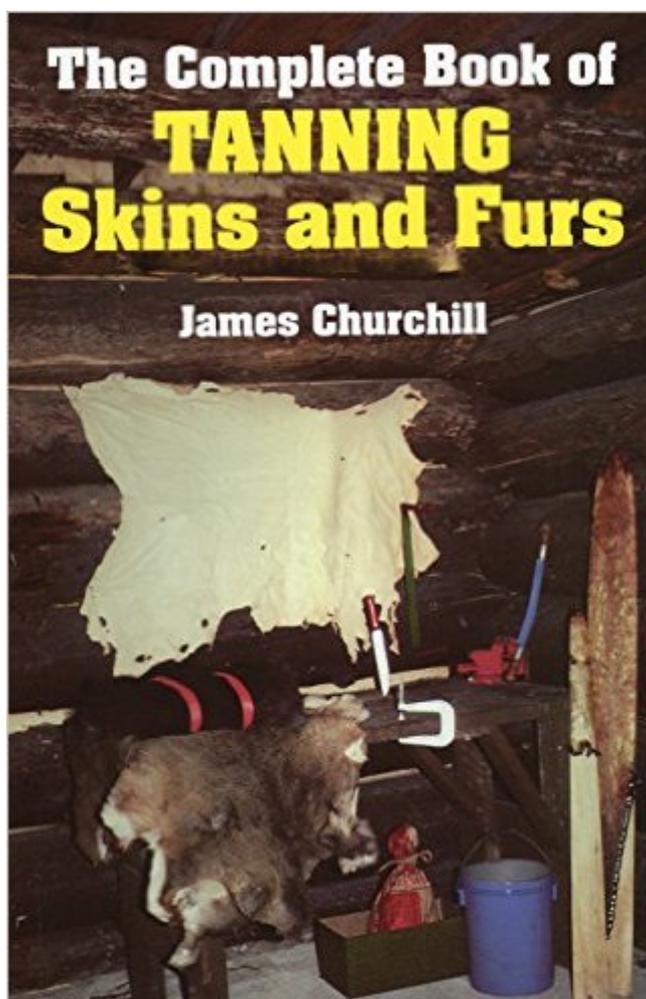


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The Complete Book Of Tanning Skins & Furs



Synopsis

The finer points of tanning with background information on the necessary tools and equipment.

Book Information

Hardcover: 208 pages

Publisher: Stackpole Books; First Edition edition (November 1, 1983)

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Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (27 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

If you want to learn tanning and you can only afford one book, don't make it this one. While James Churchill has clearly tanned numerous hides, he doesn't give the beginner near enough detail to have much chance of success... There especially aren't enough illustrations or photos of key parts of the process. Tanning is fairly simple craft, but it is precise and very tactile. You need an author who will walk you step by step through the process. .com offers two books that I highly recommend if you wish to learn hide-tanning: *DEERSKINS INTO BUCKSKINS: How to Tan With Natural Materials*, and *Wetscrape Braintan Buckskin*. Get one or both and you'll get the results you're looking for. There is some good information in Churchill's work, so if you already have tanned numerous hides, you might get it as an additional source of knowledge or ideas. However you should still beware that some of the information is either faulty or just based on a severe lack of experience with certain tanning methods (an example of this is his info on tanning buckskin. Churchill has you use a smoking method that is not only a royal pain in the arse but takes three days of constant supervision. If done correctly, this process only takes 1 or 2 hrs. He also says that this smoking renders the hide water-resistant...which isn't even close to being true!) I don't mean any offense to the author...just want to prevent would be tanners some serious frustration.

James Churchill has obviously tanned numerous hides, but that doesn't translate into a book that can teach you to tan. He covers a lot of topics, but they are so shallowly covered that I would be surprised if a beginner could tan something that they are satisfied with. I tan hides at home for a living, and teach hide tanning at events all over North America, and as far as what Churchill has to say about the tanning methods that I often use...brain and soap tanning, or bark tanning...I don't think you would have practically any chance following his directions. They are just too scanty. Tanning isn't hard but it is precise, you need clear in-depth instructions. The directions are also sometimes incorrect or tell you a method that no self respecting tanner would use...simply because there are much easier ways! Take for example the directions on smoking a hide. He tells you that smoking makes the hide water resistant (which isn't accurate), and tells you to smoke it over a tripod arranged around a camp-fire, and to do it for two or three days! In reality, smoking a hide makes it so that you can wash it (or get it wet), over and over again, and it will stay soft. And while smoking it over a tripod works, its the biggest hassle I can think of. I certainly don't want to be putting Mr. Churchill down, writing a book is a lot of work, and he has clearly tanned many hides judging by the pictures of him and his son, but there just isn't the kind of quality detail or the number of photos and illustrations that people need to learn tanning. If you are looking for a really good, simple to follow home tanning book, try out "Deerskins into Buckskins" by Matt Richards. It will teach you how to tan beautiful hides using traditional natural tanning techniques such as brains, or soap and oil (no dangerous chemicals necessary!). It is loaded with photos and illustrations, and the methods taught are efficient, tried and true, and don't require special equipment. Another worthwhile work is "Wetscrape Braintanned Buckskin" by Steven Edholm.

Churchill covers the tanning of many different types of animals, using many different methods. This is the good and the bad of this book. No other tanning book I know of contains so much varied information, and for this reason its a good one to have. However, the techniques are not covered in much detail so it is challenging for the beginning tanner to be successful using these instructions alone. In reference to the previous reviews written here. I agree with the first two (look like they are written by the same guy?), in that if you are wanting to tan buckskin, this isn't the best book. However if you are wanting to do furs, the books mentioned below don't cover them (I'm the author of one of them)...and this is your best bet.

I just finished tanning my first 3 skins based on the information in this book. They came out great. I highly recommend this book to the beginner who wants to learn different techniques for different

hides. It covers tanning techniques for a large variety of skins. NOT JUST BUCKSKIN!!!!

Refreshingly different from all those other "my way is the only way to tan a deer hide" books. Lots of different formulas/options.

I started using this book back in the late 80's when I first started tanning. Almost everything I know about tanning, I learned from this book. I've tanned elk hides, deer hides, antelope, squirrel, rabbit, snake, coyote, fox, raccoon, skunk, beaver, muskrat, and many more. I've had some failures, but with this book as a guide, I've taken very few false steps. I've used a wide variety of techniques and found that they worked like Mr. Churchill said. I do recommend this book, and have often lent my copy to friends.

I was very disappointed with this book. He talks about the generalized steps to do tanning, but he lacks good step by step information for beginners. Its a good first book to read, then find another book with more detail as to how to actually do the procedures. He only has two plans for crafting with leather, and I think he should have added more. I wouldn't advise you purchase this book unless its your first and you want to understand the general procedure of tanning, then find a better book with more details.

This book is extremely useful to anyone entering the field of home tanning. It has a proven method for tanning any skin that is likely to be available to the home tanner, from alligators to antelope.

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