5. When you have enough smoldering wood in the clay jug, leave the jug sealed until its cool to the touch. This could take several hours.
6. When the jug is cool, open it up and there inside you will find your readymade charcoal!

Remove the charcoal from the jug and now you have a charcoal supply for drawing.
Now that your charcoal is ready, you can draw with it on paper, on the wall or on the ground.

First written up for the Hands On Art Workshops ***Hands On How to Make a... "Manual"***



Materials: (from left to right) dry wood, wood chopper, saw, hay, lighter, matches, clay jug, bowl, fire-tongs



Cut up the wood into small pieces with a wood-chopper or a saw. Here my pieces are a bit large because my stove and clay jug are large. You may need smaller pieces depending on the size of your stove and clay jug.



Use hay to start a fire. If hay is not available, you can also use paper.



Burn the wood in the stove.



When the wood is burning well, use the fire-tongs to remove a stick of burning wood from the fire.



Put the wood directly into the clay jug. In this photo, the wood has already stopped burning and started smouldering.



Seal the jug with a bowl. You can also seal the jug with a lid or other covering. Keep adding burning wood to the jug and seal the jug immediately afterwards.



When you have enough smouldering wood in the clay jug, leave the jug sealed until it's cool to the touch. This could take several hours.



When the jug is cool, open it up and you will find your readymade charcoal!