

Sweat Lodge

The sweat lodge is the altar of the earth mother; it is the womb of the earth, built of saplings gathered with care and prayer and draped with wool blankets, filled with hot stones whose wisdom are awakened and opened by the heat of the fire element. We are one with the cool air, the hard earth, the water, the sky, the smoke of the fire that heats the rocks. Leave technology behind, leave for a moment creature comforts we enjoy, to reconnect with what is primal, original and real. The soul ground.

We enter the lodge on our hands and knees, humble and willing. Inside it is pitch black, hot. As we engage in rounds of prayer, connecting to the four directions, we embrace new beginnings, let go of what is no longer needed, invite what we choose to receive and integrate our deepest wisdom with trust and understanding. We pray.

The sweat lodge is a ceremony of purification; every lodge fire connects to all lodge fires that have come before. We remember who we are in right perspective, in harmonious relationship to all things. We leave the lodge like newborn beings, lighter, altered and free.

What to Expect

- A beautiful community gathering around the fire as the rocks are heated. Sometimes we sit in silence, and sometimes we do some preparatory work around the fire prior to entering the sweat lodge.
- The Lodge Keepers will share about the process of the Lodge.
- When it is time to enter the lodge you will be guided accordingly by the lodge keeper.
- The men and women will sweat separately.
- We will screen with blankets or sheets to undress, and cover with a Towel until we are in the Lodge. The Lodge will be held with utmost discretion.
- Men will be asked to step away completely and likewise the women will do the same for the men.
- A towel can be brought into the lodge to sit on if needed.
- We enter the lodge prayerfully, on hands and knees. The inside of the lodge will be pitch black, except for the red glow of the hot rocks until they cool.
- Participants sit side by side, close together. There is typically room to sit upright in the lodge, however it is not unlike a sacred womb. The space is small and with the addition of heat and sweat we are compressed inward, in order to find the infinite expanse of the internal universe.
- As the rocks enter the lodge and the water is poured on them to create steam, the interior of the lodge will become very warm. Some people become claustrophobic at first until they relax into trust and the fire element dissolves fear. The fear that arises inside the lodge is fear that already exists, prior to entering the ceremony. As it comes up and out it is released.
- Rounds of intentional reflection and prayer commence, guided by the lodge keeper. Prayers can be made out loud as directed, or internally. Sometimes songs / chants are sung.
- At the end of the last round participants exit and lay upon the cool earth.
- Variations on this description can be expected.
- The night prior to the lodge and certainly post-lodge dreaming can be strong. Pay attention to dreams, emotional release, physical shifts etc. This is all part of the purification process physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

For Women Entering their Moon Time at the time of the Sweat Lodge:

Also led by our Woman Lodge Keeper, there will be a beautiful, alternative way of purification in place of the Sweat Lodge.

A Note about Prescription Drugs, Alcohol & Drug Use:

Alcohol and drug use is not permitted prior to or during a sweat lodge, both for safety reasons and for spiritual / energetic reasons. The sweat lodge ceremony is deeply purifying on a physical level. A great amount of sweat is produced in the body. Alcohol is dehydrating and consumption prior to a lodge, including the evening before, is compromising and unsafe. Additionally, toxins stored in the body will be released through the sweat, therefore excess recreational drug use or use of pharmaceutical prescriptions can have physical impact. Please list all pharmaceutical drugs required for maintenance of your physical and mental health in the health questionnaire.

If there are any questions or need further information, please email vickie.cowan@sacredfire.org