

NATURAL
— & —
ORGANIC
SOAP MAKING
ALCHEMY

Hobby to a Successful Homebased Business

Theresa Rogers

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By

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Cover design

Robin Goodnight

Layout & Interior Design

Chelsea Rogers

First Edition

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HOW I BECAME A SOAP-MAKING MAVEN

My family and I were seated at the kitchen table at dinnertime. I figured this was the time to “confront” them, much like any good sleuth would.

“Would any of you happen to know why the homemade soap Lorraine gave me for Christmas is disappearing faster than I’m using it? I’m positive I should have more left. This is the second bar that’s almost gone.”

I tried hard to sound angry, but I couldn’t. It was evident that someone else was using the soap. I really didn’t mind, although my curiosity got the best of me.

Silence filled the room. No one admitted to using it, not at first. I at least expected my teenage son to implicate his younger sister like he did for every other accusation.

Finally, my seven-year-old daughter confessed. “I’ve been using it, Mommy. It’s more fun to take a bath with that cool soap of yours than with any other in the house.” She paused before continuing her confession. “And, I use it when I wash my hands before eating. You do want me to wash my hands before eating, don’t you?”

Her big blue eyes locked onto mine. What a clever girl.

“Yes, I do, Braelyn,” I answered. How could I argue with that?

“I’m not mad; I was just curious. I’m glad you finally found soap you liked.”

Her father cleared his throat after hearing my response. No, not him, I thought.

“I’ve been using it too,” he said, sheepishly. “It actually does a better job of scrubbing the grime off my hands after work than anything else.”

Another pregnant pause, then finally, my teenage son Trey started talking. “Okay. I have been using it. But Mom, look at my face. Look at my acne.”

His acne, always a bane, had actually cleared up. I had noticed it before; I just didn’t realize that the natural and organic homemade soap sitting in our bathroom was responsible. The young man had tried everything else to ease his acne. I’m sure he was delighted.

THE TIPPING POINT

That evening, I gave the Case of the Missing Soap some thought. Basically, I discovered that one type of homemade soap pleased my entire family. Essentially, this bar of soap was a great astringent, gently yet effectively scrubbed grime off the skin, got a child to take a bath and wash her hands before eating and miraculously cleared stubborn acne!

And it had one more quality. Using this soap helped to relax me in the evening – or any time of the day for that matter – when I felt overwhelmed and stressed out. How could I possibly ask a soap to work any harder or more effectively and at a fraction of the cost of regular, commercially made soap that I was slowly learning carried with it all sorts of life-threatening additives.

There was no doubt about it that was the tipping point, I phoned my friend and offered to buy a couple of bars of soap from her. Then I told her why. Stop by tomorrow she said, “I’m making a new batch. I’ll have some ready for you to buy, but I think you’ll be interested in watching me make it as well.”

I wasn’t too sure about the soap making demonstration, but I agreed anyway.

The next day I visited my friend, and I saw how easy it was to make this soap myself.

When I got home, I gave everyone his or her own bar of soap and headed for the computer. I wanted to read up on the commercially made soap. I had heard it contained toxins and synthetic additives that could possibly lead to skin problems.

But I guess I wasn’t prepared to learn the fact that many of these additives that I can’t pronounce are in just about every bar of soap, every lotion and even in nearly all of the shampoos!

NATURAL AND ORGANIC

I wasn’t that naïve to believe the soap I had been buying was natural and organic. But I was not at all prepared for the level of harsh, harmful ingredients that were stuffed into one bar of soap.

I really had no choice now to change, if I didn't want to be a hypocrite. How could I continue to use commercial soap, knowing what I know now?

So, for several months, I stockpiled homemade soaps from craft shows. I especially looked for those which were scented with lavender. This herb, even in its essential oil form, is widely renowned for clearing up skin conditions, specifically tough, stubborn acne problems like my sons.

I began one day to make my own soap. I began with the melt and pour method, which is exactly all you do and graduated to the cold and hot process methods. I learned about the differences in the meaning of organic and natural.

I learned how to decorate the soap to continue to keep my daughters interest. And, I learned how this soap works hard enough to clear the grime off my husband and yet can help me relax after a stressful day.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORY OF SOAP

Meet Ugh one of our caveman ancestors. He's just returned home to his cave with a hefty amount of woolly mammoth for supper and some fur from the creature for his wife Nag, who had just been mentioning, she needed warmer clothing.

He walked into the cave with a great big smile. Sometimes, he confessed to himself he didn't have a clue to what made his wife happy. He was sure, though, that the meat and fur would. He was expecting a wonderful greeting in response.

Nag, indeed, was pleased with the surprise presents, but who knew that woolly mammoths smelled so horrible.

He walked into the cave, showed her the meat and fur, and she kissed her husband in gratitude. Then all of a sudden, she told him to go outside and get cleaned. He did as she requested. He began to clean himself using a harsh, primitive type of soap. There was still one problem, he thought, and the soap made him smell just as bad.

So, after he cleaned himself, he walked out into the field, into the wild roses growing there and took some rose petals and rubbed them on himself. He hoped she liked it.

When he walked back into the cave, she smelled the roses on him and gave him a big kiss . . . You smell like you've never had before she said. And then hinted that they should go back to the fur they used for a bed

Oh, wait. Scratch that. That's for a different type of story on another day.

The history of soap is as old as that of mankind. But there really is no proof for that statement. What archeologists can tell us, is that beginning around 2800 BC, barrels of something akin to soap-like substances were discovered at sites where people gathered in Babylonia.

Other archeologists found barrels of similar substances in Mesopotamia which dated back to approximately 2800 BC. But the most exciting part of this find, from a scientist's point of view was that they also discovered a clay tablet which described

the instructions for making the soap. The Mesopotamians simply combined potash with various types of oils.

Archeologists have also confirmed that the ancient Egyptians had their own formula for soap making with included both animal fats and vegetable oils.

Neither potash nor animal fats sound like any ingredients I want to soak in.

It wasn't until 600 AD that the "modern" soap as we know it, was developed. It was also about this time that soap-making guilds formed. Just to refresh your memory, a guild was a group of merchants or craftsman who ensured that the standards of their craft were upheld.

Soap-making craft guilds were especially popular in Spain in the 800s which soon became the leading soap maker in the Western world. It wasn't until around 400 years later, circa 1200 AD, that soap making took hold in England. That, by the way, was due to the discovery of Nicolas Leblanc, a French scientist. In the late 1700s, he discovered the fact that lye – up to even today a major component of soap – could be made from table salt.

There is no underestimating how this single discovery changed the entire craft and business. It was the last piece of the puzzle that would make commercial soap affordable to nearly every family.

Surprisingly though, the commercial production and sale of soap on substantial scale didn't occur until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Up until then many families, especially in the colonies of North America, made their own soap because commercially made soap was scarce and expensive. The standard soap-making procedure in the colonies at that time encompassed the use of hot water poured over wood ashes.

This made alkali potash which was then boiled with animal fats in large iron kettles. Yes, the soap itself cleaned well, but it was harsh on the skin and, as you might expect smelled bad.

Today, the commercial soap you and your family use, follows a similar formula and is still being produced in a manner perilously close to as it was nearly a hundred years ago – shortly after the industrial revolution. The areas the manufacturers have improved upon though include making soap milder on your skin, the coloring of soap, as well as its fragrance.

WHAT ABOUT 21ST CENTURY SOAPS?

I wish I could report to you that the soap you buy today at the big box stores or your grocery store shelves today are problem free and are unequivocally healthy for your body. Because while the soap may feel softer and smell wonderful, there are still problems with commercially made soap.

In order to give the soap a longer shelf life as well as to make the soap more attractive both in fragrance and color, commercial manufactures include synthetics and other unpronounceable additives that do little more than harm your health.

Your body, as you're well aware uses a host of nutrients daily in order keep itself healthy. What's not quite as well known – or just overlooked by most of us – is the role your skin plays in absorbing nutrients as well. When this occurs, it's called transdermal absorption. It soaks in nearly 60 percent of what you put on it. Of course, this includes not only soaps, but lotions and creams as well—and don't forget shampoos. Considering that your skin is your largest organ – on average it's 22 square feet – that's a large of amount of skin to drink up those potentially harmful additives that have access straight into your bloodstream.

Many of the products we use to get clean—soaps, facial cleansers and body washes—might actually be doing us more harm than good.

The problem comes when the skin indiscriminately absorbs what you put on it. Skin possesses what's called a semi-permeable membrane. This means that it allows all those healthy substances to be absorbed: all the best in the way of vitamins and minerals. But the skin doesn't have the ability to be a "bouncer" like at a nightclub.

When *not so good* additives are placed on the skin, the membrane allows those in as well as all of the nutritionally sound substances. And since they go straight to the bloodstream, they begin to toxify the blood that then causes problems with the major organs, like the liver and kidneys.

WHEN SOAP ISN'T SOAP

Before you think I'm a radical card-carrying rabble-rouser, or a leftover hippie from the mid-twentieth century, let's catch our breath and take a look at the big picture.

When is soap not soap?

Look at the bar or the body wash you've been using. That may not be soap. Most items labeled soap are more like washing powder than soap. And you don't have to take my word for it. Read, if you will find the following quote.

" Today there are very few true soaps on the market. Most body cleansers, both liquid and solid, are actually *synthetic detergent products* ."

Who said that?

None other than the U.S Food and Drug Administration.

To understand what the FDA is saying we have to learn a bit here about the making of soap. Don't worry; we'll get deeper into this later in the book. For now, I'm just providing you with a brief overview, so you can understand why the soap you believe you're buying from your local stores may not be soap after all.

Modern soap is made simply by mixing two ingredients. Either oils or fats with lye. It's that simple. This mixture causes a reaction that's referred to as *saponification* . The end result of this process creates a blend of soap and glycerin. It doesn't really matter what type of oil is used. If you choose olive oil, for example, your soap yields elements of olives. Similarly, if you select coconut oil, your final product will be the soap that contains elements of coconut.

The point of all of this is that the soap created from this mixture is soap. It may sound redundant, but it's a vital distinction. It doesn't need anything synthetic added to it to do the job it was meant to: clean your body. This is the way homemade soap is made and what you're about to learn more about in this book.

LET'S LOOK AT MASS-PRODUCED "SOAP."

This stands in stark contrast to the commercially produced so-called soaps. For starters, the soap is stripped of one of its most important ingredients, glycerin. This stripping process happens right after the ingredients go through saponification.

You probably have heard of glycerin with regard to soap. It's what referred to as a natural *humectant*. This means it actually attracts moisture to your skin. It's an exceedingly soothing emollient and is an invaluable ingredient in 'real' soap.

So why then, you're probably wondering, do some soap makers extract it? They take this substance and either sell it to other soap makers or use it themselves in their more expensive line of products.

These manufacturers then replace the glycerin with synthetic ingredients, including detergents, chemical fragrances as well as foaming agents. All of which, let's repeat, are not in the least bit natural. But all are added to do what the glycerin does naturally.

You can prove this to yourself, simply by reading the ingredients label of a bar of soap. In fact, why not read the labels of several different brands of soap to see what I'm talking about. The usual list of ingredients usually contains, for starters, sodium lauryl sulfate, which is used in laundry detergent. You can thank this ingredient if your skin feels dried out or if your skin is irritating.

Now to confuse you even more, there's another synthetic ingredient referred to as laureth sulfate. This is the foaming agent.

Just take a look at the list of ingredients for an average bar of soap in your local store. It could contain sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS), an anionic surfactant used in laundry detergent that will dry out and irritate your skin. It may also have sodium laureth

sulfate. This agent can all too easily become contaminated with a suspected carcinogen, known as Dioxane as it goes through the manufacturing process.

CHAPTER 2: TYPES OF SOAP

Depending on the categories you use, there are several ways to classify soap. Some people classify them according to usage; others prefer to divide them according to their physical structure.

This chapter is devoted to the many different classifications and how each soap may either differ from others or how they contain similar elements. You'll come to appreciate this information as you delve deeper into your hobby. When you talk with other soap makers, you need to know a bit about all of these different types. And keep in mind, people have a way of creating more categories all the time.

KITCHEN SOAPS

Pretty self-explanatory, right?

When you talk about soaps you use in your kitchen, you can divide these down one more time: into detergents and cleansers

For the most part, cleansers, unlike detergents, contain mild abrasives in order to get the toughest foods off items, like left-over bits of food stuck on counters or tables. In essence, they're formulated to get rid of heavy or solid particles as well as stubborn stains. When you go to buy a cleanser in any type of store, one of the first things you'll notice is the different types from which you have to choose. It all depends on the specific type of abrasive the cleanser contains.

SOAPS: LET'S GET PERSONAL

Another category of soap you'll bandy about quite a bit is the personal type. There are many forms of soap that fall into this category as well as different formulations. The kind you and your family members need depends on the personal hygiene needs as well as their current skin conditions

Take, for example, my son, who had acne. That would be considered a personal hygiene need which would encourage him to buy a soap for that particular skin condition.

Don't forget to include in this category body washes and even shampoos.

NOVELTY SOAPS



Manufactured and marketed with children in mind, these products come in a wide variety of shapes – like those that look like “rubber duckies” – or those soap-on-a-rope products you see everywhere. Of course, they work overtime cleaning the dirt and grime off of children, but the fun shapes and inventive articles sometimes placed in these products, make bath time fun for children.

PERFUMED SOAP



These are some my favorite soaps, and I know there are plenty of other people out there who feel the same way. It's amazing how something so easy to create can be such a compelling product.

For many of us, once we get the first whiff of these types of soaps, we're hooked. We have to buy it. And to think, it's made by adding a few ingredients and a pinch of perfume.

GUEST SOAPS



These are the small bars of soap that you'll stumble on (or purposely search for to take home with you) at many hotels, motels and bed and breakfast establishments. When they were first manufactured, you could always count on them as being miniature "bars" of soap. Today, you can find them in any number of shapes, included seashells, round disks, and flowers.

BEAUTY SOAPS ARE BIG BUSINESS



This is probably one of the biggest of the soap markets today. There's barely soap out there – marketed mainly to women of all ages – that doesn't promise you as a consumer a beauty advantage when used regularly. And you'll see now more than ever the number of celebrities and former models starting their own line of beauty products, with beauty soaps their main product.

These soaps feature first and foremost alluring fragrances, because, if you don't have that special fragrance, there's hardly a man who would be interested in you. But, there's more to a bar of soap than just a pretty aroma.

These products also have any number of ingredients "guaranteed" to provide your skin with everything it needs to remain hydrated, attract and maintain healthy skin, and in many cases, keep the wrinkles away.

Beauty soaps may cost a bit more than a bar of soap or a bottle of liquid body wash for the family, but these products also are rich in glycerin and oil blends which really do help improve and smooth your skin in some instances. If you buy these, you need to be selective and take a few moments now and then to evaluate how it's delivering on its promises.

MEDICATED SOAP



Medicated soaps are those that are manufactured with the intention of treating an often-troubling skin condition. If you have a teenager, your first thought may be a medicated soap designed to help clear up acne. There are also soaps on the market that claim they can help slough off clogged pores, pimples, and even chronic itching.

Just keep in mind when you buy and use them, you should be fully aware of the ingredients in these. In this way, you can narrow down your purchase and better target the condition you need healed.

A FEW MORE WORDS ON THE MEDICATED SOAP

A few years ago, various medicated soaps were all the rage. People were using them with great results. Today, though, you may find fewer of these products on the market.

It's amazing how quickly this market has grown in the past several years. Today you can find soap products that claim to heal almost everything that perhaps you present commercially manufactured soap cannot.

You've heard of soap that'll remove or reduce the appearance of the symptoms of cellulite. These claim to reduce the dimples on the skin, especially in those stubborn areas like the hip and thighs.

And you even be using another type of medicated soap that keep the signs of aging at bay. They may promise tighter, younger-looking skin. Here's one, though you may not have heard of, and that's "anti-mosquito" soap. It supposedly does exactly that. It'll keep the mosquitos from biting you. It's also popular in areas that have an infestation of mosquitoes.

The problem is that the vast majority of those on the market use synthetic ingredients instead of natural and organic ones. As we continue, you'll see how you can achieve these same results, even better, in fact, when armed with your slow cooker and a few other ingredients.

There's another, the more serious problem with medicated soap, specifically those that claim to be antibacterial. If you're wondering if they work, yes, they do. But while they claim to kill 99.9 percent of the bacteria, it's that one percent they don't kill that cause a problem. They linger and eventually become resistant to antibacterial soaps.

This resistance can reveal itself in bacteria that won't respond to any anti-bacterial treatment, not just the soap.

