

Rice bran oil

also known as rice bran extract, rice bran oil is simply the oil extracted from the germ and inner husk of rice. It's similar to peanut oil, with high percentages of fatty acids—which, by the way, makes it a perfect skin moisturizer!

Full of antioxidants, vitamins B and E, and wonderful natural emollients, this ingredient not only hydrates skin, but also protects.

RECOMMENDED READING:

[Flaxseed Oil for Skin, the Triple-Threat Against Aging](#)

A little bit about the ingredient itself

Rice bran oil is popular in Asian cooking because it has a high smoke point, making it suitable for deep-frying and stir-frying. It's often used for making good tempura, and is perfect for salad dressings as it combines easily with other ingredients without separating. It's similar to other vegetable oils, but has unique properties that make it appealing. These include its nut-like flavor and its nutritional value.

To create the oil, manufacturers press the hull or bran of the rice grain, which squeezes out the oil. Some modern-day manufacturers use chemical processes, however, so look for “cold pressed” on the label.

Different uses

Unlike olive oil, rice bran has mostly omega-6 fatty acids, which are great for skin. In today's Western diet, however, we tend to consume too many omega-6 fatty acids, and not enough omega-3s, so it's best to use rice bran in cooking in balance with other omega-3 rich oils like soybean, flaxseed and canola oils.

Japan has used rice bran oil for centuries as a base for soaps and skin creams.

Internal health benefits of rice bran oil

The most popular health benefit of rice bran oil today is its potential to reduce the risk of heart disease—specifically, to lower cholesterol levels and blood pressure. In an age when our typical Western diet leads to problems like overweight, diabetes, and heart disease, cholesterol and blood pressure levels are often found to be at unhealthy high levels. Several studies have indicated that rice bran oil can significantly reduce cholesterol.

In September 2012, for example, researchers found that people who cooked with a blend of sesame and rice bran oils had a significant drop in blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. In fact, cooking with a combination of these oils worked nearly as well as taking commonly prescribed high blood pressure medications.

In earlier studies

In an earlier animal study in 2005, researchers found that using the specific type of vitamin E found in rice bran oil called “tocotrienol rich fraction (TRF)” lowered total

cholesterol levels by 42 percent, and levels of LDL “bad” cholesterol by up to 62 percent. Previous research also indicated that the same type of vitamin E from rice bran oil may have potential as an anti-cancer and anti-infection agent.

Research from Japan has indicated that another component of rice bran oil may be effective in relieving hot flashes and other symptoms of menopause. Researchers found that after taking a rice bran oil supplement for 4-6 weeks, 90 percent of participants found some relief.



Benefits to the skin

The main benefit of rice bran oil to the skin is its wonderful deep-moisturizing capability. This is due to its combination of vitamin E and fatty acids, which go deep into skin to hydrate. It's recommended as an alternative to the popular lanolin, so keep plenty of skin cream with rice bran oil around for those cold, harsh winter months.

Concerned if you have oily skin? Try it anyway. Rice bran oil is light and penetrates easily, so it's not likely to increase the oiliness of your skin.

How it can help

With all its natural components, rice bran oil is considered an anti-aging secret in Japan. It's actually a high compliment to tell a Japanese woman that she is a “rice bran beauty.” The natural vitamin E plus vitamin B help firm and tighten your look, maintaining hydration, which helps to reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

Rice bran oil also contains “squalane” which is known to help your skin look younger and fresher.

The benefits don't stop there! Rice bran oil has a slight ability to brighten the look of your skin, helping to reduce the appearance of dark spots and smooth skin tone. Antioxidants like beta-carotene and lycopene protect from environmental stressors, and enzymes like CoQ10 provide active components that help it maintain its youthful glow. Just try rice bran oil in these two products for 4-6 weeks, and see how your skin responds. You're likely to notice softer, smoother, healthier looking skin that has a more even tone.



Rich in antioxidants and packed with Vitamins B and E, Rice Bran Oil is quickly becoming a major player in the world of skin care. Rice bran has been used for centuries in Japan as a key ingredient in cleansers, masks, toners, and bathing powders to keep skin smooth and supple. The versatile, gentle oil extracted from rice bran effectively reduces signs of aging while soothing, hydrating, and protecting the skin. Gamma-oryzanol, a unique, very rare component, particularly helps promote circulation to effectively even skin tone.

In this installment of our ongoing “Ingredient Spotlight” series, we delve into the individual components of Rice Bran Oil and explore its numerous benefits.

First off, what is Rice Bran Oil, and where does it come from?

