

## **GLOSSARY OF LEATHER TERMS**

The following definitions conform with those in the International Glossary of Leather Terms published by the International Council of Tanners in 1968.

**ANILINE DYED** - Leather that has been dyed by immersion in a dyebath and has not received any coating of pigment finish.

**ANTIQUÉ GRAIN** - A surface pattern of markings or creases, usually irregular, in which the hollows are often given a contrasting colour to produce a two-tone or two-colour effect. The creases are produced by embossing, boarding or other similar means.

**BACK** - (1) The main portion of a hide, obtained by cutting off the two bellies. (2) Leather made from (1).

**BARK TANNED** - Leather vegetable tanned mainly by means of the tannins contained in the barks of trees, the leather in process coming in contact with the raw bark.

**BELLY** - (1) Part of the hide covering the underside and the upper part of the legs of the animal. (2) Leather made from this part.

**BELLY GRAIN** - The tanned outer (hair or grain) layer split from a belly.

**BUFFED LEATHER** - Leather from which the top surface of the grain has been removed by an abrasive or bladed cylinder or, less generally by hand. In the case of upholstery leather the buffing process is invariably carried out by machine though it is sometimes incorrectly described as "hand buffed".

**BUFFING** - (1) The thin grain of leather removed from a cattle hide by the splitting machine. (2) The process of more or less removing the grain layer by abrasion. (3) Removal of the flesh side of the leather by mechanical abrasion to produce a suede effect, or to reduce the substance. Synonymous with "fluffing" and now in more common use.

**BUTT** - The part of the hide after the bellies and shoulders have been removed.

**BUTT SPLIT** - The under layers, split from the butt of a cattle hide.

**CATTLE HIDE** - The outer covering of a fully grown bovine animal.

**CHAMOIS LEATHER** - (1) Leather made from the flesh split of sheep or lambskin, or from sheep or lambskin, from which the grain has been removed by frizzing, and tanned by processes involving the oxidation of fish or marine animal oils in the skin, using either solely such oils (full oil chamois) or firstly, formaldehyde and then such oils (combination chamois). In France and the U.S.A. the term "chamois", without any qualification, is restricted to the flesh split of sheep or lambskin tanned solely with oils. (2) Leather made from the skin of a mountain antelope or chamois (such leather is rare).

**CHROME RETAN** - Leather which has been first chrome tanned throughout its thickness and subsequently further treated or tanned with vegetable and/or synthetic tanning agents and/or resin filling materials, these agents penetrating notably, but not necessarily completely, into the interior.

**CHROME TANNED** - Leather tanned either solely with chromium salts or with chromium salts together with quite small amounts of some other tanning agent used merely to assist the chrome tanning process, and not in sufficient amount to alter the essential chrome tanned character of the leather.

**COMBINATION TANNED** - Leather tanned by two or more tanning agents, e.g. chrome followed by vegetable (chrome re-tan), vegetable followed by chrome (semi-chrome), formaldehyde followed by oil (combination oil).

**CORRECTED GRAIN LEATHER** - Leather from which the grain layer has been partially removed by buffing to a depth governed by the condition of the raw material and upon which a new surface has been built by various finishes.

**COW HIDE** - (1) The outer covering of a mature female bovine animal. (2) Leather made from unsplit cow hide or its grain split. ALSO LOOSELY Similar leather from the hide of any bovine animal. (The term is not to be applied to leather from the flesh split).

**CURRIED LEATHER** - Leather, usually vegetable tanned, which has been subjected to the currying process, i.e. a series of dressing and finishing processes applied to leather after tanning in course of which appropriate amounts of oils and greases are incorporated in the leather to give it increased tensile strength, flexibility and water-resisting properties.

**EMBOSSSED LEATHER** - Leather embossed or printed with a raised pattern either imitating or resembling the grain pattern of some animal, or quite unrelated to a natural grain pattern.

**FINISH** - (1) The final process or processes in the manufacture of dressed leather. (2) The surface coating applied to a leather.

**FLESH SPLIT** - (1) The inner or under layer of a hide or skin separated from it by the splitting machine. (2) Leather made from (1).

