

The origins of henna The henna plant has been used to decorate the body for thousands of years. The bride covers her hands and feet with designs ranging from simple shapes to intricate geometric patterns .Henna paste was originally left on the palms and soles of the feet for its cooling effect, but as the paste comes away it leaves a stain on the skin – this probably sparked the idea of using henna for beautification. Medicinal properties Henna is considered a herb with its oil, bark and seeds rich in healing qualities. Henna was used widely, for example, in the Roman Empire, Ancient Egypt, other parts of North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and Asia. The henna leaves were collected, ground into a paste, then mixed with other ingredients, such as warm water, lemon juice, tea, sugar and essential oils. Modern henna artists keep the tradition alive by developing new techniques, methods and patterns. The earliest evidence of this comes from Egyptian mummies whose hair and nails were stained with henna. Henna is used for special occasions such as Weddings , engagements and Eid . The bridal patterns can take hours and are often done by multiple henna artists. Tradition suggests that for as long as the henna stain appears on the bride, she doesn't have to do any housework! Henna today Today, henna's popularity is global, mainly because emigration and social media. There is also a growing trend to use gold temporary henna patterns but these are reserved for very special occasions. Traditions Henna is part of the Arab world's culture and heritage. In ancient times, it applied to the skin surface for such ailments as headaches, stomach pains burns and open wounds. It was a popular adornment for the rich and was also used by the poor to decorate their bodies because they could not afford jewellery. The most popular of the traditions is the Henna Night where the bride , her family , relatives and friends get together to celebrate the Wedding to come . It can also be a sunblock and has been used on the noses of animals to prevent sunburn. In the UAE, popular designs include intricate flowers, ribbons and net-like arrangements. People in the desert have used henna for centuries. The dark paste can be used to decorate hands and feet, as well as to dye leather, silk, wool or hair. Also, the darker the stain, the better the marriage! So you can imagine why the bride would want the stain to come out dark and last as long as possible. It is used topically and usually not eaten.