

How to Make Candles



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Intro

Making candles can be very exciting and a lot of fun. It is important to remember that candle making involves some basic concepts. It will take a few tries to complete the steps properly, but give it some time. You will have to experiment to find the methods that work best in your work environment to make the candles you want. It is suggested that you only make a few candles at a time to keep from wasting money on supplies while you are learning.

Before you start making candles, it is important that you understand the dangers of candle making including burns and fires. You will want to have a fire extinguisher handy as well as a non slip mat. Always wear old clothing with long sleeves and make sure your sleeves don't dangle into the hot wax.

Your candle making process will run smoothly if you divide your work area into three specific work stations:

- 1 The preparation area
- 2 The melting area

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3 The cooling area

These work areas are usually set up in the kitchen since most people use their stove to melt the wax.

The preparation area

The preparation area doesn't need to be large, just a well organized flat counter in close proximity to the stove. You will want to keep your utensils, thermometer, additives, and other candle making supplies in this area. It is a good idea to know what types of candles you will be making ahead of time so that you have all the necessary items ready to go.

The melting area

Your melting work station will likely be the stove. You will need to use a double boiler to melt the wax to a temperature that is hot enough without scorching it. The molecular structure of the wax can be damaged if the direct heat to it is too much. This means your candles won't form well or hold up well when they are used. Wax comes in sheets or blocks. You will need to chip off chunks to melt. A hammer and flat head screwdriver work well for this.

Chipping wax should be done in the preparation stage so that you can simply add more pieces throughout the melting process. You will want to weigh each piece of wax before you add it to the pot for melting. This will help you determine how much scent and dye to add, which is based on weight.

The cooling area

The cooling station needs to be a flat area such as a countertop or table. The wax needs to cool for several hours so this area needs to be able to withstand high temperatures as well as remain undisturbed for long periods of time. The area should not be directly in the path of sunlight or heating/cooling systems. If it is, the candles will not set properly. If you plan to use molds for your candles, have them set up in the cooling area while the wax is melting. Once it is done melting, you will need to pour it immediately into the molds. To prevent a mess from spills, use an old cookie sheet for the molds to rest on.

All candles require three essentials – wax, wick, and a candle holder. Candles can be made in various shapes, styles, and sizes; the amount of wax, length of wick, and type of candle holder you will use depends on your own preferences.

Candles are generally made of paraffin wax. Paraffin wax is a natural wax that comes from plants. Candles can also be made out of beeswax, which is also considered a natural wax. This is the substance the bees use to construct their honeycombs.

To melt the wax for your candles properly, you will need to purchase a good quality double boiler, stir sticks and a thermometer.

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A wick is placed in the center of the wax before it dries. The wick is made of cotton fibers that have been braided together. The wick is very thin, but also very powerful. Sometimes candle makers will use a wick that is wider than normal to increase the size of the flame. To make inserting the wick quick and easy, invest in a wick holder bar.

Candle molds are very popular to help you design your own candles. You can purchase hundreds of different style candle molds or you can make your own. Candle molds are made from aluminum or metal. A silicon mold release spray will ensure your candles slide out of the mold easily and keep their perfect shape. Mold cleaner will help ensure they work properly time and time again.

You can also increase the appeal of your Candles by adding colors. The colors come in the form of a dye. There are many shades of the primary colors as well as pretty pastels and bold brights. Some candle makers like to experiment with mixing colors to create their own unique and attractive candle colors.

You have the option of leaving candles plain or adding your favorite scents. Traditional scents include cinnamon, vanilla, and potpourri. Some of the aromas help you to relax and others will make your mouth water. You don't want your candle scents to be overpowering or not strong enough. As a rule of thumb, add one ounce of scent for each pound of wax used to make the candle.

There are eight distinct candle making additives used in the candle making process. Candle wax additives are inexpensive and work well if you are educated in how to use them and why to use each kind.

Kemamide is a fine powder. It has a hint of ivory in the color, but it is close to being transparent. This type of additive becomes clumped if it is exposed to humidity so keep it in a closed, dry environment. Use this type of additive as a release agent. Add one teaspoon for each pound of wax.

Poly-AC is a fine powder, white in color. It has a dry texture and should also be stored in a dry environment to prevent clumping. This additive is a hardener. To be effective, add one teaspoon for each pound of wax.

