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Homemade Deodorant

November 24, 2013 · by The Crunchy Urbanite · in Grooming / Beauty, Health, Homesteading, Sustainability.



Much to the dismay of my coworkers and loved-ones, I've been spending the better part of a year experimenting with DIY deodorant.

Like all of us, I used regular drugstore deodorant for years. But getting getting dressed each morning, it always made me wonder what the long-term ramifications were of marinating in chemicals all day, every day, for the remainder of my adult life.

Then I tried switching to those natural deodorant brands, but — like we all found out, one way or another — they never *quite* worked.

But then I came across this. *And bingo.*

I'll provide two ways to make this: Stick form, which is more labor-intensive, and a simple paste, in case your skepticism requires you try it out first.



For this, you can either buy [empty deodorant containers](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00C8SK2HS/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00C8SK2HS&linkCode=as2&tag=thecrunurba-20&linkId=Q6XYNU4EWNSJMGZH) (http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00C8SK2HS/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00C8SK2HS&linkCode=as2&tag=thecrunurba-20&linkId=Q6XYNU4EWNSJMGZH) or you can clean and reuse one you've already finished.

Ingredients:

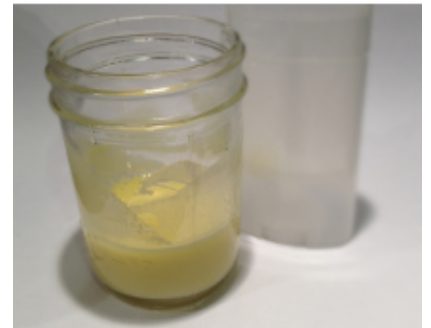
- **1 part Baking Soda**
- **1 part Arrowroot Powder**
(or any thickening agent: Guar Gum, Cornstarch, etc.)
- **1 part equal amounts Coconut Oil, Shea Butter & Beeswax**

First, melt your base. In a small (heat-resistant) mason jar, add your coconut oil, shea butter, and beeswax; and set the jar in a shallow pan of simmering water (turned off). Beeswax is especially dense, so this step can take up to 10 minutes.

When your base has melted completely, add your baking soda and arrowroot powder, and mix thoroughly. Pull your mason jar out of the hot water bath and let it sit for about 60 seconds to take the edge off before pouring the deodorant into your empty container. (Too hot and you'll leech the chemicals out of the plastic; too cool and it won't pour.)

When you've scraped the last drop into your container, put it in the fridge to cool — **and voilà!**

Helpful Tip: Before you reach for the measuring spoons, if you don't know the volume of your empty container, work backwards. Fill your container with water, then pour it out into a measuring cup to read. My empty container was 2.25 fluid ounces (66.5mL), which meant in my case, each part was 1.5 Tablespoons (22mL).



Paste

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The paste version is great if you don't have an empty deodorant container lying around, or still want to take this recipe out for a test drive.

In a small Tupperware or jar, combine:

- **1 Tbsp Baking Soda**
- **1 Tbsp Arrowroot Powder**
(or any thickening agent: Guar Gum, Cornstarch, etc.)
- **1 Tbsp Coconut Oil**

Coconut oil is usually liquid at room temperature most of the year. If it's not, microwave it for a second before mixing. If you need more liquid after combining your ingredients, add a little water, which'll turn your paste into more of a gel. (If you have it, I recommend adding a couple drops of grapefruit seed extract (http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0002JHZO8/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0002JHZO8&linkCode=as2&tag=thecrunurba-20&linkId=TPMDT2YWY5QM7M7D) as a natural preservative.)

Mitty-Gritty



Let's be honest: the true champion at work here is **Baking Soda**. If it can deodorize your shoes, it can deodorize your pits. It's dirt-cheap and next to impossible to exhaust, which means this deodorant won't crap out on you in the middle of the workday. But some people may find the tiny granules can cause skin irritation. If you're one of these people, just adjust the dose. But try not to remove it completely since it's what's doing the heavy lifting.

Coconut Oil is fantastically moisturizing and nourishing, especially for your armpits' delicate skin. (Oh, yes; we're going there.) But it's also naturally antibacterial and anti-fungal — perfect for keeping odor-causing bacteria under control. *"But Crunchy Urbanite,"* you're probably wondering. *"Won't oil in my deodorant ruin my clothes?"* Oddly enough, no. Between skin absorption and the ratio of oil to solids, this deodorant is totally non-greasy. And if you're making the stick recipe, **Shea Butter** is equally nourishing, with the added perk of being shelf-stable for months, if not years. Which means you don't have to worry about your deodorant going bad. **Beeswax** is a great natural skin conditioner, but in this small a quantity, it really serves to keep the stick as hard as possible.



