

Looking good and caring for the environment can go hand in hand if you choose the brands you use responsibly

# The GREEN BEAUTY guide for 2025

**W**hile few of the brands here would claim to be perfect, they're all taking big steps towards a better future – minimising packaging, reducing their environmental impact or supporting socially responsible initiatives. Many are vegan (or have vegan offerings) and all are cruelty-free. But, importantly, the products you see on these pages are all used and approved by the *Good Housekeeping* health and beauty team...

spent coffee grounds, night creams using leftover blueberries from the juicing industry and detoxing face masks with the powder from discarded olive stones, to name a few. What's not to love?

**GH LOVES...** Peptide Serum, £24.99 (3)

## REN

This prestige beauty brand excels in brightening skincare and gloriously scented (but unfussy) bath and body care, all in recycled, fully recyclable, compostable or reusable packaging. The brand's latest initiative is its partnership with Verdn, an online service that allows loyalty members to track their environmental impact throughout the year, with each purchase.

**GH LOVES...** Overnight Glow Dark Spot Sleeping Cream, £54 (4)

## LUSH

Lush leads the way in your low-to-no-waste bathroom. It now sells almost anything you can think of in solid form (from bubble bath to foundation and massage oil), and online orders of these zero-plastic 'naked' products come in biodegradable potato starch packaging.

**GH LOVES...** Pipit Glow Stick Highlighter, £18 (1)

## FAITH IN NATURE

This cheery range looks and smells more expensive than it is and can be popped into your basket at Sainsbury's or Ocado. The plastic is 100% recycled and recyclable but also ultra-light, which reduces carbon emissions by keeping freight weight down. The most popular products are also available in 5L containers to decant at home.

**GH LOVES...** Lavender & Geranium Body Wash, £5 for 300ml (2)

## UPCIRCLE

The family-run British company repurposes by-products of the food and drink industry, creating exfoliators with



## GARNIER

Garnier's work around sustainable packaging deserves credit - the brand has saved more than 18,000 tonnes of virgin plastic by using recycled PET plastic, and taken steps such as removing all metallised labels from its bottles, which disrupt recyclability. All Garnier products now have the stamp of approval from the Cruelty Free International Leaping Bunny programme, which leads the way in the crusade to end animal testing.

**GH LOVES...** Coconut Hair Food, £8.99 (5)

## GREEN PEOPLE

Green People founder Charlotte Vøhtz developed the world's first organic-certified skincare brand and helped to write the Soil Association's regulations for organic cosmetics. Using largely unscented, hypoallergenic and plant-based ingredients, the brand is renowned for its sensitive skin products. Signing up to its Green Beauty Club allows customers to earn points as they spend, which can be donated to its partnership with The World Land Trust.

**GH LOVES...** Scent Free Facial Sun Cream SPF30, £27.50 (6)

## BIOSSANCE

The brand revolutionised the beauty industry by creating a cruelty-free, planet-friendly alternative to squalene, a moisturising ingredient generally derived from shark liver. Biossance's alternative, squalane is sustainably created from sugarcane, and saves millions of sharks being harvested for their livers. Biossance works alongside Oceana to aid its sea-conservation work.

**GH LOVES...** Squalane + Probiotic Gel Moisturizer, £42 (7)

## DR HAUSCHKA

The brand has offered cruelty-free skincare, makeup and body care since 1967, using medicinal plant extracts and ethical production methods. When sourcing ingredients such as shea butter and damask rose oil, the brand looks to organically certified collection areas in Burkina Faso and Afghanistan to support local farmers through a partnership with the World Hunger Organisation.

**GH LOVES...** Rose Deodorant, £14 (8)

## BYROE NEW YORK

This female-led brand came to the UK in 2023 and brought with it a taste of luxury, but with ethics, too. Byroe's Salad Collection upcycles discarded fruits and vegetables from the food industry and enhances its vegan, paraben-free formulas with their nutrients.

