

Laundry Soap

Anyway, this soap recipes uses tallow. You could substitute almost any hard vegetable oil or shortening for the tallow and still come out alright.

Laundry Soap Yield: 13C liquid 6 lbs
hard

7C tallow
2C vegetable oil
1/2C borax
3 1/2C water
1C plus 2T lye
Essential oils or fragrance as desired

Mix the water and lye in a glass or stainless steel container. Never use aluminum. The lye will eat right through it! The mixture will get very hot. Stir it well until all of the lye is dissolved. Set it aside somewhere to cool to about 95-100 degrees. If I'm in a hurry, I set mine in the freezer.

Meanwhile, mix the tallow and vegetable oil together and heat them to about 110 degrees. Different soapmakers use different temperatures, so you can experiment to see what works best for you. I like to use cooler temperatures because the soap traces faster for me that way.

I pour the hot oils into a big stainless steel bowl I have when I'm ready to mix everything together. You could heat the oils in a stainless steel pot and leave them there. Anyway, when the lye mix cools to about 95-100 degrees *slowly* pour it into the warms fats. Don't splash the lye mixture on yourself, it will burn badly!

Begin stirring the soap with a wooden or stainless steel spoon. Add the borax slowly so it doesn't clump. Keep stirring. It can take an hour or more for the soap to "trace".

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The soap is ready to pour into molds when it gets thick like honey. You can dribble a little soap on the top of the mixture and it will sit there for a few seconds, sort of like thin pudding. if you want to add any scents, now is the time to do it. I add a two tablespoons of either orange or lemon oils. Don't use flavorings, they can cause the soap to get weird (seize up). Use fragrance oils like potpourri oils or essential oils. Again, there are many opinions on what oils are and are not suitable for soapmaking. For laundry, I think there are many options.

I use a cardboard box and garbage bag for a mold. Line the card board box with the garbage bag. I don't unfold the garbage bag, I just lay it in the box so that sides and bottom are completely covered. Pour the soap mixture into the box. Cover the box with towels or plastic wrap and set it aside somewhere to cool and set up.

I try to cut my soap at about 24 hours or less. This laundry soap hardens really fast and if you don't cut it into bars soon enough, it becomes too hard to cut easily. On the other hand, you have to be really careful about handling soap that hasn't cured. Some people have reactions from the lye, because the soap is still "finishing". When the soap is completely cured, it no longer contains lye. All the lye and fats have combined to create soap.

Anyway, cut your soap with a stainless steel knife into whatever size bars you want. I just slice them into bars that are about 2x3 inches. Stack the bars sort of like bricks, but spaced apart so that the air can circulate around them and set them aside for two or three weeks to finish curing.

To use in the washing machine, I use a paring knife and shave the soap into flakes or slices. It takes about a 1/2C per large laundry load. Our clothes are generally *really* dirty (we live on a farm), so you may not need as much. Put the soap in while water is filling in the machine. Let it agitate *without* clothes until the

soap dissolves (takes about a minute, depending on how fine your flakes are). Reset your machine to the beginning of the cycle and add clothes.

I add vinegar to the rinse cycle because I have occasionally noticed "soap scum" if my water wasn't hot enough. Also, sometimes the whites tend to gray a little, and so I add blueing or bleach to them.

I haven't tried this next recipe yet. It was posted on one of the soap boards many months ago. It looks like it would be good, though.

Minnie Herald's Laundry Soap Flakes

Circa: Around 1940?

1st Step:

1 quart cold water

12 oz lye

Pour water in earthenware jar. Pour in lye and stir with wooden stick. Let stand till cold (will take around an hour).

2nd Step:

1 cup sugar

1/2 Cup Borax

2 quarts washed strained grease (fat)

1 cup ammonia

scent

Put sugar and borax into an earthenware or enamel vessel and stir well. Pour warm grease into borax mixture and stir well. Add ammonia and stir. Add cooled lye solution to grease mixture. Stir until mixture thickens to fudge consistency. Pour into a mold and let stand overnight. (Use a paper box lined with waxed paper) The soap hardens in a few days. Grate the soap finely into soap flakes and use.

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Washing fat drippings:

Put fat in a large pan with 2 times the amount of water and one sliced potato, washed but not peeled. Boil hard for 30 minutes and strain into another pan. Cool for 24 hours. Cut fat off the top, hold under faucet to wash off scum which forms at the bottom. The fat is now clean and free of salt. Favorite scents: Sassafras, wintergreen, pine. Vegetable dye can be used to color the soap.

Have fun. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Be careful with the lye. It is really caustic.

Bobbi