Henna and Indigo for Natural Hair Dye

Henna and/or indigo have been used to dye hair for over 6000 years! It's a beautiful, safe, and healthy way to color your hair. However, there are many incorrect myths about hair henna. Let's dispel those inaccuracies!

You may have heard that you cannot use henna over already colored hair or use traditional hair dyes over henna. Not exactly true.

You CAN use natural body art quality henna (BAQ) over already colored or bleached hair.
You CAN color over hair that has been colored with natural BAQ henna.

You CANNOT use commercial hair dyes with adulterated or poor quality henna.

Body art quality henna is pure henna (assuming you get it from a reputable supplier, like us, of course!) and will not cause reactions with chemical hair dyes. Henna that is labeled as hair henna often has metallic salts, lead, and other chemicals that can react VERY badly with chemical hair dyes, including melting your hair. That's right, MELTING your hair.

This is why you should ONLY use high quality BAQ henna and pure indigo on your hair.

- Henna is a natural conditioner and hair strengthener.
- Reduces or eliminates dandruff.
- Effective natural treatment for lice.
- Henna is permanent and does not fade as much as typical red dyes.
- Henna/indigo yields a natural looking color with natural highlights.
- Great for men to use on both hair and beards.
- For deeper color you can reapply henna and indigo as often as you like. Most people re-dye every 4-6 weeks.
- You can henna/indigo just your roots or your entire head.
- Some people report that henna will dry their hair out, though the vast majority of people benefit with softer better conditioned hair. Simply deep condition your hair after dying to prevent this possibility, and do not mix your henna with lemon juice.
- If you have curly hair, henna may loosen your curl pattern.
- Allergies to henna and indigo are extremely rare, but as with all hair dyes, you should still do small skin test before using.

How Much Product Do I Need for My Hair Length

If you have exceptionally thick hair, add a bit more. If you have curly hair add much more!

- Short Hair (Chin Length) = 50-100 grams
- Shoulder Length = 100-200 grams
- Mid Back Length = 200-300 grams
- Waist Length = 300-400 grams

TIP Save money! Buy henna and indigo by the kilo. Unopened powder is good for 3 years if stored in a cool dry place. You can even mix larger batches of henna and freeze extra in individual sized "servings" for later use.

Make note, though indigo powder keeps for a long time, indigo paste CANNOT be frozen and must be used right away.

General Mixing Instructions

Below are basic mixing instructions for both henna and indigo for the hair.
Step-by-step application instructions for getting specific colors follow.

How to Mix Henna

As with skin henna, there are a million different ways to mix henna for use on the hair, but I'm going to give you the easiest most reliable recipe.

Remember, henna is a transparent stain that uses your hair color as its base. Do a strand test before committing to hennaing your entire head to be sure you like the results. Mix a little bit of powder with water and apply it to either your hair or hair gathered from your hair brush.

- Mix henna powder with lukewarm water until you get a consistency of thick pancake batter, but not too drippy.
- Set henna aside to release dye for 2-4 hours.
  If you are using Jamila henna, set aside for 3-6 hours.

Tips
- If you have hard-to cover grays, substitute approximately half the water for lemon juice.
- If you added lemon juice to your mix, leave henna out an additional hour for dye release, and follow up dying your hair with a good conditioner.
- If you have very thick hair and are having trouble working the paste into your hair, add a little sugar to make it easier to work in and out of your hair.
- If you don't like the smell of henna add a teaspoon of ginger powder to the henna to help neutralize the scent.
- Essential oils can be used to change the scent, but they should be used sparingly.
- Extra henna paste can be frozen for future use or made into a henna gloss.
- If you need henna quicker, the warmer the water, the quicker the dye release.

How to Mix Indigo

Indigo powder should only be mixed with water. Do not use any other liquids or any additives or it will affect its dying ability.

1. Mix indigo with warm water to the consistency of very thick yogurt. Indigo tends to get thin really quickly, so add a little water at a time.

2. Set aside for dye release 15-20 minutes.

Tips
- If you have hard to cover grays or hair add a teaspoon of salt for every 50 grams of indigo.
- If you use hot water to mix indigo, you can use it immediately.
- Extra indigo paste cannot be used at a later time, so try to mix only what you need.

How to Apply Henna and/or Indigo for Different Colors

Using henna and indigo in different ways can yield a wide range of colors. Neither product lightens the hair, so your color results will depend on the current color of your hair.

You can test color results by doing a strand test in an inconspicuous area or on hair taken from your hair brush.

Red Hair Color Tones

If you are looking for red, you only need henna. The lighter your hair the more red the color.

- On white blond or gray hair you will get a super bold coppery red color.
- Light brown hair yields an auburn color that varies in darkness and brownness.
- Dark brown or black hair gets glossy red highlights in the sun.

How to Apply Henna on Hair for Red Tones

1. Mix henna powder
    - Mix henna powder with lukewarm water until you get a consistency of thick pancake batter, but not too drippy.
    - Set henna aside to release dye for 2-4 hours.
      If you are using Jamila henna, set aside for 3-6 hours.
2. Using gloves, apply henna to clean dry hair or freshly washed hair (WITHOUT conditioner). Be sure to saturate every strand of hair and apply very thick.
3. Put a plastic hair cap over the hair and press it down so it touches the henna.
4. Remove any product that is on the skin, as it WILL stain.
5. Leave henna to soak into the hair for 2-4 hours.
   The longer you leave it in, the richer the color.
6. Rinse the paste out of your hair. Do not use shampoo, but do use conditioner.
7. Optional: Blow dry hair for 10-15 minutes to help set color.

