



11 RULES FROM UKRAINIAN GRANDMOTHERS

Keep Your Home From Smelling Old

My grandmother's house never smelled old, not one day. She always said a house gets an old smell when the air and the cloth stop moving, so we move them: into the frost, into the sun, into the water. Here are her eleven rules. Keep this list on your refrigerator.

with love, Maria

Your list: tick each one when it is done

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| ☐ Pillows on the snow | ☐ Summer cooking outside |
| ☐ Open wide, then close | ☐ Wash the walls twice a year |
| ☐ Let the bed breathe | ☐ Wormwood in the chest |
| ☐ A cold entry for outdoor things | ☐ Fresh herbs, not a plug-in |
| ☐ Rinse wool in clean water | ☐ One clean day a week |
| ☐ A soaking day for linens | |

Tonight: hang the coat you wore today on a chair by your door, not in your closet. Tomorrow morning, fold your covers back and let the bed breathe while you drink your coffee.



1 Pillows on the snow

Cold, dry air pulls old dampness and smell out of feathers and wool, and snow takes the dust.

- ☐ On a dry day below freezing, hang pillows, comforter and throws over a railing or line for 2 to 3 hours, then shake them hard.
- ☐ Lay a small rug face down on clean, dry snow, beat it and sweep it off.
- ☐ No frost where you live? Put everything out by late morning on a dry, sunny day for about 4 hours, and turn it once.



3 Let the bed breathe

Sheets and pillows hold the night's moisture, and making the bed at once shuts it inside like a lid on a pot.

- ☐ In the morning, fold your covers back to the foot of the bed.
- ☐ Leave them for one hour while you have your coffee, then make the bed.



2 Open wide, then close

«прівітрювання» — airing the house

A short, wide opening changes all the air at once, before the walls and furniture lose their heat.

- ☐ Twice a day, open two windows on opposite sides of the house all the way for 5 minutes (3 in hard frost), then close them.
- ☐ Stop leaving one window cracked all day.
- ☐ In a hot, wet Southern summer, do it in the cool early morning.



4 A cold entry for outdoor things

«сіни» — a cold entry room between the yard and the warm room

Coats and boots carry outside smells, so they never went into the room where people slept.

- ☐ Put one hook or one chair by the door, in the mudroom or garage.
- ☐ Hang the coat you wore out there overnight before it goes into the bedroom closet.
- ☐ Stuff wet boots with newspaper there; never shut them damp in a closet.



5 Rinse wool in clean water

«ліжник» — a heavy woven wool blanket

Clean, moving water does the work, not soap and not perfume.

- ☐ Soak stale wool blankets, throws or sweaters in cool water in the bathtub with one spoon of wool wash.
- ☐ Drain, then rinse again and again; no fabric softener and no hot water.
- ☐ Dry flat, or over a railing outside in the shade.



6 A soaking day for linens

The sour smell in old pillowcases comes out with heat and soaking, not with more scent on top.

- ☐ Once a month, fill a bucket or sink with the hottest tap water and a scoop of oxygen bleach (check the label first).
- ☐ Soak pillowcases, undershirts, nightgowns and dish towels for one hour, then wash as usual.



7 Summer cooking outside

Taking the smelliest cooking out of the house keeps the house cool and clean-smelling.

- ☐ In warm months, cook fish, bacon, cabbage and fried food on the grill, or in an electric skillet or slow cooker on the porch.
- ☐ Cooking inside? Lid on, window open, fan on, and leave the fan on 10 more minutes after.



8 Wash the walls twice a year

Walls and ceilings hold smoke, cooking and years of air, but most people only wash the floors.

- ☐ In spring and fall, wipe kitchen and bedroom walls top to bottom with a sponge mop and warm, soapy water.
- ☐ Do the ceiling corners, behind the headboard and behind the couch.
- ☐ If a room still smells, a fresh coat of paint is today's whitewash.



9 Wormwood in the chest

Closets and chests smell old for one reason: nobody opens them up.

- ☐ Twice a year, empty one closet or chest and air everything on the line or by an open window for one day.
- ☐ Wipe the shelves.
- ☐ Put back a bundle of dried wormwood (artemisia) or a cedar block.



11 One clean day a week

When everything is renewed on the same day, nothing has time to go stale and all the other rules get easy.

- ☐ Pick one day and keep it like church: change the sheets, do the floors, take a long bath and put on clean nightclothes.
- ☐ Wash or air the coat from your door hook, and lay out a clean shirt for tomorrow.



10 Fresh herbs, not a plug-in

A real plant smell fades fast when the air is clean, so the herbs tell you the truth; a plug-in only covers the smell.

- ☐ Throw out the plug-in and put a jar of fresh mint, thyme or rosemary on the kitchen table.
- ☐ After you mop, step on a few sprigs of mint by the door.
- ☐ Change the herbs every week.



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