

HOT PROCESS soap making

How to Make & Customize Your Own
Natural Hot Process Soaps



By Heidi Villegas

Make Your Own **Natural Soap** **the Hot Process Way**

*The Basics of Hot Process Soap Making
and How to Customize Your Own
Natural Handmade Soaps!*

By Heidi Villegas

I dedicate this book to my amazingly patient husband, Joe. Without him, I would never have had the courage to even give soap making (or writing) a try! Thank you for your loving support every step of my way!

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Thank you for purchasing my eBook through the Off Grid & Self-Reliance Super Stack! One of my favorite ways of practicing self-reliance is by making our own handmade body products, many times using plants and herbs as the base.

Not only is it fairly simple to make your own items, it will save you LOTS of money in the long run, and definitely be healthier for you and your family. I hope you enjoy my soap making eBook!

If you would like to watch actual videos of the process, I'm pleased to offer you a 40% off coupon for my full course, How to Make Hot Process Soap, along with recipes for all the different natural techniques and ingredients you can use to make your own soaps.

Just use the code: OGSS40 at check out for the soap making course.

Here is a link to the [Healing Harvest Homestead School of Self-Reliance](#), where you can find my complete natural soap making course.

Make Your Own Natural Soap the Hot Process Way

The Basics of Hot Process Soap Making and How to Customize Your Own Natural Handmade Bars!

A Short Introduction

I've been working with herbs and essential oils for many years, and have taken (and still am) many herbalism classes. I love plants! I believe plants heal, whether they are in herbal form or essential oils. Having had some health issues, I know that for me, the natural way to do things is best.

Once I learned about the toxins in the body care products lining market shelves, I decided then and there that I would make my own. It's been a process! I'm still not 100% there, I'll admit. But when it comes to cleansers, and especially soaps, we only use the ones I make or those I deem "natural." This book will show you how to easily make a natural soap your skin will love!

Many soap making books give you tons of recipes to choose from, and honestly, I find them a bit overwhelming. Especially when the recipes differ so greatly in the kinds of oils you need to use. I decided to make this book simple. I'm giving you my BEST and most favorite soap recipe—the one that's asked for ALL the time by my friends and family. You'll get complete directions for how to make the hot process style of soap making. THEN, you'll get the fun part! This is where I provide variation ideas for this one recipe so you can make lots of different kinds of soaps. After that, you'll get lists of essential oils, herbs, clays, and textures to play with so you can further customize soap for YOU!

It's a simple, yet comprehensive book for you if you want to learn how to make your own soap using the hot process method—and still be able to use your own creative license to make the soaps unique to you!

Enjoy! Have fun with your soap making adventures!

Heidi

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Why Make Your Own Soap?

There are several reasons why learning to make your own soap is a GREAT idea! When you make your own soap, you'll know exactly what is in it and what is going on (and in) your skin! You'll be creating something useful and beautiful. You'll be sure to save money, and the feeling of empowerment you'll have by doing something good for your family is just amazing. Handmade soap makes a wonderful gift! Most everyone I have ever met LOVES fresh soap made by hand!

Homemade Soap is Best for You

Here's what most people don't know about commercial soap these days: It's NOT really soap! Go take a look in the stores! You'll see words like, "Beauty Bar," or "Cleansing Bar," or "Bath Bar." You will rarely see the words, "Soap," and that's because it's not soap. Soap is only soap if it is made with sodium hydroxide (or sodium potassium, in the case of liquid soap) and fats or oils that when mixed together, go through a chemical process called saponification. What is left over from this chemical process is good old soap and some glycerin, which is highly prized for its moisturizing qualities. The FDA has actually ruled that commercial "soap" makers cannot use the word "soap" unless it meets the criteria of being made with lye and oils.

The commercially made cleansing bars you'll find in the stores contain toxic chemicals, and most of the time any glycerin that was once there is stripped out and used for other things. I call these "chemical bars," and personally I think people who know and understand they contains toxins and continue to use them are either crazy,

must not truly understand the dangers, or simply do not care about themselves. Perhaps that sounds harsh. It's just my opinion.

Here are eight common toxins found in commercial soaps:

- 1) **Triclosan**: This is actually a pesticide! So-called "soap" manufacturers added it to their soap products so they can state the soap is "antibacterial." Triclosan is terrible for the environment and is one of the toxins to blame for the recent resilience of bacteria. More importantly, it is a known endocrine disruptor. This means it negatively affects hormones, especially the female hormone estrogen. Breast cancer, anyone? Imbalanced hormones? There are many causes these days, and here is one of them!
- 2) **Sodium Laurel Sulfate (SLS)**: SLS is one of the worst chemical agents in "soaps" these days. Not only is it carcinogenic, it is able to be absorbed into your skin very easily. It may cause skin irritation, mood disorders, promotes storage of toxins in your cells, and like Triclosan, is a hormone disruptor.
- 3) **Formaldehyde**: Formaldehyde and other chemicals that may release formaldehyde (such as diazolidinyl urea) are very common in commercial soaps. First of all, everyone knows formaldehyde is the chemical used to preserve dead bodies, right? Formaldehyde may weaken the immune system, and may contribute to chronic fatigue, headaches, respiratory issues, and even cardiovascular problems such as irregular heartbeats.
- 4) **Dioxane**: This chemical should be avoided because it is highly toxic to the kidneys, liver, and the brain. It is a known carcinogen.
- 5) **Diethanolamine (DEA)**: If you see TEA in your soap's ingredients, you should know that it is also a derivative of DEA. These are terribly carcinogenic chemicals, specifically affecting the liver and kidneys. In addition, unborn babies may be

affected second hand because this chemical causes disruptions in how much choline a pregnant woman may be able to absorb, and this is an essential nutrient for the brain of the fetus to properly develop.

- 6) **Parabens**: These are preservatives that are commonly added to products, including soap. More labels are actually stating when parabens are not contained in the product—which we can infer means they are pretty bad. Parabens are hormone disruptors, especially of estrogen, and may be a cause of breast cancer. They are also thought to contribute to neural system issues.
- 7) **PEG-6**: Another wonder chemical with links to breast cancer.
- 8) **Fragrances**: Fragrances can be just about anything and can include thousands of different chemicals—the effects of which are unknown. When you see the word, “fragrance” on an ingredients label, you should stay away!

These are all toxins that should be avoided! When you make your very own soaps, you will know exactly what is in the soap and the ingredients will not be unknown to you. This is a pretty powerful feeling, especially when you know that your skin is the largest, most permeable organ on your body! Why put poisons on your skin when you could be using healthy ingredients instead?

Are you scared yet? These are not things I want on my body or anyone in my family! This is actually the main reason why I make my own soap—or buy from trusted soap makers!

You'll Get to Create Something Useful and Beautiful!

I don't know about you, but I just love creating things! Now, I don't consider myself a creative person—I did NOT get the “crafty” gene, unfortunately. But, when it

comes to making soap (which is good for you), you also get to play around with herbs, natural clays and herbal powders, and if you want, essential oils for fragrance!

The feeling you'll get when you present a handmade bar of your lovely soap to your family and friends—for gifts or just because you care—is nothing short of incredible! And when people start asking you for more (and they will), you'll become even more addicted to making your own soap! It's just a really great feeling to be able to make something beautiful that everyone needs!

Once you become comfortable with all the options you have when it comes to naturally coloring and scenting your handmade soap, you'll realize how fun it is to be creative with it! Although I'm sharing plenty of variations to get you started, it's even more fun to create your very own versions.

And quite possibly....You may even become so addicted to creating a beautiful, useful, quality product that you'll want to start up your own business! This has happened to many people I know. Yes, you CAN make money making your own soaps!

