

Smudging

Sacred Smoke Ceremony

The Ancient Art of using Smoke to purify the energy in Your Personal Space



History of Sacred Smoke Ceremony also called Smudging

Throughout history, the burning of natural herbs and minerals has been used for cleansing, healing and spiritual purposes and connects all traditional and ancient cultures across the world. Whilst it is impossible to know when the practice started, one of the earliest recorded uses of ceremonial sacred smoke is mentioned on an inscribed tablet that was found at Giza, Egypt, in about 1530 BC.

The practice is also referred to in the Old Testament in Psalm 141:2, saying *'Let my prayer be set forth before you as incense; and the lifting up of my hands be as an evening sacrifice'*. In Malachi 1:11, it says, *'...and in every place incense is going to be offered to my name'*.

The Babylonians used smoke extensively while offering prayers or as offering to the Oracles. Then, in the 5th century BC, it was recorded as having been used in Israel as part of ceremonies involving religious offerings. Its journey continued to Ancient Greece where, aside from offerings to the gods and requests for healing, it formed part of the rituals to contact the dead, following long periods of fasting and silence. The Sacred Smoke for this purpose was created from sulphur and minerals rather than the usual herbs and was believed to form a conduit between this world and the next. Eventually,

both Europe and India embraced Sacred Smoke Ceremonies, adapting the details to suit their own beliefs and tradition.

The tradition of using smoke as a purifier, an offering and/or a vehicle for prayers to a wide variety of deities can now be seen everywhere in the modern world. The Catholic Church burns incense of Frankincense and Myrrh during services, smouldering incense sticks are used in Buddhist Temples to purify the atmosphere and inspire us to develop a pure mind and in Islam, where incense are known as Bukhoor, it is used in the Mosque or Arab homes to pass amongst the congregation or guests as a gesture of inclusion and hospitality.

From the incense of Asia and Europe to the Sage and Cedar of the indigenous people, the smoke generated by plants has a primordial history of use as part of spiritual practice. Not only does herb based smoke produce known beneficial effects, such as driving off insects and preventing disease, it is also deeply and spiritually symbolic. Smoke is the medium between the higher realms, creating a good space for positive energy and removing the negative energy. As the Sacred Smoke ascends upward, it is also seen to take any prayers and intentions up to the Universe along with any personal negative thoughts and emotions.



Australian Aboriginal Smoking Ceremony is one of their most significant ancient ceremonies and involves producing smoke by smouldering various native plants, which are believed to have cleansing properties and the ability to ward off bad spirits.

Sacred Smoke Bowl Blessing is the name given to the indigenous **American** tradition often known as Smudging. This is a powerful spiritual cleansing technique which calls upon the spirits of various sacred plants to drive away negative energy and to restore balance to an individual, a group, a space or all three.

As you can see, both these ceremonies have common ingredients and common purposes and it is clear that they come from the common source of honouring the natural world and everything that exists on, in or around it.

What is Smudging?

Smudging is an ancient ceremony in which you burn sacred plants, such as Sage, to allow the smoke to clear and bless a space.



During the ceremonial burning of herbs and plant resins in a shell or clay bowl prayers of gratitude and well-being are chanted out loud. Traditionally the smoke is fanned with a special feather to direct it to where it needs to go. It was often used before important spiritual rituals and ceremonies to clear a sacred space and open the soul before calling upon the Spirits and their healing powers. An adaptation of this practice using incense is still seen today in modern churches, mosques and synagogues.

We can use this same ceremonial practice to direct the smoke over a person, throughout a living space or place of work or over tools used in spiritual practices such as crystals and singing bowls. This is done to cleanse away energy residue that may be left following a disagreement or stressful situation or when moving into a new home.

Smudging has only come into the general Western consciousness in the past few decades, so it may seem strange and 'New age-y' to some. However, this tradition has been a part of the spirituality of indigenous people for thousands of years and now it is widely accepted as a valuable cleansing process by many non-indigenous people.

Spiritual Tradition

When we perform a **Smudging Ceremony** we are plugging into an ancient, powerful line of spiritual tradition because Smudging has historically been seen as a way of connecting the material plane to the spirit realms.

Based on this rich and long history, ceremonial smoke can be seen as a Universal connection that links all cultures, religions, time frames and continents.