Rice Bran Oil (*Oryza sativa*) is derived from the hard, outer layer of rice—the bran. Bran, a byproduct of rice milling, is the layer that lies under the chaff, or husk. (Removing this nutrient-rich bran allows for the transformation of brown rice into white rice.) After being harvested, the bran is either pressed by hand or cold pressed through machinery to obtain the oil.

Why is Rice Bran Oil so popular in skin care products?

As mentioned earlier, rice bran contains high levels of Vitamins B and E, and is an excellent hydrator and anti-ager. It also contains squalene, which occurs naturally in human sebum (the oils in our skin that keep us hydrated and maintain the skin's protective barrier). Rice Bran Oil's fatty acids and other nutrients, meanwhile, provide excellent anti-aging properties while protecting against environmental pollution and UV rays. Powerful but easily absorbed, Rice Bran Oil provides serious hydration without clogging pores.

How do each of these ingredients work to benefit the skin?

Rice Bran Oil's many nutrients deserve their own exploring; take a deeper look at this oil's components below.

- Vitamin B — Rice Bran Oil contains various types of antioxidant Vitamin B, including Thiamine (B1) and Niacin (B3), as well as Vitamin B5 (Pantothenic Acid) and B6. Vitamin B helps soothe the skin, alleviating rosacea, sunburn, eczema, and even evening out hyperpigmentation. By better allowing the skin to retain moisture, Vitamin B easily penetrates the skin to protect and strengthen the skin's barrier.
- Vitamin E — Thanks to its soothing, softening, and protecting properties, antioxidant Vitamin E is often used in anti-aging skin care products. It's also used in after-sun products to rehydrate and alleviate redness and irritation. Anti-inflammatory and anti-aging, this versatile vitamin even helps increase the efficacy of SPF products by absorbing energy from UV rays and thereby preventing sun-induced free radical damage like wrinkles and fine lines. Multitasking Vitamin E helps keep our complexions firm, youthful, and radiant.
- Gamma (γ)-oryzanol — A naturally occurring mixture of plant esters and sterols, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory Gamma-oryzanol promotes circulation, reducing puffiness and uneven skin tone while diminishing the appearance of dark under-eye circles. Gamma-oryzanol intercepts ultraviolet rays at the skin's surface, thereby helping to prevent transmission and slowing the progress of melanin pigmentation.
- Squalene — Highly moisturizing and easily absorbed, squalene is found naturally in our skin's sebum, helping to protect the barrier and aid in cell regeneration for a fresh, radiant glow. Locking in moisture and diminishing the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, squalene is also useful in alleviating irritation and speeding up healing processes.

- Ferulic Acid — Found in various plants, this powerful antioxidant helps defend against UV rays and is even more effective when exposed to sunlight. Preventing free radical damage, this ingredient helps keep skin looking smooth and young and has even been shown to help repair sun that has already suffered free radical damage. Ferulic acid also increases the stability of Vitamins C and E, preventing oxidization and maintaining the efficacy of these powerful vitamins.

- Fatty Acids — Acting as the building blocks of our skin's membrane, fatty acids help protect our skin's barrier while keeping skin hydrated. Rice Bran Oil is rich in both linoleic and oleic fatty acids.
 - Linoleic Acid — Linoleic Acid, also referred to as Vitamin F, is an omega-6 essential fatty acid (EFA), meaning it's critical for human health but isn't produced naturally in the body. By strengthening the skin's barrier, Linoleic Acid protects against UV rays and environmental pollution that can cause free radical-induced wrinkles. Its anti-inflammatory properties also help reduce irritation and acne.

 - Oleic Acid— An Omega-9 fatty acid, Oleic Acid protects the skin's barrier, locking in moisture and protecting us from pollution and the elements. This anti-inflammatory fatty acid helps the skin retain its firmness and elasticity, allowing for a more youthful appearance.

Let's sum this all up. How does Rice Bran Oil benefit the skin?

- Helps prevent premature wrinkles
- Lightweight linoleic rich oil makes it suitable for acne-prone skin
- Softens and smooths the skin
- Helps inhibit melanin pigmentation
- Evens out skin tone and texture
- Increases skin barrier protection while effectively retaining moisture

Packed with antioxidants and nutrients, Rice Bran Oil provides lightweight but powerful hydration while protecting the skin from free radical damage. To reap the benefits of this versatile ingredient, try our Akwi Purifying Cleanser. In addition to Rice Bran Oil, this oil-based, pH-balancing cleanser also contains detoxifying Castor Oil, soothing Argan Oil and antioxidant-rich Camellia Seed Oil