Chimasorb 81 is a powder with a yellowish tint. Of all the additives, this one is the most likely to clump, even in areas of low humidity. Chimasorb 81 is used to enhance color. You do not need much of it, 1/10 of a percent for each pound of wax.

Stearic Powder is flaky. The color is white. This additive doesn't react to humidity at all so it is an agreeable product to use for hardening. The amount you will use depends on the type of candles you are making. This additive helps reduce the temperature needed to melt the wax. Add about three teaspoons for each pound of wax. Be careful not to over use Stearic Powder as doing so will cause damage to the wax.

103 Vybar generally is sold in the form of very small beads. The beads flow loosely and do not stick or

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clump together, even in areas of high humidity. 103 Vybar is a hardener as well. It will add a very creamy texture to your candle wax. This is a perfect hardener to use for scented candles. Add one teaspoon to for every pound of wax.

Paraflint is another hardener. It comes in beaded form similar to the 103 Vybar. However, the beads are much larger. You will want to use one teaspoon for every pound of wax.

Poly 400 comes in the form of beads that vary is size and shape. This is a UV inhibitor, which will keep your candles from fading in the sunlight. This additive is also to be used at the rate of one teaspoon for every pound of wax.

BHT Crystal is a yellowish powder. This is an antioxidant for wax that has been stored in liquid form for a length of time. Using this crystal will also add a very pretty luster to your wax.

There are many accessories available as well to make your candle making more enjoyable. Candle paints help you create your designs on the candles. This is a great way to create gorgeous contrasts between the candle color and the overall look. Luster spray gives candles a very shiny look. A base leveler will help you align crooked candles. As well as ensure the bottoms are flat and smooth.

The candle making process is easy to follow if you take your time and learn from your mistakes. Start off by making some candles while working on good safety habits and melting your wax at the proper temperatures. You will also want to experiment with your cooling process.

Votive Candles

Votives are one of the easiest types of candles to make and provide a great learning experience to learn the basics of the candle making process.

These candles are often used to accent a center piece or design. Votives are very cost effective because they burn for about fifteen hours. Votives must have a holder as they are not safe to use as a free standing candle. To make the process even less expensive, look for votive candle holders at thrift shops and yard sales. You can further personalize your votive candles by applying pretty ribbon with a hot glue gun around the rim of the votive candle holder.

You will need to gather your items. This includes wax, molds, a double boiler, and a thermometer. You will need to have wick and wick tabs for votive candles. The wick tabs serve as a base for the candle.

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You can also add in a dye and fragrance if you wish. To ensure your candles will form properly in the molds, consider investing in mold spray to keep them clean and lubricated.

Once the wax has melted, add in any colors and fragrances. Immediately pour the melted wax into the molds, filling them to the lip of the mold. For easy clean up, place old newspaper under the wax molds before you pour the wax into them. You will need to save about 20% of the melted wax for the next pouring process.

While the wax is cooling in the molds, prepare your wicks. Attach a wick several inches longer than the mold to a wick tab. Dip the wicks into the hot wax. Keep an eye on the votive molds because they will cool quicker than other types of candles. Once you can tell the wax is starting to harden, insert a wick with the tab into each mold through the bottom. As the wax continues to cool, it will meld to the metal tab, ensuring it stays in place at the base of the candle. As the candles cool, make sure your wick is staying in the center of the votive.

Once the wax has completely cooled, you will notice a sink hole in it due to shrinkage. You will want to pour melted wax into the molds again to remedy this. Make the wax about fifteen degrees hotter than the original wax you used to fill the votives. After the candles have completely cooled again, they will slide out of the molds easily. Trim the wick to about ½ an inch from the top of the candle. For safety, you will want to use a votive holder that is an inch or two taller than the candle itself.

You can add any color or scent to your votive candles to add a personal touch to them. They also make excellent gifts.

Taper Candles

You can make your own taper candles without much experience in candle making. The process of making taper candles involves dipping rather than using molds or jars. Hand dipping takes some practice to get the hang of, but you will be a pro in no time. While you are practicing, you can melt that wax down again and again until you know the right way to form your taper candles. During practice, don't add any color or fragrance.

