

I don't buy that



12 quick & easy recipes for DIY household basics

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*This book is dedicated to those who
wish to leave the world a better place
than they found it.*

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Introduction

Everywhere I look, I see the DIY movement positively exploding. People are waking up to the fact that, in a lot of areas, “market value” is often too high for the products we’re being offered in return. There’s a spreading consciousness that:

- If the thing I’m buying is harmful to my health, I don’t want it.
- Not everything should be disposable.
- “Store-bought is better” is often a myth.

We’re collectively looking at the available options and thinking there has to be a better way.

I don’t make my own household products because I want to make extra work for myself. I do it because right now, the marketplace is filled with products made with ingredients I don’t trust, that cost more than they’re worth to me, and *I don’t buy that*. Instead, I’ve found a different path of making my own products that’s working so well for me that I want to share it with the world.

This shift has undoubtedly changed my life for the better. I feel more empowered to make healthy decisions, and control more than ever what I buy and what I consume. Through this book, I’m going to empower *you* with healthier options for everyday products—options that are simple and inexpensive to make, which work just as well (and sometimes BETTER) than the store-bought versions you’re used to.

The recipes you’ll find in this book are the simplest ones in my collection. In selecting the recipes to share with you, I’ve favored ingredients which can be used for many different purposes, and only the simplest, quickest recipes often involving little more than just stirring things together.

The recipes that follow have in common some (or all) of the following benefits:

- ✓ Cost less than their mass-produced counterpart
- ✓ Simple to make
- ✓ Free of chemicals and toxic ingredients
- ✓ Are higher quality because you control the ingredients
- ✓ Cut down on packaging waste destined for landfills

The products themselves are endlessly customizable; you can tweak them to suit your own tastes by adding more or less of an ingredient to change the consistency, or add essential oils for pleasing scents. I've included ideas where you can do this in the recipe instructions, but feel free to add your own spin, too!

These products have changed the way I think about all of the products I buy, because once upon a time, I thought I *had* to buy these things. Now I know how simple they are to make myself, and can ensure I'm consuming something that's as healthy as it can be...and it wasn't difficult.

I hope you enjoy this new feeling of control, creativity and peace of mind around these products, knowing that we're not only choosing to consume products that are good for us and the environment, but our lifestyle and choices are paving the way for a better society.

Vanilla extract

Why I don't buy that:

If you look closely at the vanilla extract on the grocery store shelf, you will find that most, if not all, the labels will say “imitation vanilla extract,” even some of the more expensive brands. The ingredient list will more than likely include glucose (sugar), artificial flavors and caramel coloring.

All I want from my vanilla extract is pure vanilla flavor, so this recipe suits my taste perfectly. It requires some planning to allow the flavor to develop over a span of several weeks, but it's so worth the wait. I buy Bourbon Madagascar vanilla beans online, and use the cheapest vodka I can find. When you bake something with vanilla, the alcohol evaporates, leaving just the essence of the vanilla flavor behind. I also use this vanilla in recipes that are not baked, like smoothies and the chocolate syrup recipe in this book; I've never been able to taste even a hint of the vodka; there just isn't enough of it to make an impression.

I've found the cost is consistently about half of the price of the store-bought version I used to buy, however this will vary depending on what quantity of vanilla extract you decide to make.



Vanilla Extract

Ingredients

Vanilla beans

Vodka

Shelf life

Indefinite

You can make vanilla extract in any quantity you desire. The ratio is about three beans to one cup of vodka; more beans will make more potent, flavorful extract. I typically use a quart (four cups) of vodka and about a dozen beans.

Slice the vanilla beans in half and scrape out the tiny seeds with a knife (*see image at right*). Drop the seeds and beans into a clean glass jar. Pour the vodka over everything, then seal the jar.



Now you just need to wait. Shake the jar once or twice a week. While it's sitting, the flavor of the vanilla (its extract) will seep out into the vodka. Wait at least six weeks before cracking it open again; if you've got the time, two or three months would be even better.

At the end of the waiting time, you can strain out the beans and seeds with cheesecloth. However, I must say, I simply skip this step. I like to leave my vanilla beans and seeds soaking until I use up everything in the jar. The side effect of this is you may find the occasional vanilla seed in your finished baked goods...but there are worse things in the world.

About the author



I'm a blogger, shop owner and domestic goddess extraordinaire who is incredibly enthusiastic about helping people make their homes better places to live.

I devote a lot of my time to mastering the home realm: figuring out how to make my own home into the perfect oasis to support my life, and teaching others how to do the same for themselves. My favorite topics include food and cooking, gardening, organizing, and clearing out clutter, waste and anything toxic to make room for the things that are beautiful, loved and useful.

I live in Winona, Minnesota with my Prince Charming, Jon, and two sweet kitties, Charlie and Ninja Bob.

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