

*Clean, Naturally!*

*Non-Toxic Cleaners*

*for Your Non-Toxic Home*



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nourishing joy | celebrating real food, sustainable living, & natural homemaking

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# An Introduction

When my family and I started on our natural living journey a number of years ago, I was overwhelmed with the number of places undesirable ingredients and chemicals lurked. Suddenly I was examining my family's food, our clothing, our personal care products, and yes – our cleaners.

What I wished for then was just a handful of cleaners I could make myself. I didn't need to make *everything* from scratch – I just wanted to make the ones I used most often so my home could be safe for my children and I could save money in the process.

Over time, I tried lots of various recipes with varying degrees of success. But slowly, I developed an arsenal of cleaners that I was happy with – and that I was confident actually *cleaned* my home.

So, consider this little book my little home journal – a gift from my home to yours. These are the recipes I have made over and over (and over) and the ones that I am proud to share.

This book is by no means comprehensive – I haven't included oven cleaner or stainless steel polish or brass tarnish remover. This is simply because I wanted this book to be a simple starting place to begin with the basics – the everyday cleaners that you'll be reaching for again and again.

So, here's to clean homes and toxic-free living! May the joy in *your* home be nourished.

Kresha

# Table of Contents

Know Your Ingredients.....	5
Laundry Detergent.....	6
Dishwasher Detergent.....	7
Dishwasher Detergent Pucks.....	8
Dish Soap.....	9
Hand Soap.....	10
Bleaches.....	11
Bleach (for Laundry).....	11
Bleach (for Household Cleaning).....	12
Bleach (for Sanitation).....	13
Glass & Window Cleaner.....	14
Fabric & Air Freshener.....	15
Spray Disinfectant.....	16
Dusting Spray & Wood Polish.....	17
Lazy-Version Furniture Polish.....	18
All-Purpose Cleaner.....	19
Toilet Bowl Cleaner.....	20
Drain Cleaner (How to Clear a Clogged Drain).....	21
Kitchen Scrub.....	22
Bathtub Scrub.....	23
Soft Scrub.....	24
Carpet Deodorizer.....	25
How to Make Soap.....	26

# Know Your Ingredients

*There are only a few basic, easily found ingredients you'll need to keep on hand. With them, you'll always be able to whip up cleaners and shine up your home in no time!*

## Baking Soda

What doesn't baking soda do? I always have a jar of it next to the kitchen sink to scrub pots for a scratch-free shine, it works as a scouring agent in most homemade scrubs, it absorbs odor, it absorbs moisture, and it can help suspend essential oils in water. This one ingredient alone can revolutionize your cleaning arsenal.

## Washing Soda

Washing soda is a water softener (which helps lift fabric stains more easily) and a degreaser, so it works very well in multiple applications. It also helps liquid soap “gel,” so it's an essential ingredient in the liquid dishwashing soap.

## White Vinegar

Vinegar isn't a degreaser, as many claim, but it does break down those pesky fingerprints on walls and windows and it's an effective disinfectant. If you care about the potency of your disinfectant, look for “pickling vinegar,” which has a higher percentage of acetic acid (usually about 5-7%) than the “regular” white vinegar.

## Borax

Borax is a water softener and due to its alkalinity, tends to have a whitening effect on whatever it's cleaning (it's great on porcelain stains, for example). There is heated debate on the safety of borax, but from my research, I consider it safe as long as it's not ingested in large quantities. If you're uncomfortable using borax, feel free to leave it out of any of these recipes.

## Essential Oils

Essential oils can be a contentious subject, but in this context – where we're using them for cleaning and we're not ingesting them – I'm happy using the least expensive options I can find, as they're still concentrated distillates of the herbs and spices from which they are derived. Feel free to choose whatever brand works for you.

Do, however, keep them out of reach of children and pets, as they can be very damaging if used incorrectly or accidentally swallowed.

There are a number of other ingredients that appear through this book in specific recipes, but they're not ones you need to keep stocked, *per se*, unless – of course – you want to start a cottage industry for homemade cleaners!

