SOAPMAKING CHECKLIST

Preparation - pg 1

1. Print or write out your soap recipe for easy reference.

2. If the recipe calls for herbal or floral tea, make it, then let it cool completely.

3. Gather your ingredients.

- [ ] Oils & butters
- [ ] Distilled water or tea
- [ ] Lye (sodium hydroxide)
- [ ] Natural colorants
- [ ] Essential oils
- [ ] Extra add-ins (oatmeal, honey, etc), fully prepared, measured and set out in small bowls for easy adding.

4. Gather your soap making equipment, (Don't use aluminum or non-stick items for soapmaking.)

- [ ] Digital scale
- [ ] A cup for measuring lye
- [ ] Heatproof plastic pitcher for measuring water and mixing lye solution
- [ ] Silicone or heavy-duty plastic spoon or spatula for stirring lye solution
- [ ] Thermometer
- [ ] Safety goggles
- [ ] Latex, nitrile or other type of protective gloves
- [ ] Stainless steel, enamel-lined, heavy-duty plastic, ceramic pot, or other heatproof container to measure oils in.
- [ ] Small saucepan for melting coconut oil and solid butters
- [ ] An immersion blender (also called a stick blender)
- [ ] Soap mold(s)
- [ ] Parchment or freezer paper, if using a wooden mold

5. Prepare your work area near an open window, outdoors or under a running exhaust fan.

- [ ] Have paper towels or a few rags handy to wipe up any spills.
- [ ] Clear your sink, if working in it.
- [ ] Cover a section of the adjacent counter or table with wax paper, for easy cleanup later.

6. Prepare the soap mold(s).

- [ ] If the soap mold is wooden, line it with freezer, parchment paper, or a fondant mat.
- [ ] Silicone molds can be placed on wax paper, near your mixing area.

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Making The Soap - pg 2

7. Mix the lye solution.

- [ ] Put on safety goggles and gloves.
- [ ] Weigh the water or cooled tea in the heatproof plastic pitcher.
- [ ] Weigh the lye, using a dedicated lye-only cup.
- [ ] Replace the cap on the lye container.
- [ ] Wipe the area with a damp paper towel, to catch any stray grains of lye.
- [ ] Sprinkle the lye into the water or tea, while stirring slowly.
- [ ] Be prepared for momentary strong fumes that you should not breathe in.
- [ ] Set the lye solution in a safe place, away from children and pets.
- [ ] Rinse the spoon/spatula and the cup holding lye under cold water and set aside on a piece of wax paper or paper towel.
- [ ] Let the lye solution cool for 30 to 45 minutes, or until around 90 to 115° F (32 to 46° C).

8. Prepare the oils.

- [ ] Weigh solid oils (like coconut, babassu) and butters (shea, mango, cocoa).
- [ ] Heat the solid oils and butters in a double broiler or saucepan until melted.
- [ ] Weigh the liquid oils into your soap making pot or container.
- [ ] Add the melted solid oils and butters to the oils.
- [ ] Check the temperature of the oils.
- [ ] If needed, warm oils until temperature reaches around 90 to 115° (32 to 46° C).

9. Combine the lye solution and oils.

- [ ] Check temperatures.
- [ ] Ideally, lye solution and oils should both be around 90 to 115° F (32 to 46° C), but can vary up to 20 degrees from each other.
- [ ] Pour the lye solution into the oils.
- [ ] Rinse the lye solution container with cold water and set aside on the wax paper or paper towels.
- [ ] Place the immersion blender (stick blender) into the container of oils and lye solution.
- [ ] Tilt the blender slightly so any air bubbles are released.

Making The Soap - pg 3

- [ ] Make sure the head of the blender is completely submerged or it will splatter.
- [ ] Leaving the stick blender's motor off, stir by hand for 30 seconds.
- [ ] Turn the motor on and stir for around 30 more seconds.
- [ ] Alternate stirring with the motor on and off, for 30 to 40 seconds at a time.
- [ ] When the mixture thickens to the texture of a thin pudding, stop stirring for a moment. (This could take anywhere from 2 to 10 minutes.)
- [ ] Observe the soap batter and test for trace by lifting the stick blender and drizzling soap across the top of itself.
- [ ] If the soap is too thin to do this, continue stirring.
- [ ] If the soap leaves a pattern or "tracing" before sinking back in, stop stirring.
- [ ] Let the soap batter sit about 15 to 30 seconds and check for trace again.
- [ ] If the soap batter thinned back out, you were at false trace and need to stir more.
- [ ] If the soap batter still shows trace, you can continue.

10. Add extras.

- [ ] Stir in the extras that you prepared in step 3.
- [ ] Stir in any essential oils.
- [ ] Remember that some items (like fragrance oils, clays, and powdered milk) may cause your soap to thicken faster, so work quickly and methodically.

11. Pour into mold(s).

- [ ] Pour the soap batter into the prepared molds(s).
- [ ] Smooth the top of the soap with a plastic or silicone spatula or spoon.
- [ ] Place the spatula/spoon into the empty soap making container.
- [ ] Cover the soap with a layer of plastic wrap (to help prevent soda ash) or wax paper.
- [ ] If your mold has a top, place that over the mold, or use a sheet of cardboard.
- [ ] Cover the mold with a towel or blanket to retain heat.
- [ ] Alternatively, if avoiding gel phase, place the mold in the refrigerator or freezer.

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Wrapping Up - pg 4

12. Monitor the soap.

- [ ] Check the soap every hour or so, for the next several hours.
- [ ] If you see a crack forming, uncover and move to a cooler area.
- [ ] Soap will heat up, get dark in places and look jelly-like. This is normal.
- [ ] Let the soap stay in the mold for at least 24 to 48 hours.

13. Cleaning up.

- [ ] Set all of the soap-covered equipment and utensils aside overnight.
- [ ] The next day, soak in warm water to loosen soap, then rinse clean.

14. Finishing up.

- [ ] Remove the soap form the mold(s).
- [ ] If it's too soft, allow it to stay in the mold a day or two longer.
- [ ] Slice into bars right away, or leave the soap in a whole loaf or block for a few days.
- [ ] Place the soap on sheets of wax paper or coated rack to cure for at least 4 to 6 weeks before using.

Additional Notes

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