You will need to purchase a dipping can from a craft store or online to make taper candles correctly. A double boiler is too narrow to make these long candles. In addition, you will need a thermometer, wax, wick, dye for color, and fragrances to add scent if you desire. It is important you buy wick specially designed for taper candles. If you use pillar wick, your taper candles won't burn properly. To make the

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best quality taper candles you will want to use paraffin wax instead of beeswax.

To melt the wax properly, use a large pot with a few inches of water for the dipping can to sit in. Never place the dipping can directly on the stove top as this is a safety issue. You may also expose your home to toxic fumes. While your wax is melting, work on your wicks. It is important you buy wick specially designed for taper candles. If you use pillar wick, your taper candles won't burn properly. Cut the wick at least four inches longer than you want your candles to be. If you are making sets of taper candles, make sure each wick is cut the same exact length. This is easy to do by cutting one, then folding other pieces over and making a few more cuts.

Once your wax has melted and at a temperature of between 150 and 165 degrees, you can start the dipping process. If you are going to add color or scent you will want to do it now. Move the dipping can to a flat, dry surface. If you are using a counter top, place a towel or cookie sheet under the dipping can. Take a wick and dip it into the hot wax. You will only be getting the wick covered the first few dips.

The process of dipping taper candles is easy, yet time consuming. You will get the best looking candles if you don't try to rush the process. Each dip should be a quick in and out process. Don't allow the candle to linger in the wax hoping it will absorb more. Instead, it will cause your taper candles to have a chunky texture rather than a smooth finish. As the wax starts to cool off take the time to stop dipping and heat it again. Some candle makers dip while they have another dipping can of wax melting on the stove. This way, once the wax they are working with cools they can switch. This keeps the process going if you are able to take advantage of it.

The number of times you will dip each candle depends on the width you want them. If you are making pairs, keep track of how many times you dip each one so they will match. As the wax begins to cool after each dip, you can dip it again. As the candle gets wider you will need to allow it to cool longer after each dip. You can also try dipping two at the same time – allowing one to cool while you dip the other of the set. Once the candle is the desired size and cools completely, cut the wick to ¼ inch of the top of the candle.

The process is not difficult once you get the process of the dipping down.

Pillar Candles

Pillar candles come in all colors and scents. They are called pillars because they are round and tall like a pillar. There is no standard size though, as pillar candles come in many widths and heights.

Pillar candles are very simple to make. This type of candle is one of the most common for candle makers to indulge in. To make pillar candles, you will need molds. You can find them in all sizes at most craft stores. These molds can be found made of silicon, aluminum, or plastic. For best results, choose pillar candle molds that are made of aluminum. They allow the wax to cool better, resulting in

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a smooth finish on the candles. They are also very durable.

To get started, decide on the size of candles you want to make and how many. There are charts in candle making books and on the internet that can help you determine how many pounds of candle wax you will need to complete your project. You will also need dye to color the candles and fragrances if you wish to add that to your candles.

You will need quality wick to make pillar candles. The wider the candle you will be making, the wider wick you want. To make this easier, simply purchase a standard type of wick. You can braid three pieces together to make a thicker wick for wider candles. Many of the pillar candle molds have a wick holder built in simply slide a wick the diameter of the hole into it and eliminate the guess work. Make sure you dip the wick into the melted wax before attaching it to the candle mold. Keeping the wick in place can be tricky. A good tip is to cut the wick several inches longer than you need. Then tie it to a pencil or skewer sitting across the top of the candle mold. This will ensure the wick is centered as the candle begins the cooling process.

Once your candle wax is at the proper temperature, add in anything you want to be including in your candle including dye, scents, and additives. Immediately after, pour the hot wax into the pillar candle molds. Do not pour wax all the way to the top of the mold. You want to leave about four or five inches unfilled.

Pillar candles need some further assistance during the cooling process. Once the top of the wax has started to become solid, you will need to add small relief holes to help with shrinkage. If you don't create the relief holes your candles will get air pockets that keep them from hardening properly.

Once the candles have completely cooled, pour melted wax into the holes you created on the candle. Make sure the wax is about fifteen degrees hotter than what you had the wax at the first time you poured it. Allow the candle to completely cool down again. Your candles should slide out of the molds easily. If they don't put them in the refrigerator for half an hour. Your candles should be smooth and beautiful. Make sure to trim the wick and you are ready to burn your pillar candles.

