

## You Ask - We Answer

*I love that you send out sample soaps...so many different ones that I've enjoyed! I had the thought that your products were without perfume...and a few of the samplers seemed perfumy to me...is that my imagination or do you sell some with synthetic perfumes as oppose to EO?*

We sold many of our soaps during the first four years of being in business under the impression that the pre-mixed blends we were using in a few of our bars were pure essential oil blends. Since that time it was discovered that those blends contained pure essential oils and a small percentage of phthalate-free fragrance oil to boost the natural scent. We had to decide whether to discontinue those bars and disappoint many of our regular customers, or to continue to carry them and give people the choices they wanted. We made the decision to carry the bars and let our customers make their own choices.

All of our scented varieties of soap contain 2% essential oils—to add scent as well as therapeutic value—and 98% other ingredients (oils, water, clays, milks, etc.). The few soaps that contain the uncertified blends also have therapeutic grade essential oils in them. We did a lot of experimenting because we wanted to make our scents totally unique. The fact that a few soaps contain a mix of the blends in question plus our own essential oil additions also drives any percentage of fragrance oil down even further (less than .5-1% of the entire batch).

Bottom line? The compromise is minuscule and not worth pulling those few bars from our line up. Interestingly enough, we've never had a customer complain of allergies to any of the bars in question. But we have had a handful of customers complain of allergies to some of our other bars that are strictly made with therapeutic grade essential oils. Allergies to natural plant ingredients are common, and we trust that our customers will know their own bodies.

If you are a purist, these are the soaps/products that are scented with a mix of pure essential oils and may also contain a minimal amount of fragrance oil which augments and enhances the scent:

Chamomile and Orange Blossom soap, Chamomile and Orange Blossom jojoba, and Chamomile and Orange Blossom coordinating perfume oil, Latte Brunette, Bella Rose soap, Bella Rose jojoba, and Bella Rose coordinating perfume oil, Marshmallow and Aloe, Coconut Milk and Citrus, Green Tea and Nettles, Wheat and Honey, Lavender Buttermilk soap, Lavender Buttermilk jojoba, and Lavender Buttermilk perfume oil, Vanilla Butter soap, Vanilla butter jojoba, and Vanilla Butter perfume oil, Honey Carrot and Tangerine, Wildflowers, Vanilla Sugar Body Polish, and Sweet Rosehips Body Polish.

We have links to this information on each product that contains one of these blends, and it can be found on our website [HERE](#). All other products contain 100% certified pure, therapeutic grade essential oils and absolutes. Please [contact us](#) with any questions.

***Why did you choose to make your soaps without lye?***

All cold process soap is made using sodium hydroxide (lye); however, there is no lye in the final product due to the chemical process called saponification which turns oil into soap. You can read more about this on our [FAQs page](#).

***I would like to have size info on all products. I wonder how many ounces are in soaps I want to buy, but no info is listed. I don't buy because of this missing info.***

Our bars are hand cut and will naturally have a bit of variation in the weight. Most bars weigh between 5 - 5 1/2 ounces. This information is found on our [FAQs page](#) and can be accessed via a link at the bottom of every page on our website.

***Out of just simple curiosity it would be cool to know about the process of making the perfume oils.***

It's a lot of sniffing! I blend drops of different oils in small bowls until I get something I like. When I made my perfume oils, I played around for about three months before I finally had something I liked. When you get something you think will work, you let it sit for a few weeks to allow the scents to "marry." They change over time, so this step is important. If you still like it - great. I ended up with over 20 vials of trial scents I didn't ultimately like until I landed on [the ones I now sell](#). Playing with essential oils and absolutes is a lot of fun.

***Have you ever made a milk and honey shampoo bar?***

I have not. But I have made a goat milk body bar that had honey and oats in it. That was a limited edition, and because it was a slow seller I haven't made it again. I do carry our [Wheat and Honey shampoo bar](#) - and we have a few shampoo bars with milks: [Princess Buttermilk](#), [Coconut Milk and Honey](#), [Italian Garden](#) (has goat milk), and [Lavender Buttermilk](#).