Arrowroot Powder is a very lightweight thickener that helps give some heft. If you don't have any on hand — or have never even *heard* of it — don't sweat it. You can also substitute more common thickeners, like **Guar Gum**, **Xanthan Gum**, or (organic) **Cornstarch**. Though, having tried various thickeners, I can tell you they're not all created equal.

Now, as a guy, when it comes to applying, there's the added hurdle of terrain. That is to say, it *does tend to get caught in the weeds*, if you get my drift. So to make sure my deodorant stick is as hard as possible each morning, I like to keep it in the fridge and apply fresh out of the shower.

Scents

Want scented deodorant? Blend your favorite essential oils into your liquid base before you add your powders. Aim for about 10 drops per Tablespoon (Or every 15mL). Whether you like lavender or lemongrass, I recommend a good base (40-50%) of **Frankincense Essential Oil** no matter what. It's a natural antibacterial, which helps curb odor-causing bacteria. And given our armpits' proximity to the axillary lymph nodes, it doesn't hurt that frankincense is also anti-inflammatory and helps protect against tumor formation (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22171782>). After all, who wouldn't want a homemade deodorant working to reverse the damage from all those years of drugstore deodorants?



It took a lot of trial and error to get to this, but it was well worth it. This is one iron-clad homemade recipe that doesn't stink. **And best of all, neither will you.**

Enjoy!



(Disclosure: affiliate links to Amazon do not affect the price of items for you, but may provide a certain Crunchy blogger with a small commission.)

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43 responses to “Homemade Deodorant”

1. [Mark November 26, 2013 at 8:55 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

I found your page just in time as I was experimenting with deodorant recipes (love the blog by the way! it's nice to know other guys are into sustainable/natural living, not just stay-at-home moms who seem to dominate this sort of thing). I've put this recipe to the test at work and it really does a great job! But I was wondering how firm is it supposed to get (the stick form)? You say you keep yours in the fridge, but mine is rock solid at room temp. Good for the “terrain” as you say, but kinda like rubbing a sandy rock against my skin...do you think I may have used too much beeswax? I did use cocoa butter instead of shea butter bc that's what I had on hand, maybe that's it? Any ideas?

◦ [The Crunchy Urbanite November 26, 2013 at 10:54 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Rock-hard at room temp, huh? Yeah, could be a couple things. What's your ratio of beeswax to softer butters? (Ha! “softer butters...”) I've found equal thirds of solid/butter/oil (beeswax/shear or coco/coconut) work well, but I've never had your problem of it being *too* hard. When I used a different thickening agent (guar/xanthan gum), it'd kinda wanted to sploosh during application if I cranked the deodorant up too high, but seriously the arrowroot solves that problem. And apparently

a lot of the graininess went away, too. If yours feels sandy, that might mean too much baking soda. There's that fine line between effectiveness and comfort, but as a rule, I wouldn't go over a third of the overall recipe. Good luck, man. Hope that helps. (And thanks for liking my blog.)

2. [Laura November 27, 2013 at 5:23 am](#) · · [Reply](#) →

So good and detailed instructions that might test it out after using up my Primal Pit Paste. Someone should start selling arrowroot powder OR cornstarch (or am I blind?!) in my country, though..

3. [Natalie December 7, 2013 at 10:10 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

What brand of frankincense oil do you use? I've been looking online and it can be pretty pricey!

◦ [The Crunchy Urbanite December 9, 2013 at 4:44 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

I went the clichéd route and got the boswellia sacra variety, which is really nothing more than a posh rebranding of regular boswellia spp. oils. I do know, however, that where you get it from can be an important factor. I got mine from Oman, and have heard to avoid Indian or African-sourced oils. Truthfully, I looked online, but wound up going into a fantastic little essential oil place in Manhattan called Enfleurance. The owner there actually moved to Oman so she could steam-distill her own frankincense. If they sell online — and I can't imagine they don't — get your oil from them. I think a proper vial was well under \$30. (And through places like [Amazon.com](#), it was a lot pricier, and the unknown quality was a big turn-off.)

◦ [Pat June 25, 2014 at 7:47 am](#) · ·

You can get your oils at mountainroseherbs too that's where I get mine and they are very good quality

4. [Nikki @ Giant Fork and Spoon Society December 9, 2013 at 9:49 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

My husband is already thanking you for this recipe. He has been using arm & hammer essentials, a toxicity rating of 3 according to the EWG Skindeep database, because he couldn't find a solution to the "caught in the weeds" issue he ran into with his last batch of deo.