Container Candles

To make your container candles look the best, choose glassware that is sturdy and has a simple design. You can purchase this glassware for a very low price at most retail stores. You can generally find great deals at yard sales, flea markets, and thrift sales as well. Try to find glassware with lids if available. The design of container candles allow them to burn down to almost nothing, ensuring you get the most use out of each candle.

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Clean all the glass prior to using them to prevent dust or other particles from building up inside. If you have a dishwasher a quick rinse cycle will do the trick. It is not recommended to make container candles in anything other than glass containers for safety reasons.

You will need a double boiler for the wax, quality wax, dye, and fragrances if you desire to use it. It is best to get wicks with tabs for making this type of candle. For container candles, you can use either paraffin wax or bees wax. Melt the wax in the double boiler to a temperature of about 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Once it has reached that temperature, add your color and scent.

For best results, microwave the glass containers for a minute or two. This will make sure the wax doesn't leave unsightly air pockets in the container as it hardens. Place the glass containers on a cookie sheet to make clean up from any spills a snap. Fill each glass container within one inch of the top. Leaving that extra space will allow room for the candle to burn and not drip outside the container. You will need to let your container candles cool for about 20 minutes.

Gently place a wick with tab into each candle container make sure the wick stays centered as the wax hardens. Once the candles completely cool, cut the wick to ½ of the top of the candle. A great way to make working with the wicks easier is to take a ball point pen apart. Place the shell of the pen around the wick and use it to guide the wick into place. As the wax hardens the wick tab will stay firmly in place. You can also clip the top of the wick with a clothes pin laid across the opening to help keep it in place.

You can add creativity to your container candles by decorating the jars with paints or gluing on colored sequences. Glitter makes a great design tool as well. For a simple yet attractive design, consider gluing a pretty colored ribbon around the top of the container.

You will be fascinated at all the great container candles out there including ones for the holidays, special occasions, and fun themes. The possibilities are endless. For a great family craft, consider allowing your children to decorate the jars while you take care of working with the hot wax.

The jars keep the flame from escaping, preventing dripping and possible fire hazards. However, it is still important to keep them out of the reach of children and to never leave them burning unattended. If you plan to move a container candle, make sure the jar has not become too hot as this can result in severe burns.

Chunk Candles

Making chunk candles is really quite simple if you have the basic candle making concepts under your belt. These candles add flare to any décor as well as make great gifts. They are a bit more time consuming to make since you will be making your color chunks, but well worth the results. Remember that you can purchase color chunks to save you time.

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There are two phases to making chunk candles. To make the process easier, it is recommended that you keep the two separate. If you try to cut corners, your chunk candles will be of poor quality and won't burn well. The first phase of the project is making the chunks. The second is the process of turning those chunks into gorgeous candles.

Your candles will look their best if you select colors that compliment each other. To start making the color chunks, spray a cookie sheet with thin film of non-stick cooking spray. After the wax you are using has completely melted, add a color to it as well as any fragrance you want. Pour the mix onto the cookies sheet. Fill the sheet to the level you want the depth of your candle chunks to be.

Keep an eye on the cooling color chunks. Once it is the consistency of cookie dough you will want to use a sharp utility knife to cut it into chunks. Allow the chunks to continue cooling. If you are making several colors of chunks you can mix them together or leave them separate. Some people choose to let the colors mix together on their own while others like to create a design by adding the amount of each color they want.

You can use the same molds that you use for pillar candles, insert your candle wick through the bottom of the candle mold. Fill the mold loosely with color chunks. You can put one color on the bottom with another color on top or even layers of three colors. You can also use only one color. The choice is all yours. Do not stack as many chunks as you can in the mold or the candle won't form properly. Just toss them in and let them lay where they end up.

You are now ready to pour the melted wax over the color chunks. It is recommended that you do leave the melted wax colorless, but some people choose to add a light color to tint it and add a uniqueness to their chunk candles. As the candle cools, the chunks will adhere to together with the hot wax. Once the molds cool the chunk candles should slide out with ease.

