

## Deer Hide Brain Tanning

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No one really knows how long brain tanning has been practiced. The natives in the Americas utilized this technique to manufacture fine suede leather used to make clothing and other items. In most of North America deer seem to have been the preferred animal for this.

This is where the name buck skins came from, for the native style leather pants and shirts worn by Native Americans and early European settlers. The name buck skins is misleading because a doe hide will work just as well as a buck hide. Other animals were also used as well. On the Great Plains American Bison skins were brain tanned as well as other fur bearing animals in different regions of the Continent.

The way this is done is once a deer or other animal has been skinned the hide is pulled tight on a rack and all of the hair is scraped off of it. Once the hide is completely devoid of hair, the brain of the animal is boiled down to a paste and worked into the hide. This adds an oil into the hide that has tanning properties. Generally each animal has enough brain tissue to tan its own hide or an animal of equal size. Once the brains have been worked into the raw hide it is allowed to dry.