◦ [The Crunchy Urbanite December 9, 2013 at 11:12 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

No problem. Yeah, the biggest solution, I'd say, to that annoying "weeds" issue is arrowroot powder. It goes on great, and any of that weird lumpy, clumpy stuff when I was using guar gum is totally gone. Plus, arrowroot seems to complement baking soda better so I don't even get the slightest hint of abrasion. Glad this could help!

5. Pingback: [DOES ALUMINUM IN ANTI-PERSPIRANT DEODORANT CAUSE BREAST CANCER? | Naturally Gazania](#)

6. [Meaghan M! March 23, 2014 at 4:51 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hi there! I can't seem to find a recipe without coconut oil. I have a bad reaction to it so I don't want to use it. I already ordered the beeswax. could I just use more shea butter in place of the coconut? what do you recommend?

◦ [The Crunchy Urbanite March 23, 2014 at 6:48 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hmm, that's a toughie. The coconut oil is one of the key ingredients because it doubles both as a carrier oil and natural antibacterial. I know the baking soda can give some people a rash, but if you've definitely got a reaction to coconut, you can try substituting it with either cocoa butter or mango butter. You'll have to play around with the ratios, since your coconut replacement may behave differently. I haven't tried these, though, so definitely let me know how it goes!

I did a quick google search and came across this little DIY guide to carrier oil substitutions — good luck! <http://www.humblebeeandme.com/a-guide-to-carrier-oil-substitutions/>

7. [krista star June 7, 2014 at 6:38 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

I won't ask you what kind of sweat you typically have, but have you tested this on friends who are stinky sweaters? If so, what was the verdict?

- [The Crunchy Urbanite June 11, 2014 at 4:28 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Ha. Works like a charm. This has now held up through crazy, stress-filled days at work, extreme summer heat, and overnight airplane flights... and I come out smelling like... well, like nothing! Seriously, it's the baking soda. Also, I've had enough friends of all kinds of backgrounds and all kinds of climates try this recipe and they're all converts now — so I say give it a go!

8. Pingback: [Adventures in Hippy Dippy Living – Part 2! | domesticnotsodiva](#)9. [Stephanie W. October 31, 2014 at 3:42 am](#) · · [Reply](#) →

I'm going to give this recipe a try since we too have been seeking an at home approach...for us. The CRYSTAL products work really good but of course, they aren't long-lasting. Baking soda, though a natural odor eater, is a bit harsh. I am going to pick up the aluminum-free version though and try it again (using less) along with the Frankincense as F&M have become my new favorite power-houses.

I would like to add one thing; Last year, my son & I began eating and drinking lots of raw greens via salads and smoothies and we noticed a big difference in the sweat/odor output. I workout and garden heavily and my son plays basketball (in college) — so there was a lot of sweating going on :). The chlorophyll in the greens does an EXCELLENT job of controlling those body odors... I know it was the same for him because I laundered his compression gear!!! No more sour, sweaty, stinky laundry room odor. The kind that's so bad, you cannot launder 'the gear' with any other clothes (ewwww)!!! And for me, whilst I still sweat, it was hardly even detectable. For those who do not like veggies, liquid chlorophyll works too but not as well as fresh/raw! You'll be surprised at what greens can do. Something to consider 😊

Thanks for sharing your post.

10. [Ai Ping November 19, 2014 at 4:43 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Is your ratio by weight or volume?

- [The Crunchy Urbanite November 20, 2014 at 8:24 am](#) · · [Reply](#) →

In this instance, volume.

11. [Lorena January 12, 2015 at 11:09 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hi!! i want to try your first deodorant recepie but i can't find the shea butter anywhere here, can i sub it with cocoa butter?? Thank you!!!

I love your recepies!!

- [The Crunchy Urbanite January 13, 2015 at 9:25 am](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hi, thanks. Yes, cocoa butter should work as an alternative to Shea butter, though it may result in a somewhat softer product, so either add a touch more beeswax or just keep your finished deodorant in the fridge so it's hard.

12. [Maryam April 6, 2015 at 4:43 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

would it be okay to leave out the arrowroot powder?

- [The Crunchy Urbanite April 7, 2015 at 11:13 am](#) · · [Reply](#) →

You can leave it out, but you'll have to use something in its place, like xanthan or guar gum, or cornstarch. It's basically the flour in a cake recipe... no flour, no cake.

13. [Miranda Dixie Skullpopper Prince May 22, 2015 at 6:18 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Thank you for sharing your recipe. I tried it just now, and it didn't go on smoothly — it left blobs on my armpit, and it was also pretty gritty. I rubbed it in like a lotion, and that seemed to work. Did I make a mistake with the recipe, or is that always the consistency?

