

Design Resource

Coconut Shell Craft - Alleppey, Kerala

Incense Holder

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Manasa K. H.
NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/coconut-shell-craft-alleppey-kerala>



1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
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Introduction

Alleppey is a town situated south of Kochi; it is a district of Kerala state of southern India. It is also known as the Venice of the east due to a large number of waterways that interconnects different parts of this town. The term coconut dates back to the 16th century. It derives from the Spanish and Portuguese words coco, meaning “a grin”, and “a monkey face” respectively since there is a slight resemblance to a human face or a monkey head because of the three tiny indents on the hairy shell of the fruit. *Cocos nucifera* is a scientific term for the coconut tree or coconut palm. Tropics and subtropics are the natural habitats of the plant. The coconut is a plant, which favourably grows on the shorelines, it prospers on sandy soils. The fruit prefers rainy and sunny weather; it cannot resist low temperatures. For a propitious growth coconuts also require an area of high humidity.

The origin of the coconut plant is vague. Many researchers suggest Malaysia be the likeliest place; others consider the northwest of South America. The fruit has spread worldwide mostly with the help of seafarers. The coconut fruit itself is light and water-resistant, it can keep itself afloat on the surface of the water, thus able to be spread by currents. Now it is grown in more than 70 countries throughout the world. The major countries are India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Maldives.

Coconut Crafts in India refers to the creation of utility and decorative items with coconut shells, which is practiced in various parts of the country. Coconut crafts in India are mostly manufactured in South Indian states which feature the majority of coconut plants. Indian states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and other coastal states have an abundance of skilled artisans for making coconut crafts. A coconut tree is a tree that is widely grown all over Kerala.

Coconut Palm Tree produces one of the diversified fruits where every bit is utilized in a variety of ways. The craft of making decorative and utility products out of coconut shells and wood is mostly practiced in parts of India where coconut is grown in abundance. However, with the passage of time and the improvement in tools, people started making various other small utility and decorative articles by cutting coconut shells. From the coconut shell products like bowls, vases, teapots, hookahs and many other varieties are crafted.

Regions of Production Coconut shell and woodcraft are primarily prevalent in Kerala: in and around Calicut, Trivandrum, Attingal, Neyyatinkara and Quilandy in Kozhikode. Other states where this craft is practiced are Goa, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and a few parts of Bengal, Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu.

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3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Artisan showcasing the coconut shell incense holder.



Artisan involved in making coconut shell craft.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Tools and raw materials that are used for coconut shell craft:

- **Coconut Shell:** It is a basic raw material used in making coconut shell craft.
- **Hacksaw Blade:** It is used to cut coconut shells.
- **Emery Sheet:** It is used to smoothen the outer surface of coconut shells.
- **Buffing Machine:** It is used to smoothen the outer surface.
- **Bastard File:** It is used to carve the coconut shell into the required shape.
- **Hammer:** It is a tool with a heavy metal head mounted to beat repeatedly.
- **Quick Adhesive:** It is used to stick the articles.
- **Wood Polish:** It is used to give the coconut shell a wood finishing.
- **Sleek Glossy Top Coat:** It is used to give a glossy effect to the product.



220-grid emery sheet is used to smoothen the outer surface of coconut.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details



Hacksaw is used for cutting coconut shell.



Pedestal grinder with buffing machine is used to smoothen the surface.



Bastard file is used to smoothen and curve the edges.