For those who want to get even more creative, consider using embeds on the sides. You can place them in the candle molds first. They will stay in place once you put the chunks in the mold. You can adjust the embeds as needed prior to adding the hot wax to the mold.

Gel Candles

Gel candles are very easy and inexpensive to make. You can add your favorite scents to them as well. The supplies you need to get started include gel, zinc wicks, fragrance oils if you desire, and dye to add color. Some people love the look of a clear gel candle and prefer not to use any dye. It is important that you only use zinc wicks for gel candles because cotton wicks absorb the gel, causing them not to light or burn well.

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Gel candles can be made in a variety of holders, as long as the container is non-flammable. Holders made of glass will give you the best results. To add uniqueness to gel candles, some makers choose to make them in fancy glasses, wine glasses, and vases. To add color and themes to candles, consider using embeds. This can be glitter, marbles, colorful rocks, sea shells, crystals, or anything else that won't burn.

Use a hot glue gun and glue the wick to the bottom of the holder to firmly hold it in place. To make centering easier, mark the bottom of the holder with a red or black marker right in the center. The wick should then be placed on top of the mark. Leave the wick long enough to reach outside of the holder. You will trim it later. To melt the gel, cut it into small strips. For best results melt it in a double boiler at medium heat. The gel should be heated to 200 degrees Fahrenheit. A quality thermometer is a great investment as the gel won't set properly if you don't get it hot enough and it will lose the glossy color if you get the temperature too high.

If you desire to add color to your gel candles, add it in slowly. The colors show more vibrantly in gel candles than wax candles so you will need a lot less than what you use if you make wax candles. Stir the color into the melted wax slowly. If you aren't happy with the color you can slowly add more. If you plan to use embedded objects in the candle, it is suggested you keep the gel candle color very light. Next, add fragrance if you desire. 1/3 teaspoon is all you need for each glass of melted gel.

For best results, heat your container in the microwave for about one minute. This will eliminate those unsightly bubbles that can form on gel candles. Immediately after removing the holder from the microwave, start adding your embeds. You will want to dip them in the hot gel to get them to stick in the holder. You can arrange embeds any way you desire. For best results push them towards the edges of the holder so that they can easily be seen. You can create embed patterns or add them loosely.

It is important not to keep the gel very hot while completing the embed process. Once you have that done, pour the gel into the holder. If you allow the gel to cool before pouring it in the holder you will end up with clumps of gel throughout the candle. Make sure the wick is hanging over the top of the holder before pouring in the gel. Once the gel has set, trim it to the size you desire.

Soy Candles

Soy candles are made out of 100% natural soy wax without any additives. Soy wax is less expensive and very easy to work with, it also melts faster. Candles made of soy wax will have a wonderful aroma without having any type of fragrance added. Expert soy candle makers know how to mix the soy wax in several ways that give the natural scent a bit of a difference as well as make in fainter or more powerful.

Soy candles can be made with or without wicks. Those with wicks are used the same way as any

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regular candle out there. Soy candles without wicks work with electric candle warmers. The candle sits on the warmer plate and the warmer is plugged into the wall. There is no flame to cause a fire. Wickless soy candles are a great choice for dorm rooms, apartments, offices, and anywhere that there is a potential of a candle being left burning that can cause a fire. Many offices and dorm rooms have put a ban on burning candles for this reason, but they often allow the wickless candles using burners.

Most candle makers who have tried soy wax are very happy with the results. It has a wonderful natural scent and the texture of the melted wax makes candles that are very glossy and smooth. It is not necessary to add additives to soy wax as you often have to with paraffin and beeswax. The additives for those types of wax are for hardness and gloss. Soy wax offers both on its own.

Soy wax is cheaper than other types of wax as well. If you are on a tight budget, this would be the way to go. You will save money on the wax and you won't need to purchase additives or scents. You can purchase a soy wax candle making kit online for less than \$20. It comes with all the supplies you need to make five candles, including the jars and lids.

Many people enjoy the scent of a burning candle, but find the smoke from them can be irritating. This is especially true of individuals who are on oxygen, have bronchitis, or even allergy sufferers. Since soy wax is all natural, there is no smoke or irritates in the air from it. This makes soy wax candles a great alternative for many who otherwise wouldn't be able to enjoy using candles.

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