

RAISING THE BAR



Lather up in luxury with exquisitely crafted soap

Though woefully underappreciated, soap is essential for good health. In fact, washing your hands is the best way to stave off illness, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Happily, soap's practical purposes easily mix with pleasure. "Adding herbs to soaps can enhance their soothing and cleansing powers, while essential oils offer wonderful, natural scents," says Sandy Maine, soap maker and author of *The Soap Book*.

Also consider that less wastefully packaged bar soap offers an eco-advantage.

So, for a little sink-side indulgence, try these artisanal bars.

PHOTOGRAPHY Mike Lorrig STYLING Andrea Kraus

"The raw materials used in artisan-made soaps are usually food-grade and often organic," says soapmaker and author Sandy Maine.

1 Think pink with [Soaptopia Electric Citrus KoolTest](#), a tie-dye-inspired bar handmade from shea butter, organic hemp seed oil, and euphoria-inducing essential oils of rose, tangerine, orange, and lemon. \$6.50/6 oz.; soaptopia.com

2 [Primal Elements Lemongrass & Cranberry Seeds](#) doubles as brightening decor. An infusion of essential oil from lemongrass—used toward off infectious illness in traditional Indian medicine—gives this soap its invigorating fragrance. \$8.50/6.8 oz.; primalelementsonline.com

3 Herbalists have long prescribed passionflower to ease anxiety and tension. In [Lather Passion Flower Soap](#), the naturally sedative blossom joins with a lush selection of floral oils, including geranium and ylang-ylang, to evoke calm and indulge your senses. \$10/4 oz.; lather.com

4 Hand-cut and laced with lavender oil, [Bazil Essentials Vanilla Lavender Olive Soap](#) is sure to tantalize with its rich vanilla scent. \$6.50/4 oz.; bazilessentials.com

5 Slip into a seaside reverie by scrubbing up with [Lush Sea Vegetable Soap](#), an enchanting ocean-blue bar featuring Atlantic sea salt crystals to exfoliate and arame seaweed to moisturize. \$7.80/3.5 oz.; lush.com

6 With its swirls of sweet orange oil and organic ground ginger, [Estrella Ginger-Orange](#) warms and awakens, while the olive and coconut oils it contains help soften skin. \$5/5.5 oz.; estrellassoap.com

Los Angeles-based freelance writer Elizabeth Barker always remembers to wash her hands as long as it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.



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