

A wooden bowl filled with oatmeal sits on a wooden surface. A pat of butter is melting on top of the oatmeal. To the left, a glass of milk is visible. To the right, a wooden honey dipper is resting on a glass of honey. The background is a warm, wooden texture.

Survival Mom's Mini Guide:

Switch From
Store-Bought
to **HOMEMADE**

Survival Mom's Mini Guide: Switch from Store-Bought to Homemade

Survival Mom Lisa Bedford

NOTE: This book contains links to certain articles and other information available on the Internet. The authors have included these links as sources of information to help readers learn more about home organization.

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Introduction

Welcome to this new Skill of the Month: Switch from Store-Bought to Homemade. I'm so excited that this has become a big trend across the nation as moms seek out ways to eliminate unhealthy processed foods and finding more natural ways to care for their homes and families!

Not only will these items be healthier, since you will know exactly what goes into them, but for preppers, you'll have the added advantage of knowing how to make necessary foods and products your family uses, along with a shopping list so you can make those things years from now.

Keep in mind that when you stock up on something like chili powder, for example, you won't be using it just for homemade popcorn seasoning but for dozens of other recipes. [Individual ingredients](#) will be far more versatile and useful to you than store-bought, ready-made items.

Learning to make essentials from scratch is a great skill set to have. It can help you save money and makes healthier, less chemical laden options available- whether we're talking about food, housecleaning supplies, or personal care products. It also means that you'll be less likely to need to make a trip to the store if you run out of something. Instead, you can take a few minutes to whip it up from scratch!

You'll find loads of recipes and tips on my new [Pinterest board](#) created specifically for this skill. In fact, you may find yourself so overwhelmed with new things to try that you'll want to create your own binder, using the categories found in this mini-guide: Food, Household Cleaners, Personal Care, and Other. Print out copies of the recipes you use most often, so you'll have them come rain, shine, or power outage!

This mini-guide will give you recipes, instructions, and a list of the supplies you'll need to make a wide variety of homemade products. Get ready for a new adventure, and get the kids and grandkids involved, too!

Prepare more, panic less!

Lisa Bedford
The Survival Mom

Switch from Store-Bought to Homemade: Food

There are so many ways to get creative in the kitchen when it comes to transitioning from store-bought to homemade, and so many reasons to make this a priority.

Food allergies and sensitivities abound. More and more individuals are questioning the sources of their food and the ingredients given a green light by government agencies. In spite of decades of nutritional guidelines, sanctioned by health experts and the government, our nation is filled with more sick and obese people than ever before. Something is very wrong with the typical American diet.

Taking a critical look at what we put into our mouths is imperative. Taking control over what we and our loved ones eat could be lifesaving, and venturing into the world of homemade foods like never before is necessary.

I have to admit that this movement is very trendy on Pinterest and in social media, but this is how our grandparents and great-grandparents ate! They made everything from scratch and never even knew what high fructose corn syrup was! They could pronounce every ingredient in what they ate. Imagine that!

To get started on this switch to homemade, check out this list by Greatist of [45 Healthy Foods to Make and Never Buy Again](#), and this HowStuffWorks article about [Surprising DIY Homemade Foods](#) that might not have crossed your mind. This [recipe for homemade yogurt](#) using powdered milk is just one example of combining creativity with knowledge and a few inexpensive ingredients!

Seasoning mixes, salad dressings, condiments, and favorite snacks are some of the first things you might want to start making at home. They are rewarding, inexpensive, and take very little time to learn.

Seasoning Mixes

Store-bought seasoning blends are a great place to get your feet wet when transitioning from store bought to homemade. The store-bought versions can contain fillers, preservatives, MSG, gluten, or artificial colors. Making them at home means they often have better, more concentrated flavor, and having individual spices on hand instead means you can conveniently mix up whatever blend you want, whenever the mood strikes. You can even get creative and add a personal touch to your spice blends and customize them to your own preferences. Here are [17 Homemade Spice Mixes with Recipes](#) from Keeper of the Home.

A favorite popcorn mix around my house is this one:

Taco Seasoning Mix

1 T. chili powder
2 t. salt
1 t. garlic powder
1 t. onion powder
1 t. ground cumin
½ t. paprika
Dash of black pepper
Dash of red pepper flakes (optional)

Combine ingredients and store in an airtight container.

Another spice blend that we fell in love with is this one to spice up your next batch of fajitas or carnitas.

Barbacoa Beef Blend

3 T. onion flakes
3 T. ground cumin
3 T. ground oregano
3 t. chipotle powder
3 t. garlic powder
3 t. salt
1 ½ t. lime powder
1 ½ t. black pepper
1 t. ground cloves

Combine in a small bowl and use to season a beef or pork roast. Adjust the spice amounts to your preferences. This is enough to season 3 large roasts and I usually cook the roast, along with these spices, some water, and a couple of bay leaves, in my pressure cooker for an hour.

Salad Dressings

After spice blends and seasoning mixes, salad dressings are probably one of the easiest things to learn to make homemade. Between Food Network's list of [50 Salad Dressings](#), and [Mr. Food's list of 31 Cheap and Easy Salad Dressings](#), you're sure to be able to find some flavors that appeal to you. But if that seems like too many choices, stick with [5 Salad Dressings to Know by Heart](#) from The Kitchn.