# Laundry Detergent

*This detergent is excellent for cloth diapers, which need to be cleaned thoroughly without leaving any residue, and therefore is also excellent for thoroughly cleaning other fabrics. We use this recipe for all of our laundry and are very happy with the results. Because it uses no soap, which can leave residues on fabrics over time, it relies on the chemical reaction that happens between water, washing soda, and borax to act as the surfactant.*

*Also, since powdered oxygen bleach is more than half washing soda, I like to measure it with a heavy hand and go a little light on the washing soda. The powdered oxygen bleach is in the recipe specifically for the sodium percarbonate, which acts as a safe alternative to chlorine bleach.*

Makes 2 1/2 cups ~ approximately 20-25 loads

3/4 cup washing soda

3/4 cup powdered oxygen bleach (such as OxyClean)

1 cup borax

20 drops essential oil

*(my current favorite is 10 drops peppermint & 10 drops lavender)*

Stir all ingredients well and store in a tightly sealed container.

Use 2-3 tablespoons per load.

# Dishwasher Detergent

*This detergent is frugal and easy to make. Feel free to tweak it as needed for what works in your particular dishwasher and your hardness of water. A bit of citric acid can reduce spotting on dishes if you've got especially hard or especially soft water, but if you use citric acid, be sure to stir the mixture several times in the first day after you make it or it may become a solid mass in your storage container.*

Makes 3 1/2 cups ~ approximately 20-25 loads

2 cups washing soda

1 cup coarse salt

1/2 cup baking soda (optional, if your water is extra hard)

Stir together well, then pour into a dry, tightly sealed container.

Use 1/2 cup per load.

For a streak-free shine, pour white vinegar into the rinse compartment.

# Dishwasher Detergent Pucks

*The citric acid is the magic ingredient for getting these to harden, but they take a bit of babysitting to harden as pucks rather than puffy balls. As the citric acid absorbs moisture, it fizzes and creates air bubbles, so you'll need to tamp them down every few minutes over the course of an hour or so. I like to make them while I'm doing other things in the kitchen, like cleaning up after dinner or doing a baking project.*

Makes approximately 2-3 dozen pucks

1 1/2 cups citric acid

1 cup washing soda

1 cup coarse salt

Stir all ingredients together well, then let sit for about an hour until the mixture starts to bubble. Have 2-3 silicone ice cube trays at the ready.

When you notice the mixture beginning to bubble, stir well, then spoon it evenly into the molds and pack the mixture down well. Every few minutes, dampen your hands and tamp each puck down again firmly.

After about an hour, the pucks will stop fizzing and seize into very hard pucks. Pop them out and break off any hard edges or lines that will prevent them from fitting in the detergent container in your dishwasher.

Store in a dry, tightly sealed container. Use 1 puck per load.



# Dish Soap

*Feel free to tweak the amount of soap you use in this recipe. Some people like to use just 1 tablespoon of grated soap, but that doesn't make it as thick as I like it. If I use more than half a bar of soap, however, it becomes too ropy for my liking. So play around and see what works for you.*

Makes 2 cups

1/4 of a bar of solid soap

1 tablespoon washing soda (more for a thicker soap, if desired)

1 1/2 cups boiling water

1 tablespoon liquid castile soap

1/2 teaspoon glycerin

20 drops essential oils

*(sweet orange & peppermint, grapefruit & clove, just plain lemon)*

Grate the soap into flakes. Combine with the washing soda in a large mixing bowl.

Pour the boiling water over the soap/soda mixture and stir gently until the soap is completely dissolved. Add the liquid castile soap, glycerin, and essential oils and stir to combine.

Pour into pump bottles or reused commercial dish soap bottles and let stand at room temperature for approximately 8 hours. Shake gently if needed.

# Hand Soap

*This soap is luxurious and soft, but like the dish soap, it can become stringy and ropy if you don't agitate it while it's setting. I like to use a submersible blender to make it really creamy.*

Makes approximately 1 gallon

one 4-5 oz. bar of solid castile soap

1/2 cup liquid castile soap

2 tablespoons liquid glycerin

1 gallon of water

essential oils or vanilla extract, optional

Grate the soap into flakes and bring the water to a boil in a large stockpot.

Turn off the water and add the soap flakes, then stir until dissolved. Add the liquid castile soap and the glycerin.

Set aside at room temperature for about 24 hours. Every 4-8 hours, use a submersible blender or hand mixer to make it creamy.

When it's time to pour into storage containers, add essential oils to "taste" or pour in a couple of tablespoons of vanilla extract, then check the viscosity again and if the mixture does not pour smoothly, blend a final time.

