



GUIDE TO SMUDGING

What is smudging and why do we do it?

Smudging is a ceremony that is practiced by many cultures under different names. The information I'm sharing is from the teachings I've received, rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing. In the most general terms, smudging is the practice of burning herbal medicines.

Smudging is a cultural ceremony practiced by Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island (North America). Within this ceremony, sacred plant medicines are burned and prayers are made over the smoke.

The 3 sacred medicines that are commonly used to smudge are sage, sweetgrass, and cedar.

A smudge ceremony is done to cleanse the mind body, and spirit. It can also be used to cleanse a space or an item.

This ceremony allows us to ground ourselves into Mother Earth and connect with Creator. The smoke carries our prayers up to Creator and with it, takes any heaviness or negativity, making room for our intent to come in.



Preparing to Smudge

1. Gather your smudge supplies; shell, medicines, matches, feather
2. Set your intention
3. Place a small amount of the medicine you're using in the shell
4. Light the medicine and wait for the flame to go out, you can use the feather to blow out the flame, you just want a smoulder
5. Remove any jewellery / glasses

Smudging

1. Holding your intention in your heart and speaking it aloud to make it stronger, start by placing your hands over the smoke
2. Pull the smoke over your head so you may think good thoughts
3. Pull the smoke to your eyes so you may see the good in the world around you
4. Pull the smoke to your ears so you may listen and hear good sounds
5. Pull the smoke to your mouth so you may speak in a good way
6. Pull the smoke to your heart so you may feel good things and have an open heart
7. Pull the smoke over the rest of your body so you may walk through the world in a good way
8. Give thanks to the medicines and Creator
9. Make your prayers
10. Allow the smudge to finish burning naturally
11. Return the ashes to the land



Smudging Your House

1. Set your intention
2. Open the windows
3. Light the smudge
4. Starting at the front door, move around the house in a clockwise direction, fanning the smoke outwards, speaking your intention and prayers as you go
5. Ending back at the front door. Give thanks to the medicines and Creator.
6. Allow the smudge to finish burning naturally and close the windows
7. Return the ashes to the land

Smudging an Object

1. Set your intention
2. Smudge yourself first
3. Smudging the object...
 - a. If it's a small item, hold the object over the smoke
 - b. If it's a large item, fan the smoke over and around the object using a feather
4. Speak your intention as you allow the smoke to wash over the object
5. Allow the smudge to finish burning naturally and close the windows
6. Return the ashes to the land



Cultural Awareness Around Smudging

Every individual, nation, and tradition will have different protocols around smudging. Below I've included some of the most common protocols I've encountered and been taught. If you're in a new space and are unsure what protocols they follow, you can respectfully ask.

- Do not blow on the smudge, use your hand or a feather to fan it.
- Remove any jewellery, glasses or technology before smudging yourself and smudge them separately before putting them back on.
- Never throw the ashes in the garbage, return them to the land or hold onto them until you can. The same goes for the plant stems if the medicines you're using are still on the stem.
- Use wooden matches to light to smudge, not a lighter.
- Some traditions do not believe women should smudge on their moon time (menses). Some traditions feel that women can use sage on their moontime, but not the other medicines.
- Know where your medicines are coming from and that they were harvested in a good way. These are sacred medicines and must be respected.
- Always be mindful and have a clear intent when smudging.
- The right for Indigenous peoples to practice the tradition of smudging is legally protected in Canada by the Canadian Human Rights Act, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.