



# Trending skincare oils

Discover your fountain of youth as we take a look at the latest oily offerings to hit the beauty aisle: açai berry oil, argan oil, baobab oil, hemp seed oil, sea buckthorn oil and more.

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**I**s your skin scaly, dry, red, rough, lined, pigmented or blotchy? Your complexion is an ever-evolving reflection of your inner state. Along with healthy eating, exercise and rest, external products can make a massive impact on your most visible organ — your skin.

In Sanskrit, the word for oleation and love is the same thing. “Snehanam (oil) therapies such as massage soak cells in liquid love so they smile again,” says Ayurvedic doctor Rama Prasad. Ayurveda, along with other systems of medicine from traditional cultures, has an ocean of therapeutic oils to assist skin conditions. Ancient texts and archaeological sites are sprinkled with evidence of oils in all facets of life.

Oils naturally nourish, repair and resurface your skin. Organic oils rich in vitamins, essential fatty acids and polyphenols combine to combat environmental and oxidative skin damage. Oil’s occlusive action prevents moisture from evaporating out of the pores. So, it’s ideal to apply oil on exfoliated, damp skin or over moisturiser to lock in hydration. If you’re worried about looking shiny, try applying oils after washing your face at night. Oils similar to your sebum won’t aggravate acne, clog pores or irritate inflammation. Marinating in a blissful blend of oils can love your skin back to life.

## Optimal oils

It seems counterintuitive to apply oil to oily pimple-prone skin, but a damaged epidermis will overcompensate by

producing even more oil, which can clog pores and trigger breakouts. Using low-comedogenic (non-clogging) oils can repair the skin barrier thus helping to rectify redness, inflammation, acne, dryness, damage and excess oiliness. Opt for oils that are certified organic, not genetically modified, sustainably sourced, pure-pressed without chemical extraction, free from fragrance or additives, protected from rancidity by high-quality light- and air-protective glass. Getting a few months’ quantity at a time ensures antioxidants are intact. Try blending to get the optimal oil for your skin. Model Miranda Kerr loves to use a combination of pomegranate oil, rosehip oil and sea buckthorn oil with noni

extract, “I use it religiously every night and my skin is glowing in the morning. I also never travel without it and apply it throughout the flight to keep my skin hydrated,” she shares. Dip into these lovely oils to get your glow on!

## Açai berry oil

You’ve probably sipped this amazing Amazonian super berry in an energising smoothie. But did you know açai berry oil is an antioxidant drink for the skin also? Açai has an astounding 30 times higher level of the antioxidant anthocyanin than red grapes. Açai berry’s cold-pressed dark green oil has a fruity fragrance full of skin savers. Dripping with omega-3, 6-,

and -9 fatty acids along with antioxidant polyphenols, açai oil is a moisturising restorative. Açai’s anti-inflammatory effect makes it marvellous for eczema and psoriasis. It activates UV-damaged epidermal repair through its ferulic acid. Açai oil’s emollient action leaves skin smooth, soft and supple. Açai is ideal for ageing skin as it can help to restore elasticity and reduce fine lines. With a comedogenic factor of 2 it could potentially aggravate acne in one with oily skin, but its antibacterial properties can also decrease acne. Açai berry oil is light and absorbs rapidly leaving a non-greasy, dewy complexion.

## Argan oil

In Morocco’s dry southwest, local Berber women uncovered an oasis of beauty: the acclaimed argan tree. This “tree of life” yields a golden-coloured oil that’s enriching hair and skincare products worldwide. Argan’s unique anti-inflammatory action is due to its lush linoleic acid, linolenic acid and tocopherol, a vitamin E more abundant

in argan than most oils. This makes it a soothing oil for inflamed and red skin due to acne, eczema, psoriasis, sunburn, bites, dermatitis and keratosis.

Argan also drenches dry skin in hydrating oleic and palmitic acid, creating a youthful complexion. Argan oil is an excellent cleanser for makeup or grime due to its binding stearic acid. Argan clears excess bacteria and sebum with no oily residue if used in moderation. It excels in issues of dryness, pimples, pigmentation, scars, stretch marks, rashes, inflammation, fine lines and cracks. The oleic acid in argan oil improves skin permeability, assisting other products to penetrate the epidermis. Smoothing excess oil through hair creates shiny tresses.