- [The Crunchy Urbanite June 17, 2015 at 1:42 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Howdy, Miranda. Grittiness is an unavoidable quality of baking soda, which you can minimize by reducing the amount a touch. If it was ever gritty to me, I don't even notice now. (Careful, though, since it does the bulk of actual deodorizing.) "Blobs," though, sounds more like a mixing issue. Unless you mean applying it leaves behind larger bits in its wake, in which case you could try adding a pinch more beeswax to make the stick harder at room temp, or (what I do) keeping the deodorant in the fridge so it's nice a firm. (Plus, can't hurt the shelf-life, right?) If you're able to rub it in like a lotion, it sounds like yours might be a touch on the soft side. All the ingredients are there, so tinker with the recipe and find what works best for you. (If you come up with a good recipe hack that works for you, come back and say what it was!)

14. Pingback: [Homemade Deodorant – Recipe and Instructions | Kápiá Méra Soap Company](#)·

15. [Christine June 24, 2015 at 11:24 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

I made some deodorant using this recipe after spending about \$9 on a stick that someone else made and figuring out that homemade deodorant works for me. This recipe works beautifully. I was completely stink free, even if I forgot to put it on for a day... Or two! And then tragedy struck: my armpits became extremely red and horribly painful. I was in Thailand when this happened, and not wearing deodorant in 95 degree heat with 100% humidity is risky. I put it on every few days until the rash was so bad I couldn't stand it. I left off wearing deodorant for the next week, but then I applied a tiny amount of the leftovers from the stick I purchased. The rash came back full force. Uuuuugh. I've been without deodorant for another 2 weeks now, but it was too hot and we were too close at work today for me to go another day without. I'm going to try making some more tonight, but I'm going to halve the baking soda and replace it with bentonite clay. Thanks for such a great recipe, I just wish the baking soda didn't make my pits feel like fire!

- [The Crunchy Urbanite July 27, 2015 at 10:29 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Yeesh, that's awful. I've definitely heard of a few people whose bodies don't like baking soda. Sorry you had to find that out while you were out and about. How'd your 50/50 recipe turn out?

- [Tonya January 6, 2016 at 1:47 am](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hi Christine!

We also make our own deodorant. I've tried many different recipes none of them worked. Until one day I had the bright idea to combine ingredients from different recipes – and my blend worked great! Until after continual use All of using it got the terrible red rash!! My husband went back to the horrible store bought kind. I decided I would live with my red pits. But mine was bearable and thankfully it did clear up in about two months. I sell the stuff so I have to find an alternate from baking soda too. I am going to use bentonite clay and up the amount of arrowroot. I think that will work. Also, what I'm finding is the coconut oil can stain clothing. I Would love to hear how yours turned out w the clay. 😊 PS. I also put organic raw apple cider vinegar, Tea Tree and either peppermint or lavender with the Tea tree -those all have great properties for killing bacteria! I have also tried oregano E.O. But then you smell like thanksgiving dinner -as my husband says!!! 😞

16. [Jennie July 13, 2015 at 12:06 am](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Thank you for your post, and I liked that you discussed different options. I've switched from store bought deodorant this year, and I have tried various aluminum free deodorants from paste to stick. I'm going to start making my own, and I've researching several recipes. I'm curious about substituting mango butter with shea butter, or adding both? The mango butter seems harder than the shea butter, but I'm also planning to include beeswax. Do you think this will result in too hard of a stick deodorant?

Also, I can't get my husband to break from commercial deodorant! He keeps telling me that he likes the Dove Clean Comfort...he thinks the organic deodorants smell too strong. Any suggestions for essential oils for men?

◦ [The Crunchy Urbanite July 27, 2015 at 10:42 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hey, Jennie. Okay, that's a several-part question! First off, I'd say you could definitely try substituting mango for Shea butter, or any butter you can think of. Obviously, it'll affect consistency, but just adjust the oils or beeswax accordingly and you should be fine. Now, as for your husband: if he's motivated by scent, you can see what the general scent profile is of his Dove stick and try to replicate it. Unilever uses synthetic fragrances, which can be tough to approximate; but half of my own revelation once I started making all my own stuff was how intense synthetic perfumes were once I wasn't exposed to them every day. Personally, I scented my deodorant with bergamot, neroli, and frankincense. (There's also cedar, vetiver, rosemary, or a slew of other complementary scents for guys.) A final option, if scent is his only hurdle, is making an unscented stick and he can spritz on any cologne or body spray he uses afterwards. Ha! I feel all invested in your saga now; let me know how everything panned out, k? 😊

17. [Andrea August 21, 2015 at 9:44 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

I'm going to make this deodorant tomorrow (as long as my Amazon shipment gets here)! Quick question...or 2:

1 part Baking Soda

1 part Arrowroot Powder

(or any thickening agent: Guar Gum, Cornstarch, etc.)