Not the least of these is the fact that you will know you are doing something healthy for you and your family. The sense of pride and empowerment you will gain when you start becoming more self-sufficient in even small ways like soap making for your family is absolutely priceless. That sense of empowerment will extend into other areas, and you may just find yourself making even more of your own products! (That's actually what happened with me!) That amazing feeling of not needing to buy toxic soaps in the store makes it worth the time and effort it takes to learn to make your own soap!

You Will Save Money!

I just love, love, love this aspect of making soap! You may think you need to lay out a lot of money initially on essential oils, herbs, bulk oils, etc. in order to get to the creative aspect of soap making, but guess what? You don't have to!

If you start off with the simple basic ingredients in the recipe I'm going to share with you, that is actually all you need! The other fun natural colorants and essential oils are the icing! But truly, all you need is 5 basic oils and your sodium hydroxide to make a very high quality soap.

Whether you go out and decide to buy lots of essential oils, clays, and herbs to make a large variety of soaps, or just stick with the basic recipe, you will have a great quality soap, either way.

I love saving money, and I love making soap—So isn't that a Win-Win? I can hardly wait for you to give this a try! I know you'll love it too!

Styles of Soap Making

I'm going to focus on hot process soap making in this book, because frankly...it's my favorite. I'll explain why in a moment, but first, I want to explain about some other types of soap making you may want to experiment with as well!

Melt and Pour:

This is a "gateway" style of soap making. Essentially, you just purchase already made blocks of soap that are specially processed to melt down. Find a quality online distributor (please don't get your soap from a craft shop) like Bulk Apothecary or Brambleberry that sells bulk soaps in large blocks. These are made to be melted down, combined with whatever colorants and scents you want, poured into molds, and enjoyed! This is a great style of soap making if you are beginning and are afraid to work with lye (sodium hydroxide) or if you are working with children and want an easy project. It's quick, super easy, and not messy.

The caveat is that Melt and Pour products may just contain some of those toxic ingredients you are trying to avoid! So you must be sure to read the labels and only purchase if you know what you're getting. (IMHO.)

These cute little soaps are examples of Melt and Pour. My grand daughter and I made these easily one afternoon. These are not completely natural, however, they are beautiful and still much better than store-bought cleansers.



Cold Process Soap Making:

Many people love this method, and I'm personally not against it myself. I've made lots of cold process soap, and enjoyed every bit of it! You can make some truly beautiful soaps using the cold process method. Swirls, little toppings, and neat designs can be formed into your soaps.

HOWEVER, there are some issues I personally have with cold process soap making. Not everyone agrees with me, but it's just the way I feel. The first is that you need to pay close attention to the temperatures of both the oils and the lye solution. You'll find out about those in a minute. If you don't have the temperatures correct when you blend your oils and lye, things can go wrong. I've heard of soaps cracking, soaps that are still caustic overflowing the mold, and more. Not that things can't go wrong with the hot process method—because they sure can! But I think there is more room for mistakes with cold process soap. Again, that's just my opinion.

In my own experience with cold process soap making, the scents don't last as long as they will in hot process bars. One of the reasons is that there is a MUCH longer curing time before you can use cold process soap—about 4 to 6 weeks longer. In that time—and afterward, the scents will fade out somewhat. That's just a lot of time to have to wait to use your bars of beautiful soap!

So while the positives (you can make a much larger quantity at once if you want, and you have more flexibility with creative swirls and the possibility of making just an absolutely beautiful bar of soap) are great—to me, I'd rather have the immediacy of knowing that my soap is turning out perfectly, will smell great for a long time, and is usable right away!

Hot Process Soap Making:

In contrast to cold process soap making, making hot process soaps gives you some immediate gratification! You know right away how your soap is turning out! You can also use it right away too. Hot process soap can be cured for a harder bar, but it's not necessary. Twenty-four hours after pouring into the soap mold: BAM! You have awesome hand-made soap!

Many people feel hot process soap is not as pretty as cold process soap, and in this, I have to agree...somewhat. You can make some very attractive bars of hot process soaps, but they will have a rougher, more rustic appearance. I easily solve this "problem" by cutting off the tops for people who I know are into the "look." I've run across quite a few people who can't tell my bars of hot process apart from cold process soap.

One of my favorite things about making hot process soap is that it is a more traditional way of creating soap. In the olden days, pioneer women would "cook" the soap using wood ash and oils in a large pot over a fire. These days, the "cook" usually takes place in a crock pot, although I've heard of people using large stainless steel pots over a stove.

Another thing I enjoy about hot process soap making is that it's fast, and you don't have to worry about the temperatures of the lye solution and oils (too) much. You don't want them too hot, or you may run into some emulsification problems, but an issue like this is easily solved with hot process soap making. (I once turned my crock pot on too high, and my oils and lye solution separated. Once it cooled down, I just re-blended the mixture, and all was fine. This only happened the one time, and I learned my lesson.)



Here are a few bars of naturally colored hot process soap. You can do this too!

Methodology of this Book: The Hot Process Method

For the purposes of this book, I'll be focusing on thorough hot process soap making directions so you can easily make your own hot process soap. Plus, I'll show you how to add different colorants and scents to create many beautiful variations to just one high quality basic recipe. When I first began learning how to make soap, there wasn't much information about making hot process soap, and being the impatient person I am, I just went for it after finding only one tutorial online. I made a few mistakes along the way, and I'm here to help you not make the same mistakes I did when I began my hot process soap making journey.

The basic recipe I'll be sharing with you can easily be converted to cold process soap making if you want. You'll need to bring the temperatures of the oil mixture and lye solution to around 100 to 110 degrees each. Combine, then bring the soap to trace. Pour it into a prepared mold. Let it sit, covered with a towel, for 24 hours. Then remove it from the mold, cut it into bars, and let them cure for four to six weeks. If you don't understand the terms (like trace) now, that's ok! I'll be explaining everything as I walk you through the basic recipe. In a nutshell, that's the difference in hot process and cold process methods, in case you'd like to make cold process soap using my recipe. You need to pay close attention to temperature with cold process, and you must wait weeks to use the soap. With hot process—you don't worry much about temperature, and you can use the bars right away!

After I walk you through the steps of how to make hot process soap using my basic recipe, I'll be sharing my most popular recipe variations with you so you can experiment with a little guidance! These recipe variations will all create lovely, beautifully scented, luxuriously moisturizing, high quality soaps! And if you decide you want to break out of the recipe "mold" then I encourage you to go for it!



Soap Balls! Another great thing about Hot Process Soap—It can be formed into balls!

Tools You'll Need to Make Hot Process Soap

Although some of the things you'll need are the same as for cold process soap making, there are some differences. Here are the tools you'll need to plan on having on hand in order to make successful hot process soap.

- 1) A large crock pot (I prefer a basic manual type rather than something fancy.)
- 2) Wooden spoons
- 3) A stick blender (This is an absolute MUST, or you will be stirring FOR EVER.)
- 4) A kitchen scale (Also absolutely necessary as your ingredients must be measured by weight exactly.)
- 5) Safety Gear (Rubber gloves and safety glasses)
- 6) Soap Mold (I prefer a rectangular silicone mold for hot process soap) For this recipe, it's best to find one that's 3 1/2 x 10 or 3 1/2 x 11.
- 7) Heat resistant measuring pitcher for your lye solution (I use a Pyrex pitcher that holds 32 ounces)
- 8) Measuring cups that hold at least 16 ounces to measure out your oils, etc.
- 9) A sharp knife or soap cutter

Safety Concerns

It's vitally important to remember you are dealing with a caustic and poisonous substance when you are working with lye (sodium hydroxide). It has the power to burn your skin, cause blindness, and even kill you if ingested. Please only work in a safe area where there are no pets or children around. It's just not worth the chance that somebody may accidentally get hurt.

