

History of Cosmetology

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(A concise, organized overview for study or quick reference)

1. Early Beginnings (Pre-historic – Antiquity)

Period	Region / Culture	Key Practices & Materials	Social Meaning
Pre-historic (c. 30,000 BC)	Europe, Africa, Asia	Ochre, charcoal, plant dyes applied to skin & hair	Tribal identity, protection from sun/insects
Ancient Egypt (c. 3100–30 BC)	Nile Valley	Kohl (lead sulfide) for eyes, henna for hair, scented oils, false eyelashes, cosmetics in tombs	Beauty linked to divinity, status, and afterlife; professional “perfumers” (mt) employed
Mesopotamia (c. 3000–539 BC)	Sumer, Babylon	Mineral pigments, lead-based eye paints, scented balms	Used in religious rituals and courtly life
Ancient Greece (c. 800–146 BC)	Greece	White lead face powder, olive oil hair treatments, scented oils	Emphasized harmony and proportion; cosmetics for theater
Roman Empire (c. 753–476 AD)	Mediterranean	Lead-based face creams, hair dyes (copper, iron), “scented powders”	Cosmetics signaled wealth; professional “uniones” (beauty shops) existed

2. Middle Ages (5th – 15th centuries)

- Europe
 - **Church influence:** Cosmetic use discouraged; modesty emphasized.
 - **Secret practices:** Women used herbal concoctions (e.g., rosemary, lavender) for hair and skin.
 - **Guilds:** Emergence of “apothecaries” who prepared medicinal/cosmetic blends.

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- **Islamic Golden Age (8th?–?14th?c.)**

- **Advances in chemistry:** Distillation of essential oils, development of kohl, henna, and scented powders.
- **Cosmetic manuals:** Works such as “*Kitab al-Tibb*” (Medicine) included beauty recipes.

- **Asia**

- **China (Tang & Song dynasties):** Use of rice powder for skin, hair ornaments, and “beauty patches” (baihua).
- **Japan (Heian period):** White facial powder (oshiroi), black tooth?blackening (ohaguro), elaborate hair styling.

3. Renaissance & Early Modern Era (15th?–?18?centuries)

Century	Region	Innovations & Trends
15th	Italy & France	Venetian “white lead” face paint; first printed beauty manuals (e.g., “ <i>The Book of the Courtier</i> ”).
16th	Europe	Perfume houses in France (e.g., <i>Moyet</i> 1747) begin as apothecaries; hair powders and wigs become status symbols.
17th	England & France	Powdered wigs (peruke) popularized by Louis?XIV; cosmetic “salons” appear in Paris.
18th	Europe & America	Mauveine (first synthetic dye, 1856) later spurs colored cosmetics; “ beauty culture ” becomes a social pastime for the elite.

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