Important! This is not the final color of your hair. The color will oxidize over the next 1-3 days to reach its final color.

How to Create a Conditioning Henna Gloss

Using a henna gloss is a great way to pep-up your color every so often. It's also wonderful if you don't want to commit to full blown henna color, because a henna gloss does not leave nearly as much color as the regular henna hair dye recipe.

1. Mix henna paste (left-over paste is great!) with your favorite hair conditioner in a ratio of 1 part henna to 3 parts conditioner.
2. Apply to hair and allow to sit on your head for 30 minutes to 1 hour. The longer you leave it on, the more color will be deposited on the hair.
3. Rinse.

Brown Hair Color Tones

A variety of brown tones can be achieved with different combinations of henna and indigo using a one-step application process.

1. Mix henna powder
   o Mix henna powder with lukewarm water until you get a consistency of thick pancake batter, but not too drippy.
   o Set henna aside to release dye for 2-4 hours.
     If you are using Jamila henna, set aside for 3-6 hours.
2. AFTER dye release has occurred in the henna, mix indigo.
   o Mix indigo with warm water to the consistency of very thick yogurt. Indigo tends to get thin really quickly, so add a little water at a time.
   o Set aside for dye release 15-20 minutes
3. Mix the henna paste and indigo paste together.
4. Using gloves, apply paste to clean dry hair or freshly washed hair (WITHOUT conditioner). Be sure to saturate every strand of hair and apply very thick.
5. Put a plastic hair cap over the hair and press it down so it touches the henna.
6. Remove any product that is on the skin, as it WILL stain.
7. Leave paste to soak into the hair for 2-4 hours.
   The longer you leave it in, the richer the color.
8. Rinse the paste out of your hair. Do not use shampoo, but do use conditioner.
9. Optional: Blow dry hair for 10-15 minutes to help set color.

Important! This is not the final color of your hair. The color will oxidize over the next 1-3 days to reach its final color.

The more indigo you use, the darker brown your hair will be. Some experimentation may be in order to find the perfect shade of brown for you and your hair.

Approximate rations for henna to indigo:
Three or four parts henna to one part indigo gives a reddish brown color.
Equal amounts of henna to indigo will give a brown color.
One part henna to three or four parts indigo yields a dark brown color.

Reddish Brown
Indigo	Henna

Brown
Indigo	Henna

Dark Brown
Indigo	Henna
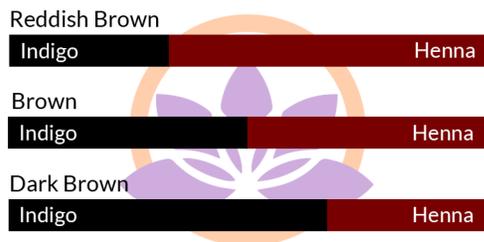
If you are trying to tone down the red of henna, but not go full brown, add indigo one teaspoon at a time until you reach the desired color.

The darker your hair, the darker the final color. The lighter your hair, the brighter the final color.

Black Hair Color

To get a rich black color, use this two-step application process. You have to dye your hair with pure henna first, then dye it again with pure indigo immediately after the henna.

Step 1 Application: Dye with Henna

1. Mix henna powder.
   - Mix henna powder with lukewarm water until you get a consistency of thick pancake batter, but not too drippy.
   - Set henna aside to release dye for 2-4 hours.
     If you are using Jamila henna, set aside for 3-6 hours.
2. Using gloves, apply henna to clean dry hair or freshly washed hair (WITHOUT conditioner). Be sure to saturate every strand of hair and apply very thick.
3. Put a plastic hair cap over the hair and press it down so it touches the henna.
4. Remove any product that is on the skin, as it WILL stain.
5. Leave henna to soak into the hair for 2-4 hours.
   The longer you leave it in, the richer the color.
6. Rinse the paste out of your hair. Do NOT use shampoo or conditioner.
7. Towel dry hair.

Step 2 Application: Dye with Indigo

1. Mix indigo powder.
   - Mix indigo powder with warm water to the consistency of very thick yogurt. Indigo tends to get thin really quickly, so add a little water at a time.
   - Set aside for dye release 15-20 minutes
2. Using gloves, apply indigo to freshly hennaed hair.
   Be sure to completely saturate every strand of hair.
3. Put a plastic hair cap over the hair and press it down so it touches the henna.
4. Remove any product that is on the skin, as it WILL stain.
5. Leave indigo paste to soak into the hair for 2-4 hours.
   The longer you leave it in, the richer the color.
6. Rinse the paste out of your hair. Do not use shampoo, but do use conditioner.
7. Optional: Blow dry hair for 10-15 minutes to help set color.

If your hair is already black, you can apply indigo without henna to deepen your natural color. Indigo is not generally used alone EXCEPT of already black hair.