

The beauty of food



Pushing the boundaries of innovation, a growing number of topical beauty products are emerging on shelf that carry 'gastronomic' ingredients focused on obtaining healthy skin. Words by Rebecca Barnes

In recent years, there have been some exciting advances in the beauty sector. High-tech ingredients play a key role in driving the market, and both brands and consumers invest huge amounts of time and money on trends and innovations.

But technology aside, there is new evidence that kitchen cupboard ingredients are not only able to feed our skin and hair from the inside, but can also do the power of good when applied topically.

According to Mintel, 'gastronomia' is one of four key trends set to impact global markets over the next decade. The report cites culinary influences as a key driver in a future where 'natural ingredients take centre stage.'

"Consumers are increasingly aware of what's going on their skin," agrees Abi Weeds, co-founder of Odylique. "While there's always intrigue in the latest wonder-peptide, there's a certain comfort and safety in using something that we are already familiar with."

On a research trip to southern California a couple of years ago, Liz McCarthy, CEO of online retailer abeautifulworld.co.uk, noticed an emerging trend for food ingredients in beauty.

"People are taking the same superfoods that deliver vitamins and nutrients to our bodies when consumed as food, and reinterpreting them – often using culinary techniques – as cutting-edge beauty products," she says. "What started as a food beauty movement in LA is

rapidly spreading; it's a simple insight that rings true to many – what's good for your body is often good for your skin, too."

It's also becoming apparent that 'homemade' concoctions are no longer seen as unappealing; a SONAR survey conducted by The Innovation Group revealed that 46 per cent of UK millennials say that they use food ingredients to make homemade beauty treatments because



they are more natural than products in stores.

Super nutrients

Avoiding chemicals and other 'nasties' is clearly important for many consumers now, so when a company is able to claim that their formulas are preservative-free, with limited batches and pure ingredients, consumer trust is reinforced. Fusing wellness with beauty, brands are exploiting superfood ingredients so that when they declare their natural status, their integrity remains intact.

Unsurprisingly, super fruits are a popular choice; boasting antioxidant power up to five times greater than blueberries and the world's highest concentration of natural vitamin C, the organic kakadu plum is used by BRYT Skincare, as well as Australian mineral make-up range Nude by Nature.

Specialising in cold-pressed superfoods that must be stored in the fridge, The Body Deli products are made in the Californian desert by chefs. Blueberry Fusion Micro Scrub contains antioxidant powerhouses raw blueberries and açai, which are full of super nutrients and skin-loving antioxidants, amino acids and essential omega fatty acids.

Former Masterchef finalist Angela Langford personally selects every ingredient for her eponymous culinary-inspired skincare line for its unique properties, whether to address a particular skin

type or treat a condition or concern. "One

of my hero ingredients is sea buckthorn, which is rich in many vitamins including C, E and A, as well as palmitoleic fatty acid," says Langford. "It is like a superfood for the skin – it's anti-inflammatory so great for treating sensitivity, inflammation and redness, as well as being important for cellular regeneration."

"I also use chia seeds which contain up to 65 per cent omega 3," she continues. "With anti-inflammatory properties, they help reduce inflammation and can help a number of conditions including acne, eczema, psoriasis, rosacea and fine lines."

Haircare is also getting in on the act; boutique brand Amika uses antioxidant-rich sea buckthorn berry, while Swedish vegan brand Maria Nila uses algae and pomegranate extracts in their shampoos and conditioners to strengthen and protect hair against heat styling, UV rays and free radicals.

Coconut is trending in both food and beauty, with a host of brands using the ingredient for its moisturising properties. Faith In Nature's Coconut Shower Gel & Foam Bath, Shampoo and Conditioner are their most popular products, while Yes To's Coconut Body Scrub uses nearly all of the coconut – including the oil and the husk – in its budget-friendly formulation.

Almonds provide a variety of nutrients, including protein, healthy unsaturated fats and vitamin E that help contribute to the health of skin from the inside out. This has been picked up on by a host of established and newer brands, including

Weleda, Safa and The Body Deli.

But the question on everyone's lips is whether 'gastronomia' has staying power? "As the mass market has become aware of ingredients and their benefits in food, so too will we see the growth of food ingredients and their benefits within skincare," says Liz McCarthy. "On abeautifulworld.co.uk we have seen a huge rise in demand for products with food ingredients. This trend is here to stay, with beauty that is quite literally good enough to eat."

