

The Modern Shamanic Guide to Rapé

The Sacred Amazonian Snuff You Blow Up Your Nose



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Introduction to an Ancient Amazonian Healing Tradition

Ancient indigenous tribal cultures have long-regarded plants as sacred medicines and healers. The art and practice of working with plants for their medicinal, psychoactive, spiritual, and transformative properties has been going on cross-culturally for millennia. One such plant that we don't tend to see as "sacred" or "medicinal" in our modern world, is tobacco. On the contrary, most people believe tobacco to be an addictive, harmful substance that can lead to life-threatening diseases like cancer.



*Huni Kui shamans sharing rapé.
Image Credit: Susan Zurrender*

But long before Marlboro or Camel cigarettes came around, tribal cultures were utilizing tobacco for sacred, ceremonial, shamanic, and medicinal

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functions. Sadly, this plant that has the potential for incredibly potent and beneficial effects on the human body, mind, and spirit has been mass-produced, synthesized and incorporated with harmful chemicals to create cigarettes, which has become so widely prevalent in our modern world, and one of the leading causes for cancer.

The sacred shamanic snuff known as rapé – pronounced ha-PAY – has been used by tribal cultures in the Amazonian region for ritual, medicinal and recreational purposes for thousands of years. These indigenous tribes rarely used tobacco for smoking. They used tobacco in ceremonies, to predict good weather, fishing, or harvest, for spiritual purposes, or for healing purposes.

Rapé is considered to be one of many sacred medicines from the Amazon that are used both to overcome physical, psychological and emotional blocks as well as gain tremendous insight into other, subtler worlds. However, it is essential that we understand how to engage properly with these medicines, so that we can obtain maximum benefit from them, and commune with them in a respectful and honoring way as indigenous cultures do.

With the advent of technology and travel, the time has come where these ancient practices and indigenous plant medicines are now accessible to us in a way they never have been before. We can use these medicines as if they were recreational drugs, as a novel means to get high, with no understanding of the proper context or manner to consume these medicines, let alone share them with other people.

Or we can choose to understand the cultural context of these practices, reconnect to the spirit of the plants, and cultivate a mutually beneficial relationship with them. By understanding the teachings and traditions which have been passed down from the Amazonian tribes, we can learn to use one of their most highly regarded medicines, rapé, to commune with tobacco on a whole new level.

This guide has been written to help you gain insight into how and why rapé can be a very potent tool used for healing and spiritual exploration in the modern era. You will learn what exactly rapé is, what different kinds of rapé you can choose from and the various ways to administer it. You will also learn about the crucial importance of “set and setting”, the sacred attitude you must have when using this sacred medicine, and what to avoid when using it.

If you are reading this you are probably an enthusiast of sacred medicine, an urban shaman, or an experimenting psychonaut. The goal of this guide is to support you in feeling informed, empowered and educated on the proper use of rapé for healing and spiritual exploration purposes, both for yourself and for the people you might share this medicine with.

What is Amazonian Rapé?

Rapé is a preparation of powdered medicinal herbs, often with a tobacco base. Rapé is typically made with *Nicotiana rustica* - also known as mapacho in South America - which contains 9 times more nicotine than *Nicotiana tabacum*, the highly-cultivated tobacco that is smoked around the world in cigarettes. Because

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of its strength, *Nicotiana rustica* elicits a feeling of alertness and elevation that surpasses your average nicotine high from cigarettes.

The effects of rapé are experienced rapidly and intensely, because the powdered snuff is administered through the nose. The practice of consuming powdered plant medicines through the nose is much more ancient than we realized (dating from the pre-Columbian days) and was first observed among the Brazilian indigenous tribes.

In Europe, herbal snuff was introduced by the doctor and botanist Francisco Hernández de Boncalo in 1577 - and the elites of that time often took snuff as a headache treatment. During the XVIII century, inhaling snuff became fashionable among the European aristocracy.

Today, indigenous tribes in the Amazon basin continue to use rapé in all aspects of life, from formal ritual use in rites of puberty, initiation, cashiri drinkings festivals, social gatherings and healing ceremonies, to simply tuning into Nature and the healing power of sacred plant medicines alone or with friends.