You've heard of this before, I'm sure, just never associated it with the soap. You've read of cases where individuals have complained an open wound won't heal, the diagnosis is that it's being caused by drug-resistant bacteria. Just battling these bacteria then become literally a life or death situation for the person with the infection.

Even the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recognizes that no evidence exists that these antibacterial soaps are actually better at cleaning your hands.

According to the FDA, the average customer does not need to use antibacterial soap. Everything in your home will get "clean enough," even if you don't use anti-bacterial soap. And you don't have to fear that you're contributing to the next epidemic of a "super bacteria" outbreak, one that can't be treated through ordinary anti-bacteria drugs.

Of course, you'll find these soaps in hospitals and doctor offices, and that's exactly where they should stay.

Rather, they may be harming you because of the chemicals they contain. The following list, published by the Food and Drug Administration is just a partial list of some of the chemicals most recently banned in medicated soaps:

Ethanol iodine

Cloflucarban

Fluorosalan

Hexachlorophene

Hexylresorcinol

Iodine complex (ammonium ether sulfate and polyoxyethylene sorbitan monolaurate)

Iodine complex (phosphate ester of alkyl aryloxy-polyethylene glycol)

Nonyl phenoxy poly (ethyleneoxy)

Poloxamer-iodine complex

Povidone-iodine 5 to 10 percent

Undecoylium chloride iodine complex

Methylbenzethonium chloride

Phenol (greater than 1.5 percent)

Phenol (less than 1.5 percent) 16

Secondary amytricsresols

Sodium oxychlorosene

Tribromsalan

Triclocarban

Triclosan

Triple dye

SOAPS CONTAINING GLYCERIN

As you recall, we said that when you make your own soap, you'll end up with a product that possesses glycerin. You can't be sure of with products you purchase off the shelves of your favorite health and beauty aid store. Today, many soap makers strip their products of this substance. And that's a shame because glycerin makes your skin feel so much moister and helps your skin stay hydrated.

TRANSPARENT SOAP



Transparent soap is exactly that, clear soap. This soap is see-through because it contains ingredients that differ slightly from other soap products. In this type of product, more often than not will contain alcohol. The inclusion of this allows the process of manufacturing to be conducted at higher temperatures.

But is it really different from other soaps.

If you've never used a transparent soap, then you're in for a surprise. It feels better against your skin compared to other soaps. For those of you who love lather, then this is your soap. It creates a wealth of it. Many individuals who have used it also praise that "squeaky clean" feeling it leaves with you.

It does all of this because the crystals it's made of are smaller than average and it doesn't have any excess oil. Some people have described it as being a soap that has, in effect, been pre-dissolved. This makes it ready to go its thing as soon as it touches your skin. And finally, it's super easy to rinse off. And unlike some soaps, it leaves no residue on your skin or in your sinks.

LIQUID SOAPS



Liquid soaps, while popular, are a bit more difficult to replicate at home and, in fact, not that easy for commercial manufacturers either. For this reason, many of these bought from retail stores are nothing more than detergents in attractive containers.

If you're not diligent about reading the labels of the many leading soaps on the retail store shelves, you can find yourself buying more than what you bargained for. Instead of getting a true soap, expecting a refreshing cleansing, you may be buying yourself of the container of soap that gives you dry skin and a whole lot more

CHAPTER 3: NATURAL VS. ORGANIC SOAPS

I have a close friend who is, well, sold on organic food.

And that's a good thing. It can make a world of difference to your health. Some of our friends claim she's gone overboard on this organic, natural food bit. She's not only willing to pay what seems like incredible prices for these products, but she's almost obsessed with natural foods.

So, it was a bit surprising when I was out with her one day, and she needed to pick up soap for the family. She bought that body wash "blindly," as I call shopping without reading the label. Had she stopped for a moment to read it, she would have found an abundance of synthetic, impossible-to-process ingredients, some of which we introduced to you in the previous chapter.

The soap, so it appeared at first glance, was anything but organic. And it didn't resemble any item that could be called natural. Yet, it never occurred to her that with that thoughtless, purchase, she was acting quite out of character.

So, what's the point of this walk through the store with her?

She's taken such good care of her body – and that of her family's – so well ensuring that as few as toxins as possible get into their systems. Yet, when it comes to her skin, she doesn't appear to have a clue that much of what she puts on it will soak into the skin and may eventually affect her organs. When it's time to buy various soaps, shampoos and cleansers and both laundry and dish-washing detergents she doesn't appear to have that same level of dedication.

Or perhaps she just doesn't know how dangerous toxins in soaps can be. Those individuals who are bothered with sensitive skin can tell you the difference in their condition when they switched from commercial to natural and organic soap. Maybe you're one of these folks, or maybe one of your children is.

You may not even have known this until you "accidentally" stumbled across a bar of natural and organic soap. Once you started to use it and experience the relief from

your symptoms, you were sold! You vowed you'd never return to harsh toxic laden soap again.

How to ensure the commercial soap you buy is natural and organic. You have to become a sleuth like you are when you buy organic food. Before any item goes into your grocery cart, you study the label. And I'm not talking about the front of the bar or container that blares at you "made with natural ingredients." "Made with organic ingredients."

You'll be reading more of that every time you go shopping. Marketers now know that consumers crave this type of reassurance. What some of them have seemed to have forgotten is the "follow through by actually using natural and organic ingredients.

So how can you be sure?

The first is by looking for soaps that are labeled "certified organic" or say that are "100 percent organic." Then and only then you can be sure that what you'll be putting on your skin is natural and organic and most importantly free of toxins.

You'll never go wrong in choosing an organic and natural soap if you look at the label with an eye to searching for ingredients that are familiar to you. Some individuals say they make it a habit only to buy soaps that contain ingredients they can pronounce, a reference to the many chemicals those of commercial grade.

To get you started (even before you begin your soap making journey) is a partial listing of these substances. As we talk more about making your own soap, you'll discover for yourself the chances for you to create a soap with some of these same, fresh ingredients.

Common ingredients found in organic soap include

Aloe Vera	Coconut Oil
Essential Oils	Cinnamon
Unrefined shea butter	Goat's milk
Olive Oil	Wild Yucca root
Sunflower Seeds	Sunflower petals

Oats	Wild Horsemint
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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NATURAL AND ORGANIC

There is a lot of talks today about products being natural or organic. Many individuals assume that if a product is labeled “natural” that it’s also organic. That simply is not so. A product can be natural, but not organic. Natural simply means you can find it in nature, like the ingredients listed above. Those are natural ingredients, but they aren’t necessarily organic.

An organic ingredient is one that contains no chemical pesticides or other synthetic ingredients to kill the weeds or the insects who may want to chew on the leaves or flowers.

The truth of the matter is that you’ll be hard-pressed to find true organic and natural soap on your neighborhood’s grocery shelf. If you want, you can try to find it at a more upscale boutique, although the sales associate assisting you will probably confess, due to the need to keep soaps from going rancid, that some not-so-natural ingredients are necessarily added.

THREE KEY IDENTIFIERS OF ORGANIC SOAPS

So, is there really such a thing as natural and organic soap? Below are three qualities you should search for when you’re considering buying natural and organic soaps.

1. Soaps that are produced locally

This isn’t always the case, but the odds are in your favor when you do purchase your soap locally. You’re more likely to find these items are packed with fresh, locally grown ingredients. You can’t always guarantee that it’ll be natural and organic, free of toxins, but if start up a friendly chat with the sales associate or the soap maker herself, you’ll find out in a matter of minutes

But there’s an added advantage you may be interested in when you look for close-by homemade soap. The owners and operators of smaller, local soap-making companies usually are conscientious about the size of their carbon footprint.

Not only that but when you deal with local vendors, you are assisting the company to help your local community financially. It's nothing less than a win-win-win transaction and relationship.

2. Artisan soap promotes social relationships

Think about it for a moment. Artisan soap is any soap which has been produced carefully and with love by hand, compared to being mass produced on large equipment.

When you buy your soap, the odds are greater than average you're making that exchange not only with the owner of the company, the person who also fashions the soap. This fact, alone, has a myriad of advantages to easily placing special orders to gaining a mentor should you decide to start a small business yourself.

You can also be assured that she or he is also knowledgeable about at least a few of the synthetic and harmful additives found in commercially bought soap.

3. Local artisans care about the quality of their products

The fact that the soap makers of these local companies are making soap by hand, to begin with is a large indication that they care about the quality of their products in addition to making money.

Of course, they're interested in making money. Few of us would start a business with the sole purpose of losing money. But these local merchants and craftspeople are also interested in making the very best soap they can. When you meet them, you'll discover the amount of passion they have for their products and the commitment they have for natural health and a clean environment.

CHAPTER 4: METHODS OF SOAP MAKING

When your friend or co-worker says she's making soap at home, do your eyes glaze over trying to visualize how it's done?

Perhaps this is the only thing that's holding you back from trying it yourself. When she's making soap, she's talking about using one of the four common methods: melt and pour, hot process, cold process, and re-batching.

We'll go over these briefly right now so you can get a feel for what soap making is all about.

MELT AND POUR

First, let's talk about the melt and pour process. Some soap makers who use either the hot or cold process can be downright snobbish in their insistence that the melt and pour technique is not soap making at all.

Depending on how you approach this method it can be the easiest or the most elaborate and delicate of projects. In any case, the melt and pour process the perfect jumping off point for someone who knows absolutely nothing about making soap.

6 EASY STEPS TO MAKING MELT & POUR SOAPS

It's so simple, in fact, it can be described in six easy steps.

1. Buy a ready-made soap base.

This isn't the same thing as the soap you use to wash with daily. We'll talk more about that later.

2. Melt the soap base into a liquid.

3. Add extra ingredients to your liking, like essential oils for scents and aromatherapy purposes, colorants as well as herbs for attractiveness.

4. Pour all of this into a mold.

5. Decorate and design the soap .

6. Allow it to harden

It doesn't get any easier than this. Using the melt and pour method can be as simple as you want. If you'd rather spend your time indulging the artist within instead of doing more mixing and carefully handling the lye, then this is absolutely the method for you – at least to start with. With a bit of decorating and addition of some scents, your gifts of homemade soap will be most welcome, even anticipated around holidays and birthdays.

And, of course, your entire family will enjoy these soaps no less than the soap created through either the hot or cold processes techniques.

As you mature into this hobby, you'll see that your bars of soap get more elaborate. You may also decide that the day has come for you to step outside your comfort zone and try another method.

THE COLD PROCESS METHOD

Granted, the cold process method, requires substantially more input from you, at least in the initial stages of creation. It's even been called the hardest of all the soap-making processes. That being said, it's probably one of the most popular. It's a satisfying process. Just keep an open mind as you step into it.

The cold process method, my personal favorite, is substantially more complicated, neatly mixing science with art. Unlike the melt and pour method, this process allows you to create your own soap base from scratch.

Basically, what you're doing when you're using this method is an activity called *saponification* . This word alone has scared off many a would-be soap maker feeling she's already out of her league, because she's never heard, and can barely pronounce the word.

But think about it. Why would you? In fact, why would anyone run around using this word when they could just as easily say “soap making?”

Saponification is the scientific term of the chemical reaction that occurs when a “base” and an “acid” come together to form salt. Don’t worry; this will be a short chemistry lesson. But you need to have at least the minimum understanding of what’s going on when you start working with the cold process method.

Should you decide to give this method a try, you’ll mix lye, also referred to sodium hydroxide, the base in the equation, with an oil or fat – that’s the acid. The result? Soap!

Just one note about this method: The equation of the amount of lye you use to the amount of oil changes from session to soap-making session, depending on the type of oil you use. The only way of knowing the ratio of lye to oil is by consulting something known as the saponification chart. I’ve included it in Appendix I made for you.

Other ingredients are added to this as the chemical reaction takes place. Some of the additions may actually change the course of the reaction; other additions won’t affect the final chemical process. They are, however, items to make the final product more attractive or even whimsical. These are items you’ll embed into the soap.

To be honest, when you make your soap in this fashion, it gives you the peace of mind of knowing what’s in every single bar of your soap. That means total control over what goes on your skin, as well as your family’s. It also means you have total control of every ingredient in the soap. If there’s an artificial ingredient in these types of soap, it means you put it there.

MORE DETAILED STEP BY STEP DIRECTIONS

Let me give you an example of the typical detailed steps in the process. This is the basis of all standard-making recipes. When you have a question about the process when you’re following a specific recipe you can always turn back here to see if you can get any clarification on it. If you’re still stumped, you know where you can turn, the internet, specifically YouTube.

[Olive oil](#) 26.5 ounces

[Coconut oil](#) 16.5 ounces

[Palm oil](#) 10 ounces

[Lye](#) 209 grams

Your choice of [essential oils](#) 2.7 ounces - optional scent

Distilled water 20 ounces

Take the dry 209 grams of your dry lye and weigh it. The easiest way to do this is by filling a re-sealable bag, like a large kitchen storage bag with the lye and then weighing it on a digital scale.

Next, weigh the 20 ounces of distilled water, making sure you've placed it in a heat-safe container.

You'll carefully pour the lye into the water. Be sure to stir while you're pouring the lye in. You'll want to stir with a fairly brisk motion. The best instrument for this is either a silicone, a heavy-duty rubber or a wooden utensil.

Continue to mix this until the lye is entirely dissolved. Don't be surprised when the ingredients are dissolving together as the resulting mixture begins to heat up. It's exactly what it's supposed to do.

Take your thermometer and put it in the lye and water solution you've just created. Then set it aside for when you'll need it later. The temperature of this solution needs to cool down to approximately 95 degrees Fahrenheit before you can do anything with it.

While you're waiting for that to cool down, measure out your 26.5 ounces of your olive oil, 16.5 ounces of the coconut oil and 10 ounces of palm oil. If you're just beginning, you may want to pour each of these into separate glass bowls, at least for your first couple tries at this method.

Next, melt the two solid oils – the coconut and palm oils – until they become a liquid. Your best bet is to use a 3-quart saucepan. In doing this, you'll want to use low heat. The last thing you want to do is to burn these oils.

Now, you'll have to wait until the oils have cooled and are at the same temperature as the lye-water solution, 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Once both of these mixtures are at that temperature, you'll be able to continue.

More than likely you may need to adjust the temperatures a bit in order to get them perfect. If either mixture should drop below that established 95 degrees, you can raise it simply by placing the entire pot in a sink filled with hot water

In a similar manner, you'll need to cool the mixture if it isn't going down to 95 degrees. In this case, all you need to do is to place it in a sink filled with cold water. Be patient; you'll find just the right temperature. After you've performed this part of the soap making process several times, you'll discover getting it "just right" is almost second nature.

Here's a tip I learned years ago. Once the lye gets to the 95-degree mark, you'll want to transfer it to a heat-resistant cup with a spout. The spout is the key because it'll be easier to pour into the oil without any spillage occurring.

From here, you'll slowly add the lye and water solution to the oils in the large soap-making pot. Continuously stir as if you're making a figure eight in the mixture. What you're aiming for here is for the mixture to reach trace. If you care to use a stick blender, you can do so but use it with care. You'll want to hit pulse several times to ensure the mixture doesn't move too quickly and splashing out of the bowl.

Now, while you're mixing this, you're going to be on the lookout for trace. Not only are you're going to be searching it by sight, but you can test its state as well. Drizzle a small amount of that mixture onto the surface of the whole. If the liquid stays on the top of the surface for even a brief period before it sinks back into it, then you have achieved trace. This is the moment that saponification takes place. Your soap is now soap and ready for the next section of the cold process method.

Completing the saponification process may test your patience. This is the part of the recipe where you swear the soap begins to take on a mind of its own and tries to block your progress. Of course, that's not the case. I've had many individuals ask me

how long it takes until these two separate chemicals are unified through the chain reaction.

I would like nothing better than to reassure you that it happens in a certain, predetermined amount of time, but I can't. The length of time it takes for the two items to become one could be as short as eight minutes and as long as an hour. Of course, that depends on the utensils you're using as well as the types of oils you've chosen to work with.

It's a great idea, and plenty of polished soap makers agree with me, to make sure that while you're waiting for trace, you should check the mixture at approximately five to 10-minute intervals. This ensures you'll see it at its very first appearance.

If you wait too long to test it, you always run the risk of the soap becoming solid before you can even take it out of the pot to put in the mold. Of course, if you're using a powered-stick blender, your trace time will be cut shorter than by stirring by hand.

Now comes the more artistic part of the recipe. It's at this point that you'll add any essential oils, nutrients or colorants to the soap.

If the recipe you're using calls for any of these, stir them in only briefly. You want to ensure that the texture and the coloring are evenly spread throughout the soap.

