

Making Soap

By: Vertex

Making soap is a very rewarding. I've been making it for my family for about 15 years and we wouldn't have anything else. Regular "soap" really isn't. It is technically called a detergent. Real soap is a mixture of oils without 30 letter chemical names.

The first time you make a batch allow yourself about one hour and thirty minutes. As you gain skill you can reduce your time considerably. There are hundreds of ways to make soap.....this is just one. I have also left out the technical terms and actual chemistry of making soap. There are plenty sites on the Net if you are interested.

Equipment: (never use any metal pans or spoons because the Lye will react with the metal!!!)

Equipment for soap making is very simple. You will need:

Large glass mixing bowl (Microwave safe)

Large Pyrex measuring cup

Plastic measuring cup for water

Candy thermometer

Long handled plastic spoon with slots in it

Scale.....I picked up an old Postal Scale that works fine

A 1 teaspoon measuring spoon

Braun Hand Blender (this isn't absolutely a must but it makes stirring a snap and cuts down your time considerably)

A mold large enough to accomodate the total amount of material you have mixed.

Saran Wrap (this goes inside the mold. It makes it easier to get the soap out after it hardens)

Ingredients:

There are many combinations of oils that you can use. In fact, you can make soap out of Lard only. It's not very exciting though. However, it will do a good job cleaning your hands!!

All ingredients are WEIGHED, including the water.

Here is a recipe of one of my soaps: It will produce about 8.75 pounds of soap.(about 35 4 oz bars of soap)

Water.....35 oz

Sweet Almond Oil.....6 oz

Castor Oil.....5 oz

Coconut Oil.....24 oz

Olive Oil.....32 oz

Palm Oil.....25 oz

Red Devil Lye.....13 oz (be sure and use the Red Devil Brand and NOT Draino. DO NOT USE DRAINO!!!)

Fragrance.....aproximately 9 teaspoons of your favorite (it can be purchased at a craft store)

Lets do it!!! First, get your mold ready. Line it with Saran Wrap or shoot it with Silicone Spray.

Weigh Lye in a plastic container. Weigh water in a plastic container. Dump the water into your Pyrex container and slowly add the Lye to the water, stirring all the time. Be sure and do this outside because there is a reaction and the fumes are nasty. Stand up- wind to avoid the fumes. There is also quite a bit of heat produced by the reaction. NEVER POUR THE WATER INTO THE LYE. If you do you might end up with a face full of Lye. It reacts violently!!

Set this aside for now. It will need to cool to room temperature before you use it.

Weigh your fats and then put them in the large glass bowl. Put the bowl into a Microwave Oven and heat until the oils are totally melted. You will want the temperature of the oils at about 125 degrees F.

When the fats are at the proper temperature, slowly pour the lye solution into the fats.

Hand stir the fats first for one minute and then use the Braun Hand Mixer for one minute, then hand stir for one minute, back and forth like that for about 15 minutes. Start watching the mixture at about 15 minutes for change. The mixture will start to look and feel like custard pudding. This is called Trace and if you take a spoonfull and dribble it across the mixture it will leave a noticeable trail.

This means that the soap is ready to pour into your mold. At this time add any fragrance or color you have, mix well, and pour into the mold. Don't wait too long at this point because it will harden up on you. Cover the poured mold with Saran Wrap(keeps the air off of the fresh

soap)and towels and leave alone for 24 hours. Don't peek!!! There will be quite a bit of heat produced by the final reaction so don't panic if the sides of the mold get very hot.

At the end of the 24 hours turn the mold upside down and remove the block of soap. Cut the soap into bar sizes of your choice and let air dry about 4 to 6 weeks. New soap is soft and you will use it up very fast so let it cure for the 4 to 6 weeks. Enjoy!!