**GH LOVES...** Mango Yogurt Balancing Mist, £58 (9)

## MEDIK8

This family-owned business is powered by 100% renewable energy, and has saved tonnes of plastic simply by replacing the inserts in its cartons with recycled card. It's committed to achieving net zero by 2040. Medik8's charity, The Zipper Foundation, also donates a minimum of £15,000 to animal welfare every year, in memory of the family's beloved dog.

**GH LOVES...** Mutiny Squalane-Based Alternative Lip Balm, £21 (10)

## NEAL'S YARD REMEDIES

Much-loved for its green credentials as well as excellent bath, body and skincare products, Neal's Yard Remedies uses 92% organic ingredients, was the first UK high street retailer to be certified as carbon neutral and has also been approved by Leaping Bunny as cruelty-free. Its Stand By Bees campaign went to Parliament to advocate for the protection of pollinators.

**GH LOVES...** Wild Rose Beauty Balm, £43 (11)

## INLIGHT BEAUTY

Founder and formulator Dr Mariano Spiezia believes in integrating modern science with nature's alchemy and quality craftsmanship. Recycled violet glass packaging shields formulas from UV lights and preserves products for longer, and the products contain locally infused raw botanical oils, free from unnecessary water, alcohol and synthetics. Inlight Beauty also takes the lead as a brand that supports its local community, with its Black Cornish Bees project for the endangered species.

**GH LOVES...** Super-Food Mask, £44 (12)

## AXIOLOGY

Eco-friendly makeup can be hard to find but Axiology's products are all vegan and free from plastic packaging. Bold casings are recyclable and colours are formulated entirely from plant-based butters, oils and pigments. Zero-waste refillable blushers and highlighters are some of the vegan brand's other bestsellers, in pencil-like formats that blend easily on to the skin.

**GH LOVES...** Balmie Set in Of The Earth, £35 at Content Beauty (13)



\*  
Organic ingredients have been grown on an organic farm





## CLEAN RESERVE

This vegan fragrance brand sources ingredients through companies that pay Fairtrade prices and support local communities. Its scents come in fully recyclable bottles, packaged in boxes made with FSC-certified paper and printed with non-toxic ink. In 2024, Clean Reserve partnered with earthday.org, creating the Protect The Pollinators campaign.

**GH LOVES...** Radiant Nectar EDP, £69.95 for 100ml (16)

## TROPIC

Waste-conscious Tropic makes its products from fresh in small batches. Everything is free from artificial preservatives and reasonably priced across the board, from skincare and haircare to bath, bodycare and cosmetics. Tropic also offers an impressive Innerbottle technology in its moisturisers, which tackles skincare waste by using airless balloons to help you squeeze out every last drop. Double-offsetting carbon emissions has also helped the brand to prevent deforestation across 105,000 acres of the Amazon rainforest.

**GH LOVES...** Colour Palette, £68

## BRAMLEY

This countryside-inspired brand is just lovely. Ingredients are natural, biodegradable and grown in the UK, while plastic is manufactured using sugarcane rather than fossil fuel. Glass bottles are available, as are 5L bottles to refill from at home – an investment at £140, but one that smells good, looks good and does good by keeping things as local as possible.

**GH LOVES...** Shampoo and Conditioner, from £18 each (17)

## SBTRCT

SBTRCT offers a solid range of skincare that eliminates unnecessary water usage without compromising quality. The products target a wide range of issues, such as oil control, brightening, ageing, sensitivity and congestion, and are all plastic-free, vegan and affordable. Having just been awarded Best Zero Waste Brand Of 2024, SBTRCT is great for eco-friendly skincare that gives results.

**GH LOVES...** Clarifying Facial Exfoliator, £32 (14)

## PLASTIC FREEDOM

All beauty and household brands stocked on this lovingly curated website are cruelty-free and eco-friendly. Plastic Freedom founder Beth Noy has saved 500,000 plastic products from being in circulation since 2018. Beth also plants one tree for every order received by donating to One Tree Planted.

