



12 MONEY SAVERS FROM UKRAINIAN GRANDMOTHERS

Forgotten Village Tricks

My grandmother washed for a family of seven without one spoon of soap, and she never threw away a coat that still had years in it. Here are her twelve tricks.

with love, Maria

Your list: tick each one when it is done

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| ☐ Overnight soak with washing soda | ☐ One bar of laundry soap |
| ☐ Free soap from buckeyes | ☐ Homemade starch spray |
| ☐ One boiling day a month | ☐ A coat of leaves for the house |
| ☐ A little blue for whites | ☐ Wormwood with the wool |
| ☐ Bleach stains with the sun | ☐ Wool never dies |
| ☐ Smooth sheets without an iron | ☐ Turn the coat, do not toss it |

Tonight: find the coat you were going to give away. Is it finished, or only tired?



1 Overnight soak with washing soda

«ЖЛУКТО» — a hollow linden trunk for washing

Water through ash became lye, which eats grease, and washing soda is its safe grandchild.

- ☐ Stir half a cup of washing soda into a bucket of hot tap water.
- ☐ Put in whites and dish towels, dirtiest at the bottom, and leave them overnight.
- ☐ In the morning, wash as normal. Cottons and linens only, never wool or silk.



2 Free soap from buckeyes

A horse chestnut holds natural soap inside it, and in America the buckeye is one.

- ☐ Chop eight or ten buckeyes on an old board, put them in an old pot kept only for this, and pour two cups of hot water over them.
- ☐ Steep thirty minutes, strain into a jar, and use it for one load of darks.
- ☐ Try it on an old shirt first.



3 One boiling day a month

A sour dishcloth is not finished; it only needs a hot bath.

- ☐ Once a month, wash dishcloths and kitchen towels on the hottest or sanitize cycle with one spoon of washing soda.
- ☐ Wash everything else in cold water the rest of the month.



4 A little blue for whites

«СИНЬКА» — bluing

Blue is the opposite of yellow, so the eye sees white again.

- ☐ Stir a quarter teaspoon of liquid bluing into a quart of cold water, always into the water first.
- ☐ Pour that into the rinse of your white laundry.



5 Bleach stains with the sun

Sun and water were the only bleach, and many stains fade in one afternoon.

- ☐ On a sunny day, wet stained whites and lay them flat on clean grass or hang them in full sun.
- ☐ When they dry, mist them again with a spray bottle.
- ☐ Whites and cottons only, because the sun fades colours too.



6 Smooth sheets without an iron

Damp cloth pressed flat dries smooth, the way her roller and board pressed it.

- ☐ Take sheets and pillowcases out of the dryer while still a little damp.
- ☐ Pull the corners straight, fold, and press flat with your palms.
- ☐ Stack them with a few heavy books on top overnight.



7 One bar of laundry soap

One plain bar rubbed on collars lasted the family for months.

- ☐ Keep a bar of Fels-Naptha or Zote beside your washing machine.
- ☐ Wet the collar, rub the dry bar hard on the dirty ring, and wait ten minutes before washing.



8 Homemade starch spray

A starched cloth is smooth, so dirt sits on top instead of going in.

- ☐ Stir one tablespoon of cornstarch into two cups of hot water and let it cool.
- ☐ Pour it into a spray bottle and spray tablecloths or collars before you press them.



9 A coat of leaves for the house

«**zarata**» — a bank of insulation around the house

The cold comes up from the ground first.

- ☐ Fill contractor bags with dry leaves and line them against your coldest outside wall, closed crawlspace vents, or mobile-home skirting.
- ☐ In March, take the bags away so mice and damp do not move in.



10 Wormwood with the wool

Moths and mice hate the smell, and moths go first for dirty wool.

- ☐ Tie a handful of dried wormwood in an old sock or handkerchief and put one in each drawer or bin of winter wool.
- ☐ Change it every spring.
- ☐ Never put a sweater away unwashed.



11 Wool never dies

An old sweater becomes yarn, socks, insoles or mittens, and a darned heel goes on walking.

- ☐ Buy a wool sweater at the thrift store; unravel it for yarn, or wash it hot to felt and cut into insoles or mittens.
- ☐ This week, darn one sock heel over an old light bulb or an orange.



12 Turn the coat, do not toss it

A turned coat looked almost new and lasted ten more years.

- ☐ Before throwing out a good wool coat, take it to a tailor or alterations shop.
- ☐ Ask for a price on a new lining or on turning the collar.
- ☐ Look for 100 percent wool coats at thrift stores.



I am writing my grandmother's ways down in a small book. You are on my list, so you will hear first when it is ready.

Maria