

Coffee, Wine, Yoghurt, Oil and Eggs: Don't Bother



Don't mix coffee, wine, yogurt, oil and eggs into your henna.

You probably have these in your kitchen, but don't mix them into your henna, even though someone will say, "My grandmother did it this way." These were probably added to henna because they were kitchen leftovers, not because they were effective as a henna mix.

Coffee is around pH 5, so it has few hydrogen ions to donate to your henna mix. Coffee will not darken your henna stain and it contains caffeine. Caffeine is transdermal, so coffee in henna paste may give you a headache and the jitters¹ if you're sensitive to caffeine. Coffee may also leave an unpleasant smell in your hair. Wine mixed into the henna paste will not make the henna stain a darker red. Though wine has anthocyanins, it is not worth having to endure the smell of wearing wine on your head for several hours.² There are other, pleasanter, sources of anthocyanins. At 4 pH, yoghurt isn't a bad thing to mix with henna, but the proteins in yogurt will hinder dye uptake. If you're trying to cover gray, or to get a robust color out of your henna, don't use yoghurt in your mix. If you want a creamier mix, Ancient Sunrise® CMC powder is a better choice.

People often ask if they should add eggs and oil to their henna. Both eggs and oil will hinder dye uptake. If you want to do an oil or protein treatment, do those separately from the henna, either in the week before or the week after you apply henna.

Do you want a truly 'pure water-only' mix for your henna? Don't use tap water, because that tap water is usually pH 7 or 8, and may be as high as 9.5.³ Instead, collect rainwater or melt some snow! Rainwater and snow in industrialized countries is usually pH 4, and may be lower.

¹ Shakeel, Faiyaz, and Wafa Ramadan. 2010. "Transdermal delivery of anticancer drug caffeine from water-in-oil nanoemulsions." *Colloids & Surfaces B: Biointerfaces* 75, no. 1: 356-362.

² It is this author's opinion that henna mixed with wine has a 'five buzzard warning' for disagreeable smell.

³ The alkalinity and dissolved minerals in tap water contribute to fatalities of houseplants.

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