***What shampoo bars are good for highly textured hair?***

[Simply Shea](#), [Marshmallow and Aloe](#), [Latte Brunette](#), [Wheat and Honey Almond](#), [Jojoba Silk Conditioning Bar](#)

We also have a page on our website with recommendations for different hair and skin types [HERE](#).

***I'm not sure how you use the jojoba oils...like lotion?***

Exactly. Jojoba is not really an oil. It's actually a wax ester that most closely resembles human skin sebum. It is often used in high end massage salons because of its ability to soak into the skin without leaving a greasy residue. My favorite way to use jojoba is in the shower after washing and right before getting out. I squirt some on each limb and rub in. The water makes it easily spreadable, and it locks in the moisture. When you exit the shower, your skin will feel and smell like a baby's butt. No wait. Not like that. Anyway, no lotion is necessary, and I promise you'll love your skin. [Our jojobas](#) fly off the shelf, and we have lots of scents to choose from.

***Are any of your bars antibacterial?***

Many of our bars contain essential oils (like tea tree) and carrier oils (like neem tree) that have powerful antibacterial properties. However, the best way to combat bacteria is to wash your hands with plain old soap. Research now shows that antibacterial soap is no more effective than regular soap at getting rid of bacteria. If you Google this subject, you'll find several informative articles online. [HERE](#) is one from WebMD.

The point is, what you want to look for in a bar of soap is whether or not it helps your skin stay healthy or dries it out. Bottom link: natural soap does a much better job of keeping your skin from drying out, and it doesn't have harsh chemicals.

***How long are your soap bars good for? I know that soap generally has a longer shelf life but how long is it really safe to keep a bar of soap and/or will it lose it's effectiveness at some point?***

Soap gets harder and more mild with time. It never loses its effectiveness. A shelf life of 2 years is a conservative estimate. They will probably last much longer.

***I would be interested in how you make the [whipped body butters](#).***

We melt down the oils and then put them in the freezer until the top becomes a bit opaque. Then they are whipped for a long time until it looks like whipped cream. Simple as that!

***What is the simplest way to use your shampoo and body bars without lots of extra products and steps.***

Just scrub up and rinse! That's what we do here in our house! No extra products or steps are necessary for our body bars. An acid rinse is a helpful follow up to a shampoo bar in order to balance the pH of your scalp and strip away extra product build up, but this step isn't necessary every time you wash your hair. I do it once every 7-10 days. It takes about 20 seconds, so not a big deal.

***What brand of essential oils do you use?***

We get this question a lot. We purchase most of our essential oils in bulk from New Directions Aromatics. “New Directions Aromatics Inc. is a leading wholesale supplier of 100% pure, unadulterated, therapeutic-grade Essential Oils and Raw Materials. They source directly from ethical producers in all six continents.” You can read more about them and visit their website [HERE](#).

Sometimes people contact us and want us to buy our oils from a popular MLM company. So for fun, I crunched the numbers one day. Let’s take lavender. This company sells a 5 ml bottle of lavender (*lavandula angustifolia*) for \$30.92 retail or \$23.50 wholesale. We (and you too!) can purchase the same size [Bulgarian lavender from New Directions](#) for \$2 (happens to be on sale the day I wrote this, and you can get the organic lavender for \$2.86).

There are 30 ml in an ounce, so this company’s inflated wholesale costs run \$141 per ounce. Since we use 7 ounces of essential oil in each batch of 56 bars of soap, it would cost us \$987 to make a batch of lavender soap using their essential oils at their wholesale pricing. That translates to \$17.62 per bar of soap. And that’s just the essential oil cost. We’d have to charge over \$25 a bar to make a profit. Anyone want to pay that much money for a bar of soap? I don’t think so. Fortunately, anyone can purchase the same quality oils at a fraction of the price at New Directions. This is where many natural skin care product companies purchase their oils.

