



## Smudging pot

Use a clay bowl or clamshell. Or an abalone shell, though some tribes believe they're inappropriate for the ritual. A flat rock with a bowl-shaped depression will work. And in a pinch, you can even use the ground (likely what our ancestors did).



# Do It Yourself Smudging



*DIY Smudging was made possible with support from the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council GHWIC program funded by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 6 NU58DP006732.*





**S** mudging is a deeply rooted tradition for many Indigenous Americans. They believe the smudging ceremony removes their sadness, impurities and anxieties.

For many, it's how they connect spiritually with their Creator. Smudging gives them spiritual protection and improves their health.

Smoke from burning traditional medicines like sage—and sweetgrass, cedar, tobacco and sweetpine, to name a few—is how many Native people cleanse themselves, objects and places. Many believe it purifies their souls of bad thoughts about others, clears their minds and rids them of negative energy.

Learning to smudge can be a healing experience all by itself. And you don't need much to do it, just the desire to feel better.

## Pick your medicine

It's best to harvest your own medicine from Mother Earth. Before picking, many tribes thank the Creator by burning natural, raw tobacco as an offering. Once picked, remove stems and dry the medicine before using it. If you buy plants online, make sure they're from a reputable source.

**Sage.** Both white and common offer strength, clarity and wisdom.

**Cedar.** It's popular for cleansing, purifying and eliminating evil spirits.

**Sweetgrass.** Mother Earth's hair, is a symbol of kindness. Some Native people believe the plant's smoke carries prayers into the spirit world. Talking circles and healings enjoy its calming effect. Most use braided sweetgrass.

**Tobacco** is a sacred medicine in many Native cultures. Tribes believe it's the ideal bridge between the human and spiritual worlds. Many tobacco ceremonies are sacred and remain a secret to people outside the tribe.

# Smudging



*Sage*



*Cedar*



*Sweetgrass*



*Tobacco*



*Feather*



*Matchstick*

## Ready to smudge

- ❖ Be fully present and focused.
- ❖ Place a small amount of medicine in the smudge bowl. Many tribes prefer to light it with a match or matchstick instead of a lighter.
- ❖ Let the medicine flame up for a bit. Some use feathers to fan the flame.
- ❖ Hold your hands above the flame to cut off the oxygen, then it starts smoldering.

## The smudging ceremony

- ❖ As the ceremony starts, so do the prayers. Many tribes have smudging prayers.
- ❖ Think of smudging as bathing in smoke. Cup your hands to catch the smoke, pass it over you and rub it into your skin. Start with your head and move down the rest of your body. Take several handfuls, like you would water. Some tribes use an feather for this.
- ❖ When finished, return the sacred ashes to Mother Earth.