



# Properties of Oils In Cold Process Soap



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This is not a complete list, Just the most commonly used ones

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## **Apricot Kernel Oil**

Apricot kernel oil is a light oil. It absorbs nicely into the skin and is a good luxury conditioning oil in soap - at about 5% - 10%.

## **Almond Oil, Sweet**

A moisturizing oil that is very light and absorbs well. In soap it produces a low, stable lather, but is recommended to not use it more than about 5% - 10% in soap - as it's not a hard oil.

## **Avocado Oil**

Avocado oil is a heavy, green, rich, moisturizing oil that has a high percentage of unsaponifiables. It's often used in soap recipes for people with sensitive skin. It's high in vitamins A, D & E. You can use it in your recipes from 5% - 30%.

## **Babassu Oil**

Babassu oil comes from the kernels of the babassu palm. Its fatty acid makeup is very similar to palm kernel and to coconut oil. It's high in lauric and myristic acid, which contribute to a nice, fluffy lather.

## **Canola Oil**

Canola, a kind of rapeseed, is a good economical oil for soap making - you can substitute a portion of your olive for canola, or use it as part of your batch at 10-15%. It gives a nice, low, creamy lather and is moisturizing. It will slow down the rate at which your soap will get to trace, so it's a good oil to add if you're doing complicated swirls or colors.

## **Castor Oil**

Castor oil is a thick, clear oil that helps increase the lather in soap - a rich, creamy lather. It's also a humectant (attracts moisture to your skin) oil. Just a little will do...5% - 8% in your recipe will work great.

## **Cocoa Butter**

As it is very hard saturated fat, use with other more unsaturated oils like olive or castor. Use in conjunction with more sticky ingredients such as shea butter or lanolin. Using too much cocoa butter will result in a dry, exceptionally hard bar of soap.

## **Coconut Oil**

Coconut oil is one of the primary oils soapmakers use in their soap. Most of the coconut oil sold and used has a melt point of 76°, but there is a hydrogenated type that melts at 92°. Some soapmakers prefer this one because it's easier to scoop - but either version works the same to give tremendous, bubbly lather to your soap. It also makes for a very hard, white bar of soap. The collective opinion is that using more than 20% coconut oil in your recipe will be drying to the skin.

## **Corn Oil**

It acts like most of the other vegetable liquid oils like soybean or canola. It can be used as part of your recipe (10-15%) and will help give a moisturizing, stable lather.

## **Grape seed Oil**

Grape seed oil is a lightweight, moisturizing oil that is a good additive to soap in small quantities. It doesn't have a long shelf life, so unless you treat it with rosemary oleoresin extract, or have a very low superfat percentage, don't use it more than about 5% in your recipe.

## **Hazelnut Oil**

Hazelnut oil has a short shelf life (3-4 months). If you want to add it to soap, I wouldn't recommend using more than about 5-10% in your recipe because of the short shelf life. A lovely oil, but very fragile.

## **Hemp Seed Oil**

Hemp seed oil is a deep, green color with a light, nutty smell. It gives a light, creamy/silky lather. Because of its fatty acid makeup, it has a very short shelf life...less than six months...so it should be refrigerated or even kept in the freezer. It can be used as a luxury healing/moisturizing oil in soap up to 10%-15%.

## **Jjoba Oil**

Jjoba is actually a liquid wax. It contributes a nice stable lather, has remarkable absorption and moisturizing qualities and unlike some of the other luxury moisturizing oils, has a very long shelf life - 1-2 years. Use it at 5-10% maximum.

## **Lard**

Lard makes a super-hard, very white bar of soap with a low, creamy, stable lather that is, believe it or not, nicely moisturizing. Before vegetable oils were commonly available, it was one of the main fats (along with beef tallow) that folks used to make soap. If you use animal oils in your soap, then combining lard with some of the other liquid oils like coconut and olive makes a wonderful, well balanced bar of soap - and is really economical. Make sure your lard is fresh and of high quality. Use it at any percentage in your recipe, but I recommend not much more than 30-40% or so. Cold process laundry soap can be made with 100% lard with a 0% superfat percentage.

