

Milky Way Molds

HOT PROCESS SOAPMAKING

Keeping cold-process soap properly insulated is important when pouring into individual 3 and 4-ounce cavities.

Heat loss can be a problem due to a large surface area relative to a small volume of soap. This heat loss can retard saponification.

One solution to this potential problem is an elevated pour temperature in the range of 115-120 degrees F.

Another method involves precooking the soap so that it's thoroughly saponified before being poured into the molds.

This is hot-process soapmaking.

What are the advantages of hot-processing?

One, the soap doesn't need to be insulated since it's neutral when spooned into the molds. It just needs to cool and harden, which takes 1-2 hours. **Two, neutral soap is much gentler on dyes and fragrances—you'll find both stay "truer."**

The book *Transparent Soapmaking* by Catherine Failor introduces a simple, hot-process technique that can be tailored to any formulation. The steps are as follows:

1. Use two pots for soapmaking.

One is your soap pot; the other, a kettle large enough to comfortably contain your soap pot. An enamel 5-gallon canning pot is ideal for most situations. This second kettle becomes the bottom of a double boiler. Fill it with 3-5 inches of water.

2. Stir your soap until traced.

Meanwhile, bring the water in the large kettle to a slow boil.

3. After tracing, place the soap pot inside the kettle.

Keep the water at a gentle boil. Cover, if possible, to retain heat.

4. Cook your soap for 1¾ hours.

During this time, it should become a soft translucent mass. Translucency is a sign that the soap is neutralizing. Stir briefly 2 or 3 times during the cooking to ensure even heat distribution throughout the soap mass.

5. After 1¾ hours the soap will be neutral. Add dye and/or fragrance and spoon into molds.

If the soap seems too thick to work with, thin with a few ounces of alcohol. Start with 2-3 ounces; gradually add more if needed. Pure ethanol (Everclear), 90-99% isopropyl or vodka all work well. **When dividing the soap for different fragrances and colors, keep the unused portion hot** since it begins hardening as it cools. Hardened soap can be "remelted" over a double boiler. Finally, **check to see if there are any air pockets in the molded soap.** These can be removed by gently tapping the mold on the counter top.

"The finest selection of craft molds in the Milky Way Galaxy"