

The Foundations of Incense

A WORKBOOK FROM THE
HAND-CRAFTED INCENSE
WORKSHOP SERIES



THE NORTHWEST SCHOOL OF
AROMATIC MEDICINE



Most people see incense as a simple air freshener or a tool for enjoyment, which it is...

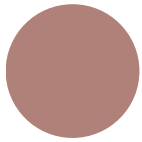
...But it's so much more than that.

For aromatherapists and herbalists, incense becomes a vital holistic tool, deepening the healing journey for their patients.

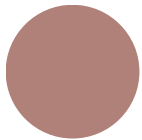
For incense enthusiasts, crafting your own blends fosters a deeper connection with precious botanicals and resins, and enriches your incense practice greatly.

And for the spiritually attuned, crafting personalized incense blends for ritual enhancement is a transformative experience, reshaping your spiritual path.

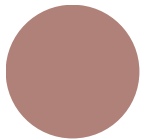
Ways to Use Incense



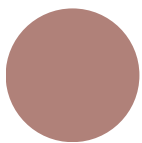
Fight off infections, colds, and flus during the cold season while strengthening your immunity



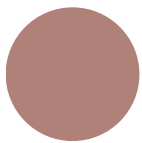
Heal the body through the respiratory and digestive systems, and balance the psyche, emotions & spirit.



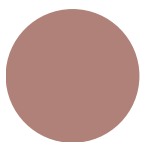
Cleanse the atmosphere and kill various airborne pathogens and viruses



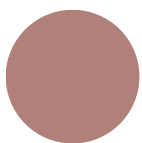
Add depth to your spiritual practice, prayer, meditation, or ceremony



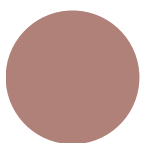
Achieve holistic healing with specially formulated aromatherapeutic blends



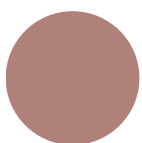
Formulate amazing smelling incense for enjoyment, sensory pleasure, relaxation, & uplifting your space



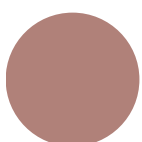
Impress your guests with beautiful aromas that make them feel welcome in your home



Soothe the nervous system and relieve anxiety and stress



Share your incense creations with others as gifts to friends and family



Add incense to your existing product line for added revenue or start a new venture selling your fragrant creations



The path of the incense crafter is one of beauty and wonder.

Incense crafters are blessed to work with many raw aromatic botanicals from around the world. Many crafters even grow their own botanicals or harvest them in nature, deepening their bond to their incense practice and the plants they use in beautiful ways.

They live immersed in the realm of scent, enveloped by the heavenly aromas emanating from their crafting tables. They share their aromatic gifts with friends and family, or offer healing incense formulas to patients, bringing in transformation, balance, and joy to others.

Many even go on to support themselves through creating flourishing incense businesses, putting their creations out in the world, promoting peace and relaxation, and sharing their aromatic medicine.



The 3 Virtues of Incense

Before you attempt to make your first batch of incense, It's important to know about the possibilities so you know which direction you want to take your incense crafting practice.

So let's talk about the 3 Virtues of Incense and the 3 main types of incense...





Incense As Medicine

Incense, the original aromatic medicine, has an ancient history of therapeutic use. The original act of burning aromatic plants as incense on hot coals was a practice that addressed a wide range of physical and emotional issues.

This evolved into a refined medical practice in traditions like Chinese Medicine and Ayurveda over millennia.

Today, incense remains a respected healing tool worldwide, and is an important addition to aromatherapy and herbal medicine practices.



Medicinal aromatic plants in incense serve various purposes, from respiratory, immune, and nervous system support, to psychological balancing, to emotional and spiritual healing, and more.

Incense offers a user-friendly and safe approach compared to essential oils or ingested remedies. Anyone can benefit from the healing properties of incense with very little knowledge of plant medicine.

Those well-versed in healing can add a powerful layer of aromatic medicine to their practice.

Despite its efficacy, many are unaware of its therapeutic potential. Many are also turned off by incense due to their experiences with commercial products filled with harmful synthetic fragrances.

This is why learning to make your own *natural incense* with trusted ingredients is crucial.

Incense & Aromatherapy

Incense, the precursor of modern aromatherapy, provides a broader spectrum of plant medicine than essential oils. While less potent, incense complements essential oils in a holistic aromatherapy practice, also offering a ritualistic aspect for a deeper healing experience. It can also be used independently for effective healing.