Besides making sure the area is clear of children, pets, or any other person who might get hurt, there are things you need to do to protect yourself too. Here is a quick safety list:

- 1) Wear long sleeves—This will protect your arms in case of the accidental splash
- 2) Wear safety glasses—I make sure to always have my glasses on. If you end up with a volcano of some kind, trust me—you'll want your eyes protected.
- 3) Wear rubber gloves—Again, you don't want to be burned.
- 4) Be aware that your lye solution will be HOT. The chemical reaction between the water and the lye will heat the solution to around 190 degrees.
- 5) Do not use metal utensils or containers, unless they are made of stainless steel. Other metals may react with the lye.

These are my actual gloves and glasses I wear when making soap. I also wear long sleeves and covered shoes.



What is Lye, and Why is It Needed?

There are two kinds of lye: Sodium Hydroxide and Potassium Hydroxide. Sodium Hydroxide is what you will use to make your solid bar soap. Potassium Hydroxide is used to make liquid soaps, and you won't need this kind for these recipes.

Due to the fact that lye is one of the ingredients used in making dangerous illegal drugs such as "meth," you might find it is regulated in some states, possibly your own. You may find it difficult to find locally, and there may also be restrictions on how much you can keep on hand legally. It just depends on where you live.

Lye is best purchased online, in my opinion. I know some people might be able to find it in hardware stores, but I like to use food grade lye when making soap, even though that's not necessary. It just makes me feel better. You can find lye on Amazon or from soap making suppliers.

To store your lye, find a safe place away from children or pets. You can even purchase a "lye safe," if you want. I don't have one of these because my children are grown up, but I do make sure my lye is stored in a secure cupboard all the time, but especially when my grand children visit.

Lye is a necessary component in making soap, and this is because of the chemical reaction that occurs during the soap making process. Essentially, you need a liquid (usually water, but sometimes milk or tea) to create a solution with the lye. Once the lye is in liquid form, it can then react with the molecules of oil, thereby creating soap, along with the byproduct glycerin (which is great for your skin if made naturally, like in soap making).

What Happens to the Lye?

You might be wondering what on earth happens to the lye during the soap making process? I know I wondered! Without getting into all the scientific details, the chemical reaction between the lye solution and the oil mixture changes the molecular structure of the mixture, creating soap! When done correctly, there is no actual lye left in hot process soap. The long cure time needed in cold process soap making also gets rid of the lye when using that method. This is the simple answer. If you want a more scientific answer, please check out TheNerdyFarmWife.com. She has an excellent article that details what actually happens with the chemistry during soap making.



I love using herbs in my soap making. You get the benefits of the plants, plus they may just help give your soap some beautiful color!

The Basic Recipe

Many good soap making books provide recipes for soaps that need lots of different combinations of oils, liquids, colorants, and scents. In this book, however, I'm sharing my favorite soap recipe, then giving you lots of options for changing it up to create many different soaps! The reason for this is that, when I was a new soap maker, trying to find all the different oils to create these many different soaps became very expensive and time consuming. I just wanted to make good soap. And, here it is for you! I've made many, many loaves of different soaps using this one simple basic recipe, and I know you'll love it too! I've been told over and over by many people that it's the best soap they've ever used. I even have some friends who refuse to use any thing else!

This recipe makes three pounds of soap, and that will fit into a standard 3 1/2 inch by 10 or 11 inch soap mold. The soap mold I use is 10 inches long, and I always get a "bread top," because it won't completely fit. This is not a problem for me because after the soap has cooled in the mold for about an hour, I just cut the top off. My husband and I use it like this, or I'll form it into soap balls! If you use the longer mold, you probably won't get a high "bread top" like I do.

I also prefer a silicone soap mold because the soap is super easy to remove, and there is no need to line it with parchment paper. If you do happen to use a wooden soap mold, you will need to be sure to line it so you can remove your soap! I say KISS! Keep It Simple Sweetie! I go for silicone molds these days. It's less work and hassle!

Now, on to the recipe!

Basic Recipe for Moisturizing, Lathering, High Quality Soap!

Lye Solution

15 ounces of distilled water

7.2 ounces of sodium hydroxide (lye)

Oil Mixture

15 ounces olive oil

15 ounces coconut oil

12 ounces sweet almond oil

6 ounces shea butter

1.5 ounces castor oil

That's it! That's the basic recipe. So, if you purchase these items, you'll be able to make a wonderful soap that lathers like crazy and will make your skin love you! With this basic recipe, I'll be showing you how to add natural scents and colors to create your own custom soap!

Here are the ingredients for the basic recipe: Olive Oil, Coconut Oil, Sweet Almond Oil, Shea Butter, Castor Oil, Sodium Hydroxide, Water. That's it!



How to Make Hot Process Soap Using the Basic Recipe

Here are the step-by-steps for making hot process soap with this basic recipe (be sure to wear your safety gear):

Step 1) Mix up your Lye Solution

To do this, measure out your water FIRST. Then measure out your lye granules. Now this is important: Pour the lye into the water! NEVER, ever pour water into the lye. If you do, you could experience a lye volcano, and that is NOT something you want to happen. So, again, pour your lye into the water!



I measure out the water first, then pour the lye INTO the water—It's very important to combine them in this order! I like to do this chemical combination outside because there are fumes from the mixture that can burn your nose a bit. Some people wear masks—I just turn my head away. If you are sensitive, you should wear a mask.

Step 2) Mix Your Oils Together

Get your crock pot set on LOW. I always put my solid oils (shea butter and coconut oil, if it's cold out) into the crock pot, and let them liquify first. Then I pour in the rest of the oils. I have found doing it this way helps the oils cool down and not get so hot, while remaining in liquid form.

Step 3) Combine Lye Solution and Oils

Here is where you gently pour your lye solution into the crock pot of liquid oils.

Step 4) Mix to Trace

Using your stick blender, mix and mix and mix until your oil/lye solution mixture is the consistency of soft pudding. You should see peaks that don't go away when you lift the mixer. It's important to get to this consistency, or the soap won't form correctly, and you'll have a mess on your hands.



Step 5) Cook

Now, just place the lid on the crock pot and let your mixture cook away. What you'll see as your mixture turns into soap are some different phases. Here they are:

- 1) Opaque, hard soap—Your mixture will get hard at first
- 2) You'll notice the sides start changing first—the mixture on the sides of the crock pot will be bubbly and rather translucent, and will begin rising up the sides of the crock pot. You'll want to watch this phase carefully because if your soap starts changing too fast, it may actually lift itself out of the crock pot. You'll want to give it a good stir as soon as the center area is softer and there is a good amount of translucence on the sides of the crock pot. Just stir it on down.
- 3) You'll still notice some opaque areas in your soap, along with more translucent areas. That's fine. Let it cook.
- 4) If your soap starts rising again, just stir, stir, stir it on down. You may have to do this a total of two to three times.
- 5) Your soap should start looking a bit like mashed potatoes at some point.
- 6) Your soap will become more like petroleum jelly: translucent and a bit waxy. Once it gets to this phase, it's ready. You should NOT see any opaque bits at all—if you do, it's still caustic.

Here's a good picture of the soap cooking. You can still see opaque bits, and it needs to be stirred down. Some people call this the "mashed potato" phase. All I know is it's not quite ready yet! Getting there!



