

I Make Soap To Feed My Family

Making soap can be both a fun and lucrative business these days, with some handmade soaps selling for as much as \$20 - \$30 per piece in certain gift shops. The price of course depends on the quality of the soap, which in turn depends on the skill of the soap maker and the ingredients used. Much of the popularity in handmade soap stems from the growing trend of people buying them as gift items. Like scented candles, they smell nice, look uniquely individual and are available in a variety of pretty shapes and colors. They are also generally affordable and more importantly, can be used by the recipient. Many people in fact use them decoratively, or just leave them in their wardrobes for the fragrance. Handmade soaps hold a personal yet understatedly luxurious appeal today, harking back to a rich tradition of many hundreds of years, before industrial manufacturers started mass producing the item. The process of making soap by hand is actually not that hard to master. Like the art of baking a cake, all that one requires are the right utensils, the right ingredients and lots of patience. It is not easy however to make a product that customers will come back to purchase time and again. A good piece of soap must not only look and smell appealing, it must also clean well, lather easily and yet not dissolve or break apart in the shower quickly. Unlike most factory manufactured soaps available commercially, handmade soap should preferably be PH balanced and alcohol free, so that it doesn't dry the skin too much. In her book "Simple Soapmaking", author and soap maker Burgundy Shank shares how various types of soap can be made through the use of different vegetable oils. The qualities of the soap can also be adjusted by temperature and particular ingredients added to preserve the soap and extend the scent. When making soap for sale, it is important to understand who your target market is (i.e., men or women), and whether it is meant just for the face alone, for washing hands or all over the body. This way, the right ingredients can be chosen and the product tailored appropriately. For instance, it is sensible to use hypoallergenic ingredients for children's soap as their skin is more sensitive than adults. Women's soap can also have more floral scents like rose, lavender and peach, compared to men. Some soaps are also made for specific skin conditions like eczema, psoriasis and acne, and may contain special ingredients like sulphur, charcoal and tea tree oil. Many women today still balk at the idea of using soap to bathe, preferring instead to use shower gels, foam cleansers etc. This is due to the common misconception that soaps are inherently harsh and strip the skin of moisture. Worse, soap also has a working class connotation to it - no frills and basic. Using a good quality handmade soap however, might change their mindset, as its expensive scent and rich lather help create a veneer of class and sophistication. In addition, it is much more environmentally friendly since it the need for plastic bottles is dispensed with.

About the Author

Four years ago, Estevan was retrenched from her job. While looking for a new job, she picked up the art of soapmaking online at <http://www.soap-maker.info>. That was the best decision she ever made in her life. Today, she owns a successful chain of stores selling handmade soaps.

Source: <http://americanahost.com>