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Soap-flakes/grated soap

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This is an important ingredient for laundry powder and liquid. You can use liquid soap for laundry liquid, but the result doesn't emulsify so needs shaking before each use; with grated/powdered soap it tends to emulsify better. Some soaps result in a nice gel, which is easy to spoon out.

Soap-flakes are now unfashionable, as almost everyone uses a washing-machine or liquid soap. With web research, you can still find a few suppliers of soap-flakes; but it's not difficult to make your own – just grate* soap very finely. NB Use pure soap, with minimum additives: vegetable oil (non-palm), caustic soda (lye – the ingredient which turns fat into soap). ('Beauty bars' such as Dove are not suitable.)

I am still experimenting with different simple-ingredient soap bars for making laundry liquid: ideally you get a gel, but at least emulsification. Some pure-style soaps have glycerine, which is harmless but seems to impede emulsification.

* Grating soap or chopping chunks in a food-processor is OK, but I've recently discovered a dramatic but brilliantly successful method of making nicely-powdered soap for using in laundry powder and liquid. Put a bar of pure soap in a big bowl into the microwave and run it, watching very carefully. After half a minute or so, you'll see it start to foam up from the bottom; keep watching, and chop it around once or twice as it continues to foam spectacularly, until there aren't any large pieces of soap left; in total it might take 1.5 minutes. Take it out and leave until cold - the foam hardens into chunks. In a small food-processor it then turns magically into perfect fine soap-powder.



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