Step 6) Check for Doneness

Some people will use a pH test to see if their soap is done. It should have close to a neutral pH. If you are using a test strip or phenolphthalein, your test strips or drops should not be pink. If the test is pink, you still have too much alkalinity.

Personally, I have not had great success using pH tests on my soaps. I used them when I first started soap making because I was pretty paranoid about the possibility of using caustic soap, but I have never once had a problem with my finished soaps being too alkaline. I've tried the test strips, as well as a fancy test that even required an app on my phone. Frankly, it made me feel better, but was not necessary.

After my first two or three soap making sessions, I turned to the ZAP test. I learned this from a few other soap makers online. WARNING: This is simply my personal preference, and I am not advocating you do this! But here are the ZAP test steps:

1) You should be able to roll a bit of the soap between your fingers. It should feel waxy and malleable. It should look translucent.

2) If this is the case, then place a bit of the soap on the tip of your tongue. If it "ZAPS" you, then it is NOT ready, and is still caustic. If it doesn't ZAP you (and trust me, you'll know), then it is ready. You should taste a good soap taste and nothing else. Rinse your mouth well.

Basically, for good hot process soap readiness, you should have a translucent mixture, it should be a somewhat waxy consistency, and it should be a relatively neutral pH.



See how waxy it is? I can actually form it into a little ball. This is the first sign it's all finished. Then I'll just touch it to the tip of my tongue. If I taste great soap taste and no ZAP—it's all good to go. Do not do this if the soap is not waxy or is not hardening a bit enough to form a ball. It's not fun to zap your tongue—trust me. I know. And definitely do NOT swallow! Obviously.

Step 7) Add Your Essential Oils and Any Ingredients for Texture

Once you have determined your soap is ready, it's time to add your essential oils and any other textures you have in mind. To add your essential oils, turn the crock pot OFF. Then allow the soap to just sit for a few minutes (around 5). Carefully pour your essential oils into the hot soap and stir like crazy! You want to get those oils fully integrated into your soap.

If you are planning on adding any textures (oatmeal, pumice, salt, etc.) you'll do this after you add in your essential oils.

Step 8) Put Your Soap in the Mold

Plop or pour your soap into the soap mold. This particular recipe requires me to actually spoon it into the soap mold. Push it down well, in order to be sure there are no air pockets. You can also pick up the mold and let it drop gently onto the counter to further make sure the soap is in all the corners and there are no pockets of air.

Step 9) Allow to Cool

A good rule of thumb is to let it cool several hours or overnight. It needs to be solid before you remove it from the soap mold.

Step 10) Cut the Soap



With hot process soap, you can leave the whole entire loaf alone if you want, and only cut what you need when you need it! This really ensures the integrity of any scent you have added for a very long time!

You can also choose to slice the top off if you want—you should do this before you remove it from the mold, as it will be easier for you to cut it. If you want to use the “bread top” to form soap balls, you’ll want to slice the top off before it cools completely and is still somewhat malleable. Otherwise, the top can be sliced just like the bars.

If you don’t want to cut off the top, your soap bars will have a rough, rustic appearance. They will not be smooth like regular soap bars. It’s completely up to you!

That’s it! That’s the basic recipe and directions!

Cutting off the “bread” top— This will create a nice, smooth top for your soap bars. You can still use the “bread” part, of course! Some people like the top left on, though. It makes for a very unique rustic appearance.



Using Natural Fragrance and Colorants in Your Soap

Natural Colorants

There is a huge difference between artificial colors and those that are natural colorants in soap making. Have you ever seen those practically fluorescent colors in some soaps, like bright pinks, yellow, greens? Well, I hate to break it to you, but those are chemical colorants, and are NOT natural. Even micas, which purportedly come from the earth, are usually chemically processed to create the colors they impart. I do not consider these natural colorants.

Truly natural soap colorants will not be eye poppingly fluorescent or sparkly. They just won't be. Sorry. Natural soap colors will be more earth-toned and muted, and in my opinion, much more beautiful.

You can naturally color your soaps with herbs infused in the water (a tea) before adding the lye, powdered herbs added to the oils before mixing to trace, clays added to the oils, or by using herb infused olive oil or sweet almond oil. I'll go over each of these methods in the recipes that follow, and I've included a list of herbs and clays along with the colors they create in your soap in the Appendices.



Natural Fragrances

Like natural colorants, there's not a lot of wiggle room with natural fragrances either. It's just the way it is. There are fragrance oils, which are chemically derived, and there are essential oils, which come from plants. There's really no in-between.

Fragrance oils may contain some natural elements, but they often contain toxic artificial perfumes. Honestly, I refuse to use them in my soaps. That's just my personal preference.

Essential oils are extensive to make, and therefore, much more expensive than fragrance oils. They are the volatile oils from certain plant parts. Not all plants or plant parts create essential oils, either. I've had many people ask me if I can make an apple scented soap. The answer is "NO." This is because apples do not have essential oils, and neither do most fruits. The only fruit scents you are going to get using essential oils are citrus, and this is because the peels contain the essential oils.

Again, sorry about that bad news. But it is what it is. The beautiful types of natural scents you'll be able to obtain using essential oils are going to come from woods (cedarwood, frankincense, etc.), spices (cloves, cinnamon, etc.), citrus (orange, lemon, tangerine, etc.), florals (lavender, jasmine, geranium, etc.), and minty-pungent type plants (peppermint, eucalyptus, etc.). You can combine these different essential oils to create some truly lovely scents.

Besides the amazing way they smell, essential oils have numerous health benefits associated with them! For example, using a soap with eucalyptus, tea tree, and peppermint essential oils is really going to help clear your sinuses in the morning! Using a lavender and vetiver scented soap is going to calm and relax you! Using a soap scented with tangerine and lemon is going to really uplift your mood and create happiness! Unlike artificial fragrances, essential oils have been clinically proven to benefit your psychology as well as your physical body. There is a LOT of power in plants!



Recipe Variations

Using Essential Oils in Your Soap

The essential oil amounts I use in making soaps are quite large. In other words, the amounts I state to use in the following recipes will make a very highly scented soap that will last a long time. If you are not into heavily scented soaps, start out by cutting the essential oil amounts in half. You'll save money too! You can make adjustments to suit your needs as you experiment!

For making soap, I usually purchase my essential oils through either Starwest Botanicals or Bulk Apothecary. The quality is not therapeutic grade (although I think Starwest's essential oils are of a much higher quality than Bulk Apothecary), but they are perfect for soap making, where you are using essential oils in terms of tablespoons or ounces instead of drops! You can find links on my website through any article, located in the sidebar to the right: www.healingharvesthomestead.com.

When to Add Your Essential Oils to Hot Process Soap

This is a pretty critical step to understand, because essential oils will break down with a lot of heat. Since hot process soap is, well...HOT, you need to take a precaution or two when adding your essential oils. You'll need to add them at the very end of the cook.

First, turn off the heat on the crock pot. The soap won't cool fast enough to make it difficult to put in the mold. Then add any herbs, powders, clays, etc. at the end of the cook and stir these in REALLY well.

Finally, add in your essential oils and stir like crazy to get them integrated as well as possible. You might see a kind of mucous-y (for lack of a better term) substance forming as you stir in the oils. Don't worry about this and just keep on stirring everything really well. Now, you are ready to put your soap in the mold.

However, if you want to create extra "swirly" or "marbled" effects, you'll want to add these powders (such as cinnamon) AFTER the essential oils, because you don't stir these in well—you want "chunks" or "swirls" left in your soap. These are more for effect and extra decoration. Since the essential oils need to be stirred in completely, you'll add any powder that you are going to stir in lightly after you add in the essential oils.

