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Making Soap at Home
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Making
S O A P
At Home

Do You Know---?

- *That many families spend \$15 a year for soap?*
- *That 6 pounds of fat and 1 can of lye can be made into 9 pounds of soap?*
- *That fat from butchering can be used to make an excellent quality laundry soap?*
- *That fryings can be clarified to make clean fat suitable for soap making?*
- *That some women have records that show the savings in soap making amount to \$1 for each hour of labor?*

Prepared by Extension Specialists in Home Economics

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE
EXTENSION DIVISION
EAST LANSING

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MAKING SOAP AT HOME

Making soap at home has been a thrifty practice of many families for years. Fat from butchering and fryings from cooking can be converted into soap suitable for laundry use. This fat should not be wasted, and if a family does not want it for themselves, the fat should be given to someone who can make use of it.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

Enamel, crockery or glass utensils
Wooden stick for stirring
Household scales
Wooden or heavy cardboard box lined with a wet cloth
Thermometer (for some recipes)

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Clean fat
Lye
Water
Borax, if desired

TO CLARIFY FRYINGS FOR SOAP MAKING:

1. Place fryings in kettle.
2. Add an equal amount of water.
3. Bring to a boil, remove from fire and stir.
4. Add 1 quart cold water for each gallon of hot liquid. Do not stir.
5. Let stand until cool.
6. Remove cold fat from surface.

TO PREPARE FAT FROM BUTCHERING:

1. Grind fat or cut into strips.
2. Place fat in kettle containing a small amount of water.
3. Heat slowly and stir often.
4. When cracklings settle, strain off fat and let it cool.

TO REMOVE FAT FROM CRACKLINGS:

1. Pressed and unpressed cracklings
 - a. Cover 4 pounds cracklings to twice their depth with water. Add 1 tablespoon lye for pressed cracklings—1 teaspoon of lye for unpressed cracklings.
2. Cover and boil one hour.
3. Remove from fire. When boiling stops, add one quart cold water for each gallon of liquid.
4. Let stand and cool.
5. Skim fat from surface.

FATS FOR SOAPMAKING:

1. Mixed fats make the best soap.
2. Fats listed in order of desirability are:
 - a. Tallow and lard mixed
 - b. Tallow
 - c. Lard
3. Poultry fats may be used if combined with other fats.
4. Clarified fryings are usually mixed fats.

TO MAKE SOAP:

COLD PROCESS SOAP

(Use the recipe printed on lye can if desired)

- 1 can lye (13 ounces)
- 1 quart cold water
- 6 pounds fat
- 3 tablespoons borax, if desired

Type of fat	Temperature of melted fat	Temperature of lye solution
Soft rancid fat...	97° F. - 100° F.	75° F. - 80° F.
Sweet lard or other soft fats.	80° F. - 85° F.	70° F. - 75° F.
Lard and tallow..	100° F. - 110° F.	80° F. - 85° F.
Tallow	120° F. - 130° F.	90° F. - 95° F.

Dissolve the lye in the cold water. Let it cool to temperature listed on chart below. Melt the fat and cool to proper temperature. Slowly pour the lye solution into the fat, stirring slowly and evenly. Add borax. Continue stirring until the mixture is hard enough to hold its shape, perhaps 20 or 30 minutes. Pour into box lined with a cloth wrung out of cold water.

TWO-DAY SOAP

- 5 pounds fat
- 1 can lye (13 ounces)
- 6 quarts cold water
- 3 tablespoons borax, if desired

Mix the ingredients in an enamel pan. Let stand 48 hours, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon or stick. Then heat over a low fire until melted. Pour into box lined with a cloth wrung out of water.

NOTE: The following may be used in place of the 5 pounds of fat: (1) 2½ pounds fat and 2½ pounds ground cracklings. (2) 5 pounds cracklings ground in a food chopper. These mixtures must be strained just before pouring into the molds.

MOLDING AND CUTTING SOAP:

1. Pour soap into a wooden or heavy cardboard box lined with a cloth wrung out of cold water. Let the edges of the cloth hang over the edge of the box. This makes it easy to remove the molded soap.
2. When soap has hardened cut it into bars, using either a knife, or a string or wire wrapped once around the soap and pulled together.

CURING SOAP:

1. Soap must stand several weeks before it is ready to use. Aging helps to complete the combining of lye and fat and also permits the soap to dry.
2. Test for neutral soap—touch the tip of the tongue to the soap. If it "bites," the lye has not yet completely combined with the fat and water, and the soap should be allowed to cure for a longer time.
3. Do not allow new soap to freeze.

IF YOU HAVE "BAD LUCK"—

1. If incorrect temperatures or measurements are used, the ingredients may separate and not form soap. If this happens do not throw the mixture away but proceed as follows:
 - a. Place the mixture in an enamel or iron kettle and melt it over low heat. Stir to prevent sticking.
 - b. Add enough water to keep the soap the consistency of thick syrup.
 - c. Boil the soap slowly until the lye, fat and water have combined to form soap and the mixture is the consistency of honey. Mold.

USING HOMEMADE SOAP:

1. Homemade soap is recommended for laundry use and dishwashing.
2. Let soap dry until it does not dissolve or "wash away" readily. This will vary with the amount of water in the recipe and the place it is stored.
3. When soap is dry, it may be (1) used in bar form, (2) ground in the food chopper to speed up dissolving, or (3) made into flakes by slicing it with a slaw cutter. Place the flakes in a slightly warm oven and dry. Dry flakes may be pulverized.