

SKIN — JUN 12, 2023

I Spent 3 Hours Topless in the Sun and Didn't Get Burned—My 3 Secret Weapons

by MARIE LODI

We all know tanning is bad. But I still want to have some color, especially on my legs. However, unlike many of my fellow beauty editors and recovering lay-out-in-the-sun-obsessed friends, I still haven't incorporated [self-tanners](#) or [spray tans](#) into my beauty routine. Instead, when I have the rare beach outing or pool day coming up, the girl who used to lay out in the sun for hours instantly resurfaces in me, and I instinctively break out the coconut-scented tanning oil. I just want to become a bronzed babe. Is that so wrong?

To find out if there was a safe way to get some color, I asked [MMSkincare](#) founder and board-certified dermatologist [Ellen Marmur, MD](#). “Yes, and no,” she says. “The skin has melanin to protect our DNA from injury. A base tan is not considered safe because DNA mutations happen randomly, even from a little sun, not just from sunburns or chronic deep tans.” She goes on to say that there are always risks when exposing the skin to the sun, but the best way to protect yourself and cause the least amount of harm is by wearing sunscreen with at least 30 to 50 SPF and reapplying every one to two hours when spending extended periods in the sun.



PHOTO: @MARIELODIANDREAKOS

While I already knew a safe tan was too good to be true, I was still in denial. So, when I visited my friend Lola in

New York during 80-degree weather (it was still chilly back home in L.A.), I was immediately on board when she suggested a day at the beach. Even better? Being topless at the beach in New York is legal, which means no tan lines, baby! I packed my bag of products, and this is where you might say I'm contradicting myself because although I was set on getting tanned, I still pulled out all of the stops for sun protection. I brought True Botanicals Skin Barrier Sun Shield, a mineral sunscreen I use on an alternating basis with Shiseido's Urban Environment Oil-Free Sunscreen. I also packed Vacation's SPF 30 Baby Oil. Although it's inspired by how unsuspecting tanners in the '80s and '90s used to let their skin sizzle underneath the sun's rays, this one has SPF 30. It wasn't like I thought these products wouldn't work. I just had some wishful (read: delusional) thinking that I would still get some color. After all, I tan easily.

VACATION

Baby Oil SPF 30 Sunscreen Oil

\$22

SHOP NOW

I was out there in the sun for a total of three, yes, three hours. I was in heaven, topless and relaxing, as nature intended. I was fully facing the sun while my friends were shading themselves in Lola's tent. I was sure I'd have a nice color. Well, I was completely wrong. After all that time, my skin was still the same color. I was absolutely shocked. The sunscreens I used did their job a little too well if you ask me! My takeaway from this experience? I need to stop trying to relive the tanning days of my youth and get a spray tan already. And for anyone out there looking for the best sun protection ever, try these three! I love Vacation's entire lineup of suncare, and I've been loving True Botanical and Shiseido as everyday facial sunscreens. Plus, they work wonderfully underneath my makeup.

SHISEIDO

**Urban Environment Oil-Free Sunscreen
Broad-Spectrum SPF 42 with Hyaluronic
Acid**

\$50

SHOP NOW

TRUE BOTANICALS

Skin Barrier Sun Shield SPF 30

\$65

SHOP NOW

[Cassandra Bankson](#), YouTube creator, skincare expert, and medical aesthetician, shared tips on how to properly wear sunscreen with makeup. “Sunscreen should be applied at the last step of your skincare routine—before primer, concealer, foundation, etc.—but it can double as a moisturizer or a makeup primer with the added benefit of providing skin protection benefits,” she says. “For a more natural look, opt for lightweight formulas (like Supergoop!) that look and feel invisible on the skin.” Bankson is also launching Isntree Onion Newpair Sunscreen SPF 40 PA+++ with K-beauty brand Isntree. I’m very intrigued by this one because it’s a purple sunscreen that contains Muan red onion extract to even out skin tone and blur acne scars. The product will be on YesStyle and Stylevana on June 15 and on Amazon in July.

Some days, I use my sunscreen as a moisturizer and primer, as Bankson suggests, but not all sunscreens work well when used that way. My favorite SPF primers are E.L.F. Cosmetics Suntouchable! (honestly obsessed and love that it’s \$14) and Saint Jane Beauty (my game-changing primer).

E.L.F. COSMETICS

**Suntouchable! Whoa Glow Broad
Spectrum SPF 30 Sunscreen**

\$14

SHOP NOW

SAINT JANE BEAUTY

**Luxury Sun Ritual Pore Smoothing Face
Sunscreen SPF 30**

\$38

SHOP NOW

Ahead, see more of my favorite sunscreens as well as new ones that I'm excited to try.

SHISEIDO

**WSL™ Ultimate Sun Protector Lotion
Broad Spectrum SPF 50+ Sunscreen**

\$50

SHOP NOW

This SPF lotion from Shiseido is a mainstay in my sun-care arsenal. This limited-edition version is part of Shiseido's ongoing collaboration with the World Surf League as part of the Shiseido Blue Project, an initiative that supports the protection of our oceans.

