



cork toys
made in portugal

IMPORTANT! NOTICE TO PARENTS

The purchase of a cork toy is a humanly noble act. Nature appreciates your choice. Before enabling its use by a child, it is advised to read the notes hereby presented to understand what cork is and how to maintain the relationship between a cork toy and a child.
Keep this information for future reference.

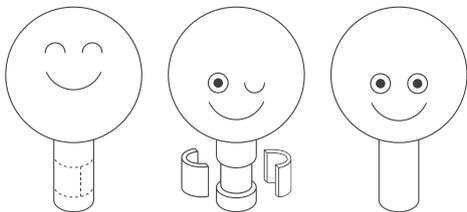
1 ABOUT CORK

1.1 ECOLOGICAL ORIGIN

Portugal is the largest cork producer and supplier in the world. Thus, **elou** has its headquarters in the epicentre of the main cork industry hub in the world. The "sobreiro" (Portuguese word for cork oak) is the tree that produces cork and Portugal has the largest cork oak planting in the world. Cork oaks grow spaced apart in wide landscapes we call Montados (Portuguese word that describes a cork oak forest), whose planting grows around 3% per year. Also called "Montados de Sobreiro", the Portuguese cork oak forest is one of the 14 world biodiversity sanctuaries: over 130 species of plants and 150 species of animals (mainly birds) can be specifically found there. Besides, cork oaks act as natural facilitators for the maintenance of more than 20 000 plant species and prove to be one of the world's foremost wildlife and flora friends. In Portugal, this tree assumes an environmental status of extreme importance, reason why its slaughter is punished by law.

The Montados protect the soil against erosion and consequent desertification. They are an anti-fire barrier - due to the weak combustibility of cork - and play an important role in regulating the hydrological cycle. From a human standpoint, they offer another fundamental contribution to the air we breathe, being responsible for setting 14 million tonnes of CO2.

The total area occupied by cork oaks in the world exceeds the equivalent to 1 million football fields, most of it located in Portugal and in some countries of the Mediterranean basin. Its growth depends on the crossing of some meteorological variables, namely high temperatures and levels of humidity. Thus, cork is a raw material of excellence, existing in only a few parts of the globe.



1.2 FROM THE CORK OAK TO CORK ITSELF

The process of extracting cork is one of the most beautiful masterpieces of nature. Cork oaks cannot be pruned and here lies the great distinction between wood and cork as raw materials.

Cork oaks produce a large bark that surrounds its trunk and it is only from the extraction of that bark that the cork is born. In addition, one of the fundamental principles of that harvesting process lies in the respect to the tree's growth and development rhythm, reason why the first cork extraction happens only when the tree reaches about 20 years. The cork harvesting period typically occurs between May and August and, even if a new bark of cork is visible after 7 years, a new harvesting cycle can only begin after a minimum gap of 9 years between extractions to assure the sustainability of the species.

Cork harvesting constitutes a point of human intervention in nature that is in line with environmental principles. In fact, this action is necessary and allows this species to remain alive for decades, because the discontinuance of the harvesting process proposes serious growth difficulties to the cork oak. In practice, the tree offers its cork to the man who, in turn, helps it to grow.

Cork production is a natural and ecologically sustainable process, whose responsible practices exempt Man from any culpability in terms of the ecological footprint: the simple fact that no trees are cut down in the process is a unique case when it comes to sustainability and ecological responsibility.

1.3 CORK AND ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

Exploring cork in Portugal is a keystone on the establishment of rural populations and generates thousands of jobs related to agronomic, forestry and silvopastoral activities, as well as catering and tourism.

Portugal exports about 60% of the total cork production. The cork industry directly employs more than 9 000 workers and provides more than 28 000 jobs in adjacent areas. More than 670 companies operate in Portugal exclusively using this raw material, resulting in a daily production of around 40 million stoppers.

Cork plays a very significant role in the country's economy and the underlying industrial activity is sustained by cultural patterns based on a manual interaction between man and nature. Nevertheless, the growing investment in industrialization is the materialization of a set of synergies between technological innovation and ancestral habits and techniques deeply rooted in the Portuguese tradition.

