Shea Education

An Introduction to Shea Butter

History, Uses and Benefits of Africa’s Most Sustainable Resources
History of Shea Butter

- All-natural product has been around for centuries.
- Staple of African Pharmacology
- Early users were Cleopatra and the Queen of Sheba.
- About 200 years ago, Europeans rediscovered shea butter.

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The Shea Tree

• Indigenous to Africa

• Grows naturally (wild) from Senegal to Sudan

• Attempts to cultivate it elsewhere have been unsuccessful
Africa is home to ~500 Million Shea Trees
The Shea Tree

• Bears the first fruits when it is 10–15 years old; full bearing when the tree is about 20–30 years; produces nuts for up to 200 years after reaching maturity.

• The fruits resemble large plums and take 4–6 months to ripen.

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Shea Nuts

• Oil Rich Seed

• Considered to be a vegetable fat

• Carried by wind, rain, animals and people--sustainable

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Why It’s Made

- Made primarily by women
- Referred to as “Women’s Gold”
- Used to purchase food, clothing and schooling
- Personal use/cooking oil

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How It’s Made – Nut Collection

• Shea nuts are collected
• Co-ops may be miles from home
• Nuts must intact and free of mold
• Broken/damaged nuts are usually removed

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How It’s Made: Washing the Nuts

• Nuts are washed with a 5% bleach solution to reduce microorganism contamination

• Washing prevents mold/yeast

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How It’s Made: Drying Nuts

• The washed and cleaned nuts are sun dried

• Nut selection is very important to quality of shea butter

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How It’s Made: Nut Crushing

• The nuts are crushed using a mortar/pestle

• Grueling work

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How It’s Made: Roasting

• The crushed nuts are roasted for 30 minutes
• Stirred to prevent burning
• Done in hot sun
• Scent originates here
How It’s Made: Grinding

• Roasted nuts are ground into a smooth paste

• Water is added

• Paste is mixed well, by hand

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How It’s Made: Separating the Oils

- Paste is hand kneaded; more water added gradually
- Curds of butter float to the top, taken out
- Curds are melted slowly; excess water released as steam

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How It’s Made: Final Steps

• Scooped and placed into lined baskets or containers
• Entire process takes two days

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To Market

- Most shea butter sold at local markets
- Markets can be 5 or 10 miles away
- Trips are made by foot

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Why It’s Unique

• Bioactive Fraction (Healing)

• The “active ingredient” in Shea Butter

• Most oils from fruits, vegetables and nuts have 1% or less

• Loaded with Vitamin A, E and F

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# Healing Fractions of Oils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oil</th>
<th>Healing Fraction Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby Oil</td>
<td>0.00–0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral Oil</td>
<td>0.00–0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive Oil</td>
<td>0.6 –1.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesame Oil</td>
<td>1.0 –1.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soy Oil</td>
<td>0.5 –1.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize Germ Oil</td>
<td>0.8 –2.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refined Shea Butter</td>
<td>1.0–2.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argan oil</td>
<td>1.5 –3.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocado</td>
<td>2.0 –6.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low quality Unrefined Shea Butter</td>
<td>3.0–9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Germ Oil</td>
<td>3.5 –4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher quality Unrefined</td>
<td>4.0–9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Certified Premium Grade A Shea Butter</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.0 – 9.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Grade A?

- Use of a significant number of nuts obtained from immature fruits
- Microbial contamination
- Inappropriate temperatures during extraction process
- Extensive post-extraction manipulations to reduce color and/or odor
- Improper storage temperature
- Too much time between nut crushing and the heating process
- Water with high metallic content (iron)
Why Grade A?

- American Shea Butter Institute developed grading standards
- Certifies Shea Butter for export
- Tested three times – before leaving Africa, upon arrival to US port, upon arrival to distributor
- Ensures healing fraction remains intact

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Benefits

- Melts at body temperature
- No greasy feeling
- Vitamin A & E – Reduces lines, wrinkles, stretch marks, sun damaged skin; keeps skin healthy
- Vitamin F – Skin protector & rejuvenator
- Does not clog pores

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Uses

• 21+ Uses
• Stretch mark prevention during pregnancy
• Minor burns
• Eczema
• Sun and wind protection
• Even skin tone
• Reduce blemishes and scarring

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More Uses

- Skin peeling, after tanning
- Blemishes and wrinkles
- Itching skin due to dryness
- Sunburn
- Shaving cream to reduce razor irritation
- Small skin wounds
- Skin cracks
- Soften tough skin on feet (especially heels)

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Little Known Industrial Uses

- Candle & Soap Making
- Industrial Lubricant
- Fertilizer
- Livestock Feed Formulations
SoulShea™
for shea butter lovers

• Importer of Certified Premium Grade A Shea Butter

• Supply to Massage Therapists, Soap makers and “Shea Butter Lovers”
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