I could write a book about my family's search for really good [homemade salad dressings](#)! We've come up with a few that we've customized and used over the years. Here are our favorites.

Caesar Dressing (The non-creamy kind, and so good!)

6 ounces olive oil (I've also used canola and vegetable oils.)
2 ounces lemon juice
2 pressed garlic cloves
1-2 t. sugar or other sweetener (Sweeten to taste.)
1 t. Dijon mustard
¼ c. Parmesan or Romano cheese, grated
¼ t. black pepper

Combine ingredients in a container with a tight fitting lid and refrigerate. This is a very fresh tasting dressing and is a nice change from the heavier creamy Caesar dressings.

Asian Dressing

6 ounces vegetable or light olive oil
3 ounces rice vinegar
2 ounces soy sauce
2 t. sugar or other sweetener (Sweeten to taste.)
1 pressed garlic clove
¼ t. ground ginger

Combine ingredients in a container with a tight fitting lid and refrigerate. Toss together chopped romaine, add mandarin orange slices, slivered almonds, and sliced, cooked chicken breast for a fantastic salad!

Italian Dressing

8 ounces extra virgin olive oil
4 ounces Balsamic or red wine vinegar
2 pressed garlic cloves
1 T. sugar
½ t. dried oregano
¼ t. salt
¼ t. onion powder
¼ t. dried basil

Combine ingredients in a container with a tight fitting lid and refrigerate. This is great as a marinade, too!

Simple Creamy Dressing

1 c. mayonnaise
1 T. garlic powder
1 t. onion powder
2 T. milk

Whisk these together and refrigerate for at least an hour before using.

Home Made Condiments

Salad dressings aren't the only condiments that can join the arsenal of homemade recipes. This super-fast [Five Minute Ketchup recipe](#) proves that making your own condiments doesn't have to be hard or time consuming. Or perhaps you would prefer some [Ridiculously Easy Homemade Mustard?](#) And don't forget the [mayo!](#)

The recipe we use most often for homemade ketchup is this one:

Lisa's Homemade Ketchup

6 oz. tomato paste
1/4 c. honey*, or to taste
1/2 c. white vinegar
1/4 c. water
3/4 t. salt
1/4 t. onion powder
1/4 t. garlic powder

Whisk all these ingredients together in a medium size saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook for 30 minutes and allow to cool before pouring it into a container. We use [squeeze bottles](#) but you could also recycle old ketchup bottles for this use.

I highly recommend having more than one bottle to use because you will probably end up wanting to double this recipe so you don't have to make it too often. It stores very well in the fridge.

We have made many variations of this, including a spicy ketchup blend with [Tony Chachere's](#) seasoning salt. (My favorite!)

*Honey, sugar, stevia, Splenda, or any other sweetener will work well here, just be sure to add a little at a time to get the taste you and your family prefer.

Snacks

Popular snacks that can be bought readymade are also surprisingly easy to make at home, and popcorn has to be one of the easiest. It can be made in a brown paper bag in the microwave, or in a pan on the stovetop. But that's just the beginning of what you can do with this delicious, snack-time favorite. Food Network has a list of [50 Flavored Popcorn Recipes](#) to try, and Spark People gives even more ideas with their article, [23 Ways to Top Your Popcorn](#).

While we're looking at savory snacks, did you know you can make cheese crackers at home? The Brown Eyed Baker has a recipe and tutorial for [Homemade Cheez Its](#) on her blog.

We've used various popcorn seasoning mixes over the years, both store-bought and homemade and like this one, which is a variation of the taco seasoning mix.

Taco Popcorn Seasoning Mix

1 T. chili powder
2 t. salt
1 t. garlic powder
1 t. onion powder
1 t. ground cumin
½ t. paprika
¼ cup [nutritional yeast](#)
Dash of black pepper
Dash of red pepper flakes (optional)

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl and then blend in a coffee grinder, spice grinder, or a blender. Churning this mixture into a fine powder is the key! Pour into a shaker bottle and enjoy over hot popcorn!

Sauces & Salsa

Have you taken a look recently at the ingredients in the store-bought marinara sauce? Or store-bought salsa? These are both so simple to make and require inexpensive ingredients that there's no need to sacrifice that freshness for something that contains any number of unwanted ingredients. Here are 3 of my family's favorites in this category, including one that originated with my husband.

Marinara NOT From a Jar!

I wanted to include my recipe for homemade marinara because it's so fresh tasting and delicious but also because the store-bought versions contain massive amounts of high fructose corn syrup and preservatives. There's just no need for that when this is so easy to make!

This recipe has been in my family for at least 30 years, and we never get tired of it.

Lisa's Homemade Marinara Sauce

2 28 ounce cans whole Italian tomatoes, chopped (Use home-canned if possible.)
¼ c. tomato paste
½ c. olive oil
1 crushed garlic clove
1 T. minced onion
2 T. minced fresh parsley
½ t. crushed dry oregano
1-2 T. fresh basil, thinly sliced
1 t. salt
A few shakes of black pepper

Place all ingredients in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cover. Simmer for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally or until sauce is reduced to about 1 quart.

If you love Alfredo sauce and aren't worried about fat grams, you have got to try this next recipe! Again, we've been making one version or another for many years.