## Baobab oil

Baobab oil is extracted from the fruit seeds of the rotund upside-down tree. The baobab blooms once a year and is native to Australia and Africa. Just as the water stored in the baobab’s trunk hydrates it for up to a thousand years, the oil gives your

skin an ageless glow. The high vitamin A, C and E content of this silky orange oil makes it an excellent rejuvenator for collagen stimulation, scar healing, stretch marks and sun damage.

Baobab contains a balanced blend of saturated fats, monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats, linoleic acid and oleic acid along with rare fatty acids malvalic and sterculic. These combine to create a uniquely moisturising antioxidant elixir that protects the epidermis from water loss and damage. Studies have shown this non-greasy oil soothes eczema and psoriasis. Baobab is only to be applied topically as it contains anti-nutrient cyclopropanoid fatty acids (CFPA).

## Black seed oil

Add some black magic to your skincare regimen with this multipurpose marvel, black seed oil. Coming from the plant *Nigella sativa*, this “blessed seed” was a key ingredient in Cleopatra’s beauty routine. A plethora of published scientific studies and trials support black seed oil’s efficacy as an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer agent. Its anti-fungal thymoquinone and nigellone are astounding antioxidants. It also



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Sallow thorn

Photography Getty Images





*[Jojoba oil] sinks seamlessly into the skin eliminating excess oil, sealing moisture in and securing against external oxidative damage.*

contains myristic acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, palmitoleic acid, oleic acid, linoleic acid, arachidonic acid, proteins, vitamins A, B1, B2 and B3, as well as calcium, folate, iron, copper, zinc and phosphorous. Specific skin conditions black seed oil has proven clinically effective for include acne, eczema, squamous cell carcinoma, psoriasis and ringworm. Black seed oil's nutrients feed the skin for a gorgeous glow. Use in moderation as it has a strong pungent aroma.

### Hemp seed oil

Hemp seed oil supports healthy, hydrated skin without hallucinogenic properties as it's not made from the whole plant. This nutty olive-green oil is dubbed "nature's most perfectly balanced oil" containing 21 amino acids, linoleic acid, linolenic acid, oleic acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid,  $\gamma$ -linolenic acid and antioxidants, as well as vitamins A and E. Because the 3:1 ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 offers the optimum anti-inflammatory effect, hemp seed oil is excellent for eczema, psoriasis and rosacea.

It's also a light oil that reduces oiliness by thinning sebum that clogs pores. The stearic acid has a cleansing, tonifying action. Since the seed oil is similar to skin lipids, it's an excellent hydrating emollient to revive dry, wrinkled, chapped or cracked skin. By strengthening the skin's protective barrier and increasing the skin's ability to retain water, a light coat enhances skin's suppleness, smoothness and plumpness.

A healing hemp body butter recipe is 20mLs each of hemp seed oil, jojoba oil, coconut oil, avocado oil, palm kernel oil, shea butter, cocoa butter and beeswax pellets. Melt in a double boiler and pour into an amber glass jar. Hemp seed oil is a skin saver internally, too, as one randomised, single-blind crossover study found that dietary hemp seed oil reduced the symptoms and appearance of clinical atopic dermatitis after 20 weeks.

### Inca inchi oil

The oil from this star-shaped fruit is fast becoming a skincare star. Sustainably sourced from the Peruvian Amazon, the *Plukenetia volubilis* fruit is pressed for its abundant oil. The key quality of inca inchi oil is its abundant anti-inflammatory omega-3 content (35 per cent) to omega-6 (35 per cent). This combined with its 50 per cent antioxidants, vitamin A and E, make it an excellent oil to ease irritated skin, redness, reduce UV damage, help to reverse the signs of ageing from free radicals and offer optimal oleation. Inca inchi's phytosterols promote collagen production and help the skin retain moisture. The vitamin E eases melasma and pigmentation. It also preserves the oil for approximately 24 months. The light, non-comedogenic oil leaves skin radiantly smooth and soft.

### Jojoba oil

This supreme skincare oil is the most similar to our sebum therefore it's an excellent option for pimple-prone people.

Jojoba was valued by Native Americans for its versatility in beauty and health care. The seeds from this desert shrub encase a golden nectar that's non-comedogenic, calming, soothing and protective for the skin's surface. Its main players are gadoleic acid, erucic acid, oleic acid, palmitic acid, palmitoleic acid, stearic acid, behenic acid, vitamin E and vitamin B complex. The complete combination makes jojoba oil lubricating, hydrating, antioxidant, anti-ageing, cleansing and regenerating. It sinks seamlessly into the skin eliminating excess oil, sealing moisture in and securing against external oxidative damage.