Using Herbs and Clays for Color and Texture in Your Hot Process Soap

You can truly get creative with using clays, herbal powders, and teas in your soaps. They not only color, but can help exfoliate, depending on the texture, add slip to the soap, or provide additional benefits to your skin!

Clays:

The general rule is to add about 1 tablespoon of clay powder to every pound of soap. I tend to go easy on using clays, but others love a high amount of clay in soap. Clay will help give your soap “slip,” which makes it great for shaving! Clays also help improve your skin tone.

Herbal Powders:

I use a lot of herbal powders in my soaps, especially those that help the skin. Some herbal powders will look a certain color (like bright red hibiscus), but when added to soap will turn brown. So, take a look at the chart in the Appendix for herbs to use when coloring soaps. Take some creative license, and experiment! For herbal powders, I usually add these at the end of the cook, but before the essential oils—unless I’m looking for a specific effect like a marbled look.

Unpowdered Herbs:

Sometimes, I’ll add cut leaves or flower petals to my soap. These will generally have an exfoliating effect on the skin because they provide a rougher texture. Herbs such as finely ground coffee, seeds, leaves, etc. will definitely add a nice texture to your soap! Be careful, though! I’ve added things I’ve thought would be wonderful, only to find out that it hurts! :-) Example: Rooibos tea leaves—A definite no!

People love to add flowers or petals to their soap, but bear in mind that these often turn brown, and the color doesn't last. The exception to this rule is Calendula. These bright yellow petals withstand browning and are WONDERFUL for your skin! Lavender flowers work well, but they do turn a brownish after some time, too.

Tea (Water) Infusions:

Instead of using plain water in your lye solution, you can make an herbal infused tea (see the Chamomile infused soap). Just create your tea using filtered water, cool it down, and use it in place of the plain filtered water. You will get a bit of color this way, as well as the plant benefits! A heads up, though: Your soap may not turn out the same color as the tea! The chemical changes during the soap making process will often affect the color of the tea/lye solution. Play around with this! It's fun!

Herbal Infused Oils:

This is another way to get color into your soap, while including the benefits from the herbs! I keep a gallon jug of Calendula petals in Olive Oil on a sunny shelf in my kitchen window. I use this oil in salves, lip balms, and ointments, but I also use it in my soap making! Calendula infused oil will create a beautiful buttery yellow color in your soap, besides being great for your skin! You can experiment with other herbal infused oils too! Infused oil needs to infuse for at least four weeks in order to get as much of the plant color and chemical constituents from the plant matter, so you'll need to plan ahead if you want to use an infused oil.



A jar of Calendula infused olive oil. I always find it so amazing that the green tint of good olive oil will turn this lovely golden color with Calendula! I grow these flowers in our yard, and they are wonderfully soothing for the skin and in teas. They are also edible! You should try some! They are easy to grow practically everywhere!

The Recipes!

The “Un” Soap (All Natural)

This recipe is exactly how it sounds—unscented and uncolored. All you get is the basic soap! Just like it sounds, all you do is make the basic recipe without adding any type of essential oil, herb, or clay. That’s it! Just follow those directions!

This is a great soap for people who are super sensitive to scents or have very sensitive skin, yet still want a highly moisturizing soap that lathers well and lasts a long time. It turns out a nice creamy color—quite pretty, though plain.



Refreshing-Type Soaps

These are some of my very favorite soaps! They wake you up, help you become more alert, and often make your skin feel tingly and absolutely refreshed!

Double-Mint Soap

Double-Mint has been one of my most popular soaps over the years. I don't color this soap, but I'll add about a tablespoon of cut and sifted spearmint leaves to the batch after the cook. It smells wonderful, and it will wake you up! If you love Double-Mint gum, you'll probably love this soap too!

Essential Oils:

1.2 ounces Spearmint Essential Oil

1.2 ounces Peppermint Essential Oil

.5 ounces Patchouli Essential Oil (to ground the scents)

Herbs for Color & Texture:

Add one to two tablespoons of cut and sifted Spearmint Leaves to the batch of soap after the cook, and right before putting the soap in the mold.



Double-Mint Soap!

Peppermint Soap

Especially wonderful during the holidays, Peppermint soap is terrific any time. During the hot summer months, it can actually help cool you down! I color this soap with Nettle leaf powder, and it is a lovely dark and herbally vibrant green.

Essential Oils:

2.5 ounces Peppermint

.5 ounce Patchouli

Herbs for Color:

2 to 3 Tablespoons of Nettle Leaf Powder

**I purchase organic Nettle leaves, cut and sifted, from Starwest Botanicals, then powder them myself as I want to use them for soap. I use Nettle in many things: cooking as well as medicinal preparations. It's a wonderful herb!



Look how green the Nettle powder turns the Peppermint soap—

Refresh Soap

Here is another soap I usually leave uncolored so it is a lovely creamy off-white. You can add clays or herbs if you like, though! The scent is cooling, refreshing, and will help open your sinuses. If you have allergies or are getting a cold, this soap will help! Another cool thing about this soap is that with the addition of Tea Tree Oil, it will have anti-fungal properties too and really helps deodorize.

Essential Oils:

1.5 ounces Peppermint essential oil

1 ounce Eucalyptus (globulus) essential oil

.5 ounces Tea Tree essential oil

Herbs:

None—unless you want to, that is! It will look just like the plain soap.

Third Eye Soap

This is a fun name for a beautifully scented soap. It's not as "awakening" as the other mint soaps, but it smells just lovely. I called it "Third Eye" because your third eye is another name for your intuition or insight and is aligned with your Anja Chakra, or 6th Chakra, on your forehead. The combination of oils, especially the Frankincense, is thought to raise your awareness. This blend of oils is great for meditation too!

Essential Oils:

- 1.5 ounces Spearmint essential oil
- .5 ounces Eucalyptus essential oil
- .5 ounces Frankincense essential oil
- .5 ounces Patchouli essential oil

For Color:

1 tablespoon of French Green clay will give this soap a light green color. The clay will help add "slip" to the soap as well, making it nice for shaving.

Woodsy Soaps

I love the earthy scent of woods and resins. I have found these types of soaps are very popular with men as well as women. Men seem to have a narrower set of preferences with scents, and I feel you can't go wrong using a wood-spice scent for the guys!

Evergreen Pine

Oh, this is one of my personal favorites! This soap is highly requested by the men in my life: my husband, male friends & family, and even those asking to barter or buy. It's perfect during the holidays, or any time you want to feel like you are walking in the forest!

Essential Oils:

2.5 ounces Pine Scotch (or other Pine) essential oil

.5 ounces of Patchouli essential oil (grounds and holds the scent)

**If you want the addition of a slightly "sweet" scent along with your Pine, you can add a bit of Vanilla essential oil, Pure Vanilla extract, or Benzoin essential oil—no more than a half ounce.

Herbs for Color:

1 tablespoon Nettle Powder—This amount will create a much lighter green than in the Peppermint Soap above.

Frankincense & Myrrh

This soap is seriously wonderful. First off, Frankincense is absolutely AMAZING for your skin. It has a unique scent that is thought to enhance mental clarity. It's got a kind of wood-turpentine (not in a bad way) scent that is offset by the Myrrh and Patchouli, which sweetens it just a little. You've probably guessed it's great during the holidays, just because of the name, but I love it any time!

Essential Oils:

1 ounce Frankincense essential oil

1 ounce Myrrh essential oil (Myrrh is very viscous, so you can soak the bottle in warm water to help it pour more easily.)