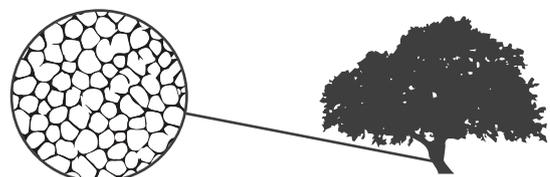
CORK COMPOSITION, TOYS AND SAFETY

elou designs and produces cork toys. Cork is a natural material, noble and with a unique ecological and sustainable status when compared to other types of material. Cork is composed of small cells of suberina, whose structure is similar to the appearance of a beehive, filled with a gas mixture identical to air. Each cubic centimetre of cork contains, on average, 40 million cells that give it unique physical properties: lightness, elasticity, impermeability, insulation, inertia, adhesion and durability.

Of all the above mentioned characteristics, its lightness stands out, since 89,7% of the volume of its cells is constituted by nitrogen and oxygen. This cellular void gives it a very light weight and, consequently, excellent floatability properties. Due to this cellular structure, unlike wood, cork does not develop sharp edges even when subjected to a cut.

Cork is a raw material commonly used and certified for the food industry and this reinforces its safety when handled by young children and babies.

Cork is the raw material at the basis of all **elou** products. A living and natural material that has been, from the beginning, the inspiration behind **elou** in its entirety, whose objective is to create a product line of minimalist conception, liable to restore the naturalness inherent in the act of playing.



CERTIFICATION AND SAFETY

All **elou** toys are duly certified and tested by several competent authorities, among which we highlight:



Certification CE: SGS - Société Générale de Surveillance (France)

Mechanical tests: CATIM - Portuguese technological centre for the metal working industry

All products comply with the strictest European quality and safety standards established by the CE designation for children toys under EN 71-1 (Mechanical and physical properties), EN 71-2 (Flammability) and EN 71-3 (Specification for migration of certain elements).

In addition to European certification, we also have certification agreements in line with the main guidance provisions for the United States of America, ASTM (US Toy Safety Regulations).

Besides cork, all components used in the production of our toys are duly certified. The inks and sealants used are natural, 100% antiallergic and free of any polluting substance (phthalates, flavourings or heavy metals).

2001/65 / EC (ROHS) - Concentration test of metals and pigments

SGS - Société Générale de Surveillance (France)

Phthalates & PCP - Toxicity Test

SGS - Société Générale de Surveillance (France)

SAFETY AND CARE

The nature of cork requires, however, some care:

- Being a natural material, the colour of the products may vary within a certain shade spectrum.
- Due to its molecular composition, slight variations in the weight and volume of the products may occur depending on the change in conditions in time and space, such as temperature, humidity, longevity and other natural factors in the life cycle of the articles themselves.
- Although all products are certified for early developmental ages, it is advised to let children play under the supervision of a responsible adult, especially during the child's teething phase. Its light and soft nature allows the child, with effort, to remove small pieces of cork that can be ingested.

This is only a precautionary recommendation since:

- All products comply with bite safety requirements for recommended age;
- The cork's cellular composition does not constitute any danger to the organism, even in case of ingestion;
- Its molecular structure does not form sharp edges even when cut or broken.
- Cork is waterproof and therefore easy to clean. To clean a cork toy, use a damp cloth and then let it dry. Do not use corrosive cleaning agents.
- Although waterproof, bath toys must not exceed 1 hour of permanent contact with water. Afterwards, it should be cleaned with a dry towel and left to dry at room temperature. Only after a good drying time, of approximately 4 hours, can the product be returned to the water.

Exceeding time in water or a drying time less than indicated, can later cause the volumetric increase and weight variations of the toy.

- The nature of cork toys is not indestructible. During the production process, we were able to control the hardness of the toy. However, one of the principles underlying the **elou** brand is the spontaneity naturally associated to the act of playing. Cork is a durable material, however, when subjected to excessive friction actions, it can perish and break into small pieces - this is a normal outcome due to the natural structure of the raw material used.

The natural depreciation of the product, derived from its continued handling, cannot be used as a reason for complaint, since it is a fundamental characteristic of the sustainable concept.

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