# Bleaches

*In my quest to make my home as natural and non-toxic as possible, naturally I wondered whether I could make bleach at home. Chlorine bleach is nasty stuff, and short of a major catastrophe where it be required for purifying water for survival, I don't want it anywhere in my home.*

*But the question is – homemade bleach is great for whitening laundry but what about cleaning? Can a homemade version actually be as effective as chlorine? The short answer – yes, absolutely.*

*The recipe that works well for laundry will kill approximately 99% of bacteria, 82% of mold, and 80% of germs when used for cleaning (those are the stats for pure vinegar before it's boosted with lemon juice, according to Heinz, one vinegar manufacturer). Hydrogen peroxide has been approved as an effective household disinfectant by the EPA since 1977.*

*And interestingly enough, since I first published these recipes at NourishingJoy.com, the most common question I've gotten via e-mail is, "Why do you call this 'bleach'? Why not 'bleach alternative'?" Well, simple - anything that has a bleaching action – that is, a whitening effect – is a bleach. These recipes are an alternative to chlorine bleach, but they are bleaches in and of themselves.*

## Bleach ( for Laundry)

*The lemon juice is actually an important part of this recipe, so don't skip it. The citric acid acts as a whitener, a very mild disinfectant, and as a water softener (thus allowing stains to be lifted out more easily).*

Makes 1 quart

*(multiply everything by 4 to make 1 gallon)*

1/2 cup hydrogen peroxide (3% solution)

2 tablespoons lemon juice OR 1/2 teaspoon citric acid

3 1/4 cups water

5 drops lemon essential oil

Use 1 cup per load of laundry.

## Bleach ( for Household Cleaning )

*For cleaning, you want oomph, and a 50-50 blend of 3% H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and water seems pretty standard by the scientific community to sufficiently deal with common household bacterias, viruses, and molds. Of course, I always like things a little more potent, so sometimes I skip adding the water altogether. (Sbbb... don't tell. It's not quite as frugal, but it makes me feel good.)*

makes 1 quart

2 cups hydrogen peroxide (standard 3% solution)

2 tablespoons lemon juice OR 1/2 teaspoon citric acid

2 cups water

10 drops lemon essential oil

Store in dark or covered bottles, as exposure to light will weaken the solution.

Lasts up to 1 month in a clear bottle, 2-3 months in a dark bottle.

### **Here are a few ideas for keeping your solution in the dark:**

*Keep old peroxide bottles and kype a spray nozzle from another bottle.*

*Wrap the spray bottle in a brown paper lunch bag and secure at the top.*

*Cover the spray bottle with construction paper or wrapping paper and make it decorative – I'm not a crafty type, but those of you who are crafty at heart, feel free go to town!*

## Bleach ( for Sanitation)

*Peracetic acid, which is formed when acetic acid (vinegar) and hydrogen peroxide mix, is a very potent cleaner, even for conquering e. coli, listeria, salmonella, shigella, staphylococcus aureus, and most viruses like the flu.*

*It is even potent enough to be used for sanitizing medical, surgical, and dental supplies, and is approved in the US for use in cheese making facilities, wineries, and other food service locales.*

*However, it is very unstable and weakens quickly once mixed. Because it weakens so quickly, there is no “recipe” for it – just ingredients – as you don’t want to mix it up ahead of time.*

Keep two separate spray bottles on hand – one with standard 3% hydrogen peroxide and one with white vinegar, then spritz them each on the surface to be cleaned – countertops, cutting boards, or fresh produce, for example, and you will effectively kill any pathogens present. Let the surface air-dry for maximum potency.

# Glass & Window Cleaner

*This is one of my two favorite cleaning recipes and I secretly do a little happy-dance when it's time to mix up a new batch. Feel free to add essential oils liberally for a lovely scent, but be careful not to add too much or you'll be smearing your windows with oil rather than cleaning them to a streak-free shine (thanks in large part to the vodka).*

Makes 1 quart

1 cup vodka

1 cup white vinegar

2 cups water

20 drops essential oil

Place in a large spray bottle and shake well before using.

# Fabric & Air Freshener

*The store-bought variety of fabric freshener is laden with toxic chemicals, but this one will leave your home breezy fresh and a welcome place to all who enter.*

Makes 1 quart

2 tablespoons baking soda

40 drops essential oil

*(lavender, spruce, sweet orange and vanilla, etc)*

4 cups water

Place the baking soda and essential oils in a bowl and rub them together with your fingers or a fork until everything is well mixed and homogenous. (The baking soda helps keep the oils suspended in the water, so this step is essential.)

