



## Washi Paper

- Washi is a type of paper produced in **Japan** and the word is derived from the Japanese words “Wa” which means “Japanese” and “Shi” which means “paper”. This **handmade** paper is also known as **Wagami** and is made from three major constituents:
  - Kozo or ‘mulberry bark’
  - Mitsumata shrubs
  - Gampi tree
- These **three components** are used solely or in combination for their uniqueness.
  - **Kozo is a deciduous tree** found in many parts of the world, it grows abundantly in the **Kyushu Islands and Shikoku in Japan**. Its toughness is closer to cloth and it does not weaken significantly when treated with water-resistant.
  - **Mitsumata is a bush** and is native to China and is used in making Japanese money. It is ivory-coloured, fine surface and is used in printing. It was used to print paper money in the Meiji period.
  - **Gampi trees** are native to Japan and are tough to find in any other parts of the world. It has a smooth, shiny surface and is used for books and crafts.
  - Since these trees and bushes are difficult to come across, the paper made using them are expensive to make. Sometimes certain other fibres like abaca, rayon, wheat, rice, bamboo, hemp, etc. are also mixed to make washi paper.
- Washi is an **ultra-thin paper** which was once used for everything from writing and painting to lampshades, umbrellas, and sliding doors. Due to its flexible and durable characteristics, it is used to preserve ancient text and documentaries in Japan.
- Washi paper has a **1,300-year history and it has received UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage status**.