Simple Alfredo Sauce

3 T. butter
2 c. heavy cream
2 cloves garlic, pressed
½ c. grated Parmesan cheese
1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese

Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the cream and garlic; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 5 minutes or until the sauce is slightly reduced.

Stir in the Parmesan cheese and return mixture to a simmer. Stir occasionally for 8-10 minutes. Add the mozzarella cheese, stir until melted and combined with other ingredients.

Serve hot over pasta.

So what if your sweet tooth attacks? This chocolate syrup is outstanding over ice cream, a brownie, or any other dessert.

Homemade Chocolate Syrup

1 c. cocoa powder
2 c. sugar
1 c. cold water
¼ t. salt
1 T. vanilla

Combine the cocoa powder, sugar, water, and salt in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir continually to avoid scorching and bring to a slow boil. Remove from heat and add vanilla. Stir to combine.

If you want a peanut butter cup version of this sauce, mix in ¼ c. smooth or chunky peanut butter while the sauce is still warm.

Growing up in Arizona, Mexican food was a part of life. A big part of life! When I married my husband, much to my delight, he came with a fantastic recipe for the freshest tasting salsa I had ever tried. Throw out your store-bought brand and keep a batch of this in the fridge instead!

Paranoid Dad's Salsa

3 T. oil
3 T. white vinegar
3 t. salt
3 t. sugar or other sweetener
3 cloves garlic, pressed
28 ounce can chopped tomatoes
1 small onion, finely chopped
1-2 jalapenos, finely chopped (Remove membrane and seeds for less heat.)
Chopped cilantro (optional)
Thinly sliced green onion (optional)

In a saucepan over low heat, combine the oil, vinegar, salt and sugar. Heat until the salt and sugar have dissolved. Add remaining ingredients and stir until everything is combined.

If you like a smoother consistency, pour the salsa into a blender or food processor and blend for 5-10 seconds. You can also use an immersion blender for this step.

Keep in mind, that just about any food you buy store-bought can be made homemade. You might have to search a little for the right recipe, but it can be done!

Resources

Books:

[The Homemade Pantry: 101 Foods You Can Stop Buying and Start Making](#) by Alana Chernila

[Classic Snacks Made From Scratch: 70 Homemade Versions of Your Favorite Brand-Name Treats](#) by Casey Barber

[Homemade Condiments](#) by Jessica Harlan

Tools and Supplies**Bulk Spices and Herbs**

A good place to look for these is in the ethnic (Hispanic, Asian, Indian, etc.) section of your grocery store. The spices come in plastic packets, not glass bottles, but are very budget-friendly. You can always pour the spices into labeled spice shaker jars.

Also try these websites:

[Azure Standard](#)

[Mountain Rose Herbs](#)

Condiment jars

[Spice shaker jars](#)

[Salad Dressing Bottle](#)

Switch from Store-Bought to Homemade: Household Cleaning Supplies

If you run out of a cleaner and don't have time to run to the store, chances are pretty good that you may be able to mix up a substitute with what you have on hand in your kitchen pantry. Besides being convenient, these homemade cleaners are better for your health- they're much less toxic than the store-bought versions!

When my kids began household cleaning chores, I was leery of them handling the typical cleaners that I had been using, such as Clorox wipes and spray and the famous scrubbing bubbles cleaners. So, I switched almost entirely over to using vinegar as my cleaning mainstay. At the time we had stained concrete floors and a mixture of warm water with 2 cups of white vinegar did a great job of keeping those floors shiny and clean.

I bought spray bottles and filled them with water and white vinegar in a 3:1 ratio and used that mixture everywhere. Sometimes I added a couple of drops of an essential oil for good measure.

Greatist.com has a list of [27 Non Toxic Recipes for DIY Cleaning](#), and don't miss Growing Up Herbal's [Homemade Recipe Round Up](#), with a total of 42 DIY recipes. There are lots of staples for household cleaning that everyone is curious about, so let's take a look at some of what's out there.

Laundry Detergent & Dryer Sheets

Probably the number one never-ending task in every household is laundry. But how can you keep all of that laundry clean without having to buy premade detergent? Not possible, you might say? Sure it is. The Humbled Housewife presents [5 Homemade Laundry Detergent](#) recipes so you can find the perfect one for you, and The Simple Dollar has a [Detailed Visual Guide for Liquid Laundry Soap](#) if you're interested in a liquid form. If powder is more your style, DIY Natural has the [most widely used recipe](#). It's simple and straight forward: washing soda, borax, and a bar soap like Fels Naptha or Doctor Bronner's are the only ingredients.

Now that homemade laundry detergents have become so popular, I've noticed that it's extremely easy to find the ingredients. Just a couple of years ago, I had to specially request washing soda at my local grocery store and order Fels Naptha from Amazon!

Super-Easy Laundry Soap

- 1 bar soap ([Fels Naptha](#) and Zote are typically used, but any bar of soap will do.)
- 1 c. borax
- 1 c. washing soda

Finely grate the bar of soap. I like to unwrap the soap and let it sit for at least a couple of weeks. This hardens the soap and gives me a finer grain when I grate it. Add the borax and washing soda and mix well. Store this in a container with a tight fitting lid. Use 2 tablespoons per full load.

We've used that basic powder laundry soap recipe for the past few years. Some folks swear by it, others prefer either the liquid version or other variations, such as this one.