***Would love to know how to make your shampoo bars! Would love to know how to make the herbal salve and diaper cream! Will you be making a conditioner bar? Can you make a flaky/dandruff bar? Can you put more moisturizer in your shampoo and body bars?***

I’m afraid we don’t give out our shampoo bar secrets. You can read all about how we make our salve [HERE](#). Our diaper cream is similar to this recipe [HERE](#) in case you want to make your own.

We already make and sell a conditioning bar [HERE](#). (Please note that this bar is not a detangler rinse. It’s a shampoo that conditions and is effective for highly textured, extremely dry hair. If you have straight oily hair - avoid this bar. If you are looking for a detangling conditioner, I recommend Nexus Humectress.)

Dandruff has [several different causes](#), and depending on the cause in your particular case, our bars may or may not help. If dandruff is due to diet issues, a skin condition, or allergies, we can’t help much. But if it’s due to dry skin or because your scalp is irritated by conventional shampoos - any of our moisturizing shampoo bars will help.

As far as putting moisturizers into our bars - we put the maximum you can add without gunking up your hair with oils when you use them. We use jojoba in every single shampoo bar along with rich butters like shea nut, cocoa, and mango. It doesn’t get any better than that!

***Is there another use for [the hair rinse \(the citric ones\)](#) since I have 2 bottles that I won't use for their intended purpose.***

Sure! Citric acid can be used to wash vegetables before eating them. I use it to balance the pH of my armpits when using our natural deodorant to prevent a rash. You can also use it as a surface cleaner in your kitchen/bathroom.

***What is the best bar for women to shave with? Are all of your bars safe for sensitive baby skin?***

Any bar with clay in it will make a good shaving bar. [MAN 2.0](#), [Rhassoul and Avocado](#), [Bella Rose](#), and [White China Silk](#) are good choices. Two options that do not have clay but would still be excellent shaving bars: [Calendula Castile](#) and [Jojoba Silk](#). Follow up a shave with some [silky Jojoba](#).

Our [Calendula castile bar](#) and the [unscented Virgin Coconut bar](#) would be the best choices for babies with sensitive skin because they only have one ingredient and are unscented. [The Calendula Castile bar](#) is made with organic olive oil, and the [Virgin Coconut bar](#) is made with organic virgin coconut oil. The fewer the ingredients, the better chance of avoiding allergies.

***How come some of your products come in powder form so we have to add water? I figured you have reasons for doing what you do but I'm curious. :)***

We do have a reason for that. When you add water to a product, you have to introduce a preservative. Natural preservatives are not powerful enough to prevent certain bacteria from growing in a water based product. If you look at the ingredients list on clay masques that are already moistened, you will see additives that prohibit bacterial growth. With our [dry powder masques](#) and [scrub](#), no preservatives are necessary. The shelf life is much longer, and everything is fresh. It's an easy way to keep a product totally natural and additive-free.

***What bars do you recommend for each type of skin or hair? Is there a place on your website that lists recommended bars according to the type of skin or hair?***

Yes! Right [HERE](#).

***I'm honestly really curious about the ph of many of the products, as a healthy scalp, skin and hair are really dependent on the ph of the products that are used.***

Our skin naturally balances its own pH within 15-30 minutes of using a product that is rinsed off. Cold process soap is slightly alkaline which is why an acid rinse is recommended periodically. Our natural deodorant contains baking soda, so it is also slightly alkaline. Some people will never get a rash, but for those who do, an acid rinse on the pits before applying the deodorant will eliminate the rash and prevent one from occurring in the future. Our [organic hydrosol toners](#) are slightly acidic and help to cleanse as well as support the acid mantle of your skin. Oils like [argan](#) and [jojoba](#) help to regulate the pH balance of our skin as well. These are the oils I use on my face and body, and my skin is very healthy.

***Where do you make them in your home?***

The kitchen. There are two other women working for me who make products in their kitchens as well. We are a small artisan company that helps support the livelihoods of four families.

***Why don't you make body creams?***

Body creams are water based and require the use of preservatives to inhibit bacterial growth. We do carry [organic Whipped Body Butters](#) that function like a cream - without the water. Who wants to pay for water, anyway?