You now can pour the soap into the mold as quickly as you can. This, by the way, is a five-pound recipe which calls for a five-pound mold. If after you've poured the soap into the mold, you find some excess solution sticks to the side of the pot.

The odds are good that those "leftovers" didn't go through the saponification process and wouldn't be anything but a problem. Instead of worrying about the leftovers, your next in this process is to insulate your soap.

It's much easier than it sounds. Insulating soap is nothing more than placing a piece of cardboard or freezer paper on top of the mold. This keeps it sealed from the air. If you want, you can also wrap it in a blanket or a towel. Allow the soap to remain nice and cozy like this for at least 24 and up to 36 hours.

After the soap is firm enough to cut, you're ready to take the soap out of its mold. You'll want to slice the large portion of the soap into smaller bars using something called a soap cutter. Take a good look at your soap before you begin to divide the large bar. Certain molds have a cutting slot guide to give you help.

Take these bars and place them on a cookie rack to cure. Leave them like this for about a week before you flip them to their other side. Continue this for another five weeks. At the end of this six-week period, you're finally ready to use the soap.

If you notice that there's any white powder on the bars, simply remove it. This is nothing more than "soda ash." If you leave it on your soap, it'll tend to dry your skin out.

Think you're done?

Well, almost. You still have one more step to take. That's to check the pH level of the soap before using it. This is an especially important step if you're a novice at soap making.

And that brings us to the . . .

THE HOT PROCESS METHOD

As you probably can guess, the hot process has parallels to its sister technique, the cold process. The main distinction between the two, in fact, is that the heat in this technique accelerates the saponification process.

If you're going to test this technique, then you'll learn that you're going to apply this heat at varying places along the process. And you can do it all with either your oven, a slow cooker or even a microwave oven. This is the soap making technique that the Pilgrims used when they first came from England.

There are a few disadvantages to this process. You may find yourself having trouble removing the soap from the mold. You may also discover, depending on how the way you're carrying out this technique, which it may also be difficult to set the soap in the mold in the first place.

But those disadvantages aside, the hot process method also has a considerable step up as opposed to the cold process. The cure time for the soap is much shorter. You don't need to wait weeks to use your soap.

From the moment I made the decision to "advance" my soap-making skills to what I saw as the next level (which isn't exactly right, I was just curious) I started searching on the web and in bookstores for someone to give me the information, straight up.

All I was really looking for, I kept telling myself, was a set of steps. I wanted clearly outlined series of steps I could follow so that I could replicate every time I made soap. Then, I would be sure that every time I would make soap, I would get the perfect bar, first time, every time.

Was that really so much to ask for?

Evidentially it was. If that what's you're looking for I'll save you time and energy. You're not going to find it.

The problem with my search methods was simply I didn't fully understand the saponification that occurred during the hot process method. I'm going to clue you in the right at the beginning so unlike me, you don't waste time and energy searching for these steps. Time and energy that could just as easily gone into the enjoyable.

We've mentioned the process when talking about the cold process method. It's that chart in the appendix of this book that shows you the ratio between lye and oil that will create the perfect medium for making soap.

During the hot process, you're already "actively cooking" the soap, which means that your mixture is saponifying on its own. You don't need to do anything else but allow it to cook.

There's only one hard and fast rule that any veteran soap making will emphasize to you over and over again.

Never walk away from the hot process method while your soap is cooking.

I know, you only mean to be gone a moment, but I speak from experience when I say that unattended hot process soap can grow wildly. What you have on your hands is what some people refer to as a “soap volcano.” Nothing good can come from this. It only creates a large mess you must clean. Then adding insult to injury, as they say, the batch of soap you’ve been devoting yourself to is ruined. There’s no way to save it.

TAKING THE HOT PROCESS STEP-BY-STEP – THE SLOW COOKER METHOD

I selected the slow cooker method because nearly everybody owns one. This way, if you get super-excited about this method, you don’t feel obligated to run out and buy a double boiler simply for making soap.

1. Set your slow cooker on low.

Setting the appliance on the lowest setting possible reduces the risk of overheating and accidentally creating that volcano of soap I was talking about. Cooking soap at a low heat.

2. Make the lye solution

In this step, you’ll heat the oils that are called for in your recipe to 150 degrees Fahrenheit. Before adding the lye solution. Then I allow the solution to cool for half an hour. This was the most intimidating step for me when I first started making soap.

You’ll place your oils first into the slow cooker. Allow them to get hot. Once they do get to the temperature, then I pour a thin stream of the lye solution into that. While I’m adding the lye solution, I use a whisk to stir the combination. Some individual prefer to use a stick blender at this step. Since working with lye can be a bit dangerous, I’d suggest you start with the whisk.

As you gain confidence – and this will be more quickly than you can imagine – then you can decide if you want to use a stick blender. If you decide, by the way, to use the latter appliance, the safest way is by pushing the pulse button. In this way, the blending can’t get out of control.

Whichever appliance you use, just be sure to maintain a near constant stirring motion. You don't want to stir so fast to have this splash up and out of the slow cooker. Then again, you don't want to allow the solution to sit idle either.

The goal to this blending is the molecules of each of these ingredients to merge in order to make something completely different from what you started with. That would be soap.

Finally, the fourth soap-making method is called . . .

THE RE-BATCH METHOD

You may also know this method by its other name, the milled soap method.

This technique involves shredding your own soap creation, melting it down and then adding ingredients to this. This method is clearly related to melt and pour we first mentioned. The difference is that in this technique you don't use a pre-made soap base.

As easy as this sounds, you may be surprised to learn that you can use this milled or re-batching method, without first having used either the cold or hot process. It's predominantly used to save batches of soap that somehow missed the mark and needs to be re-melted before using the soap for a future projects.

Here are the basic five steps needed to use the milled or re-batching soap making technique.

1. Create a plain soap base from scratch, as it were, using either the cold process or the hot process.

Don't add anything extra, however, that includes essential oils, nutrients or other substances.

In essence, you're taking the soap making method as far as the saponification segment as it were. By the time you've finished this part of the technique, you should

be looking at pure, basic unscented soap base without any type of additional ingredients.

While you may see some items in this basic soap at times. Because there are a few soap makers, who do add incidentals into this re-milled batch during the cold process method. But the vast majority of them wait until later to do this.

2. Cut the soap into bars.

3. Next, do nothing.

That's right! Well, that's not exactly correct, but close enough. You'll need to wait approximately five to six weeks until your soap has cured. That's just the term that describes the hardening process. What occurs during this waiting period is the evaporation of the water that was used in the recipe.

A cured soap lasts longer and has a firmer texture than a bar that hasn't been cured. In order to get the best results from the curing process, you should store the soap in a cool, dry location that's well ventilated.

4. Grate it .

Yes, you read that right! Grate your fully hardened soap.

But wait . . . you're not done yet.

5. Melt it.

You'll need to melt down these "shavings" in a microwave oven, a double boiler or a slow cooker. If you'd like to make this technique a bit easier, consider putting the gratings in a heat-resistant plastic bag. Then when it's time to melt them you'll have no trouble pouring in a more accurate amount without any mess.

There's also another advantage for doing this. It makes adding any extras to your mixture much easier. Add them into the bag, then simply knead them into the soap while they're still in that bag.

Once the soap are solid bars again, take them out of the mold and allow them to rest. If you've followed the above instructions and already cured the soap, then you don't need to cure it again.

The confusion comes in when people "double cure." They feel as if they need to wait another six to eight weeks to use them.

Before you use this soap, though, test it for the pH levels. This ensures that it's safe to use.

CHAPTER 5: BASIC EQUIPMENT AND INGREDIENTS

If you're like me, once you decide to do something, like making your first batch of soap, you become so excited that you might be tempted to jump in and start making it before you've double checked that you have all the ingredients

It's a good idea before you start any session – not just your initial couple of batches – that you have everything you need. And it makes sense to lay them out so you can take inventory of them.

If you start on impulse to make a cake or cookies and find that you don't have enough sugar, you can always knock on your neighbor's door to borrow a cup. The chances are good; she'll have it. It's far less likely your neighbor will have a cup of lye for you.

The following list contains the basic soap-making equipment that covers all four processes. Just because it's on the list doesn't necessarily mean you'll need it for the specific technique you're using.

BASIC EQUIPMENT YOU WILL NEED

VENTILATED SPACE

Before you even check out the equipment, you need to find a workspace in your house you can work in – safely. This means that if you've chosen to work with lye – either with the hot or cold process – it means you'll need to be in a well-ventilated room. Lye can be corrosive. It's best to take as many precautions as you can when you work with it.

RUBBER GLOVES, GOGGLES AND MASK

If you choose to work with lye, then you absolutely need the gloves, goggles and the mask. Of course, these are safety precautions, but all it takes is one slip and something volatile may occur. I know that goggles may be expensive, and your budget may be tight, but don't get cheap when it comes to purchasing these safety glasses.

You'll want to buy a pair that is much like those used in labs. And, of course, the mask is essential to ensure you're not inhaling lye fumes. This specific equipment especially necessary if you're using either the cold process or the hot process.

WATER

Whether you're using the cold process or the hot, you'll find that you'll need distilled water. Distilled water is that which has no minerals or contaminants in it.

You may not realize it right now, but you'll notice the difference when you make soap with distilled or tap water. You'll have a need for distilled water for both the hot process and the cold process.

You'll also need tap water to wash chemicals and other ingredients from your workspace as well as yourself.

STAINLESS STEEL POT



If you're using the cold process method, then you'll need one stainless steel pot to dedicate to the use for lye. Double check to ensure that it is indeed stainless steel. You don't want to use aluminum. And don't whatever you do, use this pot for cooking food. Lye has the potential to be dangerous, so it's best to keep it separate from your kitchen equipment.

STAINLESS STEEL SAUCEPAN



You'll need this to heat your additives, including fats and oils. Heat resistant glass containers and measuring cups. Don't think you can slide by using plastic equipment here. Some of the ingredients achieve so hot that it's possible they'll melt plastic.

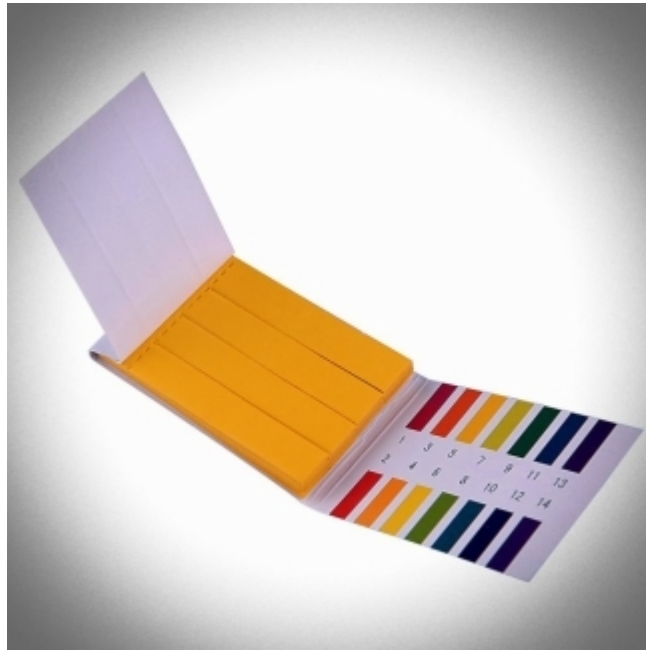
MEASURING SPOONS



Now here's a bit of a different warning. When you measure lye, you should use plastic. You're probably surprised by this. But there is a reason for it. There are

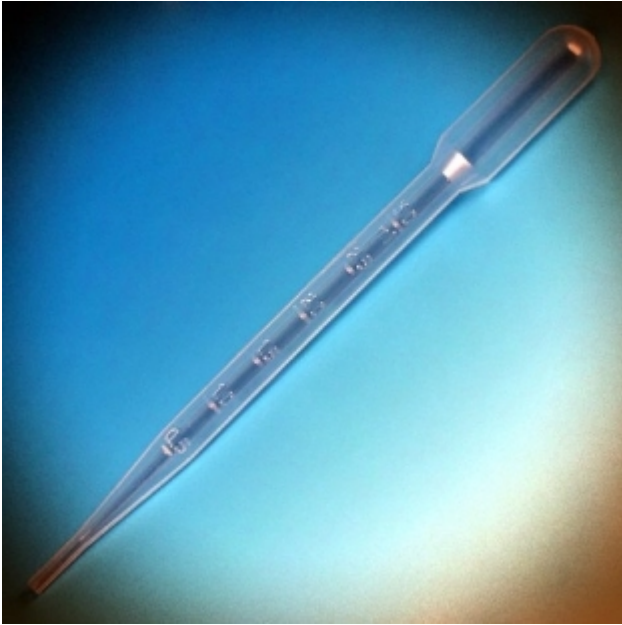
specific metals that may react with the lye. So, it's best, to dole out the initial lye with plastic spoons. This doesn't mean you should use these for hot solutions, just in case the plastic melts.

PH PAPER



Just in case you're curious, the pH paper is an abbreviation for Phenolphthalein. More commonly, you've probably heard them referred to as litmus strips. You'll use these when you go to check the soap's pH balance. It's highly recommended that you do this when you use the hot process technique.

PIPETTES



Technically speaking, these are necessary, but they are just about the easiest tools when you're measuring out small amounts of ingredients. You may find yourself needing to add ingredients in terms of "drops," especially if you're planning on using essential or fragrance oils. These will come in handy using any of the four methods.

DIGITAL SCALE



When it comes down to it, the digital scale is, without a doubt the most important piece of equipment for the artisan soap making. This may surprise you but consider that these recipes you'll be working with depend on a fairly high degree of accuracy.

Specifically, you'll want to purchase a scale that weighs to the tenth of a measurement in ounces and grams. This scale is essential for both the hot and cold processes, and you may even use it for the melt and pour technique as well.

THERMOMETERS



You might want to purchase two of these. These are vital for both the hot and cold processes.

SILICONE SPATULAS



This particular type of spatula will be essential to help you mix. You definitely don't want to use wood for this portion of the process. You'll discover the need for these, especially, when you're using the hot and cold processes.

MIXING SPOONS AND SPATULAS

You can use wooden or metal spoons and spatulas for anything that doesn't have lye in it. This means these are perfect for the melt and pour technique and when you're re-batching.

ELECTRIC STICK BLENDER



Used in the cold process method, the stick blender can be a valuable tool. Not only that, but this is one piece of equipment you'll be able to use just about anywhere and on anything

RUBBING ALCOHOL



You should keep a bottle of rubbing alcohol among your basic ingredients as a just-in-case it's a very helpful ingredient to have around. Rubbing alcohol works well at smoothing surfaces on your soap after you've popped any bubbles that may have

shown up on your soap. This can occur with either the hot or cold process as well as the melt-and-pour method.

MICROWAVE OR DOUBLE BOILER



You may want to use a microwave or a double boiler for the melt-and-pour method to heat the original soap. But I highly recommend you seriously consider using a double boiler. A double boiler is simply a smaller pot inside a bigger pot, where the bigger or outer pot holds and warms the water while the inner smaller pot melts the soap base. It is effective, safe and inexpensive to use.

SLOW COOKER



Also called by its brand name of Crockpot, you'll only need this if you're making the soap through the hot process technique. Using this appliance accelerates saponification. And don't think you need a slow cooker dedicated to soap making. The will cook out of the soap, and you'll find there's no trace of it lingering.

PLASTIC WRAP

You'll need this only if you're using the hot process technique. You'll use this for cover slow cooker after the lye and oils have been mixed.

KNIFE



What you want to use is a medium-sized knife so you can make clean cuts on your soap and soap bases when you make your product through the melt-and-pour method and when you're making re-batches.

CUTTING BOARD

It's good to cut your soap and soap bases on a cutting board, but you don't need an expensive one. You'll be using the using this in the melt-and-pour and re-batching

techniques.

SOAP MOLDS





The molds, as you probably know, are used to create the solid shape of your soap. You simply pour the soap into a mold. It's here that it'll harden and take on the shape of the mold. There are a wide variety of molds you can use. By the way, you'll need these for all the processes.

You have a choice among four types of molds: plastic, silicone, wooden or paper.

Molds made of plastic are less expensive than some categories. But they aren't the easiest to work with. Once the soap hardens, it may not slip out of the mold easily. You really have nothing to learn to give these a try, especially for your first couple of batches.

Silicone molds are easy to use and yet quite affordable. Not only this but they're better than the plastic version for getting the hardened soap out of them. But, when you check this out, you'll probably agree that it's not the sturdiest. In some cases, silicone molds have also been known to distort the true shape of the mold and therefore the soap product itself.

