

Easy Earth Week Craft
DIY BEESWAX WRAPS

Although packaging like cling-wrap and sandwich baggies offer convenience, they're definitely not an environmentally friendly option! There is, however, an eco-friendly reusable, non-toxic, biodegradable alternative, that, with just a few supplies, you can easily make at home - **DIY Beeswax wraps!**

These pliable covers easily fold up around foods like sandwiches or fruit, cover bowls of leftovers nicely and will keep them fresh for a day or so.

Note: Beeswax wraps are not airtight and should not be used to cover raw meat - for longer-lasting leftovers, raw meat, or items with a strong scent, a reusable glass or plastic container is recommended.

Some homemade beeswax wrap recipes call for other ingredients like jojoba oil and pine resin. Often found in commercially made beeswax wraps, they make the wraps more pliable at room temperature and help them stick to surfaces and themselves more readily, however tests show that these more expensive ingredients didn't necessarily offer any major benefits over the simple fabric and wax versions.

Here's how to make your own beeswax wraps!

What You'll Need

- Cosmetic-grade beeswax pellets or shaved block beeswax (available online and at some health food stores)
- Clean, dry, thin-to-medium thickness 100% cotton, hemp or linen fabric (approximately the thickness of a t-shirt, pillowcase or cloth napkin). Organic or re-purposed fabric is all the better!
 - Scissors or pinking shears
- Brush
- Parchment paper
- Baking sheet
- Hanger (optional)
- Binder clips or clothespins (optional)
- Ruler (optional)

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 200°F, or the lowest setting.

2. Cut the fabric into the desired sizes. You can hem the fabric if you like, or use pinking shears to prevent fraying.

Suggested sizes for beeswax wraps:

Small - 7"x7" or 8"x8"	Ideal for covering small items like the top of a mason jar, half an apple or avocado, or the cut end of a cucumber
Medium - 10"x10" or 11"x11"	Will cover an average bowl, half a sandwich, or other small to medium vegetables like a partial head of cabbage
Large - 13"x13" or 14"x14"	Will cover a full sandwich, half a modest watermelon, small baking dish or average pie pan, or a medium mixing bowl
Extra-Large - 16"x16" or larger	Will cover large bowls and baking dishes, whole or partial loaves of bread

3. Line your baking sheet with parchment paper and place the fabric on top. If your fabric is one-sided, place the patterned side facedown. Use a fresh piece of parchment paper each time you make another wrap.
4. Evenly distribute a liberal amount of beeswax pellets all over the fabric. Make sure you get pellets near the edges too. It's better to err on the lighter side, since too much wax can make the wrap more stiff and even flaky. You can always add more, or sop up any excess if needed. You only need to put the beeswax on one side of the fabric - it will saturate the cloth and cover both sides.
5. Place the sheet in the oven for about 4-8 minutes. When the pellets melt completely, take the tray out and use a paintbrush to spread the wax evenly over the entire fabric, dispersing any pooled/heavy spots of wax towards the edges. **NOTE:** The beeswax will stick to the brush, but you can easily clean it with hot water and use it to make wraps in the future.
6. Using tongs, remove the fabric from the baking sheet. It should feel cool to the touch after waving it for a few seconds in the air. Immediately, hang the fabric up to dry or set it on parchment paper on a table or back of a chair with the beeswax side facing up.

7. If you like, once the beeswax has set and is not very tacky, you can add buttons /Velcro, or hand-sew the wraps into small pouches.

A few additional notes:

- Homemade beeswax wraps usually stick to themselves better than a bowl or other object, so simply pinch the sides together to create a good hold.
- After use, you can clean your wraps by wiping them with cool water, or washing them by hand in cool water with a mild dish or castile soap. Hang them until they are fully dry and then store them in a cool, dry place. Avoid any heat such as hot water, microwaves, or ovens that will cause the beeswax can melt, ruining your wraps.
- If your newly made wrap is sticky at first, allow it to cure for a few days, or longer in high humidity environments.
- The wraps typically last (retain their cling) for six months to a year, depending on the level of use. They can be re-waxed (as required) and used again. If they're really old, you can compost them - since they're made from 100% natural materials, they're biodegradable.
- As you bend and shape your beeswax wraps, faint white lines may develop – this is normal. However, if you've used a little too much wax, it may get flaky and shed. If that's the case, simply put your wrap back into a warm oven, allow the wax to re-melt and soak some of the excess up using a napkin or paper towel – finish by placing it back into the oven to even out. If your wrap feels limp and not waxy enough (or has visible areas missing wax) toss it back in the oven with an additional sprinkle of beeswax to provide a thicker coating.

Have fun making and using your homemade Beeswax wraps!

The planet thanks you for your efforts!