What is the Purpose of Smudging?

Smudging allows us to affect the subtle energies around us using the natural energy of various powerful, healing plants. Modern science confirms that our body, and indeed, the spaces that we occupy, vibrates with invisible energy currents that can be strongly affected by outside forces, both physical and spiritual. The use of Smudging cleanses our energy field of all the emotional and spiritual negativity that gathers in our body and space over time. It's a little bit like taking a spiritual shower! It can energise us, bring peace of mind and even help our body and space to adjust to the rhythms of the seasonal cycle. Most importantly, though, Smudging will promote a peaceful, beautiful

environment in which we can relax and regenerate.

When to use Smudging



The Smudge Ceremony is a perfect way to ensure that your personal space is clear from any energy that is lodged there, blocking your way to aligning with the flow of life. If you're feeling stuck, negative, sluggish or low in spirits, it may be due to some stagnant energy in your energy field. Your field can include your emotional, energetic, mental, spiritual or physical body and stagnant energy can have negative effects on function in these areas. The same applies to your environment; your home or place of work office, crowded places and large groups.

Smudging can help combat this negativity, clear the energy in your field, and help you start anew. Smudging is an ancient ceremony in which you burn sacred plants, such as sage, to allow the smoke to clear and bless a space.

Before you begin any purification ceremony, make sure you're fully present and focussed.

Your intention is the key to a successful outcome. It is important to identify the purpose of the Smudge Ceremony and to have a pure and focused intention. In this way, your intention is carried out to the Universe on the Sacred Smoke as it has been practiced for centuries.

Smudge your Energy Field -

- when you sense your energy feels sluggish, thick or sticky
- if you feel low in mood for no reason
- if you are experiencing restless nights
- after an argument or any illness to remove the energy prints left in your energy field

- upon returning home from crowded situations to remove any negative or stuck energy that may have attached to you
- before and after a spiritual practice session such as yoga or healing
- before meditation to create a clear connection with higher frequencies

Smudge your home or work area -

- when you move into a new home to remove the energy of previous residents
- before and after a guest enters your home to remove the energy of their emotions from your space
- when you begin a new job, or start your own business, to bring clarity and focus
- when you feel uncomfortable with the dynamics in your workplace

Other Reasons to Smudge –

- Over the therapy bed and therapy room after client. *You may find a Space Clearing Sage Spray is more appropriate if you have a flow of clients*
- To clean healing wands or crystals between clients
- To clean Oracle Cards that you may have used in conjunction with another person's energy

Equipment for Smudging



The Smudging Ceremony is very simple and empowering and you don't need a lot of expensive equipment to incorporate the practice into your personal practices.



All that is required is

- a shell, usually Abalone, or clay bowl
- Smudge Stick, loose leaves or resin depending on the purpose of the Ceremony
- a candle to light the Smudge Stick
- a feather to waft the smoke

Each item has their own symbolic meaning and each herb has its own benefits and purpose.

Smudge Sticks



Originally, herbs and resins were placed in a special bowl and burned, or were burned over the smouldering coals of a fire. But, as many of the indigenous tribes were nomadic, Smudge sticks were formed and used as an easy and portable way of cleansing that proved to be just as effective.

Traditionally, Sage is seen as the ideal herb to create Sacred Smoke but any sort of fragrant, medicinal herb can be used in Smudging. The healing power of plants and herbs is universal; the only difference is that not all plants grow in one region. People usually utilise the plants or herbs that are abundant in their region. Some tribes use Cedar as a way of carrying prayers up to heaven, Lavender can provide a calming and soothing energy in a chaotic situation and Sweetgrass can bring in positive energy.

Herbs used for Smudging

- White Sage is the most widely used herb in the Sacred Smoke Ceremony as it has highly cleansing, purifying and protecting properties. The smoke is said to purify negativity within our personal energy field and our living space
- Eucalyptus is the Australian equivalent of Sage. It has purifying and cleansing properties and assists in bringing good health
- Rosemary is used in Europe for purification as it promotes clarity and memory
- Sweetgrass, Seneca grass or holy grass, is often mixed with Sage or Lavender or Frankincense resin. Sweetgrass attracts positive energy whilst Sage and the like focus on dispelling negative energy
- Cedar is a very powerful herb for releasing negative energy created by trauma. It is particularly useful for people such as soldiers or victims of crimes. ***It must always be used in conjunction with Sage.***

- Lemongrass is uplifting and enhances psychic awareness
- Lavender creates a peaceful atmosphere and supports positive and loving thoughts.