***Why can't I buy them in local stores?***

I don't have the manpower or the facilities to produce our products on a large scale. We would also need to inflate our prices to sell wholesale, and we'd rather keep our costs down and our prices low. I also enjoy having a more personal connection with my customers which I would lose if we went big.

***What's the best way to put on the deodorant?***

I just dip my finger in, get a pea sized dollop, and spread it on my pit.

***Is the deodorant creme supposed to get kinda hard over time? I have to rub out the clumps (sort of melts) as I apply it.***

The deodorants are sensitive to temperature changes. We keep them in a temperature controlled environment here, but if they get too warm, they will get soft and mushy, and if they get cold, they get hard. If they get soft and mushy and then get hard again, clumps can form. This is what happens with a natural product like this that doesn't contain harmful ingredients that prevent things like this from happening. It's one of the trade-offs of going natural. You're right - the clumps just melt when they get rubbed into your skin.

***Is there any sort of regulations or rules that have to be met as far as the processing is concerned? And what is done in your home and what is done offsite?***

We aren't making food, so while there are labeling regulations, there are no manufacturing regulations. We are a small artisan type company made up of women working out of our homes rather than a large manufacturing company.

***Can all your body bars also be used as shampoo bars?***

No. Our body bars are not formulated for your hair, and I don't recommend that you use them that way. However, you can use any of the shampoo bars on your body as well as your hair.

***Why do you put patchouli oil in your antioxidant beauty bar? I hate the smell but love the bar!***

That essential oil blend is one that we purchase already mixed for us. It happens to have patchouli in it. Some people love that scent. I do! Everyone is different in their preferences.

***Is there a natural soap without lye used in it?***

Not that I'm aware of.

***Is everything organic? Is everything homemade (or made by you/your family)? Do you make your own essential oils?***

No, we are not an organic company, however we do use many organic ingredients, and we list them that way in our ingredients lists. Everything is hand made, yes. And no, we do not make our own essential oils. To learn more about how essential oils are made, see this article [HERE](#).

***How you choose the scents of your products.***

I goof around and make them. Sometimes I get ideas online.

***How do you make the apple cider rinse? what all goes in it?***

Similar to how we make salve, we fill mason jars with organic herbs of marshmallow root, horsetail, nettles, chamomile, lavender, comfrey, rosemary, calendula, and yarrow and then add the vinegar. It sits for a couple of weeks and gets shaken every couple of days. The herbs are strained out - and ta-da. That's it!

***Would you consider coming out with a shampoo bar starter kit? Offer your most neutral shampoo bar and the herbal a/c rinse together and send instructions about the transition your hair goes through. I think more people would try it that way. I sure would have when I started.***

That's a great idea!

***Do you use conditioner? I use the shampoo bars, but can't figure out how to style. you say to style as usual, but does that include conditioner? I have curly hair and can't figure out how to style after using. I also want to know how you use the shampoo bars. Do you rub the bar in your hair, or do you rub between your hands to get lather and then put in your hair?***

I use Nexus Humectress as a follow up to a shampoo bar because I have long, textured hair that snarls easily. A conditioner helps me comb it out after washing it. The use of a conditioner is a personal preference. If you have textured hair, I highly recommend [The Curly Girl Handbook](#) by Lorraine Massey. It will teach you everything you need to know about caring for and styling curly hair. Life changing! As far as how to use the bars - I rub it in my hair for the fastest lather. Once I get enough product in my hair, I put the bar down and lather up! Then rinse.

***Are your bars gluten free?***

It depends on the bar. [The Wheat and Honey shampoo bar](#) has wheat germ oil in it - so no for that one. But most of our bars do not have ingredients that contain gluten.

***What are the best uses for Argan oil and jojoba? Which is best if you only buy one?***

Both [organic Moroccan argan oil](#) and [organic jojoba](#) are incredible oils for your skin, scalp, and hair. Argan oil is richer, slightly thicker, and costs twice as much money as jojoba. I recommend argan for the face and hair - and jojoba for the body due to cost factor.