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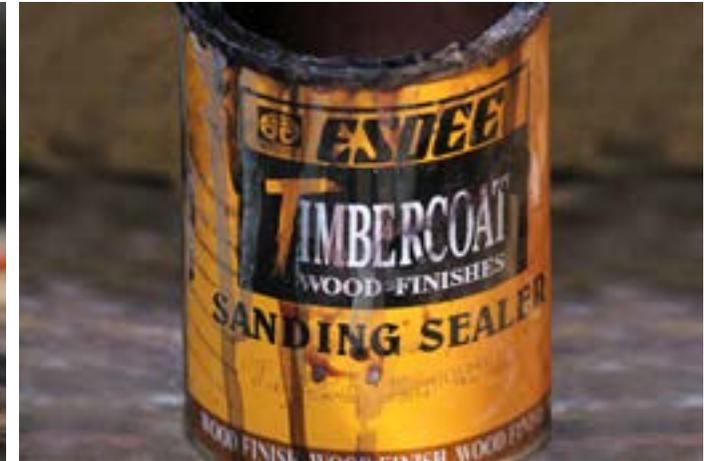
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Sleek is used to give a coconut shell craft a glossy finish. Wood polish used to polish the coconut shell crafts.



Instant adhesive used for fixing the articles.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Making Process

The process of coconut crafts involves sketching, cutting, sanding, and buffing to create the finished product. The process involved in sourcing the coconut shell for the finished product has undergone drastic changes. Initially, hand tools were used to carve, cut, and finish the edges. With the advent of machines, there are lathe machines that have replaced all the hand tools. The process is much faster.

Initially, the artisan begins by cutting off the coconut shell with a band-saw to reveal the interior of the coconut and Scoop out the flesh of the coconut with a chisel. It should be dry and easy to remove. At each stage, sanding is done to make the surface smooth. Finally buffing is done for the inside surface in case of a hollow product or serving bowl.

The edges of the coconut shell are made smooth by filing or by sanding with sandpaper. This process is followed repeatedly till the finish is satisfactory. The outer surface of the shell is cleaned using a buffing machine and then the inner part of the shell is smoothed. Using a bastard file, then half sliced shell is carved into the required design. Once the shell is given a design it is when they start working on the base part of the instant stick holder by cutting the small circle out of the coconut shell. To make the base part of the instant stick holder initially they clean the outer and inner surface of the coconut shell using a buffing machine and emery sheet. Once the surface is cleaned circle kind metal tool is hammered placing over the center coconut shell.

After a shape is cut out, the edges are made smooth by filing or by sanding with sandpaper. The base part of the Incense holder is then made into holes by piercing with the chisel. Once all parts of the incense holder are carved out it is then fixed using quick adhesive. It is then polished using wood polish. Alternatively, if a glossy finish is desired, it is given a coat of synthetic varnish. If the surface is to have a dark finish then it is painted before the varnish coat is applied. The inside of the object in this case is first rubbed with sandpaper to get the desired smoothness and then it is buffed on the machine.

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

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Flow Chart:

Coconut Shell Craft

- 01 Initially artisan begins with cutting off the coconut shell with a band-saw
- 02 Outer surface of the shell is cleaned using buffing machine and then inner part of the shell is smoothened.
- 03 Using a bastard file, half sliced shell is carved into required design.
- 04 Base part of the instant stick holder is made by cutting of the small circle out of coconut shell.
- 05 After a shape is cut out, the edges are made smooth by filing or by sanding with sand paper.
- 06 The base part of instant stick holder is then made holes by piercing with chisel.
- 07 Once the all parts of incense holder is carved out it is then fixed using quick adhesive.
- 08 It is then polished using wood polish

1. Introduction

2. Tools and Raw Materials

3. Making Process

4. Products

5. Video

6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Artisan smoothing the coconut shell using buffing machine.



Hacksaw is used to cut the coconut shell in to required shape.



Bastard file is used to smoothen and curve the edges.



Outer surface of the coconut shell is being smoothed.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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Incense Holder

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<https://dsource.in/resource/coconut-shell-craft-alleppey-kerala/making-process>



Coconut shell is hammered to get the base part of the instant stick holder.



Base of the incense holder is smoothed using buffing machine.



Sharpe edged chisel is used to make holes.



