Spongik

Video: https://youtu.be/N7IimXuc8Yk

Images: https://www.dropbox.com/home/Spongik/Spongik%20Photos

About Spongik: short version

Spongik is an eco-friendly and an innovative alternative to conventional kitchen sponges. This 3-in-1 sponge set is made from 100% natural and biodegradable materials that have very unique properties. Cellulose sponges expand in contact with water, while hemp scourer has anti-bacterial properties. The sponge is infused with chemical-free dishwashing soap, eliminating the need of plastic dishwashing liquid bottles in the kitchen. Spongik set comes with a dryer that dries and sanities the sponge between uses. Made from diatomaceous earth, the dryer instantly absorbs moisture from its surface and helps the sponge to dry faster. Beautifully designed ergonomic water drop shape sponge perfectly fits in the hand, while the pointy edge is intended to clean hard-to-reach corners of glasses and bowls. The sponge tackles the toughest jobs, yet it is gentle on the hands and doesn't scratch the surfaces and the non-stick layer of the pans and pots. Neutral colors of the dryer complement the kitchen interior. Spongik is a new standard in cleaning and designed to look beautifully in the kitchen.

About Spongik: detailed version

Spongik is made out of 100% natural materials like cellulose and hemp. Designed to reduce all the unnecessary dishwashing plastic items, Spongik is an environmentally friendly and a zero-waste alternative to conventional polyurethane kitchen sponges and plastic dishwashing liquid bottles. Spongik will take only a few years to biodegrade while conventional kitchen sponges take 52 000 years to degrade into microplastics.

The 3-in-1 Spongik set includes a versatile sponge dryer and a sponge infused with chemical-free dishwashing soap. Its smart feature notifies when it is time to replace the sponge, avoiding the bacteria to reach the incubation stage in the sponge.

Careful selection of materials makes Spongik have very unique properties. Cellulose sponge is naturally a flat sheet that instantly expands into a sponge when it comes in contact with water (view it). And the diatomaceous dryer quickly dries water from its surface (view it). When the wet sponge is placed on the dryer, the moisture and bacteria get pulled out from the sponge, dries out and dies. Quick elimination of moisture helps the dishwashing sponge to dry faster and reduce breeding of the bacteria.

Beautifully designed ergonomic water drop shape perfectly fits in the hand, while the pointy edge is intended to clean hard-to-reach corners of glasses and bowls. The sponge tackles the toughest jobs, yet it is gentle on the hands and doesn't scratch the surfaces and the non-stick layer of the pans and pots. Neutral colors of the dryer complement the kitchen interior and add a designer’s touch.

Quotes:

“If you hate washing dishes, Spongik is for you”

“If you care for your health and the wellbeing of our planet, STOP using your kitchen sponge!”

“If today every person would replace at least 1 plastic item with non-plastic alternative, that would mean minus 7 billion plastic items. That’s big”

Quotes inspiration:

What is the inspiration behind creating this project?

Being a product designer I've always felt responsible for the items that I design. Throughout my design career I have been mainly focusing on innovation, function, aesthetics, comfort, and user experience. However, once I started living by the sea, sustainability has become a priority in my design process.
I was shocked by the amount of plastic pollution at the seashores. One of my hobbies became collecting plastic trash at the beaches. 2018 I started shifting towards zero-plastic lifestyle and reducing my personal use of plastic items as much as possible. During my switch to plastic-free lifestyle I started a blog sharing my research and eco-friendly findings. Throughout my journey I inspired many people to take a small or a big eco action without compromising on their lifestyle.
During my research I couldn’t find a perfect zero-waste dishwashing sponge, so I decided to make one.

Why does this need to exist in the world?

Plastic pollution from dishwashing sponges is often overlooked. However, it is an issue worth addressing. Disposed just after few weeks of use, kitchen sponges significantly contribute to non-recyclable plastic waste. Made out of 2 polyurethane polymers, conventional dishwashing sponges can’t be recycled, composed or biodegrade. Around 50 billion kitchen sponges are disposed annually, and will remain in the landfills for 52,000 years. In the process of dishwashing, polyurethane sponges release tiny particles known as microplastics. There are estimated 1.4 million trillion microfibers in the oceans. Barely visible to the naked eye, microplastics are swallowed by marine creatures. Scientists have discovered microfibers in 114 types of aquatic species, half of which are consumed by humans. Some of microplastics from the sponges remain on the dishes, and get ingested together with traces from chemical-based dishwashing liquid soap. According to the recent studies, an average person consumes more than 70 000 particles of microplastics per year.

Plastic pollution and micro-plastics is a big environmental problem that is starting to affect not only the wellbeing of our planet, but also our health. It is important to reduce the use of plastics in our everyday lives as much as possible.

Ps. From all plastic ever produced, only 9% has ever been recycled

Why is this better than any other solutions on the market?

