

SHEA BUTTER

WHAT IS SHEA BUTTER?



100% Pure & Natural Shea Butter is an all-natural vitamin A cream. Shea Butter has shown to be a superb moisturizer, with exceptional healing properties for the skin.

We now have a growing list of skin conditions where 100% Premium Shea Butter has been shown to be effective.

Shea butter has many useful properties and has been traditionally used as a decongestant, an anti-inflammatory for sprains and arthritis, a healing salve for babies' umbilical cords, a lotion for hair and skin care, as cooking oil, and for lamp fuel.

However, the protective and emollient properties of shea butter are most valued for skin care.

In Africa, shea butter is applied to the skin and hair as a moisturizer and is also a main ingredient in traditional black soaps.

Vitamin A in Shea Butter is important for improving a number of skins conditions, including blemishes, wrinkles, eczema, and dermatitis. Additionally, Premium Shea Butter cream has properties that treat skin allergies, insect bites, sunburns, frostbites, and a number of other conditions of the skin. Shea Butter's unparalleled moisturizing property is due to several natural moisturizers present in the cream. The moisturizers in Shea Butter are the same moisturizers produced by the sebaceous glands in the skin.

If you buy the concept that the skin sebaceous glands produce moisturizers for the skin, then it's no wonder that Shea Butter is such a superior moisturizer. The positive biochemical and physiological effect Shea Butter has on skin injuries makes this cream ideal for wound healing. Many users of Shea Butter have reported that Shea Butter promotes and accelerates wound healing.

The exact benefit of the Vitamin E in Shea Butter is less clear. Vitamin E is a vitamin whose exact function in human being is not entirely clear, although it has been described as effective in a number of conditions or circumstances. These benefits include being anti-aging, an anti-free radical agent, and exerting a positive effect on increasing the micro-circulation.

If the vitamin E in Shea Butter is helpful for the skin, such benefits could be accomplished by at least two methods: (1) by increasing the micro-circulation to the skin, which results in increased blood supply to and from the skin; (2) vitamin E may serve by as an anti-free radical agent, thereby aiding in preventing the deleterious effects of sun and environmental exposure.

ALL SHEA BUTTERS ARE NOT EQUALLY EFFECTIVE

REFINED & UNREFINED SHEA BUTTER - THE DIFFERENCE

Only pure, unrefined shea butter has the true healing and moisturizing properties of shea butter.

Most shea butter available to the general public outside West Africa is white and odorless, in other words it has been "refined" to remove the natural scent and color of natural shea butter. In the process, the majority of the effective agents are also removed.

In addition, refined shea butter has usually been extracted from the shea kernels with hexane or other petroleum solvents. The extracted oil is boiled to drive off the toxic solvents, and then refined, bleached, and deodorized, which involves heating it to over 400 Degrees Fahrenheit and the use of harsh chemicals, such as sodium hydroxide. Shea butter extracted in this manner still contains some undesirable solvent residues, and its healing values are significantly reduced. Antioxidants or preservatives such as BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole) or BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene) may be added as well.

The end result is an odorless, white butter that may be aesthetically appealing, but lacks the true moisturizing, healing, and nutritive properties of true traditional shea butter. In addition, refined shea butter is often hard and grainy, not smooth and creamy like pure, unrefined shea butter.

All that can be said for refined shea butter is that it has an extended shelf life, a white, uniform color, and no odor.

Only high quality Premium Shea Butter can offer the health benefits mentioned above. Once Shea Butter is aged or loses its natural integrity, many of these wonderful benefits are also lost.

For example, Shea Butter contains the ingredient Cinnamic Acid, a substance very closely related to cinnamon in the kitchen cabinet. The Cinnamic Acid in Premium Shea Butter is mainly bound to other ingredients. As

Shea Butter loses its natural integrity the amount of bounded Cinnamic Acid decreases, and the amount of free or unbounded Cinnamic Acid increases. At the American Shea Butter Institute, it has been demonstrated that the reduction in bound Cinnamic Acid correlates well with the loss of clinical effectiveness for healing.

However, Shea Butter that has lost its natural integrity, (i.e. degraded Shea Butter), retains its moisturizing effectiveness. We now know that poor quality Shea Butter is ineffective in healing many of the skin conditions listed below in the section entitled

"21 reasons to use Shea Butter." This is a new finding and perhaps the single most important finding in the past 10 years in understanding why all Shea Butters were not equally effective.

