

Handmade Soap Facts

How many people know what soap really is? Several of the cleansing bars that you buy at the store, for example, are detergents-and not soaps at all. They are called syndet bars, or synthetic detergent bars. They are made from synthesized chemicals and are usually much harsher than soap.

Detergents contain petroleum distillates rather than oil. On the other hand, true soap is made from natural oils (such as olive, coconut and palm) and is a gentle cleansing product more appropriate for use on skin than is detergent.

Soaps, unlike detergents, are made by combining sodium hydroxide or lye, oils and water in a process known as "Saponification". Some people may question the use of lye in handcrafted soap. The fact is that all soap is made with lye. What needs to be made clear is that once the process of saponification is complete, the lye and oil molecules have combined and chemically changed into soap and glycerin. There is no lye present in the finished bars of soap.

The oils in our soaps are put there for a specific purpose. The coconut oil creates a wonderful lather. The olive oil is used for a high quality, long lasting bar. Canola and Palm oil carry nutrients to the skin, and the safflower oil make a creamy bar.

Glycerin is a skin soothing emollient that adds to the goodness of handmade soap. In commercial soaps the glycerin is removed for sale to the cosmetic industry to sell separately, sometimes at a higher price than the soap itself! Glycerin is important to skin care because it is a humectant. Humectants draw moisture from the air, which in turn moisturize your skin. A whole 1/5 of a bar of our soap is glycerin.

Most soaps have artificial ingredients to scent or color. Some handcrafted soap is scented with fragrance oils. These are synthetic chemicals that are mixed together to imitate a particular scent. They have contributed in many cases to chemical sensitivity in some people. They also have no aromatherapy benefits. The scents in our soaps should come only from essential oils, which are steamed or pressed from plants. Essential oils are the fragrance emitting components of plants and are at the heart of aromatherapy. Not only do they smell good; they have many beneficial effects on the body, mind and spirit.

The coloring in our soap should come from nature as well. The petals of Lavender and Rose can be used. Earth Pigments can also be used, which are simply finely ground rocks. This makes the colors rich and earthy, rather than artificial looking.

About the Author

Yvonne Takhtalian, C.N.H.P, H.I. spent the past 10 years developing and improving Vita-Myr Natural Products helping thousands like you heal gum disease and gingivitis. She just released a new line of 100% Natural Vita-Myr Soaps to compliment her Vita-Myr Mouthwash & Toothpaste. Find out more about effective natural relief of gum disease at <http://www.vitamyr.com/> or email questions/comments to Yvonne at <mailto:vitamyr@mindspring.com>