Spoon the baking soda/oil mix into a large spray bottle, add the water, and shake well before using.

# Spray Disinfectant

*In most of the recipes in this book, you can choose whatever essential oils best suit your fancy, as they're used largely for scent. However, in this recipe, use the oils called for, as their antibacterial and antiviral properties are particularly potent.*

*This blend of oils is often referred to as a "Thieves Blend." Legend has it that grave robbers during the time of the Black Plague covered themselves with this blend to ward off the Plague while doing their nightly duties. Whether the legend is true or not, modern research has found it to be highly effective against airborne bacteria, so it's a wonderful disinfectant to keep around the house. In fact, one study in France found that using merely lavender and rosemary was just as effective in hospitals (!) as standard hospital sanitizer.*

Makes 1 quart

4 cups water or rubbing alcohol

20 drops clove essential oil

20 drops lemon essential oil

15 drops cinnamon bark essential oil

10 drops eucalyptus essential oil

10 drops rosemary essential oil

10 drops lavender essential oil

Place all ingredients in a large spray bottle. Shake well and spray on any surface. (Test on a small area before spraying on fabrics.) Wipe dry if desired.



# Dusting Spray & Wood Polish

*This is my favorite cleaning product to make. I was picky and wanted something exactly like the commercial versions in terms of thickness and spritz-ability, so it does require a blender and a couple of specialty ingredients to get the consistency right. If you can't find the xanthan gum or emulsifying wax - or just want a quicker, simpler version - the Lazy-Version Furniture Polish works really well too.*

Makes approximately 1 1/8 cup

3/4 cup water

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 tablespoons vodka (or white vinegar)

2 tablespoons white vinegar

1 tablespoon liquid glycerin (optional)

30-40 drops essential oil (clove, orange, lemon, etc)

1/4 teaspoon xanthan gum

1/2 teaspoon emulsifying wax, melted

Place the water, olive oil, vodka, vinegar, glycerin, and essential oils in a blender and blend on high. While the motor is still running, add in the xanthan gum and emulsifying wax. Process for 10-15 seconds until slightly thickened.

Pour into a spritz bottle and use once a week.

Lasts up to 3 months.

# Lazy-Version Furniture Polish

*I really shouldn't label this as "lazy," as there's nothing lazy about it. Perhaps just simple, quick, and smart!*

Makes approximately 1 cup

3/4 cup olive oil

1/4 cup white distilled vinegar

30-40 drops essential oil (optional)

*(clove, orange, lemon, etc)*

Place in a large spray bottle and shake vigorously.

Spray directly onto surface (being careful of overspray) and wipe in swirls until there are no streaks or residue present. Buff with a clean, dry cloth.

# All-Purpose Cleaner

*I don't purchase cleaners very often, but when I do, I purchase them from a local, boutique cleaning company that makes its own cleaners. It was by looking at one of their homemade all-purpose cleaners that I realized, "This is just water, vinegar, and essential oils! I could do that!"*

*So, I started playing around with ratios and came up with the version I like the best. I'm sure others have come up with a similar recipe, so I can't claim any brilliance on this one, but I DO consider it brilliant when the kitchen smells so fresh and clean after wiping down the dinner table with this spray.*

Makes 1 quart

2 1/2 cups water

1 1/2 cups white vinegar

1 teaspoon liquid castile soap (optional)

40 drops essential oils

*(mint & clary sage or cinnamon & orange are current favorites)*

Place in a large spray bottle and shake well.

# Toilet Bowl Cleaner

*This recipe takes the fizzing power of baking soda and vinegar and the cleaning power of hydrogen peroxide to a whole new level! Your toilet never had it so good....*

Makes enough for 1 use

1 cup baking soda

1 cup white vinegar

1 cup hydrogen peroxide

20 drops essential oils

Dump the baking soda onto a dry part of the toilet bowl  
and pour the vinegar over.

As it foams, use a toilet brush to scrub it into all the nooks and crannies  
inside the toilet bowl. Pour the hydrogen peroxide into the bowl.