Borax-Free Homemade Laundry Soap

½ c. baking soda
½ c. citric acid
1 c. washing soda
¼ c. coarse sea salt
1 bar soap, such as [Fels Naptha](#), [Zote](#), or [Dr. Bronner's](#), any scent

Finely grate the bar of soap using a food process for best results. Add remaining ingredients and stir very well until mixture is consistently smooth, without clumps. Store in an airtight container. Use two tablespoons per load of laundry.

By the way, Zote is an official "laundry soap" but has a very strong perfume-y smell. You may or may not like it.

Dryer Balls

When my husband was an electrician, he became quite irritated with me any time I would forget to use a dryer sheet in a batch of laundry. Apparently, static electricity is a big deal on a job site when you work with electricity, and he occasionally accused me of trying to get him killed. Not true at all!

One option to dryer sheets that I've tried is the aluminum foil dryer ball. I simply pulled about 2 feet of aluminum foil from the roll, wadded it into a ball, and threw it in the dryer with a wet load of clothes. The aluminum works to remove static electricity. One ball lasts up to six months.

Another type of dryer ball to use is a wool ball. This is a very easy project, something that any kid could do. You need only a small rubber ball, about 1" in diameter and a skein of 100% wool yarn.

Begin wrapping the wool yarn around the rubber ball and continue wrapping until the ball is around the size of a tennis ball. At that point, tuck the end of the yarn through, making sure it won't pull out and cause the whole ball to unravel in the dryer. You can use a crochet hook to pull that end through several strands of wool.

Put the ball in an old sock and throw into the washing machine, using the hottest water setting. This will "felt" the wool yarn, turning it into a fabric! Dry the ball in a hot dryer and then begin using with each load of wet laundry. You'll find that your laundry comes out softer and without the chemical smell of dryer sheets.

Homemade Dryer Sheets

I've used vinegar for multiple purposes around my home but had never used it with my laundry until I discovered this simple method of making homemade dryer sheets.

You'll need:

- A jar with a lid (I prefer canning jars.)
- 1 c. white vinegar
- 20 drops of any essential oil or combination of oils
- Several cloth rags – cloth diapers, old t-shirts, etc.

Put the rags in the jar and cover with the vinegar and essential oils. Screw the lid on to the jar and shake vigorously. For each load of wet laundry, take out a dry sheet, squeeze cloth to get out excess moisture, and then toss into the dryer.

When the load of clothes is dry, put the cloth back in the jar, shake, and reuse, over and over again!

All-Purpose Cleaners

There isn't much need to buy store-bought, all-purpose cleaners when you already have the basics on hand to make a batch of homemade. Here are a couple of different versions to use. You might have to try 2 or 3 before finding the one that works just right for you.

Basic Vinegar Cleaning Solution

- 1 part vinegar
- 1 part water

Combine in a spray bottle and use. If you don't care for the scent, try adding 2-3 drops of an essential oil.

The following is a good recipe if you want to use vinegar but don't care for the smell.

Scented All-Purpose Cleaner

- ¼ c. white vinegar
- 1 ¾ c. water
- 30 drops essential oil

Combine in a glass spray bottle. Over time, essential oils can break down plastic. Try screwing a spray nozzle from a plastic bottle to a glass vinegar bottle. It should fit perfectly.

DIY All-Purpose Cleaner

2 T. white vinegar
1 t. dish soap
½ t. baking soda
2 c. warm water

Combine ingredients in a spray bottle, shake to combine and use.

Oven Cleaner

Oven cleaner might not be something that comes to mind immediately when thinking of DIY cleaning recipes, but [Passion for Savings](#), [Mama to 5 Blessings](#), and Martha Stewart Living's [DIY Oven Cleaner](#) show just how simple and easy it is. So, on that checklist of store bought to homemade tips and tricks: keeping your oven clean, with DIY style- check!

Most homemade oven cleaners require basic ingredients, such as:

- Baking soda
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Dawn dish washing soap
- Vinegar or lemon juice
- Elbow grease!

See? One more homemade cleaner that you can easily put to work in your kitchen today!

Window Cleaner

Everyone hates window cleaners that leave streaks, and making that perfect glass cleaner at home can be tricky. Crunchy Betty held a [Battle of the Homemade Glass Cleaners](#) to settle the matter of the best homemade window cleaners once and for all (you'll have to check out her secret ingredient- it's pretty clever!). But if that still leaves you wondering about other options, check out [More Homemade Window Cleaners](#) with TipNut for even more ideas.

As a vinegar lover, reaching for a bottle of white vinegar to clean windows was a natural impulse. Not all my bright ideas pay off, but this one did. White vinegar makes a pretty darn good window cleaner on its own, without adding anything else.

Since the window cleaner itself is only partly responsible for super clean windows (and mirrors), you want to make sure to use the right cleaning cloth. Old newspapers really are very effective. Just wad up 1 or 2 sheets and begin rubbing the glass. Old diapers work well as does a [microfiber towel](#) or [chamois](#), which can last for years.

Bathroom Cleaners

Soft scrub makes life so much simpler in the bathroom-cleaning department, and it couldn't be easier to make. The Thrifty Couple's [Incredible Soft Scrub Recipe](#), and [Easy Homemade Softscrub](#) by My Frugal Adventures will get you started. For other bathroom cleanser ideas, be sure to check out [8 DIY Bathroom Cleanser Recipes](#) from Clean Mama and even more [Homemade Bathroom Cleaners](#) by My Frugal Adventures.

