

Are soy candles really better than wax candles?

Nancy
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Nancy:

Well, if you believe the peddlers of the new-fangled votives, soy candles offer a number of [benefits](#) over traditional wax candles.

According to Wicks Works, a candle retailer that sells beeswax, soy, and gel candles, soy candles last 50% longer than candles made of petroleum-based paraffin, the ingredient found in most candles. They also burn slower and cooler (helping to better distribute fragrance), are non-toxic, less likely to trigger allergies, clean up with soap and water, and produce very little [soot](#). These factors tend to make them more animal and child-friendly than traditional candles.

Soy wax is also a favorite of environmentally conscious consumers. Made from American-grown soybeans, it's biodegradable, a renewable resource, and from a global point of view, it "supports the U.S. economy instead of foreign oil conglomerates."

[Paraffin](#) wax, on the other hand, is made from petroleum and produces [carcinogens](#) and soot when burned. In fact, one [air quality researcher](#) stated that the soot from a paraffin candle contains many of the same toxins produced by burning [diesel fuel](#). Even many of the seemingly [healthy](#), [aromatherapy](#) candles sold today can do more harm than good.

The newly popular gel candles are also petroleum-based and, though contrary to widely circulated emails, they are not likely to [explode](#), they do pose a danger. If sufficient heat builds up, the glass container housing the candle can shatter.

Beeswax is another popular alternative to paraffin candles. It is also less likely to trigger allergies and does not produce toxins or soot when burned. It is generally more expensive than paraffin but burns longer. However, some candles labeled as beeswax may also contain paraffin.

If a candle doesn't explicitly state it is [soy](#) on the label, it is probably a paraffin candle. Soy candles appear more opaque with a whitish film.

No matter what type of candle you burn, it's important to remember that you are playing with fire - - literally. The National Fire Protection Association offers a [candle safety](#) sheet to help you play it safe next time you want to set the mood for a romantic evening.

**Besides who would knowingly burn ROCKET FUEL inside their home???...
I don't care how good it smells.....**