Let sit for a few minutes if possible  
(if you've got company coming, feel free to skip the wait),  
then add the essential oils and scrub well with a toilet brush.  
Flush until all the baking soda has been washed away.

# Drain Cleaner (How to Clear a Clogged Drain)

*The first time I used baking soda and vinegar to unclog a drain, I didn't expect it to work. But, by gum, it did – and I've used this method ever since.*

*This is best used as a method of regular maintenance, say on Saturdays when you're deep cleaning the kitchen anyway, rather than as a way to unclog a totally-completely stuck drain after the fact. However, if you get yourself a mini-plunger that they have at almost any hardware store, you can give a little extra oomph to the unclogging process once the boiling water has loosened everything. (And if that doesn't work, just use the sodium hydroxide lye that you have on-hand for making soap - page 26 - and you'll have that drain clear in a jiffy.)*

2 large kettles of boiling water

1/2 cup baking soda

1/2 cup borax (optional)

1 cup white vinegar

1 cup boiling water

Fill a stockpot or tea kettle with water and bring to a boil.

Pour the entire thing down the slow drain.

Dump in the baking soda and borax, trying to get it as far down the drain as possible.

Let it sit for 5-10 minutes.

Pour in the vinegar and the 1 cup boiling water and let it fizz for another 5-10 minutes.

Flush with one last pot of boiling water. Repeat if necessary.

# Kitchen Scrub

*This mixture smells heavenly no matter which citrus fruit you use. It's a great way to lift your spirits while you scrub away dingy spots on sinks and counters! My personal favorite is grapefruit, but orange, bitter orange, lemon, or lime work equally well. You'll need about 2-4 fresh fruit to yield enough peels, depending on their size, or you can sometimes buy dehydrated citrus peels in the spice section of your local natural food store.*

Makes approximately 1 1/2 cups

1 cup baking soda

1/2 cup powdered dry citrus peels

1/4 cup borax (optional)

20 drops lemon, orange, or grapefruit essential oil (optional)

First, dry the peels by tearing them into dime-sized pieces and letting them sit for 3-4 days. You can also place them in a food dehydrator at 100°F for 6-8 hours (time will vary widely depending on the thickness of the peel and the size of the pieces).

When the peels are fully dry, place them in a spice grinder or blender and pulverize them into a fine powder. (Alternatively, you could zest the fresh peels, dehydrate the zest, then skip this step.)

Mix the citrus peel powder with the remaining ingredients in a large bowl. Place in a shaker container or small Mason jar and use on sinks, counters, stovetops, and even (non-wood) floors. Store in a dry place.

# Bathtub Scrub

*This version has a surprise ingredient that works spectacularly well on tubs, sinks, and other enameled surfaces. However, due to the surprise ingredient, it isn't quick to make, so you may just want to use the soft scrub for regular cleaning and leave the "special" scrub for your spring deep-clean.*

Makes approximately 1 1/4 cup

3 dozen eggshells to make about 3/4 cup of calcium powder

1/2 cup baking soda

15-20 drops essential oil

*(something citrus-y works well in this application)*

Rinse the eggshells well. Meanwhile, bring 3-4 gallons of water to a boil. Reduce heat to a gentle simmer, then carefully lower the eggshells into the water and let them cook for 10-12 minutes.

Remove the shells carefully and set them upside down on a baking sheet. Let them air dry for 8-12 hours, then place them in a 200° degree oven until they are completely bone dry, about 10 minutes.

Working in batches, place the shells in a coffee grinder and process until they are completely powdered, then toss the finished calcium powder with the baking soda and essential oils and mix until the oils are well-distributed and no clumps exist.

Spoon into a pint-sized Mason jar, then lay a piece of plastic wire mesh over the mouth. Screw on the regular lid to fit very tightly and store in a cool, dark place. To use, merely remove the lid and rescrew on the ring to create a shaker.

(You could also use a sprouting lid or anything else that strikes your fancy!)

# Soft Scrub

*Baking soda is great for cutting grease and giving gentle grit when needed, so this recipe is excellent for sinks, tubs, counters, or anything else that needs a soft scrubbing action. Basically, you form a paste with baking soda and liquid soap instead of forming a paste with baking soda and water.*

Makes approximately 7/8 cup

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup baking soda

2-4 tablespoons liquid castile soap (just enough to form a paste)

10-20 drops essential oils (optional)

Add liquid soap to the baking soda one tablespoon at a time until a paste is formed.