Armed with the new finding on the clinical importance of bound Cinnamic Acid, it is now possible to avoid poor quality Shea Butter.

Determination of free and bound Cinnamic Acid content will provide the needed information on the quality of a given batch of Shea Butter for treating various skin conditions.

The most significant factors responsible for variations in Shea Butter quality are the multitude of methods used to prepare Shea Butter (lack of a uniform procedure for preparation), and the environmental conditions the butter is exposed to after preparation.

In conclusion, the quality of Shea Butter may range from excellent to very poor. Shea Butter of excellent quality may be used to treat a number of skin conditions, and serve as an excellent moisturizer as well. On the other hand, poor quality Shea Butter is good only for moisturizing purposes, and should be compared with products such as cocoa butter and mango butter.

SHEA BUTTER CLASSIFICATION

At the Institute, we classify various Shea Butters imported from Africa in one of the following classes: Class A, Class B, Class C, or Class F. Where class A is Premium Shea Butter, while class F is poor quality Shea Moisturizer. It is important to note that Class A is ideally suited for the 21 Reasons listed below, as a well as a number of other healing properties not mentioned here. While Class F has little or no healing properties and should be used as a moisturizer or mixed in cosmetic products like lotions and soaps for improved moisturizing.

If you are in need of only moisturizing properties, you should consider less expensive natural products such as cocoa butter or mango butter. These two products are as effective as Shea Butter for pure moisturizing. At the Institute we encourage consumers to look for the Seal of the American Shea Butter Institute on the container before they buy the product. The Institute's Seal will assure you are buying High Quality Premium Shea Butter.

MOISTURIZING & HEALING BENEFITS OF UNREFINED SHEA BUTTER

Unrefined shea butter contains an abundance of healing ingredients, including vitamins, minerals, proteins and a unique fatty acid profile, and is a superior active moisturizer.

Unlike petroleum based moisturizers, shea butter actually restores the skin's natural elasticity.

Shea butter actually enables your skin to absorb moisture from the air, and as a result, it becomes softer and stays moisturized for longer.

In addition, shea butter has natural sunscreen properties and anti-inflammatory agents.

Because of its amazing properties, shea butter is an excellent ingredient for soaps, lotions and creams. Perhaps it is most effective when applied to the skin in its pure state.

Regular users of pure, unrefined shea butter notice softer, smoother, healthier skin.

Shea butter has also been shown to help with skin conditions and ailments such as extreme dryness, eczema, dermatitis, skin allergies, fungal infections, blemishes, wrinkles, stretch marks, scars, scrapes, and more.



BUYERS BEWARE

In the US, some alter their Shea Butter in an attempt to give it a better fragrance and texture. Others alter Shea Butter for economic reasons.

These alterations may disturb or in some cases destroy the natural integrity of the product. While altered Shea Butter may smell nicely, or when mixed with less expensive ingredients may cost much less, in many of such cases the altered Shea Butter has lost significant properties. Another problem the buyer must watch for is the age of the product.

Shea Butter could be as much as two to three years old or older by the time it reaches the buyer's hand.

The US Shea Butter Institute says that as Shea Butter ages the original clinical potency and healing power are also lost. They recommend that Shea Butter is used within 18 months from the date of extraction from the seed.

WHAT SETS SHEA BUTTER APART FROM OTHER NATURAL OILS?

Most seed oils can be divided into two important fractions:

(1) the first fraction is called the saponifiable fraction, which contains most of the moisturizing (moisturizing fraction);

(2) the second fraction is called the nonsaponifiable fraction, which contains most of the healing properties (healing fraction).

What sets Shea Butter apart from other seed oils is its exceptionally large healing fraction.

The healing fraction contains important nutrients, vitamins, and other valuable phytonutrients required for healing. Depending on the source, the size of the healing fraction may range from 5% and upward. Some report the healing fraction as high as 17%. The larger the healing fraction the better the chances are for a good quality Shea Butter.

In other seed oils, the healing fraction is very small, often in the range of 1% or less. While other seed oils may have a good to excellent moisturizing fraction, these oils contain little or no healing fraction.

Because Shea Butter has such a large healing fraction, in addition to moisturizing fraction, regular use of this natural cream can treat many skin problems, including blemishes, wrinkles, itching, sunburns, small skin wounds, eczema, skin allergies, insect bites, frost bite, and other skin conditions.

