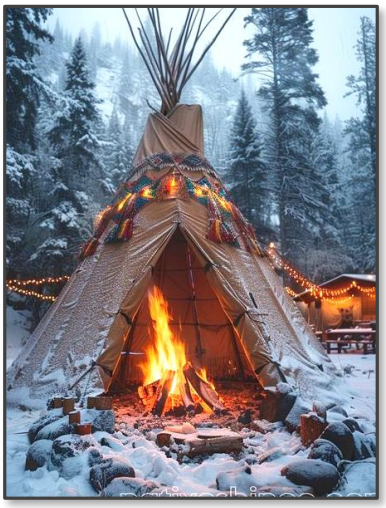
Lakota Traditional Inipi - Sweat Lodge Ceremony Protocol



A traditional sweat lodge (Inipi) is a place of healing, of purification, and of prayer. Join us for this ceremony led by Long Soldier, an Oglala elder. Everyone is welcome, and there is no fee.
Cash donations to Lakota Spiritual Leader, Long Soldier, are appreciated to offset travel expenses, providing wood, and sharing traditional knowledge. Tobacco offering is also a way to show respect to an Elder.

HONOR

Every Inipi has an **altar** set up in front of the opening door. It connects the sacred fire to the center of the Lodge. Do not walk between the altar, the fire, and the lodge. In Lakota tradition, the door will face the West. Sacred items are placed on the altar, such as a Chanupa (pipe).
When everyone has gathered around the Inipi, people will be smudged as they enter the lodge, in a clockwise fashion. We show respect by crawling in as we enter our Mother's womb in a humble way, connecting with all that is by saying "**Mitakuye oyasin**" meaning "all my relations" or "we are all connected."
Offerings of tobacco, cedar, copal, and other herbs are appropriate to give to the fire during the prayers in thanksgiving. Feel free to bring a drum or rattle so that you may join in songs and drumming while in ceremony.

PURIFICATION CEREMONY

The Leader of a Inipi (sweat lodge) is known to be the One who Pours Water. He is helped by a Fire Keeper and one who will handle the rocks inside the lodge. To conduct the cleansing, lava stones are brought into the lodge. No two ceremonies are the same. Each is run according to the vision of the leader.
The ceremony is conducted in four rounds (or doors). In the 1st round, prayers are offered to the **West**; in the 2nd, to the **North**; in the 3rd, to the **South**; and in the 4th, to the **East**. During this round, prayers are also offered to those who have crossed over.
Lakota protocol for prayers to the 6 directions:
West: Horse Nation – place of thunder beings / Water – Dark blue/black
North: Buffalo / Tatonka Nation – Earth – Red
East: Deer, elk /Hayhakaka Nation – Air – Yellow
South: Eagle / Winged Nation – Renewal – Fire – White
Above: Grandfather Sky – Blue
Under: Grandmother Earth – Green

RESPECT

Before the ceremony, please remove any jewelry, including nose ring! Once inside the lodge, it is asked that no one comes out until the end of the 3rd round when the Chanupa has been passed around. (unless for urgent needs). The reason is that when someone exits it "breaks the sacred circle" thus contaminating the ceremony.
Inside, respect the sacredness of the ceremony using a quiet voice with no mundane talk. Observe and pay attention to Long Soldier, the Ceremony Leader. This is a time of prayers, avoid eye contact and refrain from touching male or female, even if someone is crying, as touch may stop the flow of their emotions which need to be released.
Dress code: shorts for men; long skirt and T-shirt or long dress for women.
Bring a small towel to use inside the Inipi to cover your face when it becomes very hot. It is said that when you suffer from discomfort inside the lodge, you heal or save someone else's life.

Other notes: Children are welcome.
*Following tradition, women on their **moon cycle** are asked not to participate.* Please be mindful of this request.
No cell phones, alcohol, drugs or firearms at the fire circle.

We need the contribution of all participants for a smooth running of the Inipi.
The day before the Ceremony: Volunteers meet at Sweat Lodge at noon to prepare the ground, unload wood, set up the sacred fire and lodge. Please contact Mark if you can help, 970-987-3731.
After the Sweat Lodge: Volunteers to break down the lodge, put away the blankets, set up potluck feast, clean afterward the bathrooms and Heart Barn, take out the trash.