The popularity of eco dishwashing sponges has been rising in the past few years. However, almost no dishwashing sponges on the market are 100% biodegradable. Except for simple cellulose sponges, sea sponges, and loofah sponges. These sponges are very basic and lack efficiency in dishwashing. The other “eco” dishwashing sponges have at least 20-50% plastic mixed into their scouring layer, despite "green" claims on the packaging. And therefore cannot be recycled or biodegrade.
After seeing this gap on the market, I decided to create a 100% biodegradable dishwashing sponge with innovative features.
Spongik is 3-in-1 kitchen set that resolves the multiple problems associated with conventional dishwashing sponges. Spongik is infused with chemical-free dishwashing soap and notifies the user when it is time to replace the sponge (to avoid high multiplication of bacteria). It comes with the dryer that dries and sanities the sponge between uses. And it is designed to look great and complement the kitchen interior.

Full Story:

Healthier environment promotes healthier living, especially during Covid-19 pandemic. Colonies of bacteria that grow on a dishwashing sponge put our health at risk and weaken our immune system. Maintaining a clean kitchen environment and reducing bacteria growth is a good practice against the viruses and diseases.

Health Risks of regular kitchen sponges:
Dishwashing sponges inhabit the sink, remain wet for hours, and just after a few days become a breeding ground for harmful bacteria and fungi.
According to scientific studies, kitchen sponges were proven to represent the biggest reservoirs of active bacteria in the whole house. A dishwashing sponge is 200,000 times dirtier than a toilet seat.
Researchers found 362 different species of bacteria, located in sponge’s porous structure, with bacterial density of 45 billion per square centimeter. Similar densities of bacteria exist in the human intestinal tract.

Microwaving and boiling kitchen sponges were proven to significantly reduce the bacteria. However, recent studies have been contradictory, depending on the tests performed in the laboratory versus the kitchen environment. No single method seemed to be able to achieve a general bacterial reduction of more than about 60%. Scientists suggest replacing a kitchen sponge every 1-2 week.

Environmental risks of regular kitchen sponges:
Continuous disposal of kitchen sponges puts environment at risk. Made out of 2 polyurethane polymers, conventional dishwashing sponges can’t be recycled, composed

or biodegrade. Around 50 billion kitchen sponges are disposed annually, and will remain in the landfills for 52,000 years. Not to mention the microplastics...

In the process of dishwashing, polyurethane sponge releases tiny particles known as microplastics. Some of these particles remain on the dishes, and get ingested together with traces from chemical based dishwashing liquid.
Microplastics are smaller than the width of a human hair, and there is no water filtration system that is effective enough at filtering them out. Microplastics travel down the drain and make their way into the waterways, seas, and oceans. There are estimated 1.4 million trillion microfibers in the oceans. Barely visible to the naked eye, microplastics are swallowed by the sea creatures, and its toxic chemicals can cause liver damage in fish, birds and other coastal wildlife. Scientists have discovered microfibers in 114 types of aquatic species, half of which are consumed by humans. Once ingested, microplastics work their way into the bloodstream, lymphatic system, and could even reach a person's liver. Little is known how exactly microplastics will affect human health in the long-term. It is still unknown how the microplastics will affect human long-term health.

Spongik

Spongik is zero plastic 3-in-1 dishwashing set. It has several antibacterial properties and its smart feature notifies when it is time to replace the sponge, avoiding the bacteria to reach incubation stage in the sponge.
Designed to reduce all the unnecessary dishwashing plastic items, Spongik is an environmentally friendly and a zero-waste alternative to conventional polyurethane kitchen sponges and plastic dishwashing liquid bottles.

The Spongik set includes a versatile sponge dryer and biodegradable cellulose sponges infused with chemical-free dishwashing soap.

Spongik set keeps the kitchen counter clean and tidy, and most importantly reduces bacterial build-up and plastic pollution.

Chemical-free dishwashing soap inside the sponge:

Smart Sponge is infused with chemical-free soap and is designed to last 20 washes. Which is approximately 2-3 weeks depending on the amount of dishwashing. Anti-bacterial properties of the soap reduce the breeding of bacteria in the sponge. Natural soap is tough on grease yet gentle on hands, and the wastewater is harmless for the planet and safe for plants, marine and aquatic life. No need for one-time-use plastic dishwashing liquid bottle. 2-in-1 *Smart Sponge* is perfect for travelling & camping.

Ergonomic Design:

Ergonomic water drop shape perfectly fits in the hand, while the pointy edge is designed to clean hard-to-reach corners of glasses and bowls. The sponge tackles the toughest jobs, yet it is gentle enough not to scratch the dishes and the non-stick layer of the pans and pots.

100% Biodegradable Materials:

All Spongik sponges and dryers are made out of natural materials that have unique properties. Cellulose sponge is naturally compressed and expands in contact with water. And Diatomaceous dryer instantly absorbs moisture.
Spongik set is 100% biodegradable. *Basic Sponge* is made out of 100% cellulose - a natural and sustainable material that biodegrades without any harm to the environment. *Pro Sponge* is made out of 100% natural cellulose with the scouring pad that is made out of hemp and cotton blend. *Smart Sponge* is made out of the same materials as *Pro Sponge* (cellulose + hemp) and it is infused with natural dishwashing soap.