***How much [deodorant paste](#) do I use each day?***

I use a dollop about the size of a pea on each pit. It's sort of a subjective thing though. A jar lasts me about 6-7 weeks.

***How to keep the soaps nice when they are in a public place like the kitchen. We have a bunch of little kids ( all 8 are 12 and under)***

[The salt bars](#) are the only ones we use in our home by sinks. They last a long time and are kid-friendly. I wouldn't use a body bar by a sink that kids use. It won't dry out between uses, and kids like to poke holes in them. Ask me how I know.

***Can you switch back and forth between shampoo bars and regular shampoo? We have very hard water and would consider putting a softener on one shower, but not on all of them in the house.***

If you have hard water, shampoo bars are not a good option. I don't recommend them. We have an article that explains almost everything you need to know about using shampoo bars on our website [HERE](#).

***How are the soap rocks to be used? Do you ever have to replace them? Do you replace the sink salt bars? How do they work that makes them last so long and still have cleaning abilities?***

The [Texas limestone soap rocks](#) help keep the soap high and dry. Cold process soap needs to dry out between uses or it will turn to mush. If you keep your soap covered up or you let it sit in a puddle of water, it won't last very long. But if you care for it properly, it will last a very long time. It takes me about 2 months to use up [one facial bar](#) when I use it twice per day and keep it on a soap rock. These rocks will last forever. To clean, simply run them through the dishwasher.

[Sink salt bars](#) last a long time for two reasons. First, they have tons of salt in them, making them hard. Second, they are larger than our regular soap bars, weighing around 9 ounces each. They clean because they are soap, and you replace them when they are gone.

***When using an [Acne Battle Bar](#), is there anything else one should do?***

There are five steps to healthy skin. 1. Cleanse ([Acne Battle Bar](#)) 2. Exfoliate dead skin cells ([Pineapple and Strawberry Yogurt Facial Scrub](#)) 3. Balance ([Organic Neroli Hydrosol toner](#)) 4. Moisturize ([Organic Moroccan Argan oil](#)) and 5. Deep clean, soften, and lighten with a masque once a week ([Coconut Milk and Honey facial masque](#).) We sell a sample pack of our products that cover all five steps, or you can get the entire kit and caboodle and save money [HERE](#). I am planning to write a downloadable booklet that goes into more detail about how to care for your skin naturally.

***I'm curious to know if shampoo bars have an affect on colored hair? I color my hair crazy colors (i.e. pink, purple, green, etc.) and I'm concerned that shampoo bars, because they are natural, may be more likely to strip the "unnatural" color from my hair faster?***

Shampoo bars don't have any harsh chemicals that would strip hair color. However, an acid rinse would cause hair color to fade over time. That said, I color my hair, and I also use shampoo bars and my rinses, and I haven't had trouble with my color fading any more than it normally would over time. I color my hair every 7 weeks and use an acid rinse about once per week.

***Is periodically changing which shampoo bar I use good or necessary for my hair?***

I think it's good to change things up once in a while. It's only necessary when you feel it is necessary though. That might happen a lot for one person and never for another.

***Are your products made with ingredients from the USA?***

Essential oils and tropical oils are sourced from all six continents and help support different people groups. We take those raw ingredients and make the products you use. Sales from our products support families and businesses in the United States.

***How long is the shelf life for things- that would be helpful, as we have a large family and I tend to order things in bulk.***

Soap will last a minimum of two years. Our oil-based products like lotion bars and body butters and lip balms will last a year or more. Oils like Argan and Jojoba have a two year shelf life. If you have any other questions about a specific product, shoot me an email!

***How large are the soap batches you make? How many employees help you? Where did you learn about various ingredient skin benefits? How do you test a potential new soap's effects on skin? How do you form the soap bars? How many hours/week are you working on your business? How did you come up with the Texas stone for soap dryers? How often does a new soap end up being a disaster either in texture or scent?***

A batch of soap makes 56 bars. I have three women besides myself working either directly or indirectly with my business. I learn about ingredients by reading books and using Google. I test new soaps on myself and my children. The bars are made in large wooden loaf molds. I work between 20-30 hours per week.

