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Critical Analysis of Argan Oil

Argan oil is a type of oil that is derived from plants that are grown explicitly on Argan trees which are native to the African country of Morocco. Today it is mainly known for its cosmetic use in beauty practices and has become extremely popular for personal care in the United States market. Many A-list celebrities such as Eva Mendes, Taylor Swift, Selena Gomez, Jennifer Aniston, and many more vouch for the cosmetic use of Argan oil. The oil is especially popular with women who prefer using organic and natural substances on their skin instead of artificial chemicals that can be potentially harmful. Not only is the oil popular in its use among women but the ingredient is also used in a variety of men's products as well. One example of the use of Argan oil in men's products is its prevalence in various brands of beard oil. Nowadays more than ever men are becoming more active in their hair and skincare endeavors and many male consumers find themselves purchasing products that include natural oils such as Argan oil. The rise of Argan oil from local resources to worldwide sensation did not happen overnight. According to mentalfloss.com "It took centuries for the "liquid gold" to become the "new olive oil" and the cosmetic industries newest it girl, thanks in part to women who perfected their techniques over centuries and a female scientist who was determined to protect the environment" (Simpson, 2015).

This displays how although this product has been trending over recent years many consumers might not realize the history of the oil and its connection to ancient history.

The history of the oil dates back to the ancient times of the Berbers who were the indigenous tribes of northern Africa whose existence dates back over twenty thousand plus years. According to sOMEMORROCAN.COM “Argan oil has passed through the hands of various peoples. One of the first uses given to the oil of Argan was to feed the oil lamps: the Phoenicians used it as fuel thanks to the high luminosity that gives off this oil. Later, the Berber people discovered their cosmetic and nutritional virtues” (SomeMorrocan.com, n.d.). Throughout thousands of years, the Argan tree was able to survive and adapt to the climate of Morocco. The production of Argan oil is a complete process that requires intense work, this involves hand collecting the almonds from the tree and then further producing by pressing the almonds which keep all of the nutrients within the oil. The oil was also used by the Amazigh people of Morocco for its healing properties specifically by reducing the look of scars. Beautylish.com states that “Argan trees have been around for millions of years. Today they grow only on a narrow strip of semi-desert as they form the backbone of a complex and fragile ecosystem in Morocco” ([Poisson](http://Poisson.com), n.d.). This rich history of Argan oil is what the majority of consumers do not pay attention to when purchasing these products. This displays the influence not only the media and influencers have on the marketing of the beauty industry but also the lack of recognition of the history of the oil that these companies aren't pushing in their marketing and advertising campaigns. In terms of culture for the local communities of Morocco, argan oil is an important source of income and food, it's also a major source of empowerment for women in an otherwise male-dominant culture.

The Guardian states that “ Argan oil has gone from a natural, tribal ingredient to one of the most prized oils in the world as cosmetics companies have woken up to its anti-aging properties” (Moulds, 2015). Traditionally argan oil was used extensively in Morocco to treat various ailments, such as dry skin, acne, wrinkles, and joint pain. It is also a common ingredient in cooking, with health benefits ranging anywhere from lowering cholesterol to easing arthritis. Once western countries inquired about this apparently mystical resource the demand for it shot up exponentially. After this happened the ingredient had been appearing in everything from conditioners to shampoo to eye-tightening serums. One way that argan oil was discovered globally was because of the creation of the “Argan Oil Project” which was to make argan tree cultivation a permanent source of revenue. They went through with this plan by trading and over the next twenty years the project would help lead the way in sustainable argan oil cultivation, extraction, and quality control. The Argan oil project had successfully predicted that argan oil as an income source would in turn lead to more effective safeguarding of the Argan tree forest. Eventually, this lead to argan oil leaving the boundaries of southern Morocco as a beauty product, and after that, it wasn't long before the world began to take notice of this magical oil out of Morocco and then Argan oil skincare and beauty products became emerging. Ultimately argan oil is certainly a staple of Moroccan culture and continues to play a significant role in the overall wellness rituals of the Moroccan people. Its benefits are universal and health-conscious industries all over the world have taken notice. Today argan oil remains one of the most popular beauty ingredients in the world making appearances in various different products across a number of prestigious brands. I believe it is vital for these brands to pay homage to the history of this magical ingredient.

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