

## Handmade Holiday Soap By Tracey Adams

There is something so special and pure about handmade soap. The lather, the moisturizing qualities, the use of herbs and essential oils make for such a special treat. What better holiday gift to give than a bar of handmade soap that smells of fresh pine or yummy holiday delights from the kitchen? Those that use handmade soap know that once you start using it, you rarely go back to commercial soaps that often contain harsh chemicals.

These directions are for a method of making soap called “cold process.” Basically, the lye cures out of the soap instead of heat being applied to achieve the same result. This allows for smooth, creamy soap that is, quite frankly, addictive! Many people cringe when they hear that “lye” is in their soap, but all soap is actually made with lye. Lye is a natural agent that triggers saponification. When used with the correct calculations, you’ll make moisturizing soap that is wonderful for your skin!

I like to use these soaps with the following essential oil blends in the kitchen during the holiday season.

Blends:

Christmas Tree Blend: ½ oz. Spruce essential oil, ¼ oz. Fir Needle essential oil, ¼ oz. Pine essential oil and 1/8 oz. Cedarwood essential oil. Use powdered peppermint to achieve speckled green color.

Holiday Baking Blend: ½ oz. Cinnamon essential oil, ¼ oz. Clove Bud essential oil, ¼ oz. Pine essential oil, 1/8 oz. Nutmeg and 1/8 oz. Ginger essential oil. Use paprika for a speckled red/orange color.

### **MATERIALS:**

Most of the ingredients can be found at the grocery store or health food stores, with lye being the exception. The best place to buy lye is from soapmaking supply websites.

#### **4 Pound Batch**

Water 13.25 oz.

Lye (sodium hydroxide) 5.75 oz.

Coconut Oil 10 oz.

Olive Oil 20 oz.

Palm Oil 12 oz.

Plastic Pitchers

Stainless Steel Pot

Wooden soap mold (a brownie pan or plastic shoe box would also work)

Kitchen Scale

Gloves

Stick Blender

Safety Goggles

Safety Mask  
Kitchen Thermometer  
Grater  
Freezer paper  
Plastic Wrap  
Essential Oils  
2 TB Paprika (for Holiday Baking blend) and/or ½ TB poppy seeds (optional)  
2 TB Peppermint (powdered) (for Christmas Tree Blend)

**STEPS:**

1. While wearing safety goggles, mask and gloves, measure your lye in a pitcher on the kitchen scale. Measure your water in a separate pitcher on the scale.
2. Combine lye/water mixture in the plastic pitcher, stir well with spoon. Always add your lye to the liquid. If the liquid were poured into the lye, splashing could occur and lye is very hot! Set aside and allow to cool to 100° F.
3. Measure your oils.
4. Melt the oils over low on the stove and allow the temperature to drop to 90° F.
5. While everything is cooling, line your mold with freezer paper.
5. Combine lye solution and all melted oils. Be careful not to splash while combining the mixtures.
6. Stir with stick blender until the mixture traces. Tracing looks like thin pudding. It will support a drop, or your stir marks, for several seconds.
7. Once tracing occurs, add the essential oil blend and herbs. Mix a few more seconds.
8. Pour raw soap into your wooden mold.
9. Cover with plastic wrap (this prevents a soda ash from forming on the top of your soap), and a blanket. After 24 hours the soap can be cut and turned out of the mold.
10. Cut soap into bars and set the bars out to cure and dry for four weeks.
11. Once cured, you may want to use a kitchen grater to clean up rough edges.
12. Wrap your soap! Here is your chance to get creative. Use vintage fabric, raffia, muslin bags, kraft paper, stamps, etc. One of my favorite ways to give a gift is to knit or crochet a wash cloth and tie the soap and cloth up with pretty ribbon.