

**REAL  
LEATHER.  
STAY  
DIFFERENT.**

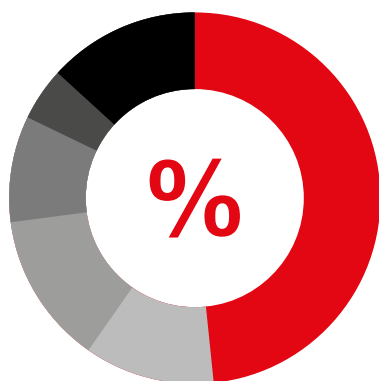
# REAL LEATHER:

**FLEXIBLE WITH UNRIVALLED DURABILITY, LEATHER DOES  
THE JOB - NATURALLY**

Strong, durable and flexible, leather is vital to many industries and crafts. In a world where fast fashion encourages the use of petroleum-based plastics, leather goes back to nature and its style is enduring. From performance clothing to industrial applications and from furniture to transport, it is the natural material of choice and has been, for 400,000 years.

- Cave paintings dating from the Palaeolithic period depict the use of leather clothing while bone tools used for scraping hides and skins have been found during Palaeolithic excavations, a period that dates from 2.6million years ago to 15,000BC. <sup>(1)</sup>
- Leather can be made with different properties tailored to the end use. For example, the leather for a walking boot will be engineered to be firm and supportive, the leather in a ballet shoe will be softer and more flexible. Leather for furniture needs to be hard wearing and incorporate special fire-retardant properties, leather for clothing will be supple and light.
- The international value of leather goods, footwear, bags and apparel is estimated at \$130.64 billion. Leather also adds value to the products of the automotive, furniture and aviation industries. <sup>(2)</sup>
- Almost 50% of global leather production is used to make footwear, most of the rest is used in the motor industry, and to make clothing and furniture.
- In 2017, leather goods accounted for an estimated 25% of a personal luxury goods market worth US \$264 billion.
- With the advent of new technologies leather remains a product that can be geared for specialist sectors and extreme environments. Leather is found on the MotoGP tracks, in the next generation of US military boots, in aviation engine systems, protecting welders and even in space, on the International Space Station. <sup>(3)</sup>
- Correctly cared for and maintained, some leather products can last indefinitely, from chairs that have lasted generations to shoes that have covered the equivalent distance of many marathons. High quality leather handbags are often passed on from one generation to the next. Leather can also be repurposed and is often upcycled.

End use of leather% by market sector, 2015 (source: UKLF/ICT)



**Footwear (46.85)**  
Garments (10.28)  
Auto (17.00)  
Furniture (9.86)  
Gloves (4.16)  
Other leather products (11.86)



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This factsheet is produced by the Leather and Hide Council of America (L&HCA), established to promote the US leather industry which is responsible for a significant proportion of the international trade in hides. The L&HCA works to establish best practice in US leather production and to share this worldwide. Figures quoted refer to the USA unless otherwise stated.

## **SOURCE:**

- (1) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_hide\\_materials](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_hide_materials)
- (2) <https://leathercouncil.org/>
- (3) <https://taskandpurpose.com/military-tech/army-combat-boot-tests>