

Soap opera...

This is not about the popular daily soap operas. But about toilet soaps.

Soap, as you all know, is used with water for washing and cleaning. When soap is applied to a soiled surface, the foamy water holds the particles in suspension, which is then rinsed off with clean water.

Soap is derived from oils and fats. Sodium Tallowate, a common ingredient in soaps, is derived from rendered beef fat. Soap, made of vegetable oils like olive oil, is called castile soap.

Soaps can be produced using several methods depending on the type required and the facilities available with the soap manufacturer. Let's look at one of these methods.

Full Boiled Method

A large amount of alkali (lye) is mixed with animal and vegetable oils (even kitchen grease can be used!)

Heat (80° to 100 °C) is applied, and the lye and oils are thoroughly mixed until the oil is Saponified (formation of soap from the reaction of a metallic alkali (base) with a fat or oil)

Saltwater solution is added to the soap mixture. This causes the mixture to separate; with the soap on the top and the impurities, excess lye and glycerin on the bottom

These steps are called 'changes'. There may be three or four 'changes' before the soap is fully saponified and ready

Once separated, the bottom liquid is drained off and the glycerin is recovered from it

This basic soap or soap base is then processed into its final form and packaged for sale



Other methods are Semi-Boiled Method, Prior Glycerin Removal and Continuous Process.