**FULL** - (1) Leather made from the unsplit, or full thickness, of hide or skin, e.g. full sheep. (2) Leather tanned solely with one agent, e.g. full chrome in contrast to semi-chrome, and full oil in contrast to combination oil.

**FULL CHROME (TANNED)** - Leather tanned solely with one agent, e.g. full chrome in contrast to semi-chrome, and full oil in contrast to combination oil.

**FULL GRAIN** - Leather bearing the original grain surface as exposed by removal of the epidermis and with none of the surface removed by buffing, snuffing or splitting. In contrast see "corrected grain".

**GLUTARALDEHYDE LEATHER** - Leather tanned with glutaraldehyde, usually in combination with other tanning agents, to make the leather more resistant to deterioration under moist conditions.

**GRAIN** - (1) The pattern characterised by the pores and peculiar to the animal concerned, visible on the outer surface of a hide or skin after the hair or wool and epidermal tissue have been removed. (2) An abbreviation for "grain split".

**GRAIN LAYER** - The portion of a hide or skin extending from the surface exposed by removal of the hair or wool and epidermis down to about the level of the hair or wool roots.

**GRAIN LEATHER** - Leather which has the grain layer substantially intact and which is finished on the grain side.

**GRAIN SPLIT** - The outer (wool or hair) layer of a hide or skin that has been split into two or more layers.

**HIDE** - (1) The outer covering of a mature or fully grown large mammal, e.g. cattle, horse, camel, elephant and whale. (2) Leather made from (1) which has not been split, or from the grain split of such hide; when used in this way the name of the animal e.g. cowhide or ox hide or the type of leather, e.g. bag hide or case hide, may be added.

**HIDE SPLIT** - Leather made from the flesh split or middle split. NOTE: If the name of the animal whence it originates, or the word "hide" or "skin", or the part of the animal whence it comes, is included in the description then the word "split" in this sense, must be used as a noun, e.g. pig split, hide split, butt split. The word "split" must not be used as an adjective unless the grain layer is described as in "split pigskin".

**LEATHER** - Hide or skin which still retains its original fibrous structure more or less intact, and which has been treated so as to be imputrescible even after exposure to water. The hair or wool may or may not have been removed. Certain skins, similarly treated or dressed, and without the hair removed, are termed "fur". NOTE: No product is described correctly as "leather" if its manufacture involves breaking down the original skin structure into fibres, powder or other fragments by chemical or mechanical methods and reconstituting these fragments into sheets or other forms.

**METALLIZED LEATHER** - Leather given a metallic lustre by the application of metallic foils or powders.

**MINERAL TANNED** - Leather that has been tanned with mineral salts such as aluminium, chromium or zirconium salts.

**MOROCCO** - (1) Vegetable tanned goat skin leather with characteristic grain pattern developed naturally or by hand boarding or graining only. The commonest and most characteristic grain is hard grain. (2) By long usage, especially in the fancy goods trade. Goatskin of any vegetable tannage that has been hand boarded in the damp condition, but in the strict sense it should be limited to goatskin tanned exclusively with sumac.

**NAPPA** - Soft full grain gloving or clothing leather made from unsplit sheep or lambskin or kid-skin. It is usually tanned with alum and chromium salts and dyed throughout its substance.

**NUBUCK** - Cattle hide leather buffed on the grain side to give a velvety surface, white or coloured.

**OAK BARK TANNED** - A light-weighting, unbleached, bark tanned leather, which has been pit tanned, at ambient temperature for not less than five to six months by a process embodying layering for not less than three months, oak bark being employed as a basis of tannage.

**PARCHMENT** - Translucent or opaque material with a smooth surface, suitable for writing, bookbinding and other purposes. It is made from the flesh split of sheep, ass or goatskin, by drying out the limed material without applying any tannage, the material being thoroughly cleansed and degreased and smoothed during the process. Generally the flesh split of a sheepskin.

**PATENT LEATHER** - Leather, one surface of which is covered with an integral, flexible, waterproof film which has a lustrous mirror-like surface. This coating was formerly built up by the application of various daubs, varnishes and lacquers, pigmented or non-pigmented, based on linseed oil. Today these may include nitrocellulose and/or other synthetic resins. Laminates coated with a plastics film less than 0.15mm thick may also be classed as "patent leather".

