

## ingredient INSIDER

Help minimize worry lines and maximize your budget by knowing which ingredients deliver real beauty dividends.

BY HEATHER MIKESSELL

**S**TRESS ABOUT the economy is at an all-time high, but that doesn't mean you need to let financial concerns show on your face. Fortunately, there are numerous skincare ingredients out there with the power to help restore skin to its youthful radiance. We sifted through the latest anti-aging products and facials then brought in a team of experts to help you separate fact from fiction—and get real age-blasting value for your hard-earned dollars.

**SKIN-SAVING SCAVENGERS** For years, antioxidants have been at the forefront of the anti-aging battle. And with a newsworthy super-antioxidant bursting onto the scene every year or so, that's not likely to change anytime soon. The first line of defense against cell- and tissue-damaging free radicals (the by-products created when cells use oxygen), antioxidants donate one of their own electrons to neutralize these harmful molecules and help prevent skin damage. Despite their anti-aging powers, some of the most potent antioxidants are naturally present in fruits and vegetables—a bonus for those who prefer to go as natural as possible with their beauty regimens. In fact, it's often true that the same


superfoods—pomegranate, berries, and citrus, for example—that benefit your health internally have the power to nourish you externally.

While the latest "it" antioxidant changes regularly, vitamin C has remained a favorite for years among many dermatologists for its ability to boost collagen in the skin. Because vitamin C is highly unstable in liquid or cream form, some dermatologists suggest opting for treatments that use a powdered version (to ensure its efficacy) and looking for skincare products with vitamin C derivatives like ascorbyl palmitate and magnesium ascorbyl phosphate, both of which are more stable and less irritating to the skin.

Before you rush out in search of a facial or product featuring the anti-

oxidant du jour, you may want to consider looking for one that incorporates a variety of them. According to dermatologist Julia Hunter of Skin Fitness Plus in Beverly Hills, California, there is no such thing as one perfect antioxidant. "The body uses different antioxidants in different chemical reactions," she says. "The more varied the antioxidants you put into the skin and body, the better."

**SKINCARE SPLURGES** Gold, diamond, and caviar are other ingredients now being offered as potent anti-aging ingredients, and their price tags aren't cheap. Used throughout history as a healing agent, gold is reputed to be a natural anti-inflammatory, making it helpful in combatting the inflammation often responsible for visible signs of »



Some of the latest anti-aging ingredients definitely live up to the hype.

INGREDIENT	CLAIMS	COST	EXPERT OPINION
<b>Alpha Lipic Acid</b> 	Helps other antioxidants function more effectively and penetrate the skin more deeply	Epicuren Enzyme Rejuvenation Facial (from \$135, 75 minutes); N.V. Parricone, M.D. Evening Facial Emollient (\$90, 2 oz)	<b>Worth it.</b> "Alpha lipic acid helps the antioxidants you put on your skin last longer and is both fat- and water-soluble. It can reach areas where water-soluble vitamin C and fat-soluble vitamin E can't, thereby fighting more free radicals."—Julia Hunter, M.D., founder, Skin Fitness Plus, Beverly Hills, CA
<b>Caviar</b> 	Rich in omega-3 fatty acids and proteins that help plump and tighten the skin	Pevonia Myoxy-Caviar facial (from \$230, 80 minutes); Kerstin Florian Caviar Firming Complex (\$128, 1.5 oz)	<b>Worth it.</b> "Studies have shown that with the oral use of omega-3 fatty acids, burns can heal more quickly, psoriasis improves, and people who have allergies to the sun become less sensitive."—Audrey Kunin, M.D., founder, DermaDoctor skincare
<b>Coffee</b> 	Contains a higher level of potent antioxidants than green tea and most berries	Priori CoffeeBerry Nature-ceuticals Lunchtime Yoga Facial (from \$55, 30 minutes); Revaléskin Day Cream (\$120, 1.7 oz)	<b>Worth it.</b> "The coffee cherry has impressive antioxidant potential, but it's important to remember that antioxidants can only help to prevent wrinkles, they can't do anything about wrinkles you already have."—Leslie Baumann, M.D., author, The Skin Type Solution
<b>Diamond</b> 	Helps exfoliate the skin and radiate and refract light to optically diffuse the look of wrinkles	Diamond Radiance Dermo-Matrix Fortifying Facial (from \$175, 80 minutes); Borba Age Defying Micro-Diamond Cleanser (\$25, 6.8 oz)	<b>Not worth the markup.</b> "Diamond does exfoliate, but it may do the job too well, causing friction that irritates the skin."—Leslie Baumann, M.D., author, The Skin Type Solution
<b>Gold</b> 	Natural anti-inflammatory; helps lift and firm the skin as well as fight free radicals	Umo 24-K Gold Facial (from \$300, 60 minutes); Chantecaille Nano Gold Energizing Cream (\$420, 1.7 oz)	<b>Worth it (for a treatment).</b> "When skin is properly massaged and hydrated, the gold can help firm, tighten, and brighten the skin. It also helps reduce wrinkles by neutralizing free radicals."—Wendy Katzman, spa director, Nidrah Spa, Santa Fe, NM
<b>Peptides</b> 	Softens skin and increases collagen synthesis in UV-damaged cells	Arcona Awards Night facial (from \$140, 50 minutes); La Prairie Anti-Aging Night Cream (\$200, 1.7 oz)	<b>Jury's still out.</b> "Peptides aren't easily absorbed, and benefits associated with them may be due more to the moisturizing lipids that are carriers for peptides in most skincare products. However, some peptide products do soften the skin."—Jennifer Reichel, M.D., director, Pacific Dermatology & Cosmetic Center, Seattle
<b>Syn-ake (a.k.a. Snake Venom)</b> 	Interferes with the transmission of nerve impulses to the muscles, delivering results similar to Botox but without injection	Peter Thomas Roth Venom Facial (from \$185, 50 minutes); Planet Skin-care Anti-Ageing Daily Moisturiser (\$77, 50 ml)	<b>Quick fix.</b> "It merely plumps the skin temporarily, making creases look softer for a few hours."—Rick Noddleman, M.D., medical director, Age Defy Dermatology and Wellness, Campbell, CA
<b>Vitamin C</b> 	Neutralizes free radicals and stimulates collagen production	Murad Environmental Shield Vitamin-C Infusion Facial (from \$70, 25 minutes); Ceflex-C High-Potency Serum (\$90, 30 ml)	<b>Worth it.</b> "Vitamin C not only stimulates collagen production, but it also helps exfoliate and serves as an anti-inflammatory, which is key because inflammation is the major cause of aging and disease. The problem with it is that it oxidizes once exposed to air."—Julia Hunter, M.D., founder, Skin Fitness Plus, Beverly Hills, CA
<b>Wine</b> 	Packed with antioxidants that help neutralize wrinkle-causing free radicals	Caudalé Vinoperfect Facial (from \$185, 50 minutes); Eminence Quince & Ice Wine Masque (\$52, 2 oz)	<b>Worth it.</b> "In addition to age-fighting antioxidants, grapes and wine contain acids that help exfoliate the skin."—Julia Hunter, M.D., founder, Skin Fitness Plus, Beverly Hills, CA