Add essential oils.

Store in a squeeze bottle or a small jar.



# Carpet Deodorizer

*When life is lived to the max, carpets take a beating. This includes day-to-day smells that just make a home smell dingy. So sprinkle some of this carpet deodorizer a few minutes before you vacuum and freshen your home naturally!*

Makes approximately 1 cup

1 cup baking soda

40-60 drops essential oils

*(lavender, tangerine, etc)*

Blend the baking soda and the oils in a bowl until there are no clumps.

Place in a shaker and shake moderately over the carpet  
a few minutes before you vacuum.

# How to Make Soap

*Okay, okay... so this one isn't in the "easy & basic" category, per se, but since some of the recipes call for "castile soap," I thought I'd include it nonetheless. Besides, it was the first homemaking DIY project I tackled and it's immensely satisfying. Preparation is the key here – give yourself plenty of time and prepare everything ahead of time. It's like making an intricate cake – it's not necessarily difficult, it just takes time.*

*Also, one note - I highly highly recommend using a [lye calculator](https://www.thesage.com/calcs/lyecalc2.php) such as the one at <https://www.thesage.com/calcs/lyecalc2.php> to develop your recipes every time you make soap. A lye calculator is an online tool that tells you exactly – to the gram – how much lye you will need according to what kind of oils you are using. I find this helpful because if I look in my soapmaking supply box and see that I'm running low on one type of oil, I can easily substitute in other oils without stressing about how much I need to change my recipe. Different oils require different amounts of lye in order to harden, so your saponification values change according to your ingredients and it's handy to have a calculator that does the calculations for you.*

Lastly, **PLEASE HEED THIS SAFETY WARNING:** In order to get the liquid oils to harden and saponify, you must use caustic lye. Never make soap when pets or young children are in the immediate vicinity and always take great care to not splash the mixture on yourself or to breathe any fumes that occur. **With care, this is an easy process, but one that requires a bit of focused time in order to keep everyone safe and healthy.**

If you do spill or splash lye crystals, lye water, or raw soap on your skin, rinse the area with as much vinegar as you can, then hold it under running water for several minutes. If a large portion of your body is affected or it's a severe chemical burn, call 9-1-1 and do the vinegar and water rinse until help arrives.

## What You'll Need

- **An online lye calculator**
- **Neoprene gloves** (NOT latex) – these can be found inexpensively at woodworking shops, hardware stores, or at [Lee Valley](#)
- **Kitchen scale** -preferably digital, but any scale able to measure within +/- 1 gram is acceptable. These can be found inexpensively on craigslist and some mass merchandisers. Soap ingredients **MUST** be measured by weight, not by volume.
- **A large stainless steel stockpot** – at least 8 quart size
- **1/2 gallon or gallon-sized glass or heat-resistant plastic pitcher** in which to mix lye water – be sure to use a pitcher that is easy to pour out without dribbling
- **Several large wooden spoons** (no metal, as it can react with the lye)
- **A rubber spatula**
- **(2) clip-on candy thermometers** – you'll need two thermometers going at once: one in the lye water and one in the oils.
- **An immersion blender or hand beater** (I highly recommend the blender! The first time I made soap I used a hand beater and it took about two hours to saponify all the oils – from then on I have used an immersion blender and it generally takes 5-10 minutes to get to trace.)

- **Molds** – you can pour all your soap into a large wooden trough, square cake pans, muffin tins, individual plastic soap molds – whatever you would like
- **Wax paper or freezer paper**
- **Newspaper or cardboard** (optional) – I like to place my lye water on several layers of newspaper or cardboard to protect my work surface and to have a place to set my spoon after stirring.
- **A long sleeve shirt** – this isn't a *required* piece of equipment, per se, but it's definitely a helpful safety tool. I have an old work blouse that is no longer worthy of being seen in public, but it's perfect for soapmaking, painting, scrubbing, and other "dirty work." For soapmaking, you want long sleeves in case your lye pellets are statically charged and jump a bit as they are poured from the container or if your raw soap splashes just a bit – this way, you'll be itch-and-irritant free.
- **Bench scraper. or large knife** – if you use a large trough mold, you'll need to cut the soap into bars once it has finished its initial cure