Resins used for Smudging

- **Frankincense** is used for purification and creating a space for spiritual growth. It was one of the gifts given to Jesus by the Three Magi.
- **Myrrh** gives access to higher realms and therefore enhances meditation and contemplation. Myrrh was also used to honour the goddess Isis, one of the symbols of the Divine Feminine. It was also equal if not higher in value than gold and was also one of the gifts to Jesus from the Three Magis.
- **Sandalwood** is grounding and assists with intuitive development and meditation
- **Nutmeg** is used to bring in abundance and enhance physical energies.

The Elements

All ancient cultures honour the elements and include them in their sacred ceremonies. The same applies to Smudging.

- **The Element of Water** is represented by the shell or clay bowl used to hold the herbs
- **The Element of Earth** is represented by the herbs or resins used in the ceremony
- **The Element of Fire** is represented by the flame used to light the herbs
- **The Element of Air** is represented by the feather used to waft the smoke

Preparation for Smudging

The art of Smudging is a sacred act and these are some things to keep in mind when preparing for your Ceremony.

- Be respectful when connecting with the natural world of plants.
- Remember everything is inter-related; nothing is random.
- The Ceremony is one of Love

So now we have investigated the history of Smudging and the herbs and tools we need, here are some methods of using Smudging.

Safety Precautions

As you are using an open flame, take proper health and safety precautions

- Do not leave the candle burning unattended
- Extinguish the Smudge Stick fully by pushing the stick into the Earth as you empty the ash
- Do not immerse the Smudge Stick in water

- Do not leave matches candles or burning sticks in the reach of children

Practices

Clear your own Energy Field

It is advisable to clear your own energy field before you work on clearing a space or the energy field of another. You may choose to say a short incantation while you work...

'I invoke Divine protection for my body, mind and spirit as the Sacred Smoke cleans my aura. My aura is strong and filled with light and love.'

Alternatively, you could use this beautiful traditional prayer at the beginning of your Smudge Ceremony

*"May my hands be cleansed, that they create beautiful things.
May my feet be cleansed, that they might take me where I most need to be.
May my heart be cleansed, that I might hear its messages clearly
May my throat be cleansed, that I might speak rightly when words are needed.
May my eyes be cleansed, that I might see the signs and wonders of the world.
May I be washed clean by the smoke of these fragrant plants.
And may that same smoke carry my prayers to the Universe"*

Process

Note: You are using an open flame in the Ceremony so please take proper precautions.

- Lay out your leaves or resin, fire proof clay bowl or shell, candle and feather
- Set your intention verbally with one of the incantations above, or using your own words, as you place the Smudge Stick or loose leaves in your bowl or shell.
- Light a candle and then light the Smudge Stick by holding the candle flame to it until it begins to smoke. If a true flame appears, shake the bundle gently until it is just embers and smoke. You will probably find that you have to re-light your Smudge Stick a few times during the ceremony.
- When burning loose leaves, it is useful to place a charcoal disc in your clay bowl or shell. Place a few leaves over it and light the disc. Be aware that it may spark a little initially but it soon begins to smoulder steadily also catching the leaves.
- Once there is a gentle flow of smoke from the Smudge Stick, use your feather to direct the smoke towards your body. Starting at your Heart Centre work down to your feet and back up, passed your Heart Centre to the top of your head. then back down to the Heart again. As you do this, visualise the smoke spiralling throughout your energy field, in front, behind, above and below, and as it spirals upward, taking with it any energy that you wish to release.
- When you have finished, empty the ash onto the soil outside and be sure that the Smudge stick is properly extinguished. Many cultures believe that the charred residue carries its own energy and must be given back to the earth.

Clear the Energy in your Home

When clearing your environment, you can use Sage to purify and Sweetgrass to attract high frequency energies. If there is a need for a difficult discussion or conversation, use Sweetgrass to bring prepare the space.