WOODEN MOLDS



Never heard of them? If you're not currently making soap, I'm not surprised. They're sturdier than silicone molds and actually provide a more insulated space for the soap. When you use these, you'll have to line them with either wax paper or parchment paper. As you might expect, these are among the costliest molds on the market.

PAPER MOLDS



Paper molds are very inexpensive. No, we're not talking sheets of paper, but rather molds made from paper products, like milk cartons. These molds, obvious, aren't as

sturdy as the others, but you'll discover you'll have little trouble taking the hardened soap out of the mold. If bad comes to worse, you can just tear the milk carton away from the soap.

LINING PAPER

This paper is needed to line the wooden molds before you pour the liquid into it. If you don't have this, you can use plastic wrap for this as well.

TAPE

You'll want the tape to secure that lining paper to the wooden molds.

SOAP CUTTING TOOL



This "cutting tool" is for you to cut the hardened soap into bars. You'll really only need this if you're working with wooden or paper molds.

SOAP MAKING INGREDIENTS YOU WILL NEED

The following is a list of ingredients that you'll need to have on hand when you're ready to create a batch of soap. Again, it's better to have these on hand and a few different oils, so you have a choice.

LYE



Also called Sodium Hydroxide, it's an essential ingredient in both the hot and cold process soap making techniques. This caustic chemical induces saponification when it's mixed with a variety of fats and oils.

THE OILS

Basically, when you're making soap using either the hot or cold processes, you're combining lye with an oil, like olive oil. Don't mistake these oils for of the essential ones we'll get about later on in the book. Essential oils are basically the essence of certain healing plants and herbs as well as provide an attractive scent to your product.

When I first start soap making, I wasn't aware of the wide range of oils from which to choose to mix with the lye. And I certainly wasn't aware of the different advantages they brought to the final product.

To give you a glimpse of what you can do – even with your first batch of soap, I've included a short list of some of the common oils used in homemade soaps. Some of these I'm sure you've at least familiar with.

Others you may never have heard of. In any case, once you know they exist, they open the door wider for a host of various soaps for your friends, family and even to help a soap making business, should you ever want to try your hand at that.

I've also included a description of some of the benefits of using each oil.

APRICOT KERNEL OIL

With a shelf life of approximately six months to a year, apricot. This oil is a real skin pleaser. It's quickly absorbed into your skin. This makes it an excellent carrier for massage oil.

It does produce small bubbles in your soap, so I try to keep this oil at 15 percent or less of the entire recipe. Most soap makers keep its usage down to approximately 10 percent. Shoot for that, especially on your first usage. Then you can always adjust the rate on later batches.

AVOCADO OIL



This oil makes a soft bar of soap. And is a popular one to use in the cold process method. Most soap makers have found that they have the best results with it when they use it at less than 20 percent of the entire recipe. Some even claim they've discovered that the optimal rate for avocado oils is 12.5 percent.

There are several benefits to using this oil, not the least of which is the abundance of vitamins packed into it, including A, B, D and E. Avocado is a great addition to any massage oil if you ever decide to make them, as well as lotions and even skin butter. Not sure how long you can keep this oil and have it maintain its benefits? You can store this for about one year, after that you should purchase a new bottle, just to be on the safe side.

AVOCADO BUTTER

Not to be confused with avocado oil, the butter is solid as long as it's at room temperature. It makes the ideal ingredient for a wide variety of skin care products. In addition to soap, it's a great addition to balms and lotion blends as well as hair-care products.

Avocado butter actually comes from the fruit of the avocado tree. It's then transformed into butter that is unimaginably soft. It has a nice, mild scent to it. When using it in

your soap recipes, you'll probably want to keep it about 12.5 percent of the cold process method. I guarantee you'll love the result.

BEESWAX



There are two types of beeswax: white and yellow. The shelf life for these is, well indefinite. You can keep them for years, and they should be just as effective as the day you bought them.

What's up with the color difference? You'll discover that the yellow version is fully refined. The white variety, on the other hand, is naturally bleached. This occurs when it's exposed to thin layers of sunlight, air, and moisture.

When you use it either in the cold or hot process method, it works as a natural hardening agent. You can use this at up to eight percent of the total of your entire recipe. You'll need to handle it a bit differently than the other "oils." You should melt it first and then add it to your soap when it reaches the thin trace stage. That's a minimum of 140 degrees. If you don't reach this temperature, the beeswax will just sit there hardened in your soap.

CANOLA OIL

Yes, this is the same canola oil you probably have right now on the kitchen shelf that you cook with. One of the biggest benefits of this oil is the cost. It's probably one of most inexpensive of all the oils we'll be talking about. That's something to take into consideration when you're just starting out, and you're not sure what to expect.

When you do try it, you may want to consider using it with other oils, especially with coconut and palm oils. Doing this makes a 'balanced' bar of soap. Most soap makers keep the ratio of this close to 15 percent. Using this will give you soap that's whiter than if you used olive oil. That's a great attribute to keep in mind. That means you can use a wide range of colors in it. Talk about variety!

Canola oil also releases a creamy lather that's often vital to a bar of soap. You may want to consider substituting canola oil in a recipe that calls for olive oil at about 40 percent of your total oils.

CASTOR OIL



Of all the oils, this is probably one you didn't expect to see used in soap making. It took me by surprise, at least, when I first heard about. It's the same castor oil that so

many moms through the ages have tried to get their children to swallow to help improve so many ailments.

This oil will last up to a year in your kitchen without losing its effectiveness. Its thick and viscous nature comes from the castor bean plant. And yes, it does have a distinctive smell but rest assured, it's quite mild and not overpowering when worked into your soap.

When you use castor oil in soap, it actually acts like a humectant. This means it takes moisture found into the air and puts in onto the skin. The other benefits of this oil is that it creates a wonderfully long-lasting leather.

While some individual soap makers have made this oil nearly 25 percent of the total recipe, you may want to keep the ratio at approximately 10 percent. Most soap makers keep this ratio even lower at a range between 2 to 5 percent. I've personally found that using more than this only creates a soft and quite sticky bar of soap.

Castor oil, though, is great for "superfating." Because of this, it tends to create large bubbles in your soap.

COCOA BUTTER



You've all no doubt heard how good cocoa butter is the skin. Here is your opportunity to use it to make your own custom soap containing cocoa. This butter will retain its effectiveness between a year to two years in your kitchen.

At room temperature, it's hard, even brittle. That's why it's technically called butter and not oil. You'll find it's used in any number of beauty products. When you melt this though you should treat it in a manner similar to chocolate. It's best to temper it in order to avoid crystallization during the hot process method. If you're using it in the cold process technique, you don't have to worry about tempering it.

Don't use cocoa butter at more than 15 percent of the entire recipe; even a smaller ratio works well. And keep in mind that the natural chocolate scent of cocoa butter may mask any gentle scents you may add to the bar.

COCONUT OIL



This oil which seems to be gaining a larger devoted following day by day will retain its effectiveness even after a year of sitting on your kitchen shelf. It probably wouldn't surprise you to learn it's one of the most common of all oils used not only by the home-made soap makers but by the commercial manufactures as well.

You can find the many types of coconut oil – some which can have varying melting points. The two you'll see most, though, are the two with the melting points of 76 and

92 degrees. This means it has one of the lowest melting points of nearly all the solid oils. Just as an aside, both of these melting points have identical saponification values. This means you can use both in the same recipe.

An additional benefit to using coconut oil in a recipe is its outstanding reputation as a remarkable cleansing agent. It not only cleanses, but it produces large, delightful bubbles. The downside to this is sometimes it does its job too well and actually strips your skin of a part of its natural moisture. This leaves your skin dry. Some individuals have even experienced irritated skin.

Most soap makers have discovered that a ratio of 25 percent creates the perfect balance without having to worry about drying out your skin. If you or the person you're creating this soap for has sensitive skin, then its best to keep this ratio to no more than 15 percent – you can even useless if you want.

COFFEE BUTTER



Here's another butter I had never heard of until I began soap making. It is a rich butter which makes it the perfect ingredient for any type of lotion, body butter, and yes, even soap. It's created out of a blend of hydrogenated vegetable oil and coffee seed oil. And, believe it or not, it really does contain some caffeine.

The caffeine content ranges from half a percent to one percent. And in case you're wondering, it does have that natural coffee scent. Once you use your soap, you'll discover that the coffee butter contributes to a smooth and creamy texture to it. If you're using it in the cold process method, you don't want to use any greater amount than six percent ratio.

EMU OIL



Yes, you read that right. Emu oil. I wouldn't even mention it, but it's been touted for the last several years as a "miracle" ingredient that will cure, well, just about whatever is ailing you. Supposedly it has anti-inflammatory as well as anti-irritation properties.

Whether that's true is debatable, but I've used it in soap with great success. It can be used in the cold process soap-making method at a ratio of no more than 12.5 percent. You actually may want to use this oil at least once. It's said to be a 'skin-loving' ingredient. You may even want to combine this with essential oils that also have anti-inflammatory properties. Some of these essential oils include eucalyptus, anise and black pepper.

EVENING PRIMROSE OIL

This oil which is widely known has a reputation for effectively treating dry, or irritated skin. It comes by this honestly due to its abundance of fatty acid. It has a rather short shelf life in your kitchen, lasting only six to 12 months. If you decide to use it, you should use it at no more than six percent of your total oils in any cold process recipe.

Now, you're ready to embrace and enjoy the more creative portions of the soap-making process, adding the loving touches that make the soap uniquely yours. In the next chapter, you're going to learn about adding scents. At least you'll learn enough to pique your interest and discover even more when you're ready to continue your journey.

CHAPTER 6: DESIGNER FRAGRANCES ON A THRIFT STORE BUDGET

Walk into any health and beauty shop that sells soaps, lotions, and other aromatic items, and you're soon wandering the entire store, just sniffing the various fragrances. Some stores even encourage you to put a dab of lotion on your hands, so you can get a realistic idea of how it smells on you.

Unfortunately, many of those products come with a rather hefty price for what you're getting. At the end of your shopping day, you find yourself buying tried and true soap. It may not have healing, exciting, or even relaxing scent. But it's what you can afford.

Have you ever stopped and wondered what would happen if you could create even a few of those fragrances at home?

Now, you can. Making your own soap means you're in charge of all aspects of the soap making process – and that includes finding the perfect scent for the recipient. If you're making the soap for your own personal consumption, then, of course, you're going to choose your favorite scent.

If you're giving the soap as a gift and you know who's receiving it, then you can customize the fragrance to that person. What a wonderfully thoughtful gift.

But the best part of this custom-made fragrance is that it costs only a quarter of the price that soap from a health and beauty store would cost.

Surprisingly, many novice soap makers are hesitant to play with the fragrance of their products. That's a shame because they're missing out on one of the most creative and imaginative aspects of the soap making hobby.

They skip this step because they fear it. "What if I mess it up?" Then you save that soap for another time, and you find another scent.

ADDING SCENT TO SOAP

It's not nearly as difficult or as intimidating as you may think it is at first glance. When you're making soap, you have three ways you can personalize the product with your scent.

You can use a "fragrance oil" or a pure essential oil in the soap. You can add various aromatic liquids, coffee and tea being among the most popular. There's another method which involves adding herbs or flowers to your soap.

THE GREAT DEBATE FRAGRANCE OIL VS. ESSENTIAL OIL



(Fragrance Oils)

If you've never been part of the soap making community before, you probably are unaware that there's a great debate raging. That's the use of fragrance oils compared with essential oils.

Now, at first glance, you may wonder what sparked this tiff. But when you learn that fragrance oils are made synthetically, then the entire discussion may seem more rational.

Fragrance oils are formulas or special combination of chemicals or in some cases essential oils that create that unique scent we go to the bath and beauty shops to admire. When a fragrance is created, the corporation which originated can get it protected by the Food and Drug Administration.

This stands in contrast to essential oils, which are more often than not a single natural ingredient that's extracted from a part of a plant.

If you've decided you want to go natural and organic in your soap making, you probably should think twice before you reach for those synthetically concocted fragrances.

Of course, the decision of the type of scent to use is always up to you. Keep in mind that fragrance oils are not natural. They are, however, quite a bit less expensive than essential oils. And to be honest, there is a wider range of fragrance oils than essential oils to use. This means a greater variety of soap scents.

There's another disadvantage to using fragrance oils. They can, at times, be responsible for failed batches of soap. This can be heartbreaking regardless of the years you've been at this hobby. When you're just starting off, and this occurs, it's especially painful. It may be even be the point of no return for some novice soap makers. The point where they say "what's the use?"

The problem is further complicated by the fact that when you purchase your fragrance oils, you really never know what they're composed of. It's true. The FDA doesn't make fragrances manufacturers disclose all of their ingredients.

If you choose to use fragrance oils – and many homemade soap makers do – then keep in mind these things. First, they aren't natural. Second, they are less expensive.

Then you have to ask yourself, at this point, what is the most important point in your journey?

WHAT ABOUT ESSENTIAL OILS?



(Essential oils)

This category of essential oils? Natural or not?

I wish I could tell you that this was a cut and dried topic. But, it isn't. Let's start off with the most evident of the facts. Essential oils are, in and of themselves, natural. That doesn't mean that the methods used to extract the oils from the substances are natural.

Not all companies harvest the plants from which the oils originate naturally. So, if you're serious about being 100 percent natural, then you'll need to learn how they harvest their plants.

But even then, some companies, in order to get the oil from the plants more quickly, may use less than natural means to accomplish this. Again, if you have any doubt about the brand you're using, you'll need to investigate their methods.

WHY ARE ESSENTIAL OILS POPULAR?

With all the mystery surrounding the harvesting and extracting of these oils, why do soap makers love them?

The truth is essential oils have several advantages in not only establishing a scent but maintaining it throughout the life of the bar of soap. This type of oil provides a stronger scent than other options. Not only that but if you choose to use them, you'll discover the scents last longer once they're encased in the finished product.

When you use essential oils, you can be sure that your soap's scent is long lasting, but it's giving your bathroom and kitchen will have their own unique aroma as well – one you'll be delighted with.

You'll appreciate using essential oils for another reason as well. Most soap makers consider them "known ingredients." By this, they mean that you know ahead of time what you can expect. If you use a certain type of oil, once you work with these for a while, you'll also be able to make an educated guess on if the combination you chose will be the cause of a failed batch.

SOME ESSENTIAL OILS CAN'T STAND THE HEAT

It may sound humorous, but it's all too true. One of the disadvantages of essential oils is that they break down at some of the temperatures the recipes call for to ensure saponification. Another reason some don't work well is because they don't have the same delightful scent after the process that they did prior to it.

Below is a quick chart of some the essential oils that are known for their dependability on withstanding the soap making process. Of course, these aren't the only ones, but these some of the most popular ones.

ESSENTIAL OILS RECOMMENDED FOR SOAP MAKING

Almond	Cinnamon	Citronella
Cloves	Eucalyptus	French Lavender
Jasmine	Orange	Vanilla
Peppermint	Rose	Sage

AMOUNT OF ESSENTIAL OIL TO USE?

I get asked this question all the time. When I reply it's a personal judgment, novices of the hobby groan. And rightly so. After all, if you've never worked with soaps before and never worked with essential oil, it's not much of an answer. After all, you don't have a base line by which to judge your amounts.

One of the ways in which you can estimate the amount to use is by first thinking about how the soap is going to be used. If you know it's going to be a bar that's not going to be used at all except as a decoration in a room; then you be quite generous with the oils. You'll expect the scents to last a while to add to the ambiance of the room.

If, however, you or a member of your family will be using it on a daily basis, which gives you a new perspective on the amount you want to put in the recipe. One of the aspects you'll want to consider is how the scent will react with your skin. Cinnamon can be a rather harsh scent if you're using it for your daily shower. But if you're putting this oil into a bar that's will be used for a foot wash, you're on the right track.

Some soap makers have created various base guidelines. They start at these guidelines and then adjust as needed in future batches. That's why so many of us maintain a recipe box and note the amount of oils as well as other changes we make. Then we have an idea what, if anything, to do in adjusting the recipe for the next time we use it.

A friend of mine has developed a rule that works well for her. For every 30 ounces of soap she makes, she uses between 1.5 and 2 ounces of fragrance. She tells me that this is enough, with most oils to withstand the soap making process and still isn't harsh on her skin. For a novice, these numbers may come in handy because at the very least they give you a starting point.