**GH LOVES...** Evolve Beauty Nourishing Hair Elixir, £16 (15)

# What does it really MEAN?

## CRUELTY-FREE

Find cruelty-free beauty brands on PETA's database ([crueltyfree.peta.org](https://crueltyfree.peta.org)) and also via the Leaping Bunny accreditation scheme - visit [crueltyfreeinternational.org](https://crueltyfreeinternational.org) for more information. Cruelty free beauty is a very complex issue, even though UK and EU legislation now makes it illegal for cosmetics companies to test on animals here. Brands are still able to sell products in the UK that have been tested on animals in countries such as China, provided that these tests aren't used for UK safety standards. These brands may pay for certain skin tests, required in other markets, to be carried out on animals, while using non-animal data to meet UK regulations.

PETA ([peta.org](https://peta.org)) banded together with other animal welfare groups and brands such as Dove and The Body Shop to submit a European Citizens' Initiative to press the EU to commit to a continent without animal testing. PETA is also calling on the Labour government to stand by its manifesto and develop a clear roadmap for phasing out such experiments.

## ORGANIC

An organic beauty product means it contains ingredients that have been grown on an organic farm. The Soil Association, and its COSMOS logo, provide the global standard for organic cosmetics, ensuring such products are created in a way that sustains nature, wildlife and people. All products with the logo have a minimum of 95% organic ingredients, aren't tested on

The Leaping Bunny logo shows that a brand is cruelty-free

animals and are free from genetically modified ingredients, parabens, controversial chemicals, synthetic colours and palm oil, and packaging must be recyclable where possible. The organisation reviews each certified brand's manufacturing process yearly.

But... while logos like this are an easy way to identify organic beauty, some products may not carry an official stamp because the brand hasn't had the budget to pay for accreditation. Others might contain wild-grown ingredients that are impossible to monitor and control.

## VEGAN

Vegan cosmetics won't contain ingredients derived from animals, such as gelatine, collagen or animal fibres, or animal

by-products like honey, beeswax and milk. They should be cruelty free, having been neither tested on animals nor produced in a way that does them harm. Remember, though, that the term 'vegan' doesn't automatically equate to 'natural' or 'organic', so do check.

## NATURAL

In the beauty and wellbeing industries, the term 'natural' isn't protected, so it can't be regulated as it can be with food and drink. However, a COSMOS certification does exist for natural products, separate to organic - visit [cosmos-standard.org](https://cosmos-standard.org).

Calling a product 'natural' implies (but doesn't guarantee) it's been made with ingredients sourced sustainably from nature (ie, non-endangered plants, flowers and minerals) with little or no modification or non-natural preservatives. 'Natural' doesn't necessarily mean better or safer, as some synthetic ingredients are more effective than natural alternatives and can be less potentially harmful. Some essential oils, for example, can irritate sensitive skin.

WORDS: URMI PANDIT, GOOD HOUSEKEEPING BEAUTY TEAM. PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY

## THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTIC

PET plastic (fossil fuel-based and widely used) can be recycled, in theory, but isn't always in practice, and contributes to greenhouse gases during production and disposal. So what's the solution? **GLASS** is more durable than plastic, does not produce harmful chemicals as it erodes and, in theory, can be endlessly reused and recycled (though because it

is heavier, its transportation has a larger carbon footprint). **ALUMINIUM** can also be recycled indefinitely and produces nothing harmful as it erodes, but some say it can react with the formulations inside. Plus, it isn't always easy to recycle. **BIOPLASTIC** is made from plant polymers (corn starch, for example)

rather than petrochemicals, but its disposal is not straightforward. Some can be recycled, some can be composted and some films and wrappers can be dissolved in water. Keeping it out of landfill (where it can create methane emissions) and out of PET recycling (where it can contaminate supply) depends on your council's recycling.