.5 ounces Peppermint essential oil

.5 ounces Patchouli essential oil

Color:

I use 1 or 2 tablespoons of Red Moroccan Clay to Color this soap. The color turns out to be a brick-red color, the more you use, and quite hard because of the clay, and very wonderful for the skin!



These are bars of Frankincense & Myrrh soap—— I used only 1 tablespoon of the clay in this soap, and it came out quite light. I like it this way!

Sexy Wild Man

Here is another of my husband's favorites, and I have a friend who gets a whole loaf from me, she loves it so much! Ladies, it's not just for men! This soap smells clean, warm, and slightly spicy-woody, with hints of Cedarwood/Lemon. It's colored with a bit of Safflower Powder, with swirls of ground Cinnamon. It's an attractive soap that smells great!

Essential Oils:

1.5 ounces Cedarwood essential oil

.5 ounces Lemongrass (This essential oil adds a LOT of scent and can be overpowering—so be careful.)

1 ounce Cinnamon essential oil

**Cinnamon can irritate the skin of some people, although I've never heard of this happening with this recipe. Just be aware, and if you are making this for someone with very sensitive skin, perhaps use less.

Color & Texture:

1 to 2 tablespoons of Safflower Powder (add to the oils before adding the lye solution, for a nice smooth color—if you forget, you can add it at the end of the cook and just stir like crazy!)

After adding the essential oils, add 1 tablespoon of Cinnamon powder sprinkled around the top. Swirl it in gently.



Sexy Wild Man Soap: Cedarwood, Lemongrass, and Cinnamon create a unique scent. The dark areas are ground cinnamon powder.

Cedarwood Soap

My husband insisted I put this soap in, even though it's very simple. This is because he just loves the scent of real cedar—as many men do. I find it a little strong, but he loves it!

Essential Oils:

2 ounces Cedarwood essential oil

Color:

None

That's it! This is a very minimalist soap!

My husband's Cedarwood Soap—



Citrus Soaps

I have not met one single person who doesn't appreciate the uplifting and joyful scent of citrus. Whether it's lemon, tangerine, orange, mandarin, or any other citrus scent, it just creates feelings of peace and happiness! In a bad mood? Just inhale some lemon essential oil and see what happens!

Citrus Dream

Citrus Dream soap is one of my top soaps of all time. It's very Lemon scented with a really uplifting overall scent of Tangerine. It seriously makes you feel happy. I've given it to friends who want more than, like, 5 bars—that's so they can use a couple and place the others around the house and car to scent the area up! It's that great a smell! I recommend just diffusing the essential oil blend, though, if you are trying to scent an area—and go ahead and enjoy the heck out of this soap! :-)

Essential Oils:

- 1.5 ounces Tangerine essential oil
- 1 ounce Lemon essential oil
- .5 ounce Lemongrass (again—go easy on this essential oil!)
- .5 ounce Patchouli essential oil (grounds the citrus)

Colors:

I'm going to give you options, here, in case you don't have or want to wait for infused Calendula oil:

Option 1) Infuse 15 or more ounces of Olive Oil or Almond Oil with Calendula flowers over a minimum four week period. Substitute this oil for whichever oil you infuse in the recipe. Your soap will be a lovely butter color—so pretty!

Option 2) Use a TINY bit of powdered Annatto seed (it's powerful stuff!). For this size bar, I'd use no more than about a teaspoon.

Option 3) Use a TINY bit of powdered Turmeric (it's also quite strong, and will provide a beautiful yellow color).

Option 4) Use 1 tablespoon or 2 of Yellow Brazilian Clay—especially if you like the “slip” and a slightly harder bar.



Beautiful Citrus Dream on the left—colored with Calendula infused oil. That's Refresh on the right!

Orange-Mint Bliss

What a great soap this is! It's got the uplifting power of Orange essential oil along with the refreshment and cooling power of Peppermint! It's a wonderful summertime soap!

Essential Oils:

- 1.5 ounces Sweet Orange, Blood Orange, or Wild Orange essential oil
- .5 ounce Peppermint essential oil
- .5 ounce Spearmint essential oil
- .5 ounce Patchouli essential oil

Color:

I've colored this soap all kinds of yellow ways! My favorite is to use Calendula infused oil (see Citrus Dream above for directions), but I've also left it plain or used a tiny bit of turmeric. I think annatto is a little powerful for this soap, unless you use a teeny-teeny-teeny amount!

Grapefruit-Vanilla

This soap is a sweet, happy, and uplifting soap. Grapefruit is known to lift the spirits, and vanilla is soothing and sweet. The combination is intoxicating! If you love the smell of either grapefruit or vanilla, you will love this soap!

Essential Oils:

1.5 ounces Grapefruit essential oil

1 ounce Vanilla essential oil OR pure Vanilla Extract OR Benzoin essential oil

.5 ounce Patchouli (needed to ground the citrus)

Color:

I like to use 1 to 2 tablespoons of French Pink Clay when I make this soap. It's a pretty pinkish-brown color with a nice slip to it. I think it matches both the grapefruit and the Vanilla.



This is Grapefruit-Vanilla soap. You can see how pink the clay is. For a color this pink in the soap, I used at least 2 tablespoons of the clay.

Summer Day Soap

I love this soap! It's happy and fresh! With grapefruit and lemon essential oils combined for a pretty aromatic uplift along with a touch of sweet spearmint essential oil, it's such a nice scent for summer. And if you really miss the summer during the cold winter months, you should give this a try!

Essential Oils:

- 1.5 ounces Grapefruit essential oil
- .5 ounce Lemon essential oil
- .5 ounce Spearmint essential oil (or a little more)
- .5 ounce Patchouli essential oil to ground the citrus.

Color & Texture:

Use any of the yellow ideas above, if you want—I usually use a tiny bit (1 teaspoon or so) of Turmeric powder.

If you want some moisturizing, soothing exfoliation, go ahead and add 1 tablespoon or more of regular oatmeal! Stir this in with the essential oils, after the cook!



Two Spicy Loaves— You can see how they look when the top is cut off. The loaf on the left shows the bottom, and the one on the right shows the top after the “bread” lump has been cut off.

Spicy Soaps

So many people I've met love spicy scents. They are warm, safe, alluring, and exotic. They tend to ground you, and create a feeling of "home." For men, I have heard that they can even have aphrodisiac qualities! At any rate, I love spicy scents, and if you do too—I think you'll love these!

Peaceful Warrior (Cinnamon-Vanilla)

I call this Peaceful Warrior because it's pink, sweet, and spicy. Having said that, I have found that men love this soap as much as women do! It's a smell that you just love to keep smelling!

Essential Oils:

1.5 ounces Cinnamon essential oil

1.5 ounces Vanilla essential oil OR pure Vanilla Extract OR Benzoin essential oil

1.5 ounces Patchouli

(Even if you don't prefer the scent of Patchouli, it helps blend these scents together perfectly, so you don't feel like you're eating a cookie.)

Color & Texture:

2 tablespoons (or even 3, for a darker pink) French Pink Clay, added with the melted oils.

1 to 2 tablespoons of ground Cinnamon added AFTER the essential oils at the end of the cook. Gently stir or swirl them in.



Peaceful Warrior Soap

Warrior (Cinnamon-Clove)

This is a very strong, spicy soap. I'd have to say this is geared more toward men, but some women like it too! I've used green clay for this soap, because it seems like more of a warrior color! My husband really loves this soap, and so do quite a few of his friends.

Essential Oils:

1 ounce Cinnamon essential oil

1.5 ounces Vanilla essential oil OR pure Vanilla Extract OR Benzoin essential oil

.5 ounce Clove essential oil

Color & Texture:

2 tablespoons of French Green Clay—more if you like a lot of slip or a very hard bar!