THE TIMING OF ADDING SCENT

The next most important question is that of timing. This is actually a simple answer. Unless otherwise specified in a recipe, the fragrance (and all other additives like color, herbs or old soap pieces) right before the soap has reached full trace. Once you put in

the additives only a few more mixes of the soap is needed. If you mix more, there is a greater chance the things you just added will seize your soap or cause it to streak.

When soap seizes, it means that the saponification process has halted or at the very most slowed. Depending on the extent of the seizure, the soap may be saved.

CHAPTER 7: COLOR IT BEAUTIFUL: HOW TO ADD COLOR

Are you ready to learn about what many see as the best part of the soap-making process: creating, attractive, colorful bars?

The good news is that you have a myriad of options from which you can choose.

Want a “neon” bright bar of soap? No problem.

Perhaps you’re more the pastel type of person, leaning towards shades of pink and lavender. Not to worry, you’ll be able to do that.

The bad news? You might not be able to use both bright and pastel in a single bar. Bright colors are more successfully completed using one method over the other.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Adding colors to soap involves the use of what are called colorants. It’s hard to find a single definition of this term, as you’ll find out if you ever research soap making methods. When I use it in this book, it means an agent that’s used to actually color or change the color of a natural bar of soap.

The first thing you need to know is that the type of colorant you select determines, in large part the vibrancy of the color that eventually appears in the soap. Take, for example, the colorant category called mica. When used in the melt and pour method, it adds a rich, nearly shimmering color to the soap itself.

But, if you would use the same mica in the cold process method, striving for the same result, chances are you’ll be disappointed. You may find that you use the same amount at a different time only to get a muted version of what you wanted to achieve.

That’s not to say that this latter, variant of the color isn’t beautiful in its own way. It is. It’s just not the result you were searching for. Before using any new form of color in a recipe, test it before you make your final decision.

Below is a brief list of a variety of you can use to add color to your particular soap-making process.

MICA





Since we've already mentioned mica, we might as well continue along these lines. This colorant is nearly guaranteed to work with the melt-and-pour process. Mica can be found, in a glorious variety of colors, just about everywhere. If you have problems finding it with soap-making supplies in the hobby and craft stores near you, you can find them on the online soap-making shops online. If you've never checked these shops out, you're in for a big surprise.

You'll discover that you can use mica with complete confidence if you're practicing the melt-and-pour method.

The same can't be said, though, if you try mica colorants in the cold process method. If you're searching for color stability for your natural and organic soaps, then you may want to use pigments. These provide your cold process soap have a viable option for the creation of brightly tinted products.

The stay true to their original color. Think of it as a variation of the saying "what you see is what you get." The color you see as a pigment is a color you get in your soap." What's great about pigments, though, is that they can do "double duty." You can use them with confidence in the melt-and-pour as well as the cold process method.

There's only one thing you should watch for when you use pigments in the melt-and-pour technique. Some of the deeper colors have the tendency to clump or speckle the final product. A color called Chrome Green Oxide pigment is a perfect example of this.

But knowing this, there is a way to alleviate that problem. Simply mix the pigment with 99 percent isopropyl alcohol or liquid glycerin. Another way to overcome this problem is by using what are referred to as color blocks. If you've never heard of them, they're highly concentrated pigments micas that are easily mixed into the soap.

Using these nearly guarantee you satisfying delightful results, especially with the melt-and-pour method.

TRY LAB COLORS

Yet, another option for coloring, suitable for both of these methods, is called Lab Colors. Highly concentrated liquid dyes, Lab Colors are especially useful when your goal is bright, vibrant colors. The only disadvantage is they bleed at times. Keep that fact in the back of your mind when you're creating your design.

This brings us to the category that's best called natural colors. Herbs and clays fall into this category. They work well with both of these techniques. These types of colorants, though, work best when you want to achieve a more subdued color.

How much?

That's the natural question just about every novice asks. How much is too much?

You have to, for the most part, find the answer through "trial and error." That's perhaps not the answer you wanted to hear. Don't be surprised if you use herbs and clays only to find they didn't turn out as bright as you had hoped for.

Nor can I offer you any hard-and-fast ratios you can use to ensure the same color even if you use the exact same ratio every time. Not all hope is lost. There are a few secrets that soap makers employ, so they don't find themselves with a totally different color than what you expected. When you add your color, consider the following factors, and you should be getting close to the color you envisioned.

When you're using the melt-and-pour method or even the cold process technique start off by using one teaspoon of color to one tablespoon of a light-weight oil, like almond oil. If you're making a relatively large batch, you might want to mix two teaspoons of colors into two tablespoons of oil.

You can even you a three-to-ratio and get a good bright color. Practically speaking, if you use too much color, the color may rub off on to the washcloth you've used it with or leave color residue on your hands.

When you're working with the melt-and-pour method, the secret to the perfect color is by starting from a baseline formula of one-half teaspoon of mica to one pound of all of your soap, both the base and the other. If that isn't bright enough, not to worry. Simply add a bit more at a time until you're satisfied with the hue.

The bottom line is this: these secrets exist simply to reduce the time you spend experimenting with various ratios.

COLOR AND YOUR OILS

One aspect of coloring your soap that most novices don't think about is how the type and more appropriately the color of the oil you've mixed with the lye interact. This is better explained by using an example. If you're using olive oil, for example, you should expect the oil itself, to tint the soap a greenish yellow. Why? The soap is taking on the color of the oil.

So, can you guarantee that you can achieve "true" colors in your final product? If so, how do you do it?

Of course, you can keep the colors true. And as you've probably guessed from the illustration we've just talked about, you can start by using a light-colored oil. Palm and coconut oils, as well as sweet almond oil, are among the lightest.

Another way to bring true hues to your soap is with a substance called titanium oxide. A natural white opaque pigment, it can be an invaluable utensil in your colorant toolkit.

If you're serious, though, about creating natural and organic soaps, though, this without a doubt a substance, you don't want to use. The latest research shows this

substance causes lung cancer in rats when they've been overexposed to it. From this perspective, titanium oxide, it sounds less than a natural substance.

Soap makers who are serious about producing natural and organic colorants make the next possible use of the gel phase of the process. Here is how they do it.

As you probably recall the soap reaches nearly 180 degrees. If you put your colors in at this moment, the heat will make your colors "pop." As an added benefit, it gives your colors a slight, but noticeable, shiny appearance. This makes the bar all the more attractive. The technique works best with natural colorants as well as Lab Colors.

If you're looking for even brighter colors than what this produces, you can easily get it by using the melt-and-pour method. The secret to this is to start with a clear base. If your goal is more of a pastel look, then use a white base. The base will lighten up whatever colors you add to it.

STORING SOAP TO KEEP COLOR VIBRANT

The last thing you want is to store your soap and return to it sometime later, only to find a noticeable and disappointing color difference. Your colors have faded.

This won't happen if you put thought into the storage process. Nobody needs to tell you, but as a reminder, don't store the soap in direct sunlight. Nothing causes fading faster than that. Your homemade soap should be kept in the dark, cool location.

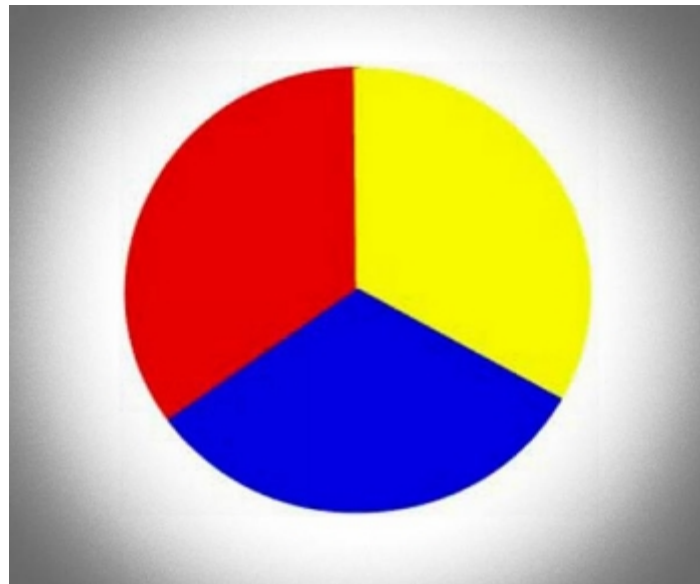
THE COLOR BASICS

There are three primary colors of which every color of the rainbow and under the sun are made of. These colors are magenta, yellow, and cyan: or more typically referred to as red, blue, and yellow. When mixed together in small doses, you can create any color you can imagine!

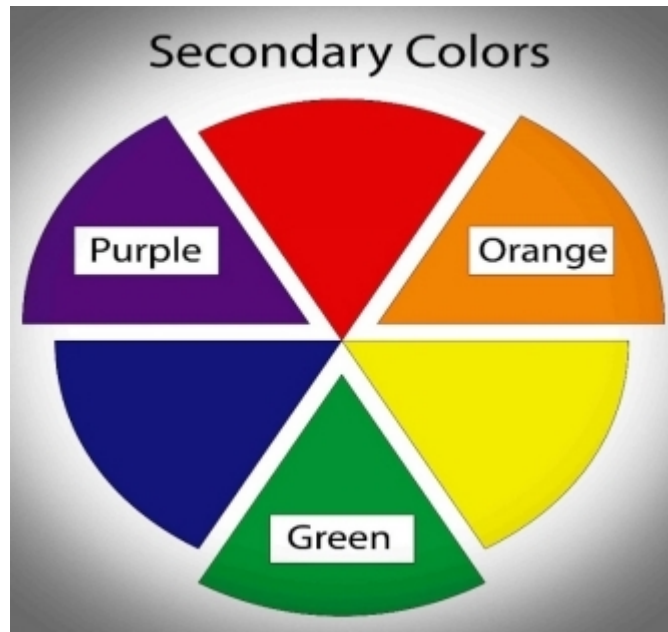
Thus, producing the color wheel. A color wheel is a basic tool that is referenced when combining colors and was first originated by Sir Isaac Newton in 1666. The wheel was designed to that essentially any colors you choose from the circle will look great together.



The wheel has changed slightly over time, but the basic version of it still features twelve colors. There are traditional color combinations that are naturally more eye catching when you paired them together: these are called color harmonies or chords. This is when two or more colors have a specific relation to one another on the color wheel.



(Primary Colors)



(Tertiary Colors)

PRIMARY, SECONDARY, AND TERTIARY COLORS

Like I said before, the primary colors on a color wheel are red, yellow, and blue. Then come the secondary colors: green, orange, and purple.

Blue + Yellow = Green

Red + Yellow = Orange

Red + Blue = Purple

Finally, there are six tertiary colors that can be produced by simply combining the primary colors with the secondary colors. The six tertiary colors are red- orange, yellow-orange, yellow- green, blue-green, blue-violet, and red-violet.

Red + Orange = Red- Orange

Yellow + Orange = Yellow- Orange

Yellow + Green = Yellow- Green

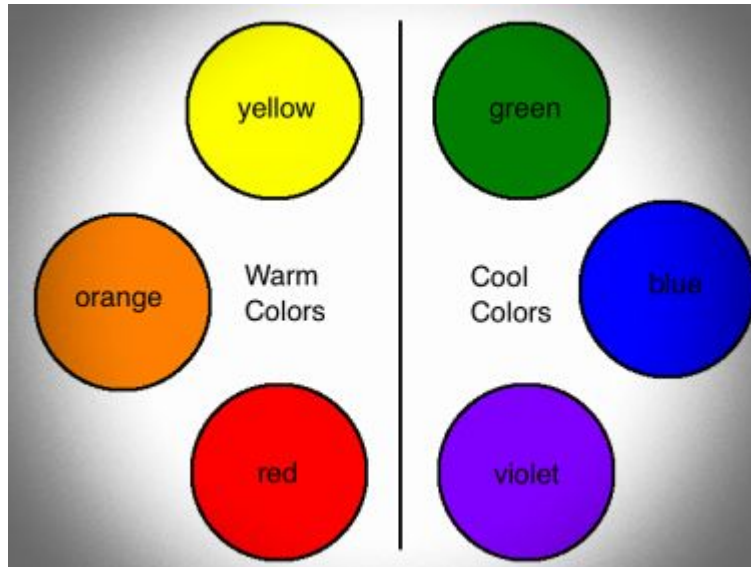
Blue + Green = Blue- Green

Blue + Purple = Blue- Violet

Red + Purple = Red- Violet

Even though there are only seven colors of the rainbow, the spectrum of shades, tints, and overall variety of mixed colors are endless. You may be thinking that all you need to do to color soap is simply throw some dye into your batch and get the exact color you had in mind for your soap.

You can get the perfect shade of pink or a natural green tone to bring your ideal color into manifestation for your homemade cleanser. But, it does take a bit more time, precision of ingredients, and thoughtfulness to make it happen.



Colors are categorized into two subsections: warm and cool. Warm colors are intense, energetic, vibrant, and associated with heightened emotions. Think of a vivid orange or passionate, rich red.

Other examples of warm colors include red- violet, yellows, browns, oranges, and reds. Cool colors evoke a sense of calm, relaxation, and are soothing to look at. Cool colors are often associated with nature and meditation; like a bright forest green or beautiful ocean blue. Cool colors are comprised of purples, blues, and greens.

Now you might be wondering, “Can colors actually make you feel hotter or colder?” The answer is absolutely! Warm and cool colors can also make a room seem brighter or darker.

If you live in a climate that is mostly hot throughout the year, you may decorate your house with cooler color schemes, so the heat feels less overwhelming. The opposite is also true and often practiced.

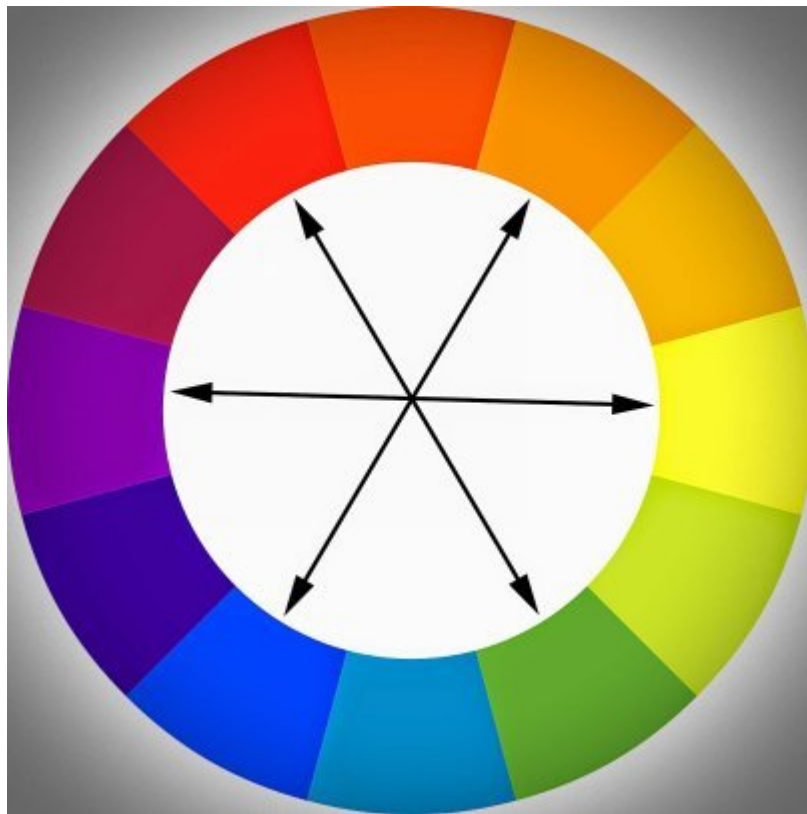
Resorts and hotels that are close to ski resorts and other winter getaways are usually decorated with reds, browns, and other deeper and deeper colors to evoke a sense of warmth and hominess.

All this information may not appear to relate directly to soap and how to make your own. But the effect that color can have your vision can make the difference in how your homemade creation will make you feel or appeal to the customer if you choose to sell your soaps .

HOW TO USE A COLOR WHEEL TO CREATE COLORFUL SOAPS

A great way to package a gorgeous blend of colored soap is to understand and efficiently use complementary, analogous, triadic, split-complementary, and rectangular color schemes to generate a sense of color harmonies.

