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Description

A timeline charting selected milestones in the history of soap, detergents and cleaning products, from ancient Babylon and Egypt, to the development of eco-friendly "green" detergents in the 21st century.

Keywords

Soap, Soap-Making, Detergent, Synthetic, Cleaning, Cleaning Product, Cleaner, All-Purpose, History, Laundry, Bath, Baths, Roman, Ancient Babylon, Ebers Papyrus, Ancient Egypt, Plague, Bubonic, Black Death, Soda Ash, Fat, Glycerine, Phosphate, Enzyme, "Green", Eco-Friendly, Timeline

Transcript

History of Soap and Detergents Timeline
2800 B.C. -- Soap-like material found in clay cylinders is evidence of soap-making in ancient Babylon.
1500 B.C. – The Ebers Papyrus, an ancient Egyptian medical document, describes the combination of animal and vegetable oils with alkaline salts to form a soap-like material used for treating skin diseases and for washing.
312 B.C -- First of the famous Roman baths, supplied with water from aqueducts, is built.
1400s – Unsanitary living conditions and poor personal hygiene contribute heavily to spread of the great plagues of the Middle Ages, especially the Black Death and bubonic plague.
1200s – The English begin making soap in quantity for commercial sale.
1608 -- Commercial soap-making in the American colonies begins with arrival of several soap makers on the second ship from England to reach Jamestown, VA.
1791 – French chemist Nicholas Lablanc patents a process that uses common salt to make sodium carbonate, or soda ash – the alkali obtained from ashes that combines with fat to form soap – yielding large quantities of inexpensive commercial quality soda ash.
1823 – French chemist Michel Eugene Chevreul publishes his findings on the chemistry of fats, glycerine and fatty acids – the basis of modern fat and soap chemistry.
1861 – Belgian chemist Ernest Solvay’s process, using common table salt, or sodium chloride, to make soda ash, further reduces the cost and increases quality and quantity of soda ash for soap manufacturing.

1916 – First synthetic detergent developed in Germany in response to shortage of fats for making soap during World War I.

1930s – Production of synthetic household detergents begins in U.S.

1940s – Synthetic detergents advanced by adding phosphate compounds that improve detergent performance and ability to clean heavily-soiled laundry.

1953 – Sales of synthetic detergents in U.S. surpass those of soap.

1950s – Development and marketing of automatic dishwasher powders; liquid laundry, dishwashing, fabric softeners and all-purpose cleaners; detergents with bleach.

1960s – Development and marketing of pre-wash soil and stain removers; laundry powders with enzymes; enzyme presoaks.


1980s – Development and marketing of cold-water detergents; liquid dishwasher detergents; concentrated laundry detergents.


2000s – Development and marketing of disposable cleaning wipes; dissolvable detergent packets; “green” and eco-friendly detergents.