Quick adhesive is being applied.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

Coconut Shell Craft - Alleppey, Kerala

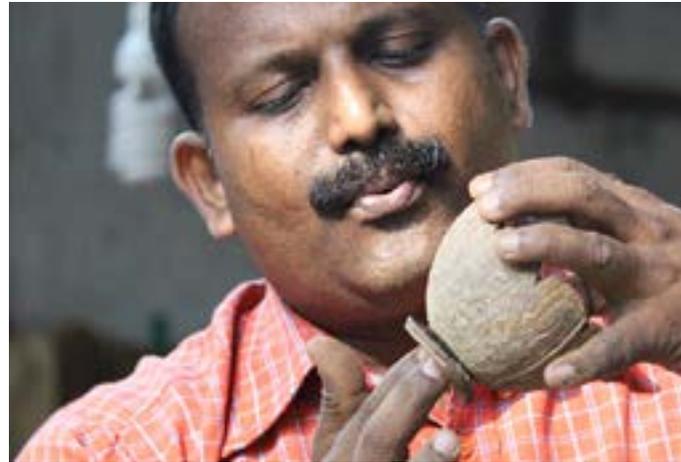
Incense Holder

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<https://dsource.in/resource/coconut-shell-craft-alleppey-kerala/making-process>



Base of the incense holder is being fixed.



220-grid emery sheet is used to smoothen the outer surface.



Wooden polish is being applied over the outer surface of the coconut shell.



Second coat of wooden polish is applied over the final product.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

Design Resource

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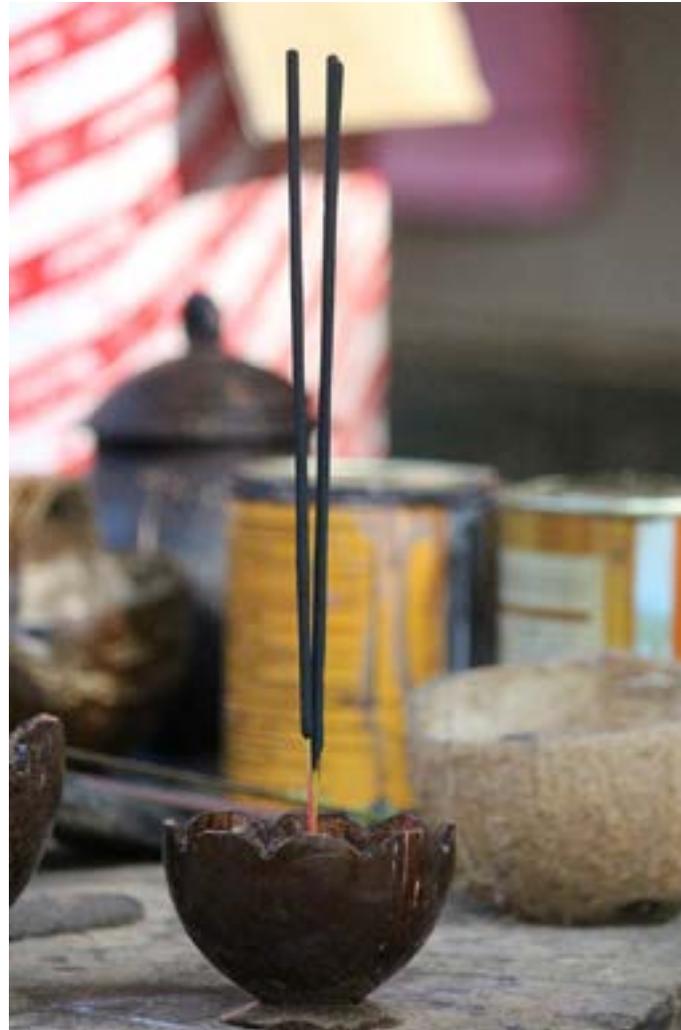
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Products

Various designs are engraved in the shell using a file. Many articles are made using coconut shells such as Basic jewellery such as earrings, pendants, necklaces, Keyrings, bowls, ice cream cups, spoons with a coconut wood handle, penholders, Incense holders Etc. And the price is depended on the product and its design.



Incense stick holder made using coconut shell.

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Video



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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details

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Contact Details

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1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
6. Contact Details