BLOOMEFFECTS

**Tulip Dew Vitamins & Mineral Sunscreen
SPF 50**

\$65

SHOP NOW

Sun serums are something I've been experimenting with more, and I've been reaching for this one by Bloomeffects a ton! It's super nourishing, has protective, antioxidant ingredients, and wears wonderfully underneath foundation after you let it settle in.

MMSKINCARE

**Sasha Suncare Mineral Sunscreen Spray
SPF 30+**

\$36

SHOP NOW

From Marmur's line of skincare, this mineral-only spray, which is fragrance free for sensitive skin, water-resistant and great for activity, also keeps skin hydrated, as it has antioxidant ingredients like Vitamin E and green tea extract. "Sales of this sunscreen also have a humanitarian benefit, as all profits are given to Beyond Suncare, an international organization recognized by the United Nations, which impacts people in Africa suffering with albinism, a condition that causes a complete absence of melanin pigment and, consequently, high rates of sometimes fatal skin cancers beginning at a very young age," says Marmur.

DR. JART+

Cicapair Tiger Grass Color Correcting Treatment SPF 30

\$52

[SHOP NOW](#)

I've loved this color corrector since my friend Krista shared it with me years ago. It instantly gets rid of any redness in my skin while protecting it with SPF 30!

FENTY SKIN

Hydra Vizor Broad Spectrum SPF 15 Sunscreen Hand Cream

\$22

[SHOP NOW](#)

A sunscreen hand cream is genius. Of course, Rihanna would have this in her Fenty Skin repertoire. It's made with deliciously nourishing murumuru and mango butters, a combination of fatty acid-rich oils, and zinc oxide to boot.

NATURIUM

Dew Glow Moisturizer SPF 50

\$22

[SHOP NOW](#)

It's all in the name with this one. I get super glowy skin with this broad-spectrum sunscreen. It wears nicely under makeup and also has something really innovative within its packaging—a 1/4 teaspoon dip cap that helps you figure out just how much sunscreen to put on.

MARA

Algae + Zinc Sea Kale Mineral Sunscreen Sérum SPF 30

\$52

[SHOP NOW](#)

This sunscreen serum was recommended to me by an esthetician, and I can see why. It's super hydrating, and smells divine. Because it's super liquidy, I was given the tip to let it settle into the skin for a minute or two before applying makeup.

ALASTIN

Silkshield All Mineral Sunscreen SPF 30

\$62

SHOP NOW

Another mineral sunscreen option that I've been using frequently is this one from Alastin (whose Brightening Serum I can't get enough of). I love how sheer it goes on. It's super helpful if I'm in a rush!

LESSE

Every Tone SPF 30

\$85

SHOP NOW

I've really been enjoying this mineral sunscreen, which is made with zinc oxide (my preferred sunscreen ingredient), as well as Australian super berries. Honestly, when it comes to SPF products, I'm gonna trust Australians, obviously! But I really love how

quickly this absorbs into my skin. For a 100 percent zinc oxide sunscreen, this blends into the skin super duper fast!

PIXI BEAUTY

Sunmist SPF 50

\$15

SHOP NOW

A sunscreen spray is incredibly helpful for applying to large areas fast, like the back and arms. This is one sunscreen that I'll be taking with me all summer long. I also love the [Aftersun Sheet Masks](#) (\$10). These will feel divine after a long, hot day. (I'm seriously about to book a trip to Palm Springs to really get some sun now.)

IMAGE SKINCARE

Image Skincare SPF 30 Prevention+ Sun Serum

\$55

[SHOP NOW](#)

Tinted sunscreen is a great choice for reducing the appearance of large pores. This new one from one of my favorite skincare brands, IMAGE, contains skin-loving ingredients like vitamins C and E, ginger root extract, plant-derived squalane, and chamomile.

OLEHENRIKSEN

**Banana Bright Mineral Face Sunscreen
SPF 30**

\$35

[SHOP NOW](#)

This has all of my favorite ingredients: the aforementioned zinc oxide, skin-brightening vitamin C, and niacinamide, which I swear is the reason my skin has looked the best it has been in years.

LA ROCHE-POSAY

**Anthelios UV Correct Sunscreen
Moisturizer SPF 70**

\$37

SHOP NOW

This is a great broad-spectrum sunscreen that contains antioxidants and niacinamide for evening skin tone and improving fine lines and texture.

PAVISE

Lip Defense SPF

\$52

SHOP NOW

Don't forget about your lips when it comes to SPF! This lip oil from Pavise is a wonderful option because it's naturally tinted, so you get a lovely hint of color while your lips are moisturized and protected.

BUBBLE SKINCARE

Plus One Tinted Mineral Sunscreen Broad Spectrum SPF 40

\$19

SHOP NOW

I'm excited about trying out this new sunscreen from Bubble Skincare. This one is tinted and formulated with milk thistle to protect the skin barrier and lilac extract for oily and acne-prone skin.

Up next, [These 29 AAPI- and Asian-Founded Beauty Brands Are on Their Way to Icon Status](#)

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