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Frankincense has a significant meaning in Christianity, and is believed to be one of the gifts offered by the three wise men to the newborn Jesus.

Today, this fragrant resin is transformed into an essential oil that's valued not only in religious practice, but also in aromatherapy and natural health. Read on to learn more about frankincense oil.

What Is Frankincense Oil?

Frankincense, also known as olibanum,¹ comes from the *Boswellia* genustrees, particularly *Boswellia sacra* and *Boswellia carteri*. The milky white sap is extracted from the tree bark, allowed to harden into a gum resin for several days, and then scraped off in tear-shaped droplets.²

Boswellia trees grow in African and Arabian regions, including Yemen, Oman, Somalia, and Ethiopia.³ Oman is the best known and most ancient source of frankincense, where it's been traded and

shipped to other places like the Mediterranean, India, and China for thousands of years.⁴
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Uses of Frankincense Oil

Frankincense oil has long been revered in the Middle East, where it's been used in religious ceremonies as an anointing oil for thousands of years. It is also a popular ingredient in cosmetics, and has even been found in the remains of Anglo-Saxons and ancient Egyptians.⁷

I believe that frankincense oil is one of the top essential oils you can use for your health. It's known for its comforting properties, and is useful for visualizing, improving one's spiritual connection, and helping overcome stress and despair.⁸

In aromatherapy, frankincense oil is either inhaled or diffused via a vaporizer – a very effective sedative that induces a feeling of mental peace, relaxation, and satisfaction, and helps relieve anxiety, anger, and stress.⁹

Frankincense oil promotes healthy cell regeneration and keeps existing cells and tissues healthy. It's useful for skin health, and can help treat dry skin, reverse signs of aging, and reduce the appearance of stretch marks and scars.¹⁰ Frankincense oil's astringent properties help:¹¹

- Strengthen gums and hair roots
- Stop wounds from bleeding
- Speed up the healing of cuts, acne, insect bites, and boils

Composition of Frankincense Oil

The main components of frankincense oil are ketonic alcohol (olibanol), resinous matters (30 to 60 percent) and terpenes such as α - and β -pinene, camphene, dipentene, and phellandrene.¹² It also contains alpha pinene, actanol, bornyl acetate, linalool, octyl acetate, incensole, and incensyl acetate.¹³

The monoterpenes and sesquiterpenes are the most valuable elements of frankincense oil. According to the book, "Reference Guide for Essential Oils," by Connie and Alan Higley, monoterpenes help prevent and discharge toxins from your liver and kidneys, and have antiseptic, antibacterial, stimulating, analgesic (weak), and expectorant properties.¹⁴

Meanwhile, sesquiterpenes can go beyond the blood-brain barrier and simulate the limbic system of

your brain, as well as your hypothalamus, and pineal and pituitary glands.¹⁵
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frankincense can inhibit the production of key inflammatory molecules, helping prevent the breakdown of the cartilage tissue that causes these conditions.¹⁷

In addition, Indian frankincense or boswellin, also a member of the Boswellia genus, has been found to significantly reduce inflammation in animal studies. It is actually one of my personal favorites, as I have seen it work well as a natural painkiller for many of my former rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients.

•**Colds and respiratory disorders** — Frankincense oil can break up phlegm deposits in your respiratory tract and lungs, and can relieve bronchitis-related congestion.¹⁸

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•**Oral health problems** — The antiseptic qualities of this oil can help prevent bad breath, cavities, toothaches, mouth sores, and other infections.¹⁹

•**Digestive disorders** — Frankincense oil speeds up the secretion of gastric juices, bile, and acids, and stimulates peristaltic motion to allow food to move properly through your intestines.²⁰

•**Uterine health** — Frankincense oil regulates estrogen production in women and reduces the risk of post-menopause tumor or cyst formation in the uterus (uterine cancer). It also regulates the menstrual cycle of premenopausal women.²¹

Frankincense is also being studied for its potential to treat cancer. Scientists have observed that there's an agent in this oil that may help stop cancer from spreading.²²

How to Make Frankincense Oil

Frankincense oil is made by steam-distilling the raw resin. When buying frankincense oil, make sure that you only choose 100 percent pure essential oil of the highest quality.

Also, do not confuse frankincense essential oil with fragrance oil. Essential oils come from plants, while fragrance oils are usually artificially created and often contain synthetic chemicals. Although they smell



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Frankincense oil can be directly applied to the skin or blended with other carrier oils such as jojoba, sweet almond, avocado, patchouli, rosemary, clary sage, citrus, and basil oils.

Is Frankincense Oil Safe?

Yes, frankincense is generally safe. However, I advise doing a spot test first, to check if you have any sensitivity to this oil. When taking frankincense oil internally, it's best to dilute a drop in an edible carrier oil (like coconut oil), a teaspoon of honey, or a glass of purified water or any non-acidic, non-dairy beverage.²⁶ You can also put a drop or two under your tongue.²⁷ However, ingesting this oil is not recommended for children ages 6 and below. Older children and teens may also require higher dilutions.

You must also remember that not all frankincense oil brands are made for internal use, so make sure you check the label before taking it.

Side Effects of Frankincense Oil

There are no reported severe side effects of using this oil.²⁸ However, in some rare cases, frankincense oil can cause skin rashes, gastrointestinal distress, such as nausea, stomach pain, and hyperacidity. It also has blood thinning effects, and may increase the risk of abnormal bleeding in people with a bleeding disorder or taking anticoagulant medications.²⁹

Frankincense essential oil is also not recommended for pregnant women and nursing moms, as it acts as an emenagogue and may induce menstruation, which may be dangerous for an unborn fetus.³⁰

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