Again, before you start your ceremony, to set your intention you could use this Native Prayer as you prepare and light the Smudge Stick

'Creator, Great Mystery Source of all knowing and comfort, Cleanse this space of all negativity. Open our pathways to peace and understanding. Love and light fills each of us and our sacred space. Our work here shall be beautiful and meaningful. Banish all energies that would mean us harm. Our eternal gratitude'.

The Medicine Wheel Garden, E. Barrie Kavasc

Process

Note: You are using an open flame in the Ceremony so take proper precautions.

- Lay out your leaves or resin, fire proof clay bowl or shell, candle and feather
- Set your intention verbally using the incantation above, or using your own words, as you place the Smudge Stick or loose leaves in your bowl or shell.
- Light you Smudge Stick from the candle and as you are leaving the space extinguish the candle.
- Move to each room in turn, stand in the centre and begin to waft the smoke into each corner from the floor up to the ceiling. Remember to include cupboards, hallways, laundry rooms and recesses. As you work you may say **'I clear the energy of this space to bring in light and love'** or some other wording that feels right to you.
- In each bedroom, smudge all areas including smudging over the bed thoroughly
- Smudge all external doorways ending with the front door. At each doorway you could say **'I open the way for only positive energy to enter into this space'** or use your own words.
- When you have finished, return to your starting point, relight the candle and acknowledge that you have finished. Close your ceremony with the words **'This is a place of peace and harmony'** or your own words and extinguish the candle.
- Empty the ash onto the soil outside and be sure that the Smudge stick is properly extinguished.

Clear the Energy in your Workplace

If you work for someone else, you may need to ask permission and it would be advisable conduct the Ceremony either before or after the working day. Most employers are open to this process especially

if they feel it will benefit productivity and relationships between the staff.

If you work for yourself, use the Ceremony to set positive intentions for business meetings and to clear stuck energy for clarity and inspiration.

Always apply the Health and Safety precautions as described.

Regularity

Once you have completed your first Ceremony you will notice the difference in your own energy and that of the space you have cleared. This will help you determine how often to carry out the Ceremony.

Depending on your situation – if you are caring for others in some way, working in a stressful job or under pressure in some way – as soon as you feel ‘sluggish or a little ‘off’ that would be the time for Smudging.

When there seems to be disruption in the home or office and situations become challenging then that would be an appropriate time for a Smudging Ceremony.

Final Thoughts:

This little book is designed to introduce you to the beautiful and ancient art of Smudging and to give you some direction. However, but it is important that you develop your own method. As long as your intention is from the heart with everyone’s best interests addressed then you cannot get it wrong. Historically, each culture has taken the basic practice and moulded it to their own needs and you can do the same.

It is important to enjoy the process of accepting and integrating different practices into your life and not make it ‘just another thing to think about’. Smudging is a tool intended to bring peace and harmony into your environment and help you deal more easily with the daily challenges we each face. The more you use it, the more you will see its advantages to you and your family, physically, emotionally mentally and even spiritually.

Enjoy!

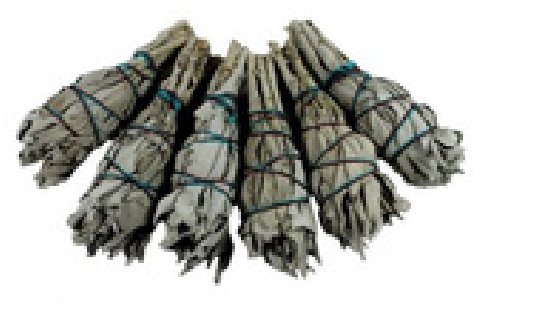
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Products

We can supply you with all your smudging needs

- Smudge Sticks
- Sage Sprays and made from pure Sage essential oil
- Sage and Sweetgrass Sprays made from pure Sage essential oil
- Crystal and Aura Clearing Sprays
- Loose Sage
- Loose Sage and Lavender
- Sage Incense
- Charcoal discs
- Clay Smudge bowls
- Smudge Feathers and Fans
- Tingsha Bells
- Singing Bowls





Classes

- Smudging Practice for Peace and Harmony
- Make your own Smudge Feather

Products available by Mail Order from The Purple Dragonfly, 256 Yarra Street Warrandyte Victoria 3113

Classes held at the above address