### Moringa oil

Moringa or drumstick is an Asian plant with a plethora of properties. Its opulent oil is odourless, clear, non-sticky, stable and has a slightly nutty taste. Dr Debra Jaliman, a New York dermatologist says, "Moringa oil is packed with vitamins A, B, and C. It's an antioxidant, antibacterial, antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory. It's a good exfoliant as well as an emollient." With an oleic acid content of more than 72 per cent, moringa oil is deeply moisturising for wrinkles or dry skin conditions. It can be kept for three years without going rancid due to its high antioxidants. Magical moringa assists acne as it's lightweight, easily absorbed, non-comedogenic and antibacterial. Antioxidants in moringa oil prevent free radicals that cause





Pomegranate oil



Sea  
buckthorn  
berries

premature ageing while tightening, moisturising and smoothing skin. Moringa is also the highest plant source of zeatin, a plant hormone that stimulates cell growth and helps to prevent premature ageing, evens skin tone and heals scars or stretch marks. The antiseptic, anti-inflammatory action of moringa oil heals cuts and soothes spots. Moringa's moisturising magic is amazing for acne, scars, eczema, psoriasis and dry cuticles.

### Pomegranate oil

The oil from this juicy ruby fruit fights dermal damage such as sunspots, inflammation and wrinkles. Its

antioxidant ellagic acid and omega-5 punicic acid protect skin from UV harm, fend off free radicals and reduce inflammatory redness or rosacea. Though thick, pomegranate seed oil penetrates deeply without a greasy residue. Pomegranate promotes a youthful complexion by stimulating fresh skin cell, collagen and elastin proliferation. Pomegranate's phytosterols including beta-sitosterol, campesterol and stigmasterol along with beta-carotene reduce free radicals and preserve pomegranate oil. Try this "fruit of life" to revive scarred or damaged skin. Avoid pomegranate oil if pregnant or trying to conceive.

### Sea buckthorn oil

"One of our favourite oils is sea buckthorn, which increases glutathione and enhances skin's cellular metabolism, promoting tissue healing. It has valuable properties to boost collagen production and is a strong free radical scavenger, making it very beneficial for scars, pigmentation and ageing skin," says Jayne Shepherd, the founder of Juniper Organic Skincare. This holy Himalayan fruit is packed with powerful phytonutrients that counter inflammation involved in acne, dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis and rosacea. Sea buckthorn is bursting with abundant fatty acids, flavonoids, higher vitamin E than wheatgerm, more beta-carotene than carrots, vitamin C and antioxidant superoxide dismutase (SOD), which fights free radicals. Sea buckthorn can break apart the glucose from collagen and elastin to reverse ageing effects of glycation. Sea buckthorn is among the best oils for troubled skin as it smooths and strengthens the skin, reduces scarring, swelling and inflammation. The oil's rare omega-7 content fortifies the skin and mucous membranes. It also assists in skin repair and cell regeneration.

### Squalane

This bio-identical oil is naturally present in people, olives and shark livers. Since squalane production reduces after the age 30, applying it can reduce signs of ageing. Squalane's pleasantly light, scentless, non-comedogenic qualities make it ideal for all skin types. Fine lines and dryness are diminished as squalane sinks into the skin rapidly. Stable saturated hydrocarbon squalane is preferable to polyunsaturated squalene, which can oxidise and clog pores. Squalane is a very safe antioxidant oil preventing UV damage, cell growth and has antibacterial properties. "Biomimetic lipids such as plant-derived squalane reinforce the natural lipid bilayer and intercellular cell membranes strengthening the skin barrier of dry, sensitive or ageing skin against lipid peroxidation, moisture loss as well as internal and external stressors", shares Cassandra Hilton, founder of Ocimum Skincare.

### Safety

Cosmetic oils are for external use only and not for internal intake unless stated specifically by the supplier. If you are breastfeeding, pregnant or trying to conceive, consult your healthcare provider before using any oils. To check for allergies, apply a skin patch test by rubbing 2mL of oil into the inner wrist and checking the response over 24 hours. 🍷

*Naturopath Caroline Robertson has a special interest in natural skincare. She has helped hundreds with their complexion concerns over decades of classes and consultations. W: [carolinerobertson.com.au](http://carolinerobertson.com.au)*