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THE HARVEST

During harvesting, the branches of the plant are carefully cut at a height of 20 to 25 centimeters above the ground. Once collected, the bark is skillfully peeled from the stems using a sharp knife. The stripped bark is then left to dry completely before being stored for later use.

Because the plant's root system remains undisturbed during this process, it is able to regenerate naturally. Over the following years, the plant gradually regrows, reaching full maturity again in about six years. This cyclical method of harvesting ensures the long-term sustainability of the resource, allowing it to be used repeatedly without depleting the plant population.



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Lokta paper is a traditional handmade paper from Nepal, crafted from the inner bark of the *Daphne papyracea* shrub locally known as Lokta which grows wild in the Himalayas. The craft is believed to have been introduced from Tibet, with commercial papermaking established by the 12th century A.D.

Historically, Lokta paper was primarily used for sacred Buddhist and Hindu texts due to its durability and purity. The oldest surviving example, the Karanya Buha Sutra, is housed in Nepal's National Archives in Kathmandu and is estimated to be between 1,000 and 1,900 years old.

Known for its soft yet strong texture and natural resistance to insects and moisture, Lokta paper has remained a valued medium for centuries.

Process of making Lokta Paper Video
<https://mrpb.photo/lokta-paper/>





THE PAPER PULP

The stripped bark is first chopped into smaller, manageable pieces and then soaked in a water-filled bath for several hours.

Once the bark becomes thoroughly softened and soggy, it is transferred to a large

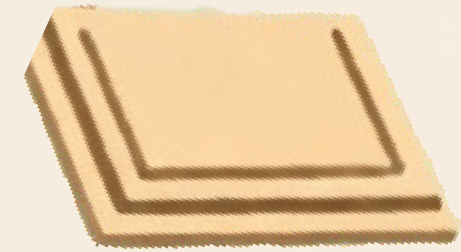
pot and simmered gently for approximately eight hours to further break down and soften the fibers. After boiling, the material is rinsed thoroughly in cold water to remove impurities and cool it down. Once it has cooled completely, the softened fibers are beaten by hand using a traditional manual beater until they transform into a smooth, uniform pulp ready for the next stage of processing.



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THE MESH

About a cupful of the prepared pulp is carefully poured onto wooden mesh frames and gently spread into an even, thin layer using smooth, deliberate strokes. At this stage while the pulp is still damp and pliable natural decorative elements such as flower petals or seeds are delicately placed onto the surface to create unique botanical designs (like our popular Natural Pressed Cornflower design restocking soon!). Once the desired pattern is arranged, the frames are set aside to allow excess water to drain. They are then left to dry naturally in the sun, where the sheets gradually firm up into beautiful, handmade paper embedded with nature's delicate details.



THE PAPER

Skilled artisans can expertly adjust the amount and consistency of the pulp to produce handmade paper in a range of thicknesses—delicate sheets as light as 6 gsm (grams per square meter), ideal for tissue-like applications, all the way up to sturdier, more substantial papers of 80 gsm or even 100 gsm, perfect for writing, printing, or fine art projects. This versatility allows for a wide variety of creative uses while maintaining the unique character and texture of each sheet.



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