Vinegar, again!, is a natural anti-bacterial, so it's a good choice to use as an all-purpose cleaner in the bathroom. However, because it's a mild acid, **it should not be used to clean granite or marble countertops or stone floor tiles.**

You can also mix up a batch of this and keep it under the bathroom sink in a spray bottle:

- 1 c. Blue Dawn dishwashing liquid
- 1 c. white vinegar

Heat the vinegar in the microwave, using a microwave safe bowl. Pour in the Dawn detergent and stir until the 2 liquids are completely combined. Use a funnel to pour into a spray bottle and put it to good use!

A few months ago one of our tiled bathtubs reached the point of no return. There was icky looking black stuff in the corners where the tub met the tile, and overall, the entire tub was a mess. We got to work cleaning it up, re-caulking the tub/tile line, and now we keep a spray bottle containing a bleach/water combination (1 part bleach to 2 parts water), and each morning, whoever is last to take a shower, spritzes down the tile and tub.

One of the most effective tips I have to pass on to you when it comes to keeping bathrooms clean is to have a full set of cleaners and supplies in each bathroom. Yes, you can have a single caddy with the cleaners, but having everything right at your fingertips while you're standing there at the bathroom sink means you, or one of the kids, is far more likely to actually clean, right then and there!

Resources

Books

[A Simply Homemade Clean](#) by Lisa Barthuly

[Homemade Cleaners: Quick and Easy Toxin Free Recipes](#) by Dionna Ford

[The Naturally Clean Home](#) by Karen Siegel-Majer

Tools and Supplies

[Soap Nuts](#) for DIY laundry alternative- reusable, natural, plant based laundry soap

[Spray Bottles](#)

[Microfiber Cleaning Cloths](#)

[Liquid Castille Soap](#)

[Fels Naptha](#)

[Castille Soap Bars](#)

[Washing Soda](#)

[Borax](#)

Essential Oils are a great addition to homemade cleaning products. Some of the most popular ones for fragrance and natural cleansing power are:

Pine, Lemon, Orange, Peppermint, Rosemary, Lavender and Eucalyptus

If you are buying an essential oil to use *only* in your household cleaning products, there is no need to opt for the pricier versions. However, if you may also be using that oil to apply to your skin or ingest, please do your research. Not all oils are safe for those purposes.

Switch from Store-Bought to Homemade: Personal Care

I remember years ago reading about Estee Lauder and how she cooked up her first beauty products in her kitchen. I thought, “No way! You buy those things at department stores!”

Well, making your own beauty and personal care products is not only possible, it’s practical and fun, too! Around my house, it was my daughter who first started delving into this with homemade body creams, body scrubs, and complexion treatments. She was on the cutting edge and I didn’t realize it!

When I was her age, though, I used to pore over a book of beauty treatments that my mom had purchased and learned how an egg white facial could make your pores smaller (it really works!) and mayonnaise makes a great hair conditioner!

You can make almost all of the personal care products you might need, things like lotion, lip balm, deodorant, toothpaste, even shampoo and sunscreen right at home, with simple ingredients. Most of these products are going to be a bit more involved than the cleaning products in the previous section. In many cases you’ll need a double boiler and/or a fine mesh strainer.

Soap

This first DIY product is one that scares a lot of people who shy away from things like lye, hot, boiling pot, heavy-duty rubber gloves, goggles and sweat. Well, there are hundreds of recipes for making soap, and some are quite easy. Yes, many do require lye and involve a pot and a stove, but the process is so enjoyable that some folks get hooked. Months later you’ll see them setting up a little table at a farmer’s market proudly displaying their homemade soaps in various colors and scents, now for sale!

Surely you’ve heard of this one, but if not, I wanted to include it because it utilizes those tiny slivers of bar soap we all end up with and usually throw away. It may take some time to collect as many as you need for this recipe,

Easiest Liquid Soap

1 c. bar soap slivers – that last little bit of soap that really is too small to be of much good
Water

Soak the soap slivers in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water until the soap becomes goopy enough to stir. If more water is needed, add 1 tablespoon at a time. Be careful to not add too much water or the final product will be too watery.

Pour the mixture into a blender or use an immersion blender or hand mixer. Blend until the soap has a smooth consistency. Pour your new liquid soap into a dispenser bottle and pat yourself on the back for being so thrifty!

Bar Soaps

Making your own bar soap from scratch is fun and rewarding, but it's also complicated enough that the process goes beyond the scope of this mini-guide. Instead, I'd like to point you in the direction of 2 books and 3 websites that provide tutorials to help you either get started or expand upon your soap-making knowledge.

[Soap Maker's Workshop](#) by Robert and Katherine McDaniel is a top-rated book by my friends who are into making their own soap. Another book to enjoy is [Smart Soapmaking](#) by Anne L. Watson. Anne is known for being very responsive and helpful to her readers.

I could spend hours browsing through the recipes at [Soap Deli News](#). These include exotic ingredients like red palm oil and bee pollen powder. [The Nerdy Farm Wife](#) offers tutorials and dozens of recipes for beautiful soaps, and [Lovin Soap](#) offers live classes, recipes, troubleshooting when your soap doesn't turn out quite right, and their own shop.