The tribes that use have traditionally used rapé - which include but are not limited to the Katukina, Yawanawa, Kaxinawa, Nukini, Kuntanawa, Apurinã, Ashaninka, and Matses - often produce their own specific kinds of rapé blend and have different ways of preparing the herbal snuff, from techniques to songs that are sung during the rapé rituals.

From the indigenous point of view, rapé is a sacred shamanic snuff medicine with profound healing effects. Rapé is made from different medicinal plants for different purposes – to induce visions, to have energy, and to enhance the

senses with the aromatic fragrance of the plants used in the blend. Given that there are myriad medicinal plants you can blend into rapé, there are many various rapé recipes in existence - and these recipes are often closely guarded by the tribes as secrets.

Sharing rapé – or “passando rapé” – is traditionally a ritualistic practice among Amazonian tribes that may include specific chants to activate the force of the rapé and to confer the healing power of the forest upon the rapé recipient.

The ritual use of rapé is also making its way around the world, introduced to the West through ayahuasca ceremonies by traveling shamans and by visitors who have spent time in the jungle with indigenous communities.

The Sacred Art of Making Rapé

It's a laborious process to make rapé, and rapé production is typically done in a ceremonial context, from gathering the sacred plants to cooking and processing the medicine. Traditionally, the person making the rapé blend needs to be an experienced shaman with thorough knowledge about the medicinal plants of the forest.

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*Preparing & gathering sacred plants for rapé.
Image Credit: Amir Leron*

In addition to having broad knowledge of the medicinal plants of the Amazon rainforest (which is also one of the most biodiverse regions in the world), the shaman also needs to know precisely which part of each plant can be used. For example, the root bark of a plant can have a different purpose and effect than the leaves or the seeds of the same plant.

This sacred preparation of medicinal rapé is a process that may take weeks. Usually, the shaman of the tribe – the pajé – works under a strict diet and in a trance-state when endlessly pounding and mixing the rapé herbs. The other members of the tribe might be responsible for the collection of rapé plants. The plants will either be sun dried or toasted under a light bulb and are filtered several times through a fine cloth and then mixed with other ingredients to obtain the final batch.

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*Final stages of preparing a rapé blend.
Image Credit: Amir Leron*

In earlier times, the pajé used to be the only person considered qualified to make this sacred medicine. Nowadays, the whole tribe might even participate in making rapé in a communal ceremonial event. Only recently have the tribes begun to share their sacred medicine with foreign friends, passing on the knowledge and application of rapé to non-indigenous people.

The sacred art of making rapé is typically an apprenticeship that takes years to master. This is because different rapé blends may involve complex processes as different plants are harvested and prepared. It may also involve extended periods of dieting with the plants in order to receive the teachings of these plants, on top of the ceremonial process of working with them in a “feitio” - medicine making session. Mastery not only involves knowledge of the plants and their preparation, but a subtle and precise appreciation for the flavor as well as the effects of the blend, plus the ability to reproduce these qualities batch after batch. Many

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serious rapé makers consider the art of making rapé to be an apprenticeship, not only with the master shamans, but more importantly, with the plants themselves.

Rapé enthusiasts can now be found all over the Amazon, Brazil, and the world, and some non-indigenous rapé makers are even evolving the art of making rapé to incorporate new standards in production, storage, and the formulation of new blends. Still, many of the blend compositions remain a secret of the local tribes.

The Healing Properties of Medicinal Rapé

Rapé can also be mixed with other mind altering plants, like coca, jurema, or yopo for unique effects. It is also known to potentiate the healing capacity of other plants, like ayahuasca. Furthermore, rapé is believed to help release emotional, physical, and spiritual illnesses, easing negativity and confusion, and enabling a thorough grounding of the mind.

Likewise, shamans use rapé to re-align with their energy channels, connect with their higher self, and to deepen their connection with the natural world. In addition, rapé paves the way to detoxify the body and cleans out excessive mucus, toxins and bacteria.

Medicinal rapé is also used as a cure for certain diseases, sores, wounds, and as a defense against insects. It is also used as an analgesic and narcotic substance that eases fatigue, pain, hunger, and thirst. There are even special rapé blends that are made to counteract influenza and other diseases.

Because tobacco-based rapé contains nicotine, it increases blood flