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# beauty

## Brazilian Beauty

The Brazilian rainforest is packed with natural ingredients that can keep you healthy and beautiful

By Celia Shatzman

Step inside the Amazon rainforest and you'll be immersed in the cacophony of the jungle, surrounded by the rich biodiversity that holds secrets to medicine and beauty. As the world's largest tropical rainforest, the Amazon sprawls across much of northwestern Brazil and spills into Peru, Colombia and other South American countries. It is within this dense jungle that many of the world's best beauty ingredients are sourced.

"Brazil is a very rich country, speaking not only of culture, but also of biodiversity and nature," says Maren Harzheim, spa supervisor at Belmond Hotel das Cataratas. "We have numerous healing plants, fruits, herbs, berries and most are extremely powerful antioxidants, anti-inflammatories or help to detox."

Belmond Hotel das Cataratas is perched overlooking Iguazu Falls, and it is the only hotel inside the Brazilian Iguazu National Park. Harzheim says, "We are a spa literally in the middle of the rainforest, using the products it is offering to us, all local and natural."

Harzheim looked to her surroundings to create the spa menu, which features exclusively natural or organic products. "Our local →

Maracuja oil from the passion flower is known for its moisturizing properties

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Brazilian products prove that you do not need any amount of chemicals—nature already has everything we need to pamper ourselves and take care of our bodies,” she says. For example, the Essence of the Amazon massage uses a blend of passion fruit and lemongrass essential oils, while The Rainforest Scalp Treatment includes a moisturizing hair mask of Brazilian nut, cupuaçu and cavalinha to nurture hair with natural silica, iodine and calcium.

When Harzheim first moved to Brazil five years ago, she noticed that Brazilians tended to favor products from abroad. But that has changed, and as they’re now embracing local brands, Brazilian ingredients can be found all over the world. Harzheim highlights her favorite beauty ingredients from the Amazon.

## AÇAÍ

“It is not only delicious to eat, but also extremely rich in antioxidants and has the highest oxygen radical absorbance score of any fruit that has been officially tested and categorized,” Harzheim says. “This means it is an absolutely powerful ingredient in any type of anti-aging or renewing treatment. So whenever you find açai berry as a key ingredient in a product, it will be worth its price!”

Additionally, açai is packed with B vitamins, electrolytes and trace minerals that are necessary for reducing inflammation and improving energy levels.

**TRY:** Ikove Organics Açai Age Resisting Serum, [ikove.com](http://ikove.com)

## ANDIROBA

“The oil from this nut is cold-pressed and very rich in fatty acids—perfect for moisturizing,” Harzheim says. “It contains analgesic, anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties, also making it ideal for tense, aching muscles.”

**TRY:** Raw Natural Beauty Andiroba Botanical Face Primer, [dermstore.com](http://dermstore.com)

## CAVALINHA

Known as Horsetail in English, cavalinha eases inflammation, boosts healing and skin elasticity, and is a powerful moisturizer. It is also used to treat acne and cellulite, cleanse skin, and strengthen hair and nails.

**TRY:** Aubrey Organics GPB Balancing Protein Conditioner, [aubrey-organics.com](http://aubrey-organics.com)

## CLAY

“The clay from the Amazon region is derived of decomposed plant material and trace minerals such as calcium, aluminum, magnesium, silica, phosphorous, copper and zinc,” says Harzheim. “As the Amazon rainforest has an extremely rich diversity of vegetation, this makes any product with clay extremely potent.”

**TRY:** Surya Brasil Amazonia Preciosa Facial Clay Mask, [suryabrasilproducts.com](http://suryabrasilproducts.com)

## CUPUAÇU

“This typical rainforest tree bears fruit very similar to cacao,” Harzheim says. “It is rich in fatty acids and works as an antioxidant.”

**TRY:** Me & the Girls Bar Beleza, [meandthegirls.com](http://meandthegirls.com); Bekura Beauty Cupuaçu Coco-Nilla Bean Body Massage Oil, [bekurabeauty.com](http://bekurabeauty.com)

## LEMONGRASS

“Its oils are known for being a sedative,” Harzheim says. “It has a calming effect on the mind and body and helps combat anxiety.” The essential oil is also an analgesic, antiseptic and skin astringent.

**TRY:** Farmaesthetics Organic Rainwater, Aloe & Lemongrass Bath & Beauty Bar, [farmaesthetics.com](http://farmaesthetics.com)

## MURUMURU

A typical Brazilian palm tree, its seeds are used to produce highly emollient butter that is full of vitamins, making it popular for lip balms, creams, lotions and hair conditioners. It restores elasticity in hair and skin, making it a mighty anti-ager.

**TRY:** Ojon Damage Reverse Restorative Conditioner, [origins.com](http://origins.com)

## PASSION FRUIT (MARACUJA) OIL

“A great moisturizer, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory, it is known in Brazil for its strong anxiety-reducing benefits,” Harzheim says.

**TRY:** Tarte Cosmetics Maracuja Oil, [tartecosmetics.com](http://tartecosmetics.com)



Left to right: wild cupuaçu, açai berries and cavalinha also known horsetail



CUPUAÇU: ME & THE GIRLS / AÇAÍ: LAZYLAMA, SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / HORSETAIL: NOERENBERG, SHUTTERSTOCK.COM