## Ingredients

- **Oils of your choice** – you may follow the recipe here or use a [lye calculator](#) to develop your own recipe.
- **Lye** (sodium hydroxide, NOT potassium hydroxide) – if you don't have a source locally, you can find it in the continental US at [Brambleberry Soapmaking Supplies](#), [Amazon.com](#), [The Lye Guy](#), [Camden-Grey Essential Oils](#), or [AAA Chemicals](#). In Canada, you can order it through [CanWax](#) or possibly at your local Home Hardware store (make sure it's at least 97% pure lye). In any other area, google your region's name and "sodium hydroxide" and you should be able to find a few resources.
- **Liquid of your choice** – distilled water, chamomile tea, green tea, etc. Water is recommended if you have not made soap before.
- **Additives** (optional) – lavender buds, herbs, mineral clay, fragrances and essential oils, colorants, exfoliants, etc. The recommended amount for fragrances are to use 0.7 ounces of fragrance per pound of soap.

## A Recipe for Soap

*I generally use a 5-pound soap mold plus various little molds with this recipe. Makes approximately 6.5 pounds.*

1500 grams olive oil

450 grams canola oil

300 grams coconut oil

100 grams palm kernel oil

90 grams sweet almond oil

325-330 grams sodium hydroxide

610-915 mL water (the more water, the longer the cure, but you'll get a couple more bars out of the batch)

### Optional Ingredients:

4.5 – 5 ounces essential or fragrance oils

4-5 tablespoons mineral bentonite clay (optional, but recommended for shaving soap)

5-10 tablespoons oatmeal, lavender buds, chopped herbs, etc. (start with the smaller amount and add more as desired)

## Method

### **Prepare all your equipment, prep your work area, and measure out any additives.**

Once the soapmaking process is underway, you may not have time to get other things ready, so make sure to prep *everything* ahead of time. If you're using a wooden soap mold or other inflexible mold (such as a cake or bread pan), you'll need to line it with freezer paper. If you're using plastic or silicone molds, you can use them as they are.

Make sure you've got lots of counter space in which to work and that your sink is free so you can quickly toss in used utensils or wash up anything with raw soap on it.

You'll also want your additives ready to go when your soap hits "trace," so it's definitely helpful to have them measured out ahead of time.

### **Make your lye water.**

Put on your neoprene gloves and long sleeve shirt, then measure out your lye on a piece of wax paper according to the [lye calculator](#) and set it aside.

In a well-ventilated area covered with newspaper or cardboard, measure your water into your heat-resistant pitcher, then add your lye. *NEVER put the lye in the pitcher and then add the water – it will create a caustic volcano that could erupt out of the container.* It will heat up very quickly, creating steam and bubbles. Be careful not to breathe any fumes. Stir with a wooden spoon until the solution is clear.

Place one of the candy thermometers in the pitcher and observe the temperature. Due to the chemical reaction, it will likely spike to about 180-200 degrees Fahrenheit. Let it cool to 120-125 degrees. This may take 1-2 hours.

### **Measure and heat your oils.**

Meanwhile, measure all your oils into your stainless steel pot. Heat gently over medium-low heat until all oils have melted. Turn off the heat and let the oils cool to 120-125 degrees.

### **Mix the ingredients.**

Once both the lye water and the oils have cooled to within 5 degrees of each other, pour the lye water into the oils, stirring as you pour. At this point, you may continue stirring with a spoon or you may switch to an immersion blender. Stir constantly until the mixture becomes completely opaque and is the consistency of a cooked custard – this is referred to as "trace." This will take 5-30 minutes with a blender and 2-3 hours by hand. You can test the consistency by lifting your stirring implement and letting a few drops fall back into the mixture. At proper trace, the drop will be suspended by the mixture.

At this point, you may add any additives you wish. Using a wooden spoon or spatula, stir in your fragrance or essential oils, clay, herbs, etc.

## **Pour and cure the soap.**

Pour the raw soap into your prepared molds, tapping them gently to remove air bubbles and to get the mixture evenly into all the corners.

Set the molds aside to cure for 2-5 days. Once the soap is no longer soft when touched, unmold the soap and cut it into bars using a bench scraper or large knife. Lay the bars on wax paper to cure for an additional 3-6 weeks. The longer they cure, they harder they'll get, as well as if you use them within the first 2-3 weeks, they may still be mildly caustic, which may cause your skin to itch slightly.

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