Add with your oils in the crock pot—it will get stirred up nicely during the hand mixing.

1 tablespoon of ground Cinnamon and (optional) 1/2 teaspoon ground Clove powder.

Add these AFTER the essential oils at the very end, before placing in the soap mold.

Mandarin Spice

Love Oriental scents? This soap has a beautiful Mandarin scent reminiscent of the Orient, along with famous Cinnamon, Clove, and Patchouli direct from the Spice Trades! It's sweet and spicy without being cloying. Mandarin is known to calm and uplift at the same time!

Essential Oils:

1.5 ounces Mandarin Orange essential oil

.5 ounce Clove essential oil

.5 ounce Cinnamon essential oil

.5 ounce Patchouli essential oil

Color & Texture:

Use a 1/2 tablespoon of Paprika powder for an orange-yellow color. Add to the oils in the crock pot.

If you want, add 1/2 tablespoon of clove powder or 1 tablespoon of ground cinnamon for effect at the very end, after adding your essential oils!



Mandarin-Spice Soap

Floral Soaps

Most women love floral scents! Lavender is a very common and fairly inexpensive floral that soothes, calms, and just smells fresh and pretty. Unfortunately, other floral essential oils tend to be VERY expensive, so I've focused on the Lavender blends for these soaps. (Except for Happy Hippy—it's got more of a 60's vibe, and the Rose Soap—which isn't really rose!)

Lavender-Mint

This is relaxing and refreshing at the same time! The sweet scent of Lavender helps calm and soothe and may provide relief for headaches and stress. The mint is cooling and helps with mental clarity!

Essential Oils:

2 ounces Lavender essential oil

1 ounce Peppermint essential oil

Color/Texture:

I think green is a great color for this soap—a very light green. I've used 1/2 tablespoon of French green clay or Nettle powder before and it's been nice.

If you want to get a more purple/pink color, in honor of the Lavender, try 1/2 tablespoon Alkanet powder added to the oils in the crock pot.

I love adding finely ground oatmeal to this soap because it adds to the "spa" feeling!



This is Lavender Rosemary Vanilla, but it has been colored with Moroccan Red Clay—about 3 tablespoons, so you can see how red this clay can be! I did not put Lavender flowers in this loaf because I was making it for a friend who doesn't like texture.

Lavender-Rosemary-Vanilla

If you have acne on your back, you might want to give this astringent soap a try! Both Lavender and Rosemary (especially the Rosemary) have properties that help control overactive sebaceous glands. Together these three essential oils smell wonderful! It's an unusual scent, but very pretty—definitely floral. The Vanilla provides a “sweet” overtone.

Essential Oils:

1 ounces Lavender essential oil

1 ounce Rosemary essential oil

1 ounce Vanilla essential oil OR Vanilla Extract (pure) OR Benzoin essential oil

Color & Texture:

I like using 1/2 tablespoon of alkanet powder (put in the oils in crockpot before trace) for a purplish color.

I've also used French pink clay (2 tablespoons) or even Red Moroccan Clay.

For texture, I add 2 tablespoons of lavender flowers to the soap after the cook, right before I add the essential oils.

Happy Hippy Soap

Love Patchouli? Love the 60's? Well, you will probably love this soap if you do! It's filled with exotic scents. I almost put it in the Woody section, but it is very heavy in Patchouli, so here it is in the florals!

Essential Oils:

1.5 ounces Patchouli essential oil
1 ounce Frankincense essential oil
.5 ounce Cedarwood essential oil

Color:

I feel this soap deserves something exotic. I have used Red Moroccan Clay (2 tablespoons), and I've also tried Indigo Powder. Indigo powder will give you a color from gray to almost black, depending on how much you use. 2 tablespoons will definitely give you a dark colored soap!



Happy Hippy colored with Indigo Powder. I sometimes call this "Mystic" soap, too.

Lavender-Orange-Pine

Here is a soap that is a great combination of floral, citrus, and wood. I really like this. It's calming, soothing, and not overpowering at all. I didn't give this one a name, although I've been making it for awhile. I even make an aromatherapy spray with this blend because it smells so clean and pretty.

Essential Oils:

1 ounce Lavender essential oil

1 ounce Orange essential oil

1 ounce Pine essential oil

(It's a very balanced blend!)

Color:

I generally keep this one plain, and add about 3 tablespoons of ground oatmeal for skin soothing and softening. But if you want color, I'd go with a nice light green from French green clay or perhaps pink from French pink clay? Use 2 tablespoons of either to get a nice color! The last batch I made with this essential oil blend, I used Chamomile infused tea in place of the water. The color was a beautiful golden-pink brown.



The actual color was a little more brown than this, but it's a lovely soap.

A Rose is a Rose

A rose is a rose....except when it's not! There is no Rose essential oil in this soap, and that is because it is EXTREMELY expensive. It's prohibitively expensive, in fact! So, I've done the best I can with what I know. I've used a combination of Rose Geranium essential oil, Palmarosa essential oil, and a touch of Patchouli for a soft, romantic scent. You might want to cut this recipe in half, for sure, though, because (to me) it seems strong!

Essential Oils:

1 ounce Palmarosa essential oil
1 ounce Rose Geranium essential oil
1/2 ounce Patchouli essential oil

Color:

2 tablespoons of Rose Kaolin Clay is wonderful to color this soap!
But by now, you've read through so many options, you might want to try something different!

Texture:

I haven't tried this, but you could add some rose petals on top, just before it's completely cool. Just press them in. I wouldn't add them to the hot soap before you put them in the mold. They are very likely to brown.



This purple soap is colored with Alkanet Root. You don't need to use much of alkanet root powder! A tablespoon or two will give you a nice purple color.

Easy Herb and Clay Color List

My Favorite Plants and Clays for Coloring Soap Naturally

Red and Pink:

Madder Root: Produces a range from pinkish to red, depending on how much you use.

French Pink Clay: A light pinkish brown, actually quite pretty.

Morrocan Red Clay: Provides a lovely dark red brown, depending on the amount used

Kaolin Pink Clay: Also a light pinkish brown soap, similar to French Pink Clay.

Green:

Nettle Leaf Powder: Using Nettle leaf is my very favorite for a bright, vibrant green.

Spirulina: Makes a nice green-blue color

Green Clay: Makes a calming light green color

Henna: I have not actually tried using Henna in soap---only my hair. I hear it makes a nice olive green/brown soap.

Yellow and Orange:

Calendula Petals: Using Calendula is my favorite way to make yellow soap. I infuse the petals in the almond oil or olive oil for about 6 weeks. The oils turn a beautiful golden yellow--and no extra colorant is needed in the soap! Plus the Calendula is extremely softening and soothing to the skin.

Annatto Seed: You'll have to grind this to as much of a powder as you can, then strain for just the finest particles. A tiny bit of this goes a long way! Color ranges from light yellow all the way to striking orange with more added!

Paprika: Paprika makes a darkish orange color. It's quite pretty, and great in the Fall!

Safflower Powder: Another way to make a rusty orange bar of soap

Turmeric: Turmeric makes a nice yellow soap. It's not as pretty a yellow as Calendula, in my opinion, but I've used it often and it turns out nice!

Purple and Blue:

Alkanet Root: If you buy it unpowdered, just grind it in your spice mill! This makes a wonderful very dark purple bluish color. Go easy on it! A little goes a long way. Also, it may turn a grayish color depending on the lye content, but it's not unpleasant. If you only use a small amount, you'll be more in the purple range.

Indigo: Gives a deep blue color. It will stain, so be careful!