If you want a fun activity with (or without) your kids, you can buy [soap base](#) at craft stores to "make your own." You can add [colors](#), scents, and even [glitter](#) (just for fun), then pour the soap into special [molds](#). While you aren't truly making the soap from scratch, you are in control of the ingredients and you can have the exact color and scent you want.

This is a good way to try this without making too large an investment of time or money, and you can use the molds, colors, etc. later, if you do decide to make soap entirely from scratch. Plus, it makes a good gift.

Lotion

Whether it's dry chapped hands from wintery weather or that your hands need a little help from all the hard work they do in the garden and around the house, lotion is a personal care staple. There are a couple of really great resources like this [round up of DIY lotion recipes](#), and this [easy recipe for a non-greasy handmade lotion](#), that can be made in whatever scent you like by adding different essential oils.

Here's a super simple recipe that I like to use when any of us have sore muscles.

Minty Massage Oil

- 1 c. coconut oil
- 5 drops wintergreen essential oil
- 5 drops peppermint essential oil

In a small container that has a tight fitting lid, thoroughly mix these 3 ingredients. If temperatures get over 75 degrees or so, the coconut oil will liquefy. Otherwise it will remain a solid and you can just scoop out what you need with your fingers.

Creamy Moisturizing Lotion

½ c. shea butter
2 T. almond or coconut oil
10 drops of any essential oil

In a double boiler over low heat, combine the shea butter and oil. If you don't have a double boiler, use a regular saucepan over very low heat.

Pour the mixture into a small mixing bowl and refrigerate for about 10-15 minutes, or until the mixture starts to become translucent and slightly solidify. If it becomes too hard, you'll have to reheat the mixture.

Add the essential oil and, using a hand mixer, blend until it becomes creamy. Scoop the lotion into a small jar with a lid.

Facial Cleansers

If you haven't yet tried honey as a facial cleanser, you must do so asap! The first time I tried it, I was so impressed with how smooth my skin felt that I made it a priority to keep a container of honey right next to my bathroom sink.

Using honey as a cleanser is the easiest DIY product that I know of, but plain Vaseline is right up there, too. Many years ago I worked at a Phoenix television station with a beautiful Hispanic woman named Dolly. One day she confided in me that the secret to her beautiful skin was Vaseline. Since my skin has always tended to be oily, I was shocked and couldn't imagine cleaning my face each night with Vaseline. Of course now the big trend in facial care is oil! Argan oil, avocado oil, and more.

If you'd like to step it up a notch above honey and Vaseline, here are a couple of recipes to try.

Green Tea Facial Cleanser

¼ cup liquid castile soap, such as Dr. Bronner's
¼ cup chamomile tea
¾ t. oil, such as olive or avocado oil
Essential oil, optional

Brew the green tea as though you were brewing a cuppa for yourself. Measure out ¼ cup of the brewed and cooled tea. In a small bowl, combine the remaining ingredients. Pour into a small pump bottle.

Depending on the type of castile soap you use, you may not want to add an additional scent. Dr. Bronner liquid soaps come in various scents including rose, lavender, tea tree, and peppermint. His baby soap is unscented.

Green Tea Toner

This toner has hordes of fans who swear it helps minimize their pores. The most basic recipe is simply strong green tea! Brew one green tea teabag in ¼ cup of boiling water and allow to steep for several minutes. Cool, pour into a small spray bottle, and spritz your face after each cleansing. There's no need to wipe the green tea off your face. Allow to dry and enjoy the results.

Lip Balm/Gloss

Lip balm is another essential from the personal care category. As [this recipe](#) from Martha Stewart shows, a basic lip balm is very simple to make (beeswax, carrier oil, honey, and some optional essential oils to change the flavor). If you want to get really creative, check out these [13 Lip Balm Recipes](#) for variations on a theme.

Here's the easiest recipe for lip balm that I've found.

3-Ingredient Lip Balm

2 T. beeswax
2 T. shea butter
2 T. coconut oil
10-12 drops essential oil*, optional

In a small saucepan over low heat, melt together the beeswax, shea butter, and coconut oil. Stir in the essential oil. While the mixture is still hot (you don't want it to harden at this point), use an eye dropper or a medicine syringe to fill [small containers](#) or [lip balm tubes](#). Lip balm will harden and soon be ready to use.

*If you'll be adding essential oil, keep in mind that the scent and flavor will be right on your lips, so select your oil carefully and be sure to get a high quality oil.

You can easily add a tint to this lip gloss recipe by melting a tiny bit, 1/8 teaspoon or so, of a lipstick together with the beeswax, shea butter, and coconut oil. You can also mix in some [powdered hibiscus](#) or [beet root powder](#) to add a bit of color.

Shampoo and Conditioner

Hair care products can be expensive and complicated, but they don't have to be. And don't believe what you hear from the advertisements on TV and radio. Cheap hair care products at the store might not be good for your hair, but that doesn't mean expensive, stylist-approved products are the only alternative! Homemade shampoo and conditioner are always an option. This simple [Honey Shampoo](#) is one recipe to try or consider this one for [Castille and Coconut Milk Shampoo](#). For conditioner, here are [Five Hair Conditioners You Can Make at Home](#).

This recipe uses ingredients found in several of the recipes in this mini-guide, so you may already have them on hand. It's a gentle blend of castile soap and tea.