It is because of these unique healing properties that the Shea tree got its name, the karité tree, which means the TREE OF LIFE.

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF SHEA BUTTER?

Shea Butter, the multi-purpose all natural vitamin A skin cream, is derived from the seed of the Shea tree. The cream is extracted and prepared without the use of chemicals. The best Shea Butter for skin use is prepared by cold press methods without use of added chemicals or preservative.



CHARACTERISTICS AND AVAILABILITY

Shea Butter substitutes are not likely to give you the results mentioned in this document. At room temperature, Premium Shea Butter is a soft uniformly beige colored creamy solid that readily melts in the hands and is quickly absorbed by the skin.

When left in a hot room or near a heat source, Shea Butter will readily melt just as any other butter. At room temperature, using a butter knife, Premium Shea Butter spreads very nicely as soft butter or margarine does. Shea Butter is not green, gray, dark brown or white.

Shea products with these colors are modified substitutes sometimes bearing the name 100% Shea Butter.

Furthermore, pure, natural Shea Butter has a characteristic smell. Once you smell pure natural Shea Butter, you will always know the smell. In fact, some first time users of Shea Butter occasionally say the smell of Shea Butter is not the most attractive smell.

However, after 10 or 20 minutes on the body the butter has no smell.

Unaltered Shea Butter does not have cologne or perfume fragrance. If your Shea Butter does not have the characteristic smell, color and does not spread like butter, it is probably not a good quality Shea Butter.

The worldwide availability of Shea Butter Cream may depend at times on the needs of the chocolate industry. To make chocolate, the chocolate manufacturers use most Shea exported from producing countries. Shea Butter's use in the cosmetic industry is a very small fraction of the annual Shea harvest.

WHAT ARE THE INGREDIENTS IN SHEA BUTTER?

Simply, Pure Premium High Quality All Natural Shea Butter.



21 REASONS TO USE SHEA BUTTER

Shea Butter will provide improvement in all the conditions listed below. As you use this multi-purpose cream you are likely to discover additional uses. The amount of time required for optimum results with various conditions may vary with each condition. Wrinkles, for example, require 4 to 6 weeks of daily use. Itching is relieved immediately.

1. Dry skin
2. skin rash
3. Skin peeling, after tanning
4. Blemishes and wrinkles
5. Itching skin
6. Sunburn
7. Shaving cream for a smooth silky shave.
8. Small skin wounds
9. Skin cracks
10. Tough or rough skin (on feet)
11. Cold weather
12. Frost bites
13. Stretch mark prevention during pregnancy
14. Insect bites
15. Healthy skin
16. Muscle fatigue, aches and tension
17. For before and after strenuous exercise
18. Skin allergies such as poison ivy or poison oak
19. Eczema
20. Dermatitis
21. Skin damage from heat (hot grease while cooking, radiation treatment for certain medical problems, etc.)

DISCLAIMER: The information provided here or elsewhere on this site is not intended to constitute professional medical advice for treatment. We encourage you to consult your personal physician with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

WHO SHOULD USE SHEA BUTTER?

Everyone! Every household should have a jar of Shea Butter, either among the beauty supplies for soft smooth better looking skin, or in the medicine cabinet for minor skin injuries around the house. SHEA BUTTER IS THE SKIN'S BEST FRIEND™!



FAIR TRADE SHEA BUTTER

Unrefined shea butter is a valuable natural resource for West Africa and could be an important tool in empowering local communities.

However, most shea butter on the United States and European markets is not traded fairly. The women who gather shea nuts and hand craft this remarkable oil receive only a tiny fraction of the final price.

It is estimated to take 20 to 30 hours of labor to produce one kilogram of handcrafted shea butter, which is traded at \$1 or less in today's market.

A woman making shea butter in West Africa will receive only a fraction of this price. Therefore, a person working for 30 hours, almost a week worth of work, will not receive even a dollar for her efforts. Even if she received the whole dollar, this does not even begin to reach living wage standards. **ICG** works with organizations that ensure through their direct involvement of the entire process; from gathering the wild shea nuts and crafting the butter, to distribution locally and abroad; the local workers receive fair and steady incomes.

In addition, a portion of **ICG** revenues will go directly back to the local African communities in the form of community enhancement projects.

