



Bowls for beginners

Making a bowl on a lathe may look complicated, but the basic process to get you from blank to bowl is surprisingly simple:

Bowl blank → Shape the outside → Hollow the inside → Sand → Apply a finish → Complete the bottom

That gets you from blanks:



To finished bowl:



Start with a bowl blank

A bowl blank is a piece of wood cut to a size and shape suitable for turning. The blank you choose will help determine the size and style of your finished bowl.

Shape the outside

Mount the blank securely on the lathe, turn it round and shape the outside profile. This is where you decide whether your bowl will be wide or narrow, deep or shallow, gently curved or more angular.

Hollow the inside

Turn the bowl around and gradually remove wood from the centre to create the inside. As the bowl takes shape, aim for smooth curves and an even wall thickness.

Sand

Sand the bowl using progressively finer grits of sandpaper to remove tool marks and create a smooth surface.

Apply a finish

Apply a finish to protect the wood and bring out its natural colour and grain. Choose a finish that is suitable for how the bowl will be used.

Complete the bottom

Turn the bowl around one final time to remove the mounting point and shape and sand the base.

That's bowl turning at its simplest. As your skills grow, you can experiment with different woods, shapes, sizes and decorative details to create bowls that are uniquely your own.