Brewed Tea Shampoo

1 gallon of brewed tea (Green tea, oolong, or black tea would all work well. You'll need 10 regular size teabags to make one gallon of tea.)

½ c. baking soda

¼ c. castile soap

3 t. xanthan gum (a natural thickener)

Essential oils, optional

Brew the gallon of tea in a large enough pot by filling it with a gallon of water (4 quarts) and adding the tea bags. Bring the water to a near-boil, turn off the heat, and allow the tea to steep for at least 15-20 minutes.

Stir in the baking soda, castile soap, and the xanthan gum. Xanthan gum is a natural thickener and if you add it too quickly, it will coagulate and you'll have clumps of xanthan gum in your shampoo. You don't want that to happen, so add a little at a time and whisk in each addition until your shampoo has a smooth consistency. Add 10-20 drops of your favorite essential oil(s) and allow the mixture to cool.

A gallon of shampoo is a lot so be ready with several bottles and a funnel for pouring.

The following recipe is super simple and gentle enough for everyone in the family.

Gentle Coconut Shampoo

½ c. coconut milk

2/3 c. castile soap

2 t. extra virgin olive oil

20-30 drops of essential oil, optional

Pour each ingredient into the bottle you'll be using for shampoo. Use a funnel to make the job easier. Shake well before using.

Hair conditioners

Personally, for many years my go-to conditioner was made by Hellman's. Yes, Hellman's mayonnaise! I slathered it on my hair, wrapped my head in Saran wrap to hold in the heat, and then went about my business for 30 minutes or so. Maybe my head smelled a bit like chicken salad for the rest of the day, but you just can't beat a one-ingredient conditioner that you keep in the fridge!

In a similar manner, a small amount of coconut oil can be worked through your hair and either left in or rinsed out after a couple of minutes.

I have also used apple cider vinegar rinse on occasion to cleanse my hair of build-up from hair care products, especially hair spray. Just work a cup or so of the vinegar through your hair, from scalp to the tips of your hair and rinse. Vinegar has a way of leaving hair shiny and soft.

My favorite hair conditioner story is from many years ago when my mom experimented with a DIY conditioner that was supposed to give all sorts of body and texture to her hair using cherry Jello-O. We had gone camping for the weekend, and I guess she figured she would set up some type of DIY rustic spa experience for herself while we kids were off playing and exploring in the forest and around the nearby lake. She applied this fruity smelling mixture to her hair and laid down on a cot for a quick nap.

My sisters and I were traipsing through pine needles when we suddenly heard a blood curdling scream coming from our campsite. It was my mom.

I remember running as fast as my little legs could carry me and seeing my dad flailing at my mom's head. Apparently, thousands of nearby black ants discovered that they, too, liked cherry Jell-O and were swarming her newly conditioned hair. My dad finally emptied an Igloo cooler full of water over her head to flush away the last stragglers.

Now that I think of it, in all that excitement I never did find out if the infamous cherry Jell-O conditioning treatment was effective or not.

The next two hair conditioners I want to share with you will lead you down a much more tranquil path than this, I promise!

If you love the smell of coconut, this is one you need to try.

Coconutty Leave-In Conditioner

- ½ c. coconut milk
- 1 c. distilled water
- 3-5 drops essential oil, optional
- 1 t. Vitamin E oil, optional

Combine these ingredients together in a small spray bottle. Spritz over wet, clean hair and comb through. Do not rinse.

If your hair is crying out for deep moisture, this recipe will provide just what it needs.

Good Enough to Eat Conditioner

½ c. coconut milk
¼ c. mayonnaise
¼ c. honey
½ banana, mashed

Combine these ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth, or blend with an immersion blender in a bowl. This mixture will need to be refrigerated between uses.

Apply to either wet or dry hair, cover with a shower cap or plastic wrap, and allow this to condition your hair for 20-30 minutes. Rinse well in warm water.

Deodorant

No one likes to be stinky, and- surprisingly- you can even [make your own deodorant](#) at home. Although you can use plain baking soda in a pinch, [Not a Secret Deodorant](#) can get you started with something more familiar. Or, if you'd prefer, check out this recipe for homemade [citrus scented deodorant](#).

These all-natural recipes are not anti-perspirants. They will not keep your arm pits from sweating, which is a completely natural body function. However, these will keep you smelling fresh, sweat or no sweat.

3-Ingredient Deodorant

6-8 T. coconut oil (solid, not liquid)
¼ c. arrowroot powder
¼ c. baking soda
2-3 drops essential oil, optional

Combine the dry ingredients together in a small bowl. Add the coconut oil and whisk until mixture is smooth. Scoop out into a small jar with a tight fitting lid, or into an empty deodorant container. (Either an old one or one purchased empty will work.) This recipe will fill approximately 2.5 empty, regular deodorant containers.

The one drawback to this recipe is that coconut oil starts to liquefy at 75 degrees Fahrenheit. When I lived in Phoenix, my coconut oil was almost always a liquid. Now, in cooler temperatures, it's almost always a solid. Keep that in mind if you decide to store it in something like a [deodorant container](#) or anything else that doesn't have a tight-fitting lid.