Fast Drying:

Spongik set includes a dryer, which is made out of diatomite material that instantly absorbs moisture from its surface. Diatomaceous earth is a naturally occurring mineral that is made of microscopic skeletons of algae that have fossilized over millions of years. Diatomaceous earth has versatile benefits and is a widely used in household and hygiene products including toothpastes, skin scrubs, dietary supplements, pet nutrition products, etc.

When the wet sponge is placed on the Spongik dryer, the moisture and bacteria get pulled out from the sponge. Diatomaceous material attracts and binds bacteria, causing it to dry out and die. The remains of moisture rapidly evaporate by being exposed to greater surface area through millions of pores. Quick elimination of moisture helps the dishwashing sponge to dry faster and reduce breeding of the bacteria.

Neutral colors of the dryer complement the kitchen interior and add a designer's touch. Choose among *fire* shades for warm woody interior, *water* blues for a fresh look, *air* for bright and modern kitchen environment, and *earthy grey* for any kitchen interior.

Versatile & Space Saving:

Spongik dryer is versatile in its design and could be placed in various ways around the kitchen sink: standing upright, laying horizontally, or attached to the wall.
To help minimize the space in the small kitchens, Spongik could easily fit between the sink and the wall.

Plastic Pollution:

There are 46,000 plastic pieces in every square mile of ocean, weighing up to 269,000 tonnes. Every day around 8 million pieces of plastic make their way into our oceans. Only 9% of plastic get recycled.

Plastic pollution from dishwashing sponges is often overlooked. However, it is an issue worth addressing. Disposed just after few weeks of use, kitchen sponges significantly contribute to non-recyclable plastic waste. Made out of 2 polyurethane polymers, conventional dishwashing sponges can't be recycled, composed or biodegrade. Around

50 billion kitchen sponges are disposed annually, and will remain in the landfills for 52,000 years.
In the process of dish washing, polyurethane sponges releases tiny particles known as microplastics. Some of these particles remain on the dishes, and get ingested together with traces from chemical-based dishwashing liquid soap.
Microplastics are smaller than the width of a human hair, and there is no water filtration system that is effective enough at filtering them out. Microplastics travel down the drain and make their way into the waterways, seas, and oceans. There are estimated 1.4 million trillion microfibers in the oceans. Barely visible to the naked eye, microplastics are swallowed by marine creatures. Scientists have discovered microfibers in 114 types of aquatic species, half of which are consumed by humans.

Valeria's Plastic-Free Journey:

Being a product designer I've always felt responsible for the items that I design. Throughout my design career I have been mainly focusing on innovation, function, aesthetics, comfort, and user experience. However, once I started living by the sea, sustainability has become a priority in my design process.

When I lived in Cote d'Azur, France I got overwhelmed by the amount of plastic trash that would get washed up on the shores during the winter months. I used to go the sea almost every day for a jog and found myself with the same monolog in my head "Why is this beautiful beach so dirty? Why do we make so much plastic waste? Will anyone ever clean this beach???" These negative thoughts didn't let me enjoy my jogs, and they definitely didn't make the beach cleaner. So instead of complaining, I decided to take the initiative and clean up the beach myself. I began to alternate my regular jogging routine with picking up trash, and little by little the beach became cleaner. The most incredible thing happened when I noticed other people starting to pick up plastic trash at the beach as well. This made me realize that if you want to see a change in this world, you need to start with yourself and set an example. Many people also want to live in a clean world, and sometimes a little motivation is all that is needed.

After accomplishing a beach clean-up, I decided to take other initiatives and reduce my personal use of plastic items as much as possible. I've done an extensive research about plastic free alternatives to liquid soaps, shower gels, shampoos & conditioners, toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes, and other disposable plastic items such as water bottles, plastic food containers and cutlery, plastic bags, etc. During my switch to plastic-free lifestyle I started a blog sharing my research and eco-friendly findings. Throughout my journey I inspired many people to take a small or a big action without compromising on their lifestyle.

The idea for a biodegradable dishwashing sponge came to me when my mother, who was observing my plastic-free journey, asked me which sponge am I using for washing dishes. At that time I used a regular polyurethane sponge. Immediately I started searching for plastic-free alternatives and purchased a few cellulose sponges. After a more profound research I discovered that almost no dishwashing sponges on the market are 100% biodegradable. The most sustainable sponges have at least 20-30% plastic mixed into the scouring layer, despite "green" claims on the packaging.

Seeing this gap on the market, I decided to develop a 100% biodegradable dishwashing sponge with a few unique features.

Over the past 2 years I worked with numerous natural sponge manufacturers, selecting the best materials, and adjusting the design and functionality.

4 out of 5 people surveyed, said they hate dishwashing sponges and wish there was a better alternative.
When you think of a dishwashing sponge, wouldn't you want it to be different, better?

www.spongik.com