**PEARLIZED LEATHER** - Coloured leather with a pearl-like lustre.

**PIGMENT FINISHED** - Leather to whose surface a finish containing fine pigment particles in suspension has been applied.

**PRINTED LEATHER** - Leather bearing a surface pattern produced, usually by embossing, but sometimes by other methods, e.g. by silkscreen printing.

**PROTECTED LEATHER** - Leather in which certain special chemicals have been incorporated to render it less liable to deterioration through exposure to polluted atmospheres. The treatment is often applied to vegetable tanned upholstery and bookbinding leathers.

**RAW HIDE** - (1) A hide which has only been treated to preserve it prior to tanning. (2) Translucent material made from the whole substance (for industrial applications, principally in the textile industry) or the grain split (for luggage) of bovine hide freed from the hair and epidermal and flesh layers and dried out in the limed state, usually without any tanning process being applied. When used for luggage purposes the surface is usually varnished to give protection from moisture.

**RETANNED** - Leather which has been subjected to an additional tannage with similar or other tanning materials.

**ROUGH TANNED LEATHER** - Leather which after tanning has not been further processed but has been merely dried out. The term "rough tanned" is used chiefly in connection with vegetable tanned hide leathers. e.g. "rough tanned strap".

**RUSSET LEATHER** - Originally unfinished vegetable tanned cattle hide leather which has been dressed ready for staining or finishing but the leather may now be combination or chrome tanned. Sometimes termed "skirt leather".

**SHADOW FINISH** - Shading of certain parts of the leather in footwear and other leather products, usually by the manufacturer.

**SHRUNK(EN) GRAIN** - Leather specially tanned so as to shrink the grain layer and having a grain surface of uneven folds and valleys. Sometimes called "drawn grain".

**SKIN** - (1) General. The outer covering of an animal. (2) In the strict sense. The outer covering of small mammals and other vertebrates, e.g. sheep and goats; or of the immature animals of the larger species, e.g. calves and colts. Used in relation to pigs, reptiles, birds and fish. (3) Leather, made from (1) and (2) which has not been split. (4) The outer covering of a fur-bearing animal dressed and finished with the hair on.

**SKIVER** - The tanned outer or grain split of a sheep or lambskin. Sometimes applied to goatskin.

**SPLIT** - (1) A single layer from a hide or skin that has been separated over its whole area into two or more layers. The layers thus obtained are termed: (a) grain split (outer split); (b) flesh split (inner split); (c) in heavy hides there can also be a middle split. (2) Leather made from the flesh split or middle split. NOTE: If the name of the animal whence it originates, or the word "hide" or "skin", or the part of the animal whence it comes, is included in the description, then the word "split" in this sense, must be used as a noun. e.g. pig split, hide split, butt split. The word "split" must not be used as an adjective, unless the grain layer is described as in "split pigskin".

**SPLIT HIDE** - (1) The outer (hair or grain) layer of a hide from which the under or flesh side has been split to give it a reasonably uniform thickness. (2) Leather made from (1). Originally vegetable or combination tanned now also chrome tanned. The leather is dressed according to the purpose required, e.g. upholstery, luggage, bags.

**SUEDE** - (1) Velvet-like nap finish produced on leather by abrasive action. (2) Leather whose wearing surface has been finished to have a velvet-like nap.

**SUEDE SPLIT** - Leather made from the flesh split of hide or skin and finished with a velvet-like nap normally on the split surface.

**TANNING** - Processing whereby putrescible raw hides and skins are converted into leather.

**TOP FINISHED** - A leather which has been given a final coating of a finish to confer special properties such as gloss, level colour, fastness to wet rubbing, waterproofness and so forth.

**TOP GRAIN** - North America. The grain split of a hide.

**UPPER LEATHER** - Leather produced for the outside upper part of footwear.

**VEGETABLE TANNED** - Leather tanned exclusively with vegetable tanning agents, or with such materials together with small amount of other agents used merely to assist the tanning process or to improve or modify the leather, and not in sufficient amounts to alter notably the essential vegetable tanned character of the leather.

**WET BLUE LEATHER** - Leather which after chrome tanning has not been further processed and is sold in the wet condition.