[The Texas limestone rocks](#) are cut by a family down in Texas who contacted me last year to see if I'd be interested in carrying them. Am I ever glad they did!

I don't think any new soap has ever been a disaster. There's always someone who likes it! If we accidentally botch a batch, depending on what the cause was - we either throw it or sell those bars on clearance.

***How often do you make your soaps?....daily? How big are your soap loaves before slicing...in pounds? Do you ever make custom soap loaves?***

I have another lady who makes soap for me, and I also make some. Between the two of us we turn out about 7 batches per week. Each batch weighs about 19 pounds. I would be happy to make a custom batch, but nobody seems to want 56 bars at a time. : )

***I would love to learn how to make my own shampoo soaps. It would be fun if you could write some e-books how to do this at home or post some videos on your website of the process from start to finish.***

There are many videos and tutorials out there on how to make shampoo bars. Google can be your best friend here! The way we make our bars is our proprietary secret and one we don't want to share with the public.

***Love, love [the kitchen sink salt](#) and it lathers so well. got bars for my sisters and they love them too. I tried the lime spa salt bar and it would not suds/lather - ever! what was the problem??***

I don't know. [The salt bars](#) all have the same base recipe. We use the Lime Spa bar regularly here and have never had that problem. If it doesn't work on your end - I'd recommend that you stick with what you love!

***I really wish you still had the foam pump hand soap. Or...if you even sold the pumps along with a concentrated version of your liquid soap that could be mixed to be foam soap. I like using foaming hand soap and prefer it to be natural.***

I stopped carrying the pump soap for a variety of reasons. First, I purchased it from a wholesale supplier, and it was expensive. My profit margin was too low to sustain sales unless I jacked up the price for the customer. Second, there are far more inexpensive hand pump soaps that are totally natural and readily available in most drug stores, Target, Walmart, etc. Third, they cost a lot more to ship - and because we give our customers flat rate shipping, that became another cost we had to absorb that ate away at any profit. Fourth, they took up a huge amount of limited shelf space in our home. And finally, they don't last very long for the price. The salt bars last almost four times as long, and are so much kinder to your skin.

***Love your products! What bar or bars would you suggest for shaving my legs? I used a sample a while back and loved how silky smooth my legs were...No clue what it was. Thank you!***

Anything with clay in it is going to make a great shaving bar. The [Rhassoul and Avocado](#), [Bella Rose](#), and [White China Silk](#) shampoo bars all fall under that category. Other bars that are great for shaving include [Jojoba Silk](#), [Simply Shea](#), and [Calendula Castile](#). And don't forget to follow up your shave with some luxurious [Organic Jojoba](#) in several to-swoon-for scents!

***I love your new deodorant cream, but it gives me a rash. Is there are workaround?***

One of the most effective ingredients in [our all natural deodorant](#) is aluminum free baking soda. The problem is, baking soda is alkaline, and while most skin adjusts its own pH within 15-30 minutes, some skin types struggle with this adjustment over time. That's why some people don't have any problem wearing this type of deodorant and some do. Even though we put less baking soda in our deodorant than most similar products on the market, if your skin has pH issues, you may still suffer with a rash.

You can help your skin out by patting something acidic on your pits before applying the deodorant. Apple cider vinegar is a great choice. We have an [organic, herbal infused ACV rinse](#) in a spray bottle you can easily spritz on your pits after washing them in the shower. We also have some [deliciously scented Citric Acid rinses](#) that will do the same job! If you are already using one of these products in conjunction with [our shampoo bars](#), then you're all set.

Everyone's skin is different. I've noticed that I need to spray some type of acidic rinse (my favorite is the [Orange Bergamot rinse](#)) on my pits about once every two weeks in order to keep my pits rash-free. Some of you will never need to use an acid rinse, and some will need to use it every day. The results are worth it! [Our deodorant](#) is a safe and effective option for staying odor free all day.

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*Apple Valley Natural Soap 2015*