Most of the deodorant recipes I've used or seen online all contain coconut oil. I had to search for ones that didn't. My daughter gets a rash with coconut oil recipes, and I've heard others complained that the coconut oil stained their clothes. So far I've been lucky and enjoy the coconut oil versions. If you want something different, try this one.

All-Natural Buttery Deodorant

1/8 c. shea butter
1/8 c. cocoa butter
½ T. baking soda
1/8 c. arrowroot powder
5 drops Vitamin E oil
20 drops essential oil, optional

In the upper portion of a double boiler, combine the cocoa butter and shea butter. Melt over low heat. If you don't have a double boiler, use a small saucepan over low heat. You don't want the oils to get too hot.

Once melted, remove from heat and add the arrowroot powder and baking soda. Mix in the Vitamin E oil and essential oil, if desired. The oil will still be hot, so carefully pour it into a jar with a tight-fitting lid or into two 2 ounce containers.

Resources

Books

[Homemade Beauty: 150 Simple Beauty Recipes Made from All Natural Ingredients](#) by Annie Strole

[Natural Beauty At Home: More Than 250 Easy to Recipes for Body, Bath, and Hair](#) by Janice Cox

[Soap Maker's Workshop: The Art and Craft of Natural Homemade Soap](#) by Robert and Katherine McDaniel

Ingredients

[Arrowroot Powder](#)

[Beeswax](#)

[Coconut Oil](#)

[Jojoba Oil](#)

[Non-Nano Zinc Powder](#)

[Shea Butter](#)

[Xanthan gum](#)

Essential Oils – Since you'll be adding these oils to skin and hair products, be sure to purchase oils that are safe for that purpose. Not all are. Some of the most popular oils for personal and beauty products are lavender, vanilla, rosemary, and citrus oils.

Tools

[Glass Jars](#)

[Empty Deodorant Sticks](#)

[Lip Balm Tubes](#)

[Lotion Jar with Pump](#)

[Roller Ball Applicator](#) (lip gloss size)

A Final Word From Lisa

The most important piece to take away from this mini guide is the knowledge that you really can begin transitioning away from relying on processed, mass produced products to healthier, homemade versions.

I'm not sure when "homemade" became a dirty word and the preference of our nation switched to products from the factory, but the pendulum is definitely switched directions. Millions of moms are discovering, or perhaps re-discovering, the joy of creating things in their own kitchens that are of a higher quality and safer than anything a factory could make.

This mini guide is just a starting point. Recipes abound for seasonings and foods, cleaning supplies, and personal care products- it's just a matter of deciding what appeals to you the most and where YOU want to start.

Share with me your favorite recipes on [my Facebook page](#) or by email to lisa@thesurvivalmom.com. I may feature them in future publications!

As always, [visit my blog daily](#) to see what's new and which skill will be featured next and sign up for my Sunday morning email to make sure you never miss a giveaway, review, or article.

Prepare more, panic less!

Also by Lisa Bedford, The Survival Mom

Survival Mom: How to Prepare Your Family for Everyday Disasters and Worst Case Scenarios

Everything You Need to Know to Keep Your Family Safe and Secure -- No Matter What

Undaunted by the prospect of TEOTWAWKI (The End of the World as We Know It), Lisa Bedford tackles every what-if and worst-case scenario head-on, offering practical advice on how to prepare your family for whatever might come your way. From a few days without electricity to an unexpected job loss or total chaos after the destruction of a tornado, Survival Mom provides everything you need to become self-reliant and establish plans for your family, including:

- preparing the home for a natural disaster
- alternative sources of energy in a power's-out situation
- everything you need to know about food storage
- personal protection (do I really need to learn how to shoot a gun?)

Deep inside every mom is a Survival Mom whose passion for her family drives her to make the best of the present and prepare for the future. So tap into your Mama Grizzly instincts and channel your worries into action. Whether you're a full-fledged "prepper" or just getting started, with real-life stories and customizable forms and checklists along with Lisa's "you can do it" attitude, Survival Mom replaces paranoia and panic with the peace of knowing YOU have the power to keep your loved ones safe and secure.

Happy, Healthy, and Prepared: Top Tips From the Hosts of The Survival Mom Radio Network

Edited by Lisa Bedford

The Survival Mom Radio Network includes over a dozen amazing podcasters who are experts in all different areas of preparedness. This short book includes the very best top tips from the hosts of The Survival Mom Radio Network. But who are they and what do they talk (and podcast and blog) about?

Whether you are interested in healthy living, home & family, homesteading, growing & preserving food, prepping, or survival -- they're all here!

The Survival Mom Radio Network Hosts are moms just like you and me. They aren't Navy SEALs or paramilitary specialists. Most of them have learned skills like canning, gardening, and dehydrating food in the last few years.

Each one has their own specific area of interest, although some are similar. For instance, two hosts might both focus on cooking, but one is more interested in farm to table and the other with gluten and allergen free. Every one of them is concerned about their family finances. They are trying hard to make

what they have stretch as far as possible. They have found that certain things are healthier, cheaper, and just plain easy to do -- once you get started.

Survival Mom hosts are anxious to make sure their families are prepared, even for life's small, personal emergencies – like Mom getting sick when the larder is bare. Survival Moms aim to make sure there is always enough of the basics so that even in an everyday emergency or worst-case scenario, her family will still eat well, have plenty of water to drink, and keep clean.

Enjoy this e-book, chock full of great tips!