

How to make an Edo house

You will need:

Terracotta air drying clay
Board, rolling pin and knife
Card
Brown pencil crayon
Twigs of the same length
Green tissue paper
Glue

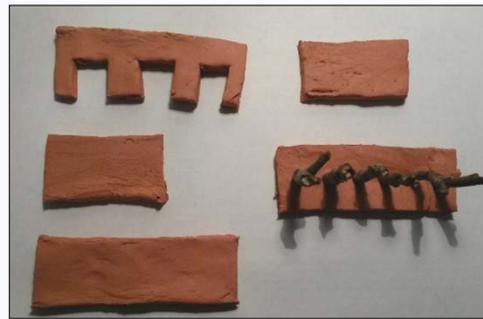


Drawing of Benin City, by an English officer in 1897

Cut the clay into five portions and roll it flat (about 1 cm thick). Make two slabs longer than the other two. Use the fifth portion to make a strip of clay. Each pair of slabs must be the same length and all must be the same width.



Cut openings on one of the long slabs to create entrances into the building. Neaten the edges of the slabs with the knife. Stick the twigs in the fifth strip of clay, evenly spread.

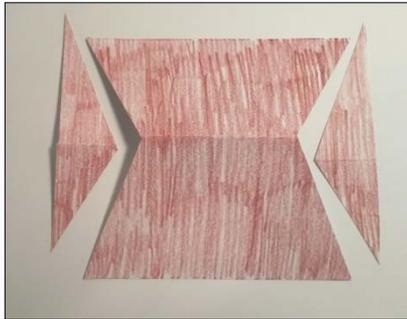


Leave the walls to dry and glue together, or stick the wet clay together using slip (a bit of water and clay mixed together to form a paste).



Make a roof in the style of the houses of the ancient Benin city. These type of roofs are called hip roofs. They have no ends (gables) but the ends slope down, meaning the roof has no vertical sides.

Lay a piece of paper on the table and colour it brown. Cut it so it is the length of your clay house. Fold it length way to make the pitch of the roof. Cut triangles out of each end and throw them away. Fold and stand the roof on the table and measure the triangular gap at each end. Draw these triangles on another piece of card, cut out, colour in and tape to the roof. This will form a hipped roof for your clay structure.



Now scrunch up green tissue paper and create trees to place around the houses. The Edo peoples of early Benin built their houses in small clearings in the rainforest, so put lots of tall trees around the houses on this part of your 3d timeline.