## **Olive Oil**

Extra virgin and virgin olive oils come from the very first gentle pressing of the olives. The refined, or Grade A oil comes from the second pressing, and is lightly refined/filtered. 100% olive oil makes the famous "Castille soap" and "Marseille soap" must contain at least 72% olive oil. Olive oil is generally the #1 oil in most soap makers' recipes. Olive oil soaps are very moisturizing, make hard, white bars of soap and are exceptionally mild. But the lather from Castille soap is low and a bit slimy. Most soap makers combine olive oil with other oils to improve the lather.

Pomace grade olive oil is a thick, rich, green grade of olive oil that is obtained by solvent extraction of the fruit and pits of the olives - what's left over after the first several pressings that give the virgin and Grade A oils. It has a very high level of unsaponifiables (the portions of the oil that don't react with the lye to form soap.) This will make your trace time quicker.

## **Macadamia Nut Oil**

Macadamia nut oil is a light oil with a mild nutty odor. It is unique in its fatty acid makeup in that it contains palmitoleic acid - which makes it really easily absorbed into the skin - and is reported to be really great for older skin.

## **Palm Oil**

Palm oil, along with olive and coconut, is one of the top oils used by soap makers today. Because of the qualities it gives soap - a hard bar with a rich creamy lather.

## **Palm Kernel Oil**

Though it comes from the same plant/nut as palm oil does, palm kernel oil is almost identical in its soap making properties to coconut oil - giving a nice hard white bar of soap...with lots of luscious lather. Palm kernel oil is often available partially hydrogenated, in easy to handle/measure flakes...or just as a standard liquid oil. You can use it up to about 30% or 35% in your recipes. However, like palm oil, palm kernel oil is surrounded by the same environmental and human concerns.

## **Rice Bran Oil**

Expressed from the husks of rice, most soap makers found that rice bran oil imparted nearly the same creamy, moisturizing qualities that olive oil did to their soaps. It does have a lot of the same antioxidants and vitamins that olive has, and a similar fatty acid make up. The only disadvantage of rice bran oil is its short shelf life - (6 months or so.)

## **Safflower Oil**

Its fairly short shelf life. You can certainly use it in your recipes like you would soybean, canola or sunflower - at 5-15% or so. In soap, it is mild and moisturizing.

## **Shea Butter**

Moisturizing and nourishing. Fairly inexpensive and easy to find. shea butter for soap making will add a wonderful creamy lather, great conditioning properties and some hardness to your soap.

## **Soybean Oil**

Soybean oil, like canola, safflower and sunflower, is often used as a portion of a soap making recipe in combination with other "core" oils like coconut, olive and palm. Use it 5-15% of your soap recipe. It is mild, moisturizing and gives a low, creamy lather.

## **Shortening**

Soybean oil, in its hydrogenated form is generally called vegetable shortening & sold under generic names, or the brand Crisco. Shortening is usually a blend of soybean & cottonseed oil, and makes nice soap. Like all soap making oils, except olive, it's not a great oil to use alone, but combining it with olive & coconut makes a good, stable, bubbly, moisturizing bar of soap. I recommend not using over 15% as it can go rancid in higher amounts.

## Sunflower Oil

It works well with palm and olive oils to give a nice, rich, creamy lather that's very moisturizing. Depending on the type you get, it may have a short shelf life due to its fatty acid makeup. In soap, it does well up to about 25% .

## Tallow, Beef

Like lard, beef tallow gives you a super-hard, white bar of soap with low, creamy, stable lather that is very moisturizing. Before vegetable oils were commonly available, it was one of the main fats that folks used to make soap - and remains one of the most common oils in soap. (Check your label for sodium tallowate. That's beef tallow.) If you are o.k. using animal oils in your soap, then combining beef tallow with some of the other liquid oils like coconut & olive makes a wonderful, well balanced bar of soap. While you can use it at any percentage in your recipe, I wouldn't recommend much more than 40% before it starts creating a brittle bar of soap.



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