Blue Cornmeal: I haven't tried this yet, either, but I hear it turns a purplish-blue to brown color.

Browns:

Chamomile: Infusing your water with Chamomile to make a tea to use will give you a very pretty light golden brown color.

Cinnamon: Cinnamon makes a nice brown color. You can also swirl it in at the end.
Caution: Cinnamon may be irritating to the skin for some people.

Clove: Makes a darker brown color.

Coffee: Ground fine, infuse in the oils as they heat. It will give you speckles in your soap, but will really scrub your skin well!

Black:

Activated Charcoal: Hands down the best for making a black soap! If you don't use enough, though, it will be a gray color. Activated charcoal is purifying to your skin, too!

This is not a comprehensive list! Experiment with all kinds of different herbs and clays!



You can really make a wide array of colors using natural herbs and clays! It's pretty incredible, and I personally love the muted earth tones far better than the strange colors of unnatural colorants.

A List of Essential Oils That are GREAT for Scenting Soap

Anise: Anise is quite strongly scented and will give you a licorice scent. So if you are a person who enjoys the scent of black licorice or star anise—this is for you!

Benzoin: Mmmmm....Sweet and vanilla scented, Benzoin is good for your skin. However, it can be difficult to use because it is highly viscous. You'll have to warm the bottle in hot water to get it to flow reasonably enough to use.

Bergamot: Bergamot is a citrus oil and has a relaxing scent. There's a tinge of floral in bergamot. I don't use this much because I find it to be on the expensive side.

Cinnamon: Pretty much everyone knows what cinnamon smells like! :-)) As stated earlier, just be aware that some people are sensitive to cinnamon. Go easy on this oil.

Clove: Clove is an oriental scent, quite strong, and should be combined with other oils. It's another oil that may cause skin sensitivity, although medicinally, it is used as a numbing oil for tooth and mouth pain.

Eucalyptus: A clean, uplifting, and refreshing scent! It also has some terrific medicinal qualities, and if you experience allergies or sinus issues, using Eucalyptus soap in your shower can really help! You should be careful about using this essential oil on children under the age of 12. In soap, it is highly diluted, but you still need to take care. Best thing, as always, is to check in with your medical doctor.

Frankincense: This is an expensive oil, but I'm including it here because it is just so wonderful! It has a piney/turpentine -ish scent, and has long been used as a healing oil. It's truly an oil that benefits your skin, especially mature skin.

Grapefruit: This is a super uplifting and happy essential oil! It's also thought to help with fat deposits and cellulite. Used with Rosemary, it is a great combination for acneic or especially oily skin.

Lavender: Lavender is arguably the most used essential oil scent in soap making! It's inexpensive (relatively), and it smells wonderful. It is highly relaxing and soothing to the skin.

Lemon: Lemon is another common scent that most people really love. Lemon, like many of the citrus oils, will not last long in soap. Using a touch of Patchouli in the blend helps ground the scent, keeping it in the soap longer.

Lemongrass: Lemongrass has a lemony scent, and is very helpful for emotional balance. I like to use lemongrass along with lemon essential oil because the scents are similar, and I've found it helps the lemon fragrance go a lot further in the soap.

Mandarin Orange: This oil is calming for people, especially children. If you've smelled a mandarin orange, then you know what this scent is like. It's not quite orange, and it is lighter and sweeter.

Orange: I've used Blood Orange and Sweet Orange. Both are good! Orange essential oil has a joyful citrus scent! As in other citrus oils, it will not last as long in soaps, so using another oil to help "ground" it, like Patchouli or Lemongrass will help.

Patchouli: This is one of those love it or hate it oils! Personally, I love Patchouli. It starts out strong, then fades into a lovely exotic scent. It helps weaker essential oils to last longer in the soap. So, even if you use a bit in your Pine or Citrus soaps, it will smell just fine! It blends well with these scents.

Peppermint: Oh, my goodness—this is one of my favorites. It's cooling (literally) on your skin, so it's a great summertime scent. It is very stimulating, so take care using on children (always see a doctor and ask if it's ok) or for people with heart issues.

Rosemary: Rosemary has a woody-green scent, and it is also stimulating. It should be used with caution or not at all around people with heart issues, for young children, or people with nerve issues. Seek advice from a doctor any time you use essential oils.

Spearmint: Spearmint is sweeter than Peppermint, and much more mild. I love spearmint, and if you've ever tasted a spearmint leaf, then you know what I'm talking about!

Tangerine: What can I say? Tangerine essential oil just flat out makes a person happy. It really does. Like the other citrus, you'll need to ground it using a stronger oil, like patchouli or lemongrass.

Tea Tree Oil: One of my favorites, I used to think it was stinky! But blended the right way with other oils (like Eucalyptus, the mints, and patchouli), it is lovely. Tea Tree essential oil is an antiseptic, antifungal, and all-around anti-microbial. In fact, it can be used to treat stubborn toenail fungus! In soap, it's beautiful.

Wintergreen: Wintergreen has analgesic properties, and may help with joint pain relief, especially when used in salves. In soap, like most essential oils, it is mainly for the scent. It has a strong and powerful kind of “icy-hot” scent. If you’ve tasted wintergreen gum, it’s the same scent!

A List of Different Textures to Try

One of the enjoyable things about creating your own custom soaps is experimenting with textures. Besides using clays (which I love to do) and some of the other herbs (like ground cinnamon) mentioned in the recipes in this book, you can add all kinds of other natural ingredients for purposes such as extra moisturization, exfoliation, and to enhance the appearance of the soap too! I've addressed some of these in a few of the recipes, and here is a list of additional ideas you can start trying right now!

White Pumice: White pumice is very finely ground pumice, and is highly exfoliating. You can purchase this from online soap making shops like Brambleberry or Soap Making Resource.

Seeds: Different kinds of very small seeds are fun to use! Raspberry seeds are one of these that I've used, and although they are exfoliating, they can actually hurt a bit if you use too much!

Coffee Grounds: Using coffee grounds, finely ground, provides another great exfoliating texture. Besides exfoliating, coffee grounds are stimulating to the skin, and some believe can help with cellulite! They also provide a nice dark color that can add contrast to your soap!

Ground Oatmeal: Oatmeal is terrifically moisturizing and skin softening! I just use my spice grinder to turn it into a very fine powder and add a few tablespoons to my soaps.

Salt: Some people enjoy adding salt to their soap for a spa-like effect. Personally, I find it very drying, but you might want to try adding a few tablespoons of salt at the very end!

Herbs: It's pretty neat to be able to add flowers or leaves that match what the soap is! Lavender flowers, for example can be added to Lavender soaps. Spearmint or Peppermint leaves, crushed small enough can add a nice texture and look to your soap.

If you like, you can powder your herbs to give more color. Herbs, such as Nettle Leaf, when powdered, retain the bright green color! Not all herbs will hold color, though. Most will turn a brownish color in the soap. But go ahead and play around with this!



Spearmint leaves added to uncolored soap.

Final Thoughts and Advice

I know when I began making soap, so many things were confusing, and it was sometimes difficult to find information! I truly hope this book has given you some jumping off ideas for your hot process soap making endeavors! It's such a lovely, creative process, and the sky is the limit!

I'd love to know about your soap making adventures and experiments! Feel free to email me at healingharvesthomestead@gmail.com if you have any questions, successes, things that didn't go as planned—or anything else!

Thank you for reading this book, and please know I truly appreciate you!

Heidi, at Healing Harvest Homestead

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<http://eepurl.com/cvLLST>

Resources:

<http://www.botanicskinessentials.com/uncategorized/toxic-soap-ingredients/>

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