



## Import product information

# Prickly pear seed oil

## Treasure from the desert

Prickly pear seed oil, also known as cactus fig seed oil, is a unique vegetable oil obtained from the seeds of the fruits growing on the prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia ficus-indica*). This cactus is native to Latin America, but is also largely grown in North Africa. Due to its unique properties, the oil has been a rising trend in cosmetic products in recent years, especially in the skincare segment. The remarkable composition of this oil makes it a valuable antioxidant anti-aging cosmetic ingredient with moisturizing and cell rejuvenating properties.



## Application

Known for its antioxidative, moisturising and firming effects, prickly pear seed oil is an effective cosmetic ingredient. The oil can be directly applied on the skin, but it can also be easily incorporated as an active ingredient or as a carrier in skin and hair care formulas. Ideal applications are in anti-ageing, hair, sun and moisturising products.

- **Anti-aging:** Prickly pear seed oil is particularly recommended for the care of mature skin. A high content in Vitamin E and linoleic acid decreases the effects of ageing and acts as a barrier against premature ageing of the epidermis. Prickly pear seed oil helps restore the skin's firmness and elasticity.
- **Sensitive & dry skin:** Prickly pear seed oil softens the skin without leaving a greasy residue. Thanks to its light texture, the oil absorbs easily and quickly into the skin. Its omega 3, 6 and 9 content reinforces the hydrolipidic film strengthening skin tone with a deep lifting effect. This makes it particularly effective for sensitive and dry skin, as it prevents dehydration and contributes to cell renewal.
- **Oily skin & acne:** Prickly pear seed oil is equally suitable for oily skin or skin with acne as it regulates sebum reducing the oily skin effect. It helps tighten pores and it has healing properties meaning the oil also finds application in the treatment of scars.



## Quality



- 100% pure and natural
- Available in organic quality
- Virgin, cold pressed
- Without any chemical treatment
- Cosmetic quality

## Properties



- Density: 0.92 g/cc
- Saponification value: 165 – 195 mg KOH/g
- Colour: yellow to green
- Odour: herbal, mildly tart and tangy, distinctive
- INCI Name: Opuntia Ficus-Indica seed oil



## Get in contact



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## Production process and quality

The climatic conditions found in Tunisia and Morocco are ideal for a large production of prickly pear. It thrives in a hot and dry climate meaning it is ideal for these regions as it does not require any irrigation. Prickly pear seed oil is obtained by direct cold pressing of the seeds contained inside the edible fruit, the prickly pear seed. The widely applied virgin cold extraction technique preserves the nutrients and benefits of the oil while foregoing high yields to instead focus on superior quality. Processing of the fruits, mainly performed by women, is very long and laborious. The production of 1 litre of the oil takes about 36 hours of manual labour requiring processing of between 800 kg to 1 ton of the thorny prickly pears to obtain 30 to 50 kg of seeds. Compared to argan oil, prickly pear seed oil contains almost twice the amount of linoleic acid and 70% more vitamin E. Care should be taken not to purchase low quality prickly pear oil, which has been extracted by maceration and chemical extraction, as through these techniques the valuable ingredients (essential fatty acids, sterols and tocopherols) are lost.

## Market potential

Companies looking for innovation in cosmetics or developing premium cosmetic products should take advantage of the emerging trend of prickly pear seed oil. With an ageing population in Europe and more consumers desiring healthy natural cosmetic products, the demand for natural ingredients with new benefits is increasing. After experiencing consecutive growth up until 2020, the global cosmetics market is expected to return to its original growth rate of around 5% p.a. in the next 5 years. With a share of around 40%, the skin care market segment plays an important role in the cosmetic industry.

## Procurement

Import Promotion Desk, the German initiative for import promotion, supports European importers in sourcing natural ingredients and arranges contact with carefully screened producers of prickly pear seed oil from Tunisia and Morocco. During our pre-selection of companies, criteria such as product quality, export capability and capacity, as well as compliance with international standards and certifications are taken into account.

## Fatty acid profile



- High content of linoleic acid (omega 6) (59 – 67%)
- Second main fatty acid is oleic acid (omega 9) (15 – 25%)
- A rich source of tocopherols (Vitamin E) (500 – 1,000 mg/kg), especially in  $\gamma$ -tocopherol (90%)
- High level of phytosterols (850 – 950 mg/100 g), especially in  $\beta$ -sitosterol (70%)

## Advantages



- ➔ Linoleic acid contributes to the elasticity of the skin and supports scar healing processes.
- ➔ Oleic acid enhances penetration for deep moisturising of the skin reducing signs of dryness.
- ➔ Vitamin E (mainly  $\gamma$ -tocopherol) serves an antioxidant protecting skin from free radicals and thus having an anti-ageing effect.
- ➔ Phytosterols have anti-inflammatory properties, which can soothe sensitive or irritated skin.

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