In the realm of aromatherapy, incense and essential oils have distinct indications and healing properties, complementing each other in powerful ways.

Incense is also a valuable addition to herbal healing practices, addressing the emotions, respiratory health, the mind, and unlocking new dimensions of healing.





Incense for Ritual

Incense has been integral to sacred rituals and ceremonies across cultures throughout history and remains a key component of modern religions and spiritual practices.

Its spiritual significance lies in its ability to create a ritualistic atmosphere, enhance emotions and mental states, and influence the limbic system of the brain, associated with intuition and higher thoughts.

Used globally in spiritual practices like Buddhism, Native American traditions, and Taoism, incense is used to aid meditation, as offerings, for spiritual protection, cleansing, and enhancing creativity.

Incense for Aesthetics

Incense, with its widespread use as medicine and deep spiritual connection, has one more core virtue to explore: its captivating aroma.

The timeless aromatic art of incense crafting has evolved over thousands of years, with every culture perfecting its own traditions and styles. From India's exotic and floral incenses to Japan's refined and delicate varieties, crafting incense has been a source of sensory delight and aesthetics for ages worldwide.

Today, countless artisan incense crafters continue to create exquisite blends aimed at delighting the senses and offering transformative experiences for people.



The 3 Main Types of Incense



Loose Incense: The oldest style of incense. Requires a hot charcoal to burn. A more engaged burning experience that is perfect for personal or group rituals.

Loose incense is the oldest and most primitive form of incense. It was the original type of incense across every culture that's ever burned it.

Loose incense is a formless mixture of blended aromatic ingredients, resins, woods, or other aromatic plant materials, often infused with natural gum binders to give it a particular consistency.

To burn loose incense, it is sprinkled on hot coals. The act of burning loose incense forces you to be more present and is more of an engaged ritual for burning incense. Therefore, it's ideal for many personal or group rituals, such as prayer, various ceremonies, or the simple ritual of meditating with and studying the botanicals of the incense that you're burning.

The 3 Main Types of Incense

Cones: Self-burning, easy to use. The most fun and simple type of incense to make for beginners. Perfect for burning in the background or during meditation.



Incense cones are small, cone-shaped incense that are referred to as a 'combustible' type of incense. You can conveniently ignite their tip and they will burn all the way through on their own.

These are self-burning whereas loose incense requires hot charcoal to burn. Cones are a great form of incense to learn how to make when you're just starting out. With a little guidance through this mini-series, you'll be making your own cones in no time!

Cones are perfect for many scenarios, such as if you want incense burning in the background when guests are over, or you're meditating and desire a hands-off burning experience. Incense cones also make great for gifts for people because they're so easy to use.

The 3 Main Types of Incense



Sticks: Also self-burning, more difficult to make. Burns for longer than cones and give off less aroma. Great for hands-off burning, enjoy it burning in the background.

Incense sticks are a thin cylinder of incense that are 'combustible,' or self-burning. Just like cones, you can light one end of a stick and it will burn on its own.

Incense sticks come in many different lengths and thicknesses. They are great for burning while you're reading or going about your day, if you're wanting to relax or meditate, or you want to welcome guests and have incense burning in the background.

Incense sticks burn for a longer period of time than cones and are a bit more subtle in their aroma, whereas cones give off a more potent aroma in a shorter amount of time.

All three types of these incense; sticks, cones, and loose incense; all have their particular qualities and certain preferred uses depending on the intentions behind your incense burning.

At the same time, each variety works with **the 3 Virtues of Incense:**

You can use any of these types for therapeutic, spiritual, or aesthetic purposes. It's all up to your personal preference...

Making any of these types of incense can easily be done at home with the proper guidance and understanding.

But to do so there are some major components and key elements that you need to know how to combine correctly and carefully to get the results and success you want from your incense crafting..





What's Next?

Now that you know the foundations of incense, its vast uses, and its 3 main types, the next step is to learn about **what actually goes into a successful blend** to make it burn properly, maintain a solid shape, and smell great.

This is a big topic so I've created an entire video to give you everything you need.

Also, to help you in gathering your ingredients for your first batches of incense, feel free to check out my company **www.highermindincense.com** for sustainable and pure botanical incense powders and products.



Thanks for joining me. I still have a lot in store for you in the series. Stay tuned and look out for my next emails for lessons 2 & 3, where we'll dive deep into the building blocks that go into every successful batch of incense and how to actually make your own incense cones from start to finished product.

This is just the beginning!



Evan Sylliaasen