

Pottery is a continuously evolving art form. Thanks to the contribution of successive Algerian civilizations, one can detect the influence of the Berbers, of the Arabo- Muslim and oriental cultures, as well as easily noticeable Turkish nuances and “Hispano-Moorish” characteristics

Guelma, M’sirda and Ait Khlili are some of the Algerian regions renowned for the quality of their clay deposits which are non-existent in other parts of the country. Situated in eastern Algeria, the first region is famous for its kaolin deposits of white clay that is reserved for the production of fine porcelain. The second region, closer to the Moroccan border, and the third region of the Great Kabylie share honors for excellence.

While pottery production methods are similar from one region to another, some variations do occur giving this art form myriad facets. Pottery making is practiced in many Algerian regions, more often than not in mountainous areas.

- Pottery of the Sahara

The least known of all pottery types is based south of Adrar, in the old Ksar of Tamentit, and is commonly referred to as “black earthenware.” Best known are ram head shaped ashtrays crowned by a solar disc. From Béchar to Béni Abbès, and Timimoun to Touggourt one can find ancient pottery reflecting the architecture of the regions mentioned.

- Pottery of the Great Kabylie

Of renown fame this pottery is defined by common traits and a certain likeness. Whether originating in Mâatkas, Bourouh or Ath-Kheir, Berber pottery uses the same symbolism. It combines simplicity, functionality, solidity, water-tightness, aesthetics and human values. Its forms and ornamentation draw from rural cultural symbols and feminine sensibility. The color red is prevalent.

- Pottery of the Small Kabylie

This pottery is characterized by a wealth of shapes and themes as well as a tremendous creative force. The color red is used sparingly and judiciously. True to its environment, alternately mountainous and coastal and open to all civilizations such as those of the Phoenicians, Romans, and Turks, it shares a likeness to the pottery of the Great Kabylie. It combines strength, functionality and charm.

- Pottery of Chenoua (Tipaza)

The influence of the sea is pervasive. Roman and Phoenician artistic heritage also prevails in the region. However, the traditions seem to be fading away.

- Pottery from Eastern Constantine

This pottery is created from the major kaolin deposits in Guelma. In some locations, from Hammam Maskhoutine to Skikda, one can find very old pottery decorated with agrarian symbols and commonplace objects. Such pottery is marketed on a large scale.

- Pottery from the Aurès Mountains

This pottery is formed in austere shapes and colors reflecting the surrounding environment.

- Pottery of the Némemchas

This pottery is shaped from pinkish clay and is decorated with brownish drawings, and is left unvarnished. This art form was threatened by lyrical improvisation that distorted the original look of this aesthetic pottery.

- Pottery of M'sirda

This pottery is made of high quality clay with sober ornamentation and is given a smooth profile.