

# Sweat Lodge Information

## **BACKGROUND:**

Sweat Lodges were given to the people all over the world, thousands of years ago to help improve their lives. The Sweat Lodge is a sacred place to explore, develop and enhance our relationship to “All That Is” and it acts as an accelerator to spiritual growth. The ceremony is a powerful way to pray, and it cleanses us, heals us and helps us to grow.

There are several kinds of Sweat Lodge possible: Family Lodge (for men, women & children), Women’s Lodge & Men’s Lodge. Guests are always welcome, and Sweat Lodge ceremonies are also available on request for private groups and for individuals in crisis.

## **PREPARATION:**

Hydration is the best thing to do two or three days before ceremony; be sure to intake more water when you know you will be attending a Sweat Lodge. There are other ways to become more receptive and increase the benefits of your sweat experience. Abstain from intoxicants (at least 24 hours prior) and avoid heavy foods. The cleansing works first on the body and anything that blocks the process may be more difficult to cleanse, thus fasting is ideal or at minimum, light eating.

Throughout your day, before the sweat, count your blessings many times. Consider your intentions for your life, what you want for your life and for others. Bring those intentions into your heart and fuel them with love. Empty yourself. Try to forget everything you think you know. Become like a child and see the wonder in all of creation. Bless yourself for all you’ve been through and for what you want to give to the world.

## **ARRIVAL:**

It is important that the ceremony start as close to on time as possible. For orientation before the sweat (especially for first timers), or to ground yourself after the drive, please plan to come at least 30 minutes early. It’s always okay to come three hours early to help out. If you’re running late, come anyway. You will be allowed in, between rounds.

## **CANCELLATIONS:**

If a sweat is canceled due to rain, we may have a Sacred Pipe Ceremony or Drumming circle instead. Check your e-mail before leaving home, especially if we’re having questionable weather. I cannot return calls after the prayers have begun (an hour before sweat time). Phone # 805.481.0892.

## **MOON TIME (menstrual cycle):**

Almost all Native Sweat Lodges prohibit women from attending any ceremonies on their moon time. These are not my teachings. The Sweat and Moon Time ceremonies are both powerful cleansing ceremonies. Combining the two may intensify the cleansing for everyone involved. Cleansing is not always comfortable but it is always healing, and with loving intentions and specific prayers, this mixing of ceremonies is a powerful good thing. If you are uncomfortable about this, it’s okay. You will find the lodge that is right for you.

Note to Women on your Moon Time: The Sweat and Moon Time ceremonies both release large amounts of water from the body. Your moon time may be accelerated. Ask your body. If you decide to sweat, PLEASE replenish with large amounts of water and electrolytes (like Gatorade).

## **SWEAT LODGES:**

If you attend Native American Sweat Lodges, here is what you need to know: Bring wood, tobacco and donations for the fire keeper, sweat leader and rock runner. No drugs, alcohol or cameras. DO NOT attend ceremonies during your moon time without asking first. Never assume. Be respectful. Hold a place of silent respect at all times, for there are prayers going on around the fire and the lodge. Don't approach the Fire or Lodge without asking first. This ceremony is not a place for chit-chat. It's a place of introspection and prayer.

You are welcome to pray the whole time you are in the lodge. When it is your turn to pray out loud put your most forward prayers to voice. The listening by your lodge family empowers and strengthens these prayers. The Sweat Lodge Ceremony is not a competition as to how hot we can take it and stay in the longest. We do have considerations as to the ability of others. We are a Rainbow community and the most important thing is that we stay in and pray. If one must leave, then wait respectfully and ask when the door is opened, as it is after each round.

## **IT'S YOUR SWEAT:**

Open sweats are a community effort and it is important for everyone to contribute. What is required for a sweat ceremony to take place is a place to do it, lots of firewood, time, labor and people committed to purification, growth and love. If you want to participate in the preparation, come early. A donation helps maintain a good relationship between your sweat community and the facility. Replenish the wood used for your ceremony, which helps to ensure future sweats. The amount of wood used for a sweat is hard to convey: A large fire must burn for 5 to 6 hours and consumes 75 to 100 logs, at a cost of about \$90 per sweat. We use only natural wood, primarily Eucalyptus and Oak (No treated wood, paint or nails, please.)

## **WHAT TO BRING:**

Offerings – Tobacco offerings, Gifts, cards, and/or donations to show appreciation to the fire keeper for his or her time and labor and for taking care of you, to the door person (rock runner), and donations for the sweat leader are never required, but they do keep them going. Optional: Bring a towel to sit on, bottled water (not in the lodge itself), food to share, warm comfortable clothing for after the sweat.

What to wear: When the lodge is mixed, we call for modesty, please. Natural cotton is most comfortable. Recommended: Women – non-revealing sweat dresses, or sarongs in all woman's lodge is fine. Men – trunks or shorts, tank or tee shirt.

## **NO PAY TO PRAY:**

If you are cash-poor. (PLEASE) don't stay home because of it. Your sponsor donations will be taken care of. Wood can be found. Perhaps at another time reciprocity can be balanced. A ride might be arranged if you let us know. Handshakes, smiles and hugs are great gifts to show your appreciation. If this is the case, PLEASE let me know so that contributions and donations can be handled properly.

## **FIRE KEEPERS:**

We're always looking for fire keepers. Tending fire is a powerful way to pray and to serve the people. Women and men are welcome to learn. If you're interested, let us know or come 4 hours early.

## **BOUNDARIES:**

We are guests on the land. No dogs. Please park safely and snugly in the parking area and allow parking at the front for the elders. Be quiet in the parking lot. Respect for the land is required. What you bring in, you take out.

## **POTLUCK:**

Please bring a dish such as you would feed your most beloved. Good nutritious food, full of love. Soups are always welcome at Sweat Lodge Ceremony for their hydrating effects. Bring a gallon or more of good drinking water. We are on a well that is not potable. The kitchen will be clean before ceremony and should be cleaned after ceremony. "LEAVE IT BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT".

## **GUESTS:**

You are responsible for guests that you bring. Please be sure they are fully informed. In order to have a harmonious, highest possible experience, it is important for everyone attending to know what is expected of them. Help by teaching your guests in a gentle and loving way.

## **REQUESTED SWEATS:**

All contributions are based on "ability to support". The most important reason that this lodge is here is for those in crisis. When you request a sweat, you are responsible for the wood, for an offering for the Facility, and if possible, for an appreciation gift for the officers. Firewood costs \$250 - \$300 per cord (plus delivery). It takes 1/3 cord for a sweat, so \$150.00 is requested.

Give from the heart, keeping in mind how fortunate we are to have a place to pray in this way. These costs are not donations, but contributions are needed to make your sweat happen. Anything beyond your contribution is a donation and will be deeply appreciated. Be generous - the more you give, the more you are blessed. Some form of offering for the fire keepers is appropriate.

There is no minimum or maximum number of people required. Pick a date (or two). I'll check the schedule. Everything else is the same as for open sweats. A tobacco offering (asking) is appropriate.

## **IN CONCLUSION:**

"When the day comes, when we're all making each day a ceremony, all of Mother Earth's children will be living in harmony and we won't need sweat lodge anymore, or yoga, or hurricanes, or earthquakes ... and isn't that the whole point anyway?"

Eaglebear

Every Sweat Is Perfect AHO!

If you have any questions, suggestions, or requests please contact us! 805.481.0892 [rosa2hua@aol.com](mailto:rosa2hua@aol.com).