1 part equal amounts Coconut Oil, Shea Butter & Beeswax

In the last part of the recipe, do all three ingredients equal 1 part of the recipe or is it 1 part coconut oil, 1 part Shea butter, and 1 part beeswax?

I am going to add Frankinsense, but want to combine it with another essential oil to compliment the scent. Have you found any good combos to use with Frankinsense?

Thank you!!

◦ [The Crunchy Urbanite September 2, 2015 at 1:18 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hi. Yes, that last "one part" part is an equal combining of the three butters/waxes. (I tried to make this measurement-agnostic, since most of the world is metric — but if you're in the States, it'd be: 3T baking soda, 3T arrowroot powder, and 1T coconut oil, 1T beeswax, 1T shea butter. So 3 equal parts.)

Hmm, as far as what goes well with frankincense, I personally like to add bergamot to mine — but then, my skin seems to prefer more citrusy, grassy scents. Frankincense essential oil is a subtler scent, and I prefer it more for the properties it brings than the perfume, frankly. If you like lavender, I imagine it'd bring a nice complexity to that. Good luck and have fun! 😊

18. [Linda October 2, 2015 at 1:22 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hi, I have sensitive skin too and All I want to use is the arrowroot, shea butter and coconut oil. How much would I use of each since I can't use baking powder? Do I increase the amount of arrowroot since I would not use any baking soda?? I have ordered all three items so I should be able to make mine next week but I wasn't sure about the equal parts.

◦ [The Crunchy Urbanite October 22, 2015 at 4:07 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hey, Linda. I'm not very confident that you're going to get the same level of protection if you opt out of the baking soda since it's the active ingredient. It can be irritating, but less is still better than none. The other option is a non-solid deodorant recipe I've come across — that personally didn't really

work for me — but frankincense essential oil in a base of witch hazel, as a spray or roll-on. Might wanna give it a try?

19. [Marie B October 5, 2015 at 11:08 am](#) · · [Reply](#) →

I think coconut oil clogs my pores. 😞 Can I make this without the coconut oil? Thanks a million for your help!!

○ [The Crunchy Urbanite October 22, 2015 at 4:12 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

You could possibly re-jigger this without coconut oil, but I'd still try to find at least some oil just to maintain the ratios. Coconut oil has some nice antimicrobial properties that help shelf life and curb odor, but if you know your skin doesn't like it, you could try jojoba oil instead — which mimics human sebum.

20. [bigjimmyw13 December 28, 2016 at 7:13 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

What about a weight ratio on the ingredients? Call me a perfectionist, but I really, really like using weight.

21. [Megan September 27, 2017 at 11:14 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hi, you mention to first melt your base, what do you mean by that? What is the base as I don't see it in the ingredients or I'm completely missing it, thanks

○ [The Crunchy Urbanite September 28, 2017 at 3:21 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

No worries. The base is the wax and oils you melt down. It's easier to get the wet part out of the way first before you toss in your dry stuff. Happy deodoranting!

22. Pingback: [Aluminum in My Deodorant? No, thanks! | The NaturaLiving](#) ·

23. [Tom February 10, 2019 at 4:47 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hey question here...

For the stick recipe, concerning the last point: "1 part equal amounts Coconut Oil, Shea Butter & Beeswax" ...

Does that mean the one part is divided into thirds with those ingredients?

Example: say your "one part" is 3 TBSP... 3 tbsp of arrowroot, 3 tbsp of baking soda... would the last part be 1 tbsp coconut oil/1tbsp Shea/1 tbsp beeswax?

Thanks man!

○ [The Crunchy Urbanite February 10, 2019 at 8:29 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Hey. You are totally correct. Yeah. (Sorry, between metric/imperial and readers' individual container sizes, I tried to make it as DIY-FYI as possible – ha!)

24. [Tom February 10, 2019 at 4:49 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Ah and one other question: I've found that coconut oil seems to stain my clothing. Not yellow the pits, but stain the pits a darker color.

Do you find this to be the case as well?

○ [The Crunchy Urbanite February 10, 2019 at 8:33 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Definitely not the case. Before I made this, that was one of my concerns as well, that I'd somehow have to deal with oil stains. Luckily, zero discoloration, zero oily residue.

If you've got any oil-related staining of fabrics, I'd recommend hitting those stains with baking soda and Dawn dish soap with a good toothbrush. Let it sit an hour (or longer) then running it through the wash.

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