How to make candles

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How to make candles

Making your own candles at home can be an inexpensive, enjoyable way to spend an afternoon. The art of candle making offers many options and you're only limited by your imagination.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED: Although there are literally hundreds of products you can purchase to make a wide variety of candles styles, we'll begin with a basic candle, and you can build your expertise from there.

1. WAX. A good, general all-purpose wax is plain old Paraffin Wax, often found in the canning section of your local grocery store and also available in craft and hardware stores.

2. SCENT: Herbs, cooking ingredients like Peppermint and Vanilla and spices work well.

3. COLOR: Food coloring, inks or dyes.

4. WICK: You'll need something to insert into the candle that will allow it to burn. You can purchase wicks from any craft store or make your own by dipping cords or heavy string into warm wax and allowing to dry on a sheet of wax paper.

5. MOLD: This is what you will pour the hot wax into. Do you want your candle to be free standing or sit in a decorative container? Cans, glass and hard plastics work great for simple molds.

6. WAX CARRIER: A wax carrier is what you will use to heat the wax in as it melts. A double boiler is excellent, but you can use a saucepan filled with water as an alternative, placing the actual wax into an old coffee tin and then into the water for heating.

7. ADDITIVES: Though not necessary, you can add things to your wax for decorative purposes. Leaves, herbs, plastics and even jewelry can add pizzazz to your creation.

8. THERMOMETER: A candy thermometer will be fine.

9. MOLD RELEASE: You'll need this to ensure that you can safely remove the hard wax from your mold without damaging your candle. Silicone spray, peanut oil or cooking spray oil will all work.

10. PENCILS/DOWELS: You'll need one of these for each candle you're constructing as a wick holder.

11. WOODEN SPOON: For stirring wax.

12. WICK CUTTER: Scissors work great.

Once you have your supplies in order, create a working space that will allow you to heat and transport warm or hot wax without too much difficulty. It's good to clear off a fairly large amount of counter or table space so that your containers and candles can sit freely, without fear of tipping or being knocked over.

SAFETY FIRST!

1. Never leave melting wax unattended.

2. Always use a double boiler or the coffee cup in a can method to heat wax. Never place wax directly into a saucepan or heating device on it's own.

3. Never put water on a wax fire.

4. Never overheat wax. Fumes from overheated wax can cause severe illness.

KNOW YOUR FLASH POINT As an added rule of safety, be certain to use a thermometer when working with wax and familiarize yourself with the term "flashpoint." Flashpoint is the temperature at which wax will combust. The Flashpoint is the absolute maximum that a given wax can be heated to. If you're using Paraffin or simple canning wax, the Flashpoint is 375-degrees. That means you should keep your temperature well below 375-degrees for safety reasons.

THE MAKING OF A CANDLE Now that your supplies are in order and you've read the safety material, it's time to make your candle.

1. Heat your double boiler or wax carrier slowly to the proper temperature, placing the unmelted wax into your carrier. Heating the wax to a temperature of 140-degrees is generally sufficient for all forms of Paraffin.

2. As the wax is in the beginning stages of melting, spray the inside of your molds with peanut oil, cooking spray or silicone spray and set them aside in an area where it's safe to pour the wax.

3. Stir your melting wax gently with a wooden spoon.

4. Once the wax has completely melted, you can add to it anything that you'd like. This is the proper time to add scents (a little goes a long way! No more than one teaspoon of oil or herbs is usually necessary.) and coloring. Gently stir the wax for a few moments, allowing the color to blend and the scent to mix.

5. Using a hotpad, lift your wax carrier out of the water and pour slowly into your molds. Do not fill to the top. Leave at least a one-inch margin on the top of each mold.

6. As your wax is hardening, get your wicks, tying one end to the middle of a pencil. Slowly drop the free end of the wick into the wax, and rest the pencil on top of the mold. This will prevent your wick from falling into the wax as it's hardening.

It will take several hours for your wax to harden to the proper consistency. Many experts recommend allowing your wax to harden overnight before attempting to remove your candles from their molds, but this may not always be necessary, depending on the size of your candle. Once the wax has hardened, you should be able to tip your mold upside down, allowing your new candle to slide out freely.

You can add decorations such as ribbons or flowers to the outside of your candle for gift giving, or place it in a decorative tray or box. Remember, you're only limited by your imagination!

HOW TO MAKE GEL CANDLES

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:

Melting ~ Follow regular candle making safety guidelines for heating, pouring and burning. Melts at approximately 180-200 degrees & will take considerably longer to melt than wax. A covered Presto Kitchen Kettle, or similar, works great.

Wicks ~ We recommend using Gelwicks[™] for containers up to 2 or 2.5" diameter. Coreless Cotton container wicks can also be used if you prefer not to use a zinc core. Test burning will be necessary to determine proper size for your application. Gel works best in containers no larger than 2.5 - 3 inches in diameter. Multiple wicks are not recommended.

Fragrance ~ It is recommended to use non-polar candle fragrance oils, with a flash point of 170 or higher. Stir thoroughly & be sure they blend well. Recommended amount is up to 3% (.48 or approx. 1/2 oz) per pound for CLP, up to 5% (.80 or approx. 3/4 oz) for CMP & up to 5% (.80 or approx. 3/4 oz) for CHP. NOTE: It is important to follow these guidelines for making safe gel candles!

Coloring ~ It is recommended that less dye be used than in regular candles if you want to maintain the translucency of the gel. We recommend liquid dyes. Color Blocks can also be used by shaving off tiny bits and melting into the gel.

Embedding ~ Non-flammable objects may be embedded in this gel, just let it cool to approximately 100 degrees before embedding. Clean your seashells and other embed items so they are free of any residue by washing them with warm mineral oil. This will help keep the gel from clouding and help reduce air bubbles. We recommend using only gel safe fragrance oils in your wax embeds.

MAKE YOUR OWN PIE CANDLES

CRUST:

Use a mixture of 145 mp parafin and 156 mp hurricane wax. Melt, color with caramel color until it looks like a pie crust, pour into a pan. When it sets up just enough to work with, but not too hard, take it out, lay it in your pie pan, flip the pie pan over and cut the crust with a pastry cutter.

Making Your Own Gel Wax From Scratch:

Making your own gel wax from scratch is the best way to go. Some people like to make their own gel because it can be a lot cheaper than buying it pre-made, and you can control the density.

Ingredients needed:

CP9000 Thermoplastic Resin Powder

White Mineral Oil with a flash point of 3750 F

You can choose between:

Low Density Gel (11b Mineral Oil and 0.9 oz Resin)

Medium Density Gel (11b Mineral Oil and 1.1 oz Resin)

High Density Gel (11b Mineral Oil and 1.25 oz Resin)

Stand Alone Density Gel, which does not require a container to hold it. But does need to be on a stand of some kind. (11b Mineral Oil and 1.4 oz Resin)

Directions:

Choose your desired density; mix the proper amounts of mineral oil and resin.

Once mixed well, let sit for 1 hour.

When the mixture has sat for 1 hour, mix well until all the lumps are gone.

Heat your mixture up to 220° F on your stovetop, as your gel heats it will turn clear.

Pour your gel into a container and let it cool, once the gel has cooled seal with a tight lid.

WAX EMBEDS:

USE ANY MOLD.

POUR WAX INTO MOLD.

WHEN WAX COOLS, THEY POP RIGHT OUT.