



----- TAKE HOME -----

THAILAND'S

----- NATURAL BEAUTY SECRETS -----

WITH A LONG HISTORY OF MASSAGE, herbal remedies and natural medicine, Thailand is the place to indulge in exotic spa treatments, tonics and massages while even picking up some health and beauty tricks to take home.

Of course, many foreigners love the abundance of tropical fruits and make sure to take advantage of fresh sliced fruit and smoothies available just about everywhere, but many of Thailand's plants and fruits can also be used in different ways for a variety of healthy treatments.

Take coconut for example - the water is an excellent source of hydration, electrolytes and B-complex vitamins and helps flush the bladder and kidneys to remove toxins from the body, while coconut oil can be used as a moisturizer for the skin and hair, and shredded dry coconut can be used as a skin exfoliant.

Chances are, you'll come across a number of traditional Thai ingredients used for massages, teas and treatments while visiting one of the country's spas or massage shops. Read on to learn more about what these mystery herbs and plants are and how you can use them back in your own country.



FOR YOUR SKIN -----

DIFFERENT PARTS OF VARIOUS THAI herbs, leaves and fruits can be used to exfoliate, cleanse, tone, moisturize, soothe and brighten your skin.

TAMARIND - Tamarind bark can be used as an astringent, while the fruit's pulp is high in vitamin A and C, as well as alpha hydroxy acid that works to reduce wrinkles and stimulate collagen. You can often find natural soaps in drugstores or markets that are made with tamarind to take the skin-boosting benefits home with you after your trip.

KAFFIR LIME - The oil from kaffir lime, a knobby-skinned type of lime native to India and Southeast Asia, boosts blood circulation while toning, clarifying and brightening skin, and the rough peel acts as an exfoliant.

PAPAYA - Packed with plenty of antioxidants, low sodium quality and a special enzyme known as papain, papaya is great at exfoliating and moisturizing skin at the same time.

FOR YOUR HAIR -----

MANY OF THE INGREDIENTS that are good for your skin can also be used on your tresses. Papaya pulp moisturizes dry locks, while kaffir lime juice or oil is thought to help eliminate dandruff.

Across Thailand, dark blue, butterfly pea flowers are steeped in water, which is then applied to hair to darken the color and stimulate growth. It sounds exotic, but dried butterfly pea flowers can often be ordered online from your home country.

ADDITIONALLY, HERBAL SALVES are used for aromatherapy and to soothe muscles. Probably the most-recognized by foreigners is the *Chinese Tiger Balm* - a blend of camphor, menthol, mint oil and clove oil - available at most stores, including the ubiquitous 7-11s. You can find locally-mixed balms at pharmacies and herb shops that can be used for the same effect, including rubbing on sore muscles or as an anti-itch ointment for bug bites. The refreshing scent of these balms can also help with nausea and dizziness - you'll see many Thais sniffing little bottles or tubes especially while in traffic to recover from the exhaust!

FOR YOUR MUSCLES -----

ALONG WITH THE TRADITIONAL Thai massage, there is also a popular massage that uses hot herbal compresses to further treat and relax muscles. The compresses consist of cheesecloth filled with traditional herbs that is then soaked and steamed, then rolled or pressed into the body. The heat stimulates blood flow as the natural oils soothe muscles. The compresses can feature a range of different herbs depending on the treatment desired, but often include:

LEMONGRASS - Lemongrass' light scent helps calm the mind and clear the head.

CAMPHOR - A waxy solid from the camphor laurel tree, minty-smelling camphor helps soothe muscles and invigorate the mind while producing a cooling, tingling sensation.

PLAI GINGER - With its anti-inflammatory properties, plai ginger works on relieving muscle and joint aches and pains.

TUMERIC - When crushed, the oil from turmeric becomes an anti-septic and anti-inflammatory moisturizer.

FOR YOUR HEALTH -----

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO TO A SPA to access the benefits of medicinal Thai herbs and treatments. Along with vitamin-filled fruit shakes on nearly every corner, you can also find a range of teas and herbal infusions to sip. There are several common juices and teas made from flowers and aromatics like dried bael fruit, which helps aid digestion, chrysanthemum blossoms, which are believed to help heartburn and reduce body heat creating a cooling effect, and ginger, which improves circulation while also treating nausea and upset stomachs. Of course, coconut water is also readily available and excellent for hydration. The refreshing beverage also helps flush the kidneys and bladder, removing toxins from the body.

Often you can find these drinks at all types of markets throughout the country. Fruit shakes will be made fresh, and the teas and juices will usually already be prepared in glass or clay containers. Do note, however, that while these drinks are healthy and refreshing, the Thais have a penchant for slipping extra sugar and syrup in for a sweet treat. In most cases you can ask for the drinks without sugar - try saying, "*mai sai naam dtahn*" - but sometimes you'll be surprised with a sugar hit. Visit the dried foods section of a local fresh market to find tea and dried herbs to carry home.

Though there are some exceptions, many of these ingredients are also readily available around the world (or online) allowing you to make the most of Thai health and beauty secrets wherever you are.

MAKE YOUR OWN PAPAYA FACE MASK!

Creating your own papaya face mask can be as simple as blending ripe papaya and applying the pulp to your face and neck. You can also take it up a level by blending the papaya with a little bit of honey and lime juice before adding the mixture to your face, letting it sit for 10-15 minutes, then washing it off with warm water and a clean towel.

While the papaya gently exfoliates and smooths skin, both the fruit and the honey will help moisturize and treat blemishes, while the lime juice brightens you up.