COMPLEMENTARY COLORS



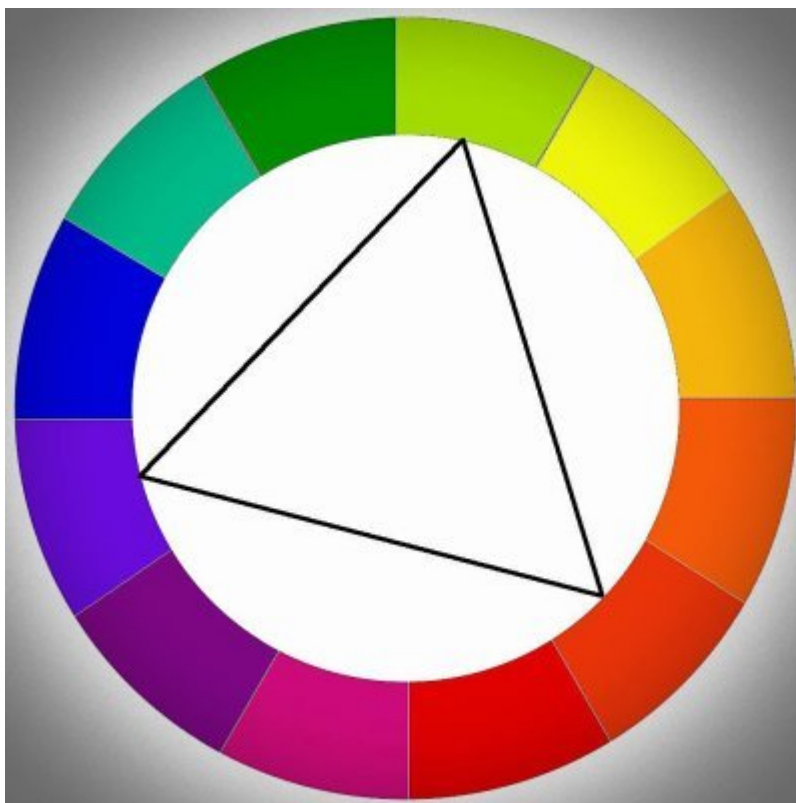
Complementary colors are on the opposite sides of the color wheel from each other. For example: red and green, or yellow and purple. Using complementary colors creates a vivid and highly energetic look, especially when paired at full saturation. When continuously used for one project, these colors can be challenging due to their vibrancy. However, in small doses and appropriate spaces, complementary colors are perfect for making your soap stand out.

ANALOGOUS COLORS



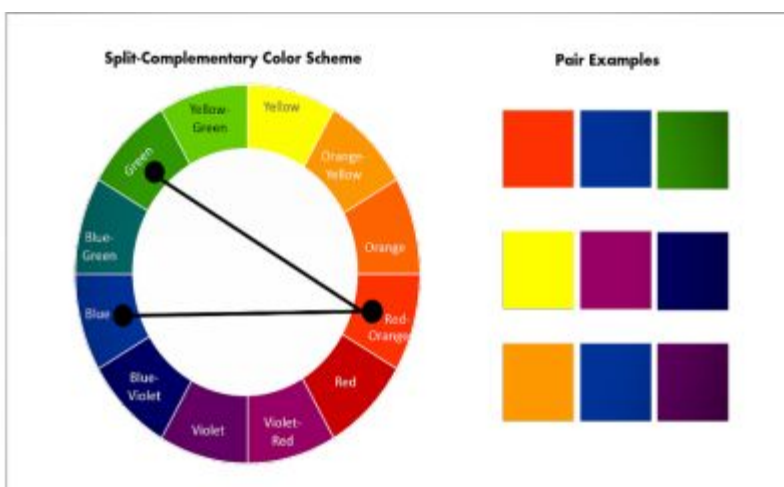
Analogous colors on the other hand are right next to one another on the color wheel. Color schemes that feature analogous colors are typically cohesive and form serene and pleasant designs. These colors are harmonious and usually very organic, but can also not offer enough contrast. When using analogous colors with making your soap, choose one shade that will dominate the visual effect and a second that will support or complement it.

TRIADIC COLORS



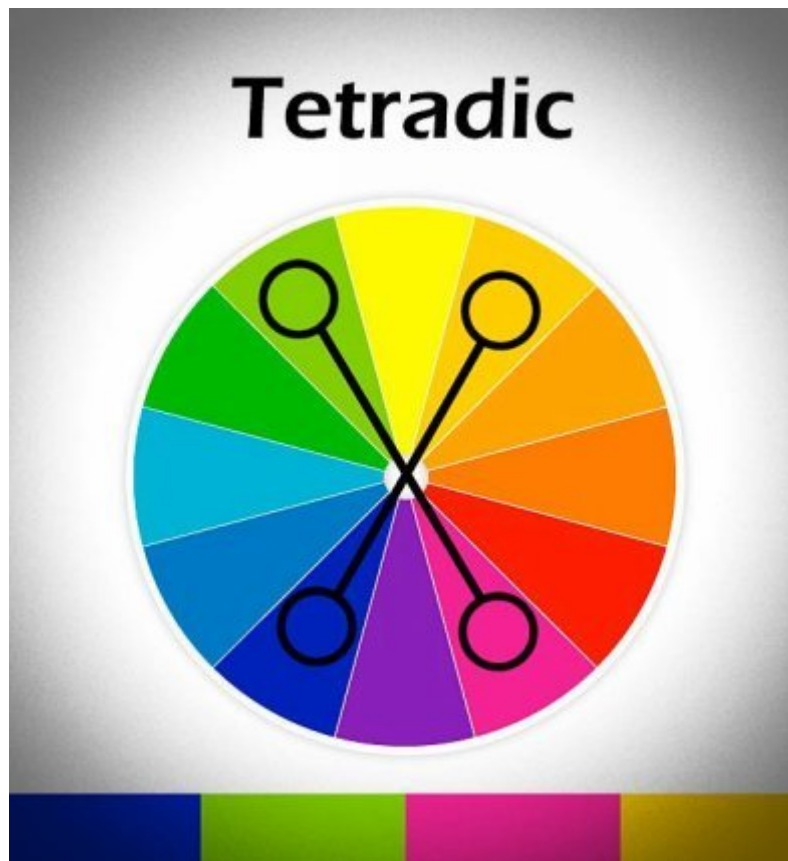
Triadic colors are recognized by their even spacing around the color wheel. Color schemes that primarily utilize triadic colors are naturally harmonious and well balanced. Triadic colors are comprised of three individual colors that are vibrant together even when undersaturated. While making soap bars, allow one color to dominate the visual appeal and the other two to create a congenial accent.

SPLIT-COMPLEMENTARY



A split-complementary color scheme is similar to a normal complementary color arrangement but uses two adjacent colors to highlight a base pigment. Split-complementary creates a strong contrast with less tension than typical complementary colors, simply by adding a third color into the mix.

RECTANGLE OR TETRADIC COLORS



A rectangle or tetradic color scheme is exactly what it sounds like! This scheme uses four colors by utilizing two complementary combinations. Tetradic color schemes are rich and full of many variations and possibilities that can create dazzling designs for your soaps! Rectangle color schemes are best used when allowing one color to be dominant.

FINAL WORDS ON USING COLOR WHEEL

It's a quick reference tool which allows you to choose color combinations. It's exactly what it says it is: a comparison of the colors presented in a circle so that you can see

the continual relationship among all the colors. As I showed you earlier Red, yellow and blue, for example, are the primary colors. They're called this because with these three colors you can create any shade of any color you like.

Mixing equal portions of yellow and blue, for example, creates a true green. The color wheel illustrates this. When you look at a color wheel, you'll discover that those colors between yellow and blue provide you with shades of what happens when those two colors are mixed.

Let's say when you're making soap you add two parts of blue to one part of yellow. You can easily look at the color and get a good idea of what the final color will look like. You should get a final color that is a blue-green.

Similarly, if you combine two parts of yellow with one part of blue, your final color will be a green-yellow. Of course, the same thinking holds when you mix varying degrees of blue and red and yellow and red.

You can also consult the color wheel when you just want to place two colors in a single theme. One of the surest ways of choosing attractive color schemes is by selecting colors that sit on the opposite ends of the color wheel.

You might think that would be the last thing you'd want to do in creating beautiful color combinations, but it really is a way to make a classic combination of color

CHAPTER 8: SOAP MAKING RECIPES

This set of recipes all require the use of the cold process instructions, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Simply gather your ingredients, then follow the instructions provided at the end of the recipe list, and you'll have amazing creations of natural and organic soap sitting in your house, ready for use

COLD PROCESS METHOD

CLASSIC SOAP

2/3 cup refined coconut oil
2/3 cup extra-virgin oil
2/3 cup almond oil
1/4 cup lye
3/4 cup distilled water

ALOE VERA SOAP

15 ounces refined coconut oil
13.5 ounces extra virgin olive oil
10.5 ounces lard
2.5 ounces organic shea butter
10 ounces aloe vera gel and water puree
6.5 ounces lye
10 ounces distilled water

COFFEE SOAP

This soap makes a great exfoliate

6.5 cups olive oil
7/8 cups lye
2.5 cups distilled water
3 teaspoons coffee grounds
20 drops cinnamon leaf essential oil

A pinch of ground cinnamon

PICK-ME-UP PEPPERMINT SOAP

15 ounces olive oil
13 ounces coconut oil
2.6 ounces castor oil
16 ounces distilled water
6.2 ounces of lye
0.8 ounces of peppermint essential oil
0.8 rosemary essential oil
0.4 ounces sage essential oil
¼ ounce spirulina
1-ounce peppermint leaves, dried

SAY GOODBYE TO ACNE SOAP

6.08 ounces, distilled water
2.33 ounces lye
6.4 ounces coconut oil
6.4 ounces olive oil
3.2 ounces castor oil
1 tablespoon activated charcoal powder
1-ounce lavender essential oil

Process

1. Cover your workspace
 2. Put on your protective safety equipment
 3. Measure the water, make sure it's ready for the lye
 4. Measure the lye.
 5. Slowly add the lye to the water, stirring gently
 6. When the water clears, allow this to rest
-
1. Place all your oils in a separate jar. These are the oils; you're going to mix with the lye.

2. Heat these in a microwave for approximately one minute. Check the temperature. It should be approximately 120 degrees.
3. When both the lye and the oils have cooled to within a range of 105 to 95 degrees, pour the oil into a mixing bowl and then add the lye slowly.
4. Stir this until it's completely mixed. Most people initially stir this by hand for about 5 minutes. After that, you can use a stick blender to continue if you wish.
5. Check to see if the color of the mixture is lightening. It should also thicken.
6. You know you've hit trace when the mixture resembles vanilla pudding.
7. Now, is the time to add the essential oils and any other additives the recipe calls for.
8. Stir thoroughly to ensure that all the ingredients are combined.
9. Pour the mixture into molds, covering with plastic wrap.
10. Wrap this in a towel (This initiates the saponification process.
11. Allow this to sit for approximately 24 to 48 hours.
12. After the soap has hardened, depending on the molds it's in; you can cut them into bars anytime now.
13. Allow the bars to cure for about four weeks, turning it over once a week.

MELT AND POUR RECIPES

Why not splurge on some heart shaped molds and treat your family to your love all year round?

YOU HAVE MY HEART SOAP

Melt-and-Pour transparent block soap

Heart-shaped soap molds

Essential oils of your choice, for fragrance

Cut the block soap into cubes. The smaller the cubes, the better, because small cubes will melt faster than larger one. Bring the water in your double boiler to boil, then allow it to simmer a short while before adding the soap cubes. Stir these cubes gently until they're thoroughly melted.

Remove this from the heat allow it to cool before you add in your oils. Pour this into your molds and then allow it to harden for approximately two hours. Now you can give your heart away!

RELAXING ROSE SOAP

Clear suspension soap base
Dried flowers of your choice
Soap Mold
Rose and lavender essential oils
Beet juice

Cut the suspension soap into small cubes and melt them in the double boiler. Once they're melted, stir in the essential oils and remove the mixture from the heat. Now add the beet juice. This is your colorant.

Press the flower petals into the bottom of the soap mold before you pour the soap into them.

Allow this to harden for several hours. After you're confident the soap has hardened you can remove your soap from the molds.

HOT PROCESS METHOD

The following recipes use the hot process technique. The recipes, themselves are listed first, then the directions for the process are listed below.

HONEY OATMEAL SOAP

17 oz. (482 g) olive oil
8 oz. (227 g) coconut oil
1.5 oz. (43 g) sweet almond or sunflower oil
1 oz. (28 g) castor oil
10 oz. (283 g) water
3.9 oz. (111 g) lye
0.5 oz. (14 g) tamanu oil or rosehip seed oil
1 tablespoon powdered oatmeal
1 tablespoon honey mixed with 1 tablespoon water
1/4 teaspoon lavender essential oil

WAKE UP SOAP

1 cup grated soap
1/8 cup safflower oil
1/8 cup coconut oil
1/8 cup water
5 drops, peppermint oil
½ teaspoon dried peppermint leaves
3 drops rosemary oil
Lye

Below are general directions for making hot process soap. I've also included the link to a YouTube tutorial, so you can watch how it's done in case you are a more visual learner. The video is a recipe not found here, but you'll get a good sense of what you're should do and when.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scokYOkLcQo>

1. Fill the heat-resistant container with f water measured by weight.
2. Set this in the sink.
3. Weigh the lye in a separate container.
4. Pour the lye into the water. Stir until it's fully dissolved. The lye will get heated and give off fumes.
5. Set this aside as you prepare the oils.

The Process

1. With your digital scale, coconut oil if the recipe calls for it. Melt this on low heat in a small saucepan.
2. Weight the other oils. Pour this into your slow-cooker. Add the melted coconut oil to this.
3. Pour the lye into the oils. With a stick blender stir the mixture. Do not run the blender continuously, be sure to pulse the appliance.
4. Continue mixing in this fashion until trace is reached.
5. Continue heating this for about an hour.
6. Gather your essential oils and colors.
7. Allow the soap mixture to cool about 15 minutes, then add your colorants and scents.

8. You can pour this into a mold. Allow it to harden for approximately 24 hours.
9. Let the soap sit in the mold for around 24 hours.
10. After that period of time, you can take the soap out of the mold, cut it into bars and it's ready to be used.

CHAPTER 9: OPEN FOR BUSINESS: STARTING A SOAP-MAKING ENTERPRISE

If you're like many individuals, once you make a bar of soap or even several batches you may try your hand at selling your homemade soap.

That's exactly what I'm doing now. I've turned my curiosity into a hobby and my hobby into a business. I'm proud to say I'm providing my family with a substantial second income and I'm loving every minute of it.

But before you jump in and begin stockpiling home-made soap to make sure you have enough to know what's involved in operating a soap business.

If you've been dreaming of starting your own business and believe you've finally found the right one for you, then you need to make sure you start off on the right foot.

More than one individual has fallen in love with soap making and started her business based on a false assumption. That she'll be doing what she loves every day of the week.

I hate to be the one to tell you this, but this is where your wake-up call starts. There's so much more to starting a business – even a small one – than just spending your days making soap. Not only that, there's quite a bit of preparation to do, and much to learn even before you sell your first bar.

I don't intend to discourage you by any stretch of the imagination, but I do want you to walk into an endeavor like this with open eyes. You need to have some idea of what it takes to be successful.

And to be honest, once you figure these steps out and excel at them, you can open just about any type of business.

THE STARTING LINE

It's natural, while you're deciding, to ask family and friends for their input. This is a great idea because they make great sounding boards. But asking for ideas and

implementing all of them are two different things. I know of one friend of mine who decided that one niche market was too small to be profitable, so she kept adding more to it. She made soap for specific skin conditions, then, for reasons only she knows, she began making soaps for pets.

What she failed to understand was the way the internet works. With exposure on the net, a narrow niche, like pet products could in and of itself be profitable if she could tap it properly.

As it turned out, she spread her energies too thin. I'm not only talking about her energy of making the various types of soap, but also the marketing efforts that go along with it. Regardless of the many people who explained to her the errors she was making and solid efforts to fix the problems, she didn't listen and unfortunately is not following her dream any longer.

Don't make the same mistake she did. Start out slow. Don't worry that you're only in one niche market. Don't worry about not selling enough. In the beginning, it's all about establishing a name and branding yourself. By the way, we'll talk briefly about what "branding" your company and how to do it later in this chapter.

If you start out slow, your costs of supplies won't be as high. You won't feel overwhelmed, or you're in over your head.

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

This is a question you should answer with sincerity. Do you believe you have what it takes to become an entrepreneur? Because when you turn on that sign that tells people, you're open for business, that's what you become.

Don't let anyone or any over-the-top advertising tell you any differently. It takes, time, money and energy to start your own business. I love to read advertising material that says "before I knew it, I was making more money . . ."

I always substitute the words "before I knew it" for after much time energy and money invested in the project"? Don't let anyone tell you things just fall in your lap? When

you're doing what you love, it'll seem a lot less like work, but it does take your dedication.

You may find yourself coming home from work to make more batches of soap, creating more labels for your products. Be prepared – and willing – to give up some the free time you were spending on the couch watching Netflix or sitting at the coffee shop talking with friends working toward a viable business.

You need to step into your new role, from hobbyist to entrepreneur knowing exactly what's expected of you. Can you honestly say you have the vision and confidence to work at your business?

These are only a few of the characteristics that'll need to shine through for you to be successful, regardless of whether you plan to keep your business small or you have grander plans than that.

Are you willing to do this?

If you believe you can do all of that – and whatever else your business may throw your way – then you're ready to think about the nitty-gritty, or the mechanics, of launching your own business.

THE NICHE MARKET

Since the rise of the internet, the “niche” market has nearly become a cliché. You probably are well aware it's a specialized segment of a larger market, like pet soap products in the market, labeled homemade soap.

What you need to ask yourself before you decide on your market is this: How is my soap going to differ from all the other homemade soap being sold today?

In order to be successful in your business, you need to answer this question honestly. Take your time. There's no need to spout an answer out right now. Before you make

that commitment to launch your business, though, you may want to go to the web to see what your “would-be” competitors are making, what niche markets they’re in. Then give serious thought to how you can present the soap buying community with something different.

But more than that, dig deeper if you can. For example, what’s the status of the niche you’re interested in. Is the market just firing up, on the upswing and able to withstand another competitor like yourself? Or has the market for this product just about peaked and the trends indicate something else may be catching the customers’ eyes.

As you research, you undoubtedly will discover niche markets you never realized existed, like wedding flavors. Other lucrative niches include monogrammed or personalized soaps, baby soap as well as soaps for the pre-teen set.

We’ve already talked a bit about soaps that will naturally heal or alleviate skin conditions, especially acne. Then there always novelty soaps. The reality is, there are probably more niche markets you can try than you’re aware of right now. It can’t hurt to at least research them.

DEVELOPING AND TESTING YOUR NEW PRODUCTS.

After you think you’ve got your niche markets narrowed down, you can turn your attention to the specific soaps you’ll make. At the same time, you may want to consider from where you’ll get your ingredients. As well as your packaging and labeling.

Having pulled together some of your new products, you can head out the door to craft shows and other places you know you can connect with customers. It’s time to discover how the products will be accepted without formally launching the products.

Don’t be afraid of any criticism. Listen to what people may not like about any aspect of your soap from the packaging to the soap itself. While you don’t have to change a thing if you like your product just the way it is. But if you find you’re getting a string of reviews with the same suggestions, then seriously consider how to improve.

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR SUPPLIES?

That's a legitimate question since as a soap seller, you're on the search for the ingredients that cost the least amount. Unless you sell \$2,000 of soap a week, which by the way totals \$104,000 in a year, you don't need to worry about finding manufacturers.

It would be wiser to stick with the smaller bulk suppliers. Most manufacturers will want you to make orders that far outstrip your ability to out pay for it.

As you spend more time at craft shows and around others who make soap, don't hesitate to ask them where they get their best prices (and best quality) on their ingredients. This is especially important with regard to essential oils and fragrance oils. They'll steer you toward reputable supplies.

MOLDS STAND IN A CATEGORY ALL THEIR OWN

Of course, if you've been making soap for any length of time prior to striking out on your own in the soap-making business world, you have molds. You probably have lots of molds. But remember, you're making soap now for a large variety of people, so it's probably a good idea to review the ones you have for their design, but to consider how old they are. It wouldn't be wise to start an order only for something to happen to your molds in the middle of the process.

When you go out on your mold search, whether online or in brick and mortar stores, you may want to buy a mold cutter. With the quantities of soap, you're planning on making, this the only way to make sure you achieve the cleanest and most even cut. When you're looking for the perfect mold, you'll, of course, take account the uniqueness of the design. But, you'll also want to look at how it's going to hold up over time. Don't forget when things go well; you'll be depending on these nearly every day. For melt and pour molds, for example, you're searching for items that are flexible. Before you invest in any large amount of molds, test them out.

Use them as much as possible before committing yourself to their daily use. Don't advertise you can fulfill a specific type of soap in a specific mold until you're darn sure

you can deliver. After all, nothing less than the reputation of your company is going to depend on you being able to follow through .

Molds are really the backbone of your business. They can even help you brand your business. That's why it's so important that you take your time and money to invest in the best. Of course, artistically, you want them to be an expression of your enterprise. So, you want to buy them with that in mind. Do they illustrate at first glance what your company represents?

But above and beyond that, you have to be able to depend on them. Think about their place in the production process. How many soaps do you think you can pour in a single sitting? If you're using the melt and pour method visualize having enough molds to you can line them up on tables with the ability to pour 50 to 100 molds at one time.

If on the other hand, you're using the cold process procedure then you need to seriously think about investing your money into a couple of loaf molds (don't skimp on quality at this point) that have cutters already built in. This allows you to make 14 pounds of soap or more at one time.

In the soap making business, believe it or not, the decision of what molds to invest in can make or break you. Many people are prone to spout the adage that time is money. As far as soap makers are concerned soap molds are money. They can either slow you down and clog the process or transform your operation into an efficient, smooth running "factory" so to speak.

Business novices most often ask about how they go about packaging the products. This depends in part on the type of soap-making process you plan to use. If you're going to sell melt and pour soaps, then you'll need to package them, so the product is wrapped tightly with either plastic wrap or shrink wrap. This prevents the soap from accumulating moisture, or what most soap makers call sweating. If you're planning to use the cold process method, these soaps are at their best when you can sell them "naked." That means they are wrapped in fabric or paper and boxed.

Don't worry too much about finding supply sources for these packaging materials; they can be found just about everywhere, once you begin to look for them. This includes the boxes too. Don't buy any more than what you believe you'll use in your

first couple months of business. If you've never done anything like this before and believe you're headed for great success, check out software programs with regards keeping track of inventory.

If you go through your packaging supplies sooner than expected, then you can always re-order. But in this way, you're sure your packaging is going to look its best.

Here are a few soap making supply stores online you can check. Please understand, I do not have any affiliations with any of these businesses, so this is for your research only. You may also find a local store or two that offer better pricing. I personally prefer to buy locally since this way you can see, feel and touch the products and actually get to see the products before buying.

<https://www.bulkapothecary.com/categories/soap-making-supplies.html>

<https://www.brambleberry.com/>

<http://www.wholesalesuppliesplus.com/soap-making-supplies.aspx>

<https://botaniesoap.com/soapmaking-supplies.html>

PRICING YOUR PRODUCTS

This is an area of soap-making that far too many novices don't totally understand. Added to that burden is the fact that many new entrepreneurs are actually afraid to price their product high enough that they can actually make a profit.

Pricing products is different than accepting a few dollars from your friends or family for your soaps. Here, you need to be brave enough to say this is the money I have invested in the soap and in order to make a profit I need to charge this much.

Making soap by hand as you're doing, after all, is a labor-intensive business. Make sure you take this into account. Because it is truly vital to your success as an entrepreneur, I'm going to spend a bit of time giving you a primer on how to do this. Once you begin your business, you'll want to dig deeper into this, but for now, you'll get the idea. You'll also be prepared not to sell yourself short.

You need to know from the very beginning that's there really no advantage in being the "cheapest" soap on the market. While you may gain a few customers, many will say that there is something inherently inferior about the product if it's being sold so cheap.

On the other hand, you need to know that there exists an upper limit of what many will pay for soaps, especially if they're going to use these soaps on a daily basis. I was on vacation recently and saw a bar of soap made with goat's milk that cost twice the amount of any other bar in the shop. I was looking for a unique bathing experience, so I bought it.

I'm not sure whether I bought it despite the price or because of it. My first thought was that it was expensive. My second thought was it's probably worth it. And believe me, it was worth every penny I spent on it.

And while you're calculating the price of your soap, don't forget to calculate the cost of your time in there as well.

WHOLESALE YOUR SOAP

There will come the day in your successful soap-making business that you'll want to sell your soaps to shops at a wholesale price.

Believe it or not, you'll want to sell your soaps wholesale at half price of your retail price. That's right. I learned this years ago when I worked for a small firm selling dietary supplements through the mail. I wrote direct marketing copy for them but was privy to the entire mail order process. Yes, it was pre-internet era.

For example, I sell my soap at craft shows for the most part at \$6 a bar, while I sell the same product to boutiques and other soap shops for \$3 a bar. In addition to this, I may run a special. If you buy one to three bars, you would pay \$6 a bar, but if you buy four, then you only need to pay \$20 for them. You'd be amazed at how many people will jump at that sale. And since I'm still making money, I can't complain.

Allow me to show you how I markup my products. Nothing here is written in stone, but hopefully, it gives you a fresh perspective on this part of the business, and a realistic peek into what needs to be done. Here is a list of what I calculate in order to determine the price of one bar of soap.

COST OF GOODS

This includes all of my ingredients from essential oils, the melt and pour base, the plant oils any additives in the batch and the packaging. If you had to pay shipping costs for any of these items, then, by all means, include that in here as well.

LABOR

Be sure to do this, even if you're not paying an employee. Your time is worth money as well.

OVERHEAD

Many soap makers also add in the cost of their overhead. Costs of items like rent, the equipment as well as insurance and electricity . . . you get the idea.

The simple equation below is a vivid illustration of how you decide what you should charge for your soap. The first equation gives you the wholesale price the second one what you should charge for retail. I've filled in the generic equations with the cost of one of my bars of soap. The figures you put into the equation will reflect your specific costs of soap making.

Cost of Goods + Shipping + Labor + Overhead x 2 = Wholesale Price

My cost of goods for an average bar is \$0.70

The shipping cost I estimate to be \$0.10 a bar.

Labor costs I've calculated to be about \$0.50 a bar.

Then I include overhead costs to be approximately \$0.15

After I get the total, I multiply these by 2.

Here's why at the equation looks like when all the variables are filled.

**\$0.70 per bar Cost of goods + \$0.10 Shipping + Labor/bar \$0.50 + Overhead
\$0.15 x 2 = \$2.90/bar. So wholesale for \$3.00/bar.**

I've already mentioned that I then take the wholesale price and double that in order to determine my retail price.

Wholesale Price x 2 = Retail Price

Of course, 3 x 2 equals \$6.

MAKING IT PROFITABLE

You can see that you can make money if you're honest about your costs and willing to own up to what you're worth when you sell your soap wholesale. But when you sell your own soap at retail price, you can begin to make more money.

It's crucial at this point of planning that you take a step back to look at the big picture.

Take a good look at the particular market you're planning to enter. Study your competitors' prices. Then determine what the upper levels of the market will pay per bar. Be sure you're not overpricing yourself.

Once you're satisfied with the price, turn to your competitors again. This time you want to check out their sales offers what, if anything, is missing from them. Perhaps it's something a hole you can fill and take advantage of their oversight.

Thinking about targeting the upper end of your market? If you are you should have a good persuasive argument why your soap is worth the money. You may find you need to defend your prices to both the wholesaler dealers as well as your retail customers.

All you may need to do is to point out the many benefits of your soap, its special ingredients. Another way to do this is through making the packaging visually compelling.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

These days there's a lot riding on a name with the introduction of the internet. Of course, naming a business should always be done with care While you want to make it a memorable name, you don't want it so over-the-top that potential customers have no idea what you're selling. And of course, the bottom line is that you have to love it.

Once you think you've found the name of your business, you'll find yourself checking trademark websites in to make sure the name hasn't already been taking. One of the

places you'll search in the U.S, Patent and Trademark Office. You really don't want to find yourself in a legal battle over your name months, even years down the road. Not only could that get expensive, but you don't want to walk away from all the goodwill you've developed under your former name. It's better to be safe than sorry.

Once you know with certainty, you can use the name of your choice you'll need to find out if it's available as an internet domain name. If you can't get that name exactly, try variations of it. You'll want something that reflects your business, so it'll be easier for your customers to find you.

Your business name should be a direct reflection of what you're selling. Don't worry that it must have the word soap in it. At some point, you'll be adding a slogan or a tagline to it. That's when you can make sure you add in the soap for clarification.

FINDING YOUR SALES

This is probably one of the questions I get asked the most: Where do I sell my soap? That is a legitimate question and an insightful one for anyone wanting to build a good-sized soap-making business. Of course, in the beginning, the easiest customers will be your family and friends. But of course, we all know you have more ambition than just to be satisfied there.

As you start out, you may discover you'll have to give what seems like an inordinate amount of it away free. When I did this, my family thought I was insane, but it has been and always will be the best method of getting people to try your product; there's absolutely nothing wrong with that.

After all, you're confident that they're excellent and you're also sure that you'll get more sales if only you can get people to try it. Think about holding an open house at which you'll invite friends, family, and neighbors to encourage them to test my products. I told them that I wanted their honesty. If they didn't like something, they were to let me know and if they had an idea of how to correct it. Large corporations call meetings like this "focus groups." Think of these gatherings in this manner.

The open house was a hit. I got great feedback and not just that, I got a chance to perfect some recipes even before I took them public. After they tried my soaps, I then

made sure I had specific questions, not just general ones, like “How did you like it?” You want to know opinions on things like how moisturizing the soap is, did they last long enough or did they dissolve too quickly, were the fragrances pleasant? Too strong or not strong enough?

There are several sales channels for selling your soaps. If you are just beginning, start with your family and friends. When I first started, I gave away a lot of soaps. I held a spring open house at invited my friends and neighbors over to test my products. I wanted clear and honest feedback on my recipes. Were the soaps moisturizing? Were they long-lasting? Did they like the fragrances? What didn't they like and what would they recommend?

WHERE DO YOU FIND RETAIL SALES OUTLETS?

When you consider retail sales, think outside of the box. Sure, your first couple of thoughts will be craft shows, and swap meets. But don't limit yourself to these venues. Think along the lines of farmers markets. Many people who frequent these are concerned about organic and natural products. It would be a natural pairing. You may even want to do an occasional home party. And, of course, you can always make an internet presence. Don't forget selling wholesale on the internet. Many soap makers, overlook hospital and corporate venues.

Consider this. If you decide to try your hand at making soap designed for wedding flavors, you could even get a table at a bridal show. In addition to taking orders, you can give out samples and have some ready for retail sales right there.

Remember that if you're going to sell retail yourself, then you need to have attractive displays, business cards, and brochure-like information flyers. It would also help if on those brochures you list the types of soaps you have available and the prices. Of course, make sure these flyers have your name, email address, website and a phone number.

It's never been easier, as a small merchant to accept credit cards. The ability to do this will without a doubt boost your sales. In the past, it was much more difficult even to get a credit card processor to deal with you.

Now, with the smartphones, you can do it all electronically. And if you have a business account with PayPal, you can do it for relatively pennies on the dollar. This is no small step, so research this extensively before committing yourself to a specific vendor.

WHOLESALE

When you decide to sell wares to wholesalers and charge at that price, you'll find yourself in an entirely different world. Before you do this, though, it's imperative you do your research. And that starts with old-fashioned legwork. Visit those places you'd like to sell your soap. You're basically studying the store to see if your products would be a good match. Even if they don't sell soap, what type of items do they sell? Are there smaller items that would complement your soap?

Once you have an idea of where you'd like to place your items, don't inquire about it until you learn a bit about wholesaler. Learn how they price and their terms. The web is a great place to start, but don't overlook any book that may be potentially helpful. Once you're confident you know enough to speak with the manager or owner, then you can call on him.

It would be best if you imposed a minimum wholesale order. It would be foolish and a waste of your time and energy if you sold only three bars wholesale to an outlet. The minimum should be the number of bars you make in one mold or even in a batch. In that way, you're making an entire batch for a wholesaler who only wants three of them.

Another reason to do this is so the wholesaler's customers will see a good display of your merchandise. When a wholesaler buys only a few, it's far more likely his customers won't notice them. If you have him buy enough around which he could build an attractive display, then it'll draw potential customers to it like a magnet.

When you create your flyers or brochures for wholesalers, be sure to include some quality photos of your products along with the pricing. This is also an excellent place to mention the minimum order of each product.

Many novice soap-making entrepreneurs often equate the terms wholesale with consignment. They are vastly different ways of selling your wares. As we see, in wholesale, the shop owner buys your products outright for a set price. And you get paid whether he sells them or not. And he, in turn, gets to set his own prices.

In a consignment situation, you approach the retail owner and provide him with your product. You set the price and he – without risking any of his money sells them. You're paid only for the ones that sell. That is one avenue to go but is not usually recommended for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is weak sales. The odds are high you'll get stuck with items that didn't sell, which are now over handled and showing their wear and tear. Not much you can do with these items.

THE BUSINESS PLAN

Chronologically, this topic is out of sequence. But's all right. Before you can construct an effective business plan, you need to learn what's involved in launching your startup. Once you know what's involved then you can intelligently estimate your timeline and costs. Yes, all of this needs to be done, ideally before you start selling beyond your family and friends.

A coherent business plan is essential to any successful business. It's not something you can easily if you've never written one before. I suggest, if at all possible, that you find a mentor to help you with this. If you have any friends whose expertise you can tap, I suggest you do so as soon as possible.

If you don't know anyone who you can trust, then I highly suggest you approach the Small Business Association. The great thing about this is the organization, part of the federal government doesn't charge you.

Another route you can take in getting familiar writing plans would be finding a class that teaches it. In my region, a class is given free of charge by your local library. Start there. If they don't have one, they can tell you where you can find one. If you can find classes nowhere else, try your local university or college. This may cost you, but it will feel more like an investment in the long run.

Once you've completed, don't follow it blindly. Consider it a living document. Once every three months, you should review it. Check your progress against what you've said you would do. Is there any item you wanted to be sure to include that somehow has slipped your mind or fallen through the cracks?

Be flexible. Perhaps there's something that has to be adjusted. Don't lament about it or criticize yourself. Adjust it and move on.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS, BUT WHERE?

There's one thing that many novice entrepreneurs don't think about enough. Now they're in the business world. And that means that they deserve a separate workspace for running their business. You'll need a space to call your own. 'The last thing you need is your dog tearing up invoices; chocolate milk spilled on legal documents or bacon stains on your brochures. There are two ways you can do this. The first is to find cheap office space so you can be free from distractions when you're grappling with the business side of your business.

Even if you're selling your products retail, you may want to wait a year or so before you even open your own rented retail space.

While many soap-making business individuals do this, I wouldn't at least not initially. There's no shame working out of your home but create a soap-friendly space that's off limits to nonessential invasions. You may have a spare bedroom you can turn to for this or even finished basement. Survey your home and click off the pros and cons of the various spaces that sound good. You really want your space to be as quiet and professional-looking as possible.

Think about what your workspace will require. You already know from making just a small amount of soap that you'll need table space, room for your soap-making equipment, probably in the form of either shelving or cabinets. Don't forget you'll also need to have enough baker's racks as well.

The other thing, you might not have thought of is that as you make more soap, you'll probably need equipment that can accommodate larger batches. Before you choose a room in your house be sure, you use one that will give you the space you'll need.

LABELS AND MORE

Are you getting exhausted yet from all the information in this chapter? Are you planning to just slap on a label and call it a day? Wait! The last thing you really want to do is to take your labeling for granted. It's an important part of your company's overall appearance. Ignoring proper labeling is also a sure-fire road to getting into hot water with the Food and Drug Administration.

Let's approach the topic of labeling with care. First, nothing says now that you have your own business that you have to outsource the creation of your labels. Many business people still make their own soap labels. Their customers cherish the thought of their soaps being homemade. A homemade label only encourages those thoughts. Of course, the time may come when you'll need to have a major label company create them because you'll be busy doing other chores vital to the health of the company. But there are real advantages to making your own labels.

First, implementing changes in the labels is merely a bump in the road and won't hold up your production. Besides, there are little up-front costs with labeling changes when you do it yourself.

This stands in contrast to the labeling companies who usually won't touch an order that doesn't consist of at least 500 labels. When you're just starting out, it's difficult for most soap making entrepreneurs to even imagine 500 labels, let alone needing that many for their inventory. And that, by the way, is 500 per separate item, not 500 in total.

So, if you have a lavender soap, you would need to buy 500 of those labels and another 400 labels for your lemongrass soap. We're talking a lot of labels now.

If you're pleased with where you're buying your blank labels from, you may just want to stay with them. But, you may also want to go back to googling labels to discover what shapes sizes and colors other companies have that you may be able to use to increase the attractiveness of your product.

You may also want to consider purchasing a laser printer. If you're currently using an inkjet, then you're probably aware that when the print gets wet, it runs. This doesn't

happen with laser printers. And the images these machines print out is crisper and clearer than inkjet.

Here's one more advantage of the laser. The toner cartridges last longer than those of the inkjet. Yes, it's true the laser cartridge costs more, but you're not going to be changing it nearly as often as you would with an inkjet.

Here are some label making businesses online you can try.

<https://www.onlinelabels.com/soap-labels.htm>

<https://www.worldlabel.com/Pages/soap.htm>

Here is a YouTube video on how to make soap labels.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKYF6o0WYAA>

FDA SOAP LABELING REGULATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

What do your labels have to do with the FDA? Quite a bit.

When you're labeling your products with the intent of selling them, you have to keep the FDA uppermost in your mind. This government organization has a host of regulations – many of which deal with what you can and can't claim about your products and how they may relieve stress or reduce the symptoms of acne.

When you begin labeling your products for public sale, you must follow all the requirements. First of all, these take into account the essential statements the FDA wants to see: quantity in the package according to its weight. The FDA also expects to see an identity statement. This is an accounting of the nature of the product's use, a common name, along with either an illustration or a second, more descriptive name of the product.

Finally, you may be tempted to make what the FDA calls "medical claims." Don't. You can't make medical claims unless the ingredients have passed the FDA requirements. For example, you can't say your lavender soap "cures" acne. The moment you do that your soap, in the eyes of the administration becomes a pharmaceutical. When this happens, then it must pass the minimum requirements of all drugs. And lavender can't.

If you notice on some products, anything that comes close to a claim is highlighted with an asterisk, and it's made clear the statement has not been reviewed or endorsed by the FDA. For now, it's best not to go there.

If you eventually do, your best bet is to find attorneys who specialize in FDA claims. Yes, there are those. They'll guide you through what you can say without breaking the FDA's regulations.

When labeling, it is essential to employ FDA label requirements. Legally you must list the number of contents, in terms of weight. An identity statement indicating the nature and use of the product, a common name, an illustration or a descriptive name must be used. It is important not to make any medical or promising claims on your labels. This is the bare bones information the FDA requires each product to be labeled with: Name and location of the business, or the information that it was "manufactured for . . . name of business" as well as a listing of all the ingredients and if needed any warning or cautionary statements the customer needs to know.

AND NOW'S THE TIME TO TALK MARKETING AND SALES

You may not want to hear this as you stir your soap, but marketing and sales are the lifelines to your business's success. You'd be surprised at the number of soap makers who groan when someone begins to talk marketing. It seems as if marketing should be simple, straightforward and common sense. But when marketers begin to talk, it seems to become another language; they tend to turn every word into a complex science.

Before you get too far along in your marketing and sales efforts, you'll want business cards. You'll soon be handing them out to many different types of people. These documents alone are a great type of marketing. You'll want to outsource these even though you can do them at home. There's just something about professional business cards that tell someone that . . . well, you mean business. It also shows people you're a professional.

Some people find creating a website intimidating. There's no way around it, though, you're going to need one. The sooner you do it, the better and more established you'll be on the internet. Even if the launch of your business is a year or more away, don't think it's too early to grab a domain name and begin designing your site. 'After all, it will be the face of your business that literally the entire world will see. (No pressure there)

If you don't believe you can design one alone, there's no shame in hiring a web designer at a price that fits your budget. Give the designer plenty of time so he can do his best possible work. You'll want to have a website that includes a shopping cart, as well as the ability to accept credit cards.

Before that, however, you can be tending your business by joining Twitter and begin tweeting under your business name. You'll also want to open a Facebook account for your business as well. And don't forget to blog. Blogging is something you can do right now to talk to people in general terms about soap making the dangers of commercial soaps.

Before the initial launch of your business, consider attending business networking events in your area. This is a great place to socialize, and you can get invaluable aid or even find a mentor at events like these.

Don't be afraid to socialize and network with those individuals within your business interest.

Take an interest in meeting other soap-makers. These are called industry associations. It's refreshing and indeed healthy to get with other individuals who have been doing exactly what you're going through right. You'd be surprised at how little competition there is among everyone once they gather like this.

In fact, you just may be surprised at the number of solid customer referrals you'll receive from other soap-makers. If their customer is searching for a particular product that they don't carry, they are usually more than happy to hunt down someone who can fill their orders. Keep that in mind and return the favor when you have a customer whose needs a product you don't carry.

Now don't forget to create a customer email list. You'll use this list when you're announcing sales, or when you send out monthly or quarterly newsletters.

In fact, the moment you believe you're going to start your business you can gather a list of friends and family who have used your soaps to announce your decision. As you gain customers, you can add them to your list.

CONCLUSION

I can't tell you how much I loved sharing my love of soap-making with you. My goal, in writing this book, was to introduce you to this world. It's a much broader and more fascinating hobby than many would lead you to believe.

There is a myriad of reasons why people adopt this as a hobby. I think I've covered most of them, including your family's health, costs, or for gift giving. Essentially, there is only one reason why they stay with it for so long. They enjoy doing it.

Some not only enjoy it, but they also develop a love, even a passion for this activity like I have. I took my passion one step beyond a hobby, and I built myself a successful small business. My soap-making profits provide my family with a nice second income – in addition to keeping them supplied with their favorite soaps.

Other individuals have taken their passion for making soap even one step beyond mine and created what can only be called homemade soap empires. The profits their businesses bring in are phenomenal. Let's not put the cart before the horse, although it does give you something to think about while you're learning the ins and outs of the hobby.

Going into business, any business is not a step to be taken lightly. There are already more than 300,000 soap making businesses in the United States. There's time to decide if you want to make it a career as you go along.

Right now, I have a feeling your next two decisions are going to be: which method am I using, and what kind of soap do I want to make?

I'll leave you now with your new-found hobby. Don't be afraid to explore as many facets of this grand activity as you'd like. I only have two pieces of advice for you now. The first is to take your hobby one step at a time. You'll enjoy the journey.

And the second is to remember that your choices are only as small or as big as your imagination.

Lastly, if you like to try making a wide varieties of soaps, than look for my recipe book "Natural Soap Making Cookbook – 150 Unique Soap Making Recipes"

Let your imagination soar!

APPENDIX I: SAPONIFICATION CHART

SAPONIFICATION CHART (POTASSIUM HYDROXIDE, KOH)

Despite what you might think upon first glancing at this, this chart is simple to use. All you really need to do is to multiply the weight of each oil by the value for that oil in the table. This gives you the amount of lye you need to saponify that oil.

If you're working with a combination of oils, you'll need to calculate each oil separately. Then you can add these together. In this way, you'll get the overall figure for the combination.

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Almond (Sweet): 0.1925	Evening Primrose: 0.1918	Neem: 0.1932	Shea (Karite) Butter: 0.1825
Apricot kernel: 0.1941	Flaxseed: 0.1913	Niger Seed Oil: 0.1890	Sheeps Tallow: 0.1949
Avocado: 0.1886	Goat Tallow: 0.1946	Olive Oil: 0.1906	Soybean: 0.1914
Babassu: 0.2463	Goose Fat: 0.1900	Olive Butter: 0.1880	Sunflower: 0.1903
Beef Tallow: 0.1999	Grapeseed: 0.1861	Palm Kernel: 0.2503	Venison Fat: 0.1946
Borage Oil: 0.1886	Hazelnut: 0.1928	Palm: 0.2000	Walnut: 0.1900
Castor: 0.1811	Hemp Seed: 0.1914	Peanut: 0.1925	Wheat germ: 0.1858
Chicken fat: 0.1910	Jojoba: 0.0979	Poppy Seed Oil: 0.1960	Waxes... Beeswax: 0.0970
Cocoa Butter: 0.1941	Kuku Nut: 0.1903	Pork Tallow: 0.1946	Carnauba Wax: 0.087
Coconut (refined): 0.2690	Lard: 0.1970	Pumpkin Seed: 0.1956	Lanolin: 0.1054
Corn (Maize): 0.1927	Linseed: 0.1913	Rape Seed (Canola): 0.1870	
Cottonseed: 0.1954	Macadamia Nut: 0.1959	Rice Bran: 0.1808	
Deer Tallow: 0.1946	Mink Oil: 0.1976	Safflower: 0.1928	
Emu oil: 0.1939	Mustard Seed Oil: 0.1720	Sesame Seed: 0.1882	

APPENDIX 2 GLOSSARY

Abrasives: Substances added to soap, usually of a gritty or a rough texture that helps to scrub dirt and dead skin off your outer skin cells. You may also hear this referred to as exfoliants. Those with delicate or dry skin should avoid soap with abrasives or exfoliants in them.

Absolute: A product, not an essential oil in the strictest sense, that's produced through a process known as a chemical solvent extraction.

Allergy: The state of hypersensitivity or adverse reaction triggered by the presence of a substance or an ingredient in certain products. Many individuals are allergic to ingredients found in commercially made soap.

Antioxidants: Ingredients are slowing the erosion of the soap and prevents natural or fresh ingredients to form with oxygen and turn rancid.

Antiseptic: An ingredient used in soaps to delay or prevent bacteria from growing on living tissue or on the soap.

Astringent: A substance or additive included in your soap whose purpose is to tighten or close pores of your skin. Many individuals like it included in their soap because it makes your skin feel smoother.

Aroma or Aromatic: Any ingredient in a soap whose characteristics include scent, flavor or taste.

Aromatherapy: The use of scents and essential oils to affect not only the overall well-being of a person. This could apply to either the mental or physical state of a person.

Aromatherapy Benefits: Any effect due to the use of an aromatic ingredient that improves or favorably affects your body. These benefits include, but aren't limited to deodorizing, energy, cleansing, improvement of balance as well purification and rejuvenation.

Botanical name: This term refers to the Latin name given to the plant as part of the biological while the second name refers to its species.

Carrier Oil: This is an oil with no scent of its own used as a base in order to dilute essential oils in making massage blends and body care products.

Dermal: Term used when referring to the skin.

Disinfectant: A substance which controls or prevents the spread of germs.

Effleurage: Here's a word you don't hear every day. It refers to a long-standing method of taking the essential oils from plant materials through the use of odorless fats and oils.

Essential oil: An essential oil is the aromatic essences of plants in a highly concentrated form which is not only aromatic, but volatile as well.

Emollient: Any substance placed in a soap to soften your skin.

Expression: A method used to get essential oil from plant material. This term is often used when taking the essential oil from the peel of a citrus fruit. This method involves taking the complete oil from the plant material. You may also hear this referred to as cold press extraction.

Extraction method: The means by which an essential oil is separated from a plant. There are several ways of doing this including distillation, expression as well as solvent extraction.

Fillers: Ingredients found in soap that add bulk or make a soap bar larger without improving the scent, color or quality of it.

Fixative: Any ingredient that stabilizes the oils in a soap which are volatile, keeping them from a premature evaporation.

Food Grade: A classification given by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that certifies the substance is safe to use in food.

Fragrance Oil: The term used to refer to any fragrance and scent that was created through synthetic or non-natural means.

Herbal: The term used to describe natural botanicals and living plants. Most often used in reference to those plants that either have culinary advantages or medicinal ones – or both.

Holistic: Of or pertaining to a natural approach to healing body, mind, and soul outside the confines of traditional allopathic, or Western medicine.

Homeopathy: An established natural healing method which uses plants, animal and mineral substances to heal the body. This method is distinguished by its minute use of many of its ingredients as to render them indistinguishable from the larger forms.

Hydrating: A substance used to restore or maintain the normal proportions of fluid in the body or on the skin.

Insoluble: A substance that is unable to dissolve in water or other liquid.

Irritant: A substance or other material producing irritation and inflammation of the skin

Main Scent: The dominant aroma of a product around which all the other scents can be added in order to make a new single blended scent.

Nervine: A substance that strengthens or tones the nerves and the nervous system.

Olfactory: This term is used in reference to the sense of smell.

Potpourri: A fragrant blend of various herbs and flowers. In the most popular form, the potpourri is more often scented using synthetic fragrance oils.

Relaxant: Any ingredient used in soap or other beauty aids that helps to soothe the body relieve stress or alleviate tension.

Sedative: This term is used in reference to substances that help to calm your nerves or reduce your functional activity.

Single note: Any product that is pure, 100 percent natural oil. It contains neither additives nor adulterations.

Soluble: Any substance which dissolves in water or other liquid.

Stimulant: An ingredient or substance that speeds the functional activity of human tissue on a temporary basis.

Synergistic : Characteristic in which the total effect is more effective than the individual parts.

Synergistic Blend : Combination of multiple essential oils that produce a completely new aroma with a different therapeutic effect.

Synthetic : Artificially produced substance designed to imitate that which occurs naturally.