Everything you need to know about pottery: where to see the potters at work, what heritage and contemporary works exhibitions are being held, who to speak to about the different methods of production.

The pottery-making traditions of Vallauris date back to the start of the Christian era. In Gallo-Roman times, large deposits of fireclay were already being used to make bricks and pots.

In the 16th century, the town was ravaged by the plague. However, 70 families from the surrounding area of Gênes later repopulated it, among which were several potters.

At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, the arrival of the railway led to a boom in the industry.

The depression of the 1930s and the use of other, more appropriate materials such as aluminium, cast iron and stainless steel marked a shift away from pottery-making for cooking purposes and led to the development of decorative pottery-making in the 1940s.

This developed in particular due to the arrival of the Massier family (end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century), with the introduction of coloured enamels and lusterware.

It was with Picasso's arrival in 1946 and the wonderful work that he created in the Madoura workshop that Vallauris' reputation as a centre of pottery-making for cooking purposes, finally gave way to that of a town in which artists and crafts people worked side by side.
In 1966, Vallauris potters decided to create a true World Centre of Ceramics. They proposed the creation of a national competition bringing together the best artists and craftsmen in France. This idea rapidly caught-on with famous contemporary artists such as André Malraux and Pablo Picasso, as well as other creative artists, so well in fact, that in 1968 the Competition became international. Thus the Vallauris International Biennial of Ceramic was born.

These days, as in the past, you will find on show in Vallauris examples of decorative pottery, one-off pieces and work by such great names as well as pottery for cooking purposes and a large variety of decorative objects.

### Pottery workshops visits

Potters like to share their know-how by opening their workshops to visitors and talking about the methods of production used. Each day a different company offers such a visit and visits can be arranged on request at the Tourist Office.

### Courses on clay techniques

Inside the old Grandjean pottery, the local School of Fine Arts holds pottery courses during the summer months (clay modelling, potter's wheel techniques), which cover the techniques of throwing, decoration and raku (a Japanese firing technique), over 30 hours of classes held in one week from Monday to Friday.

*A timetable of the courses on offer for both children and adults is available from the School of Fine Arts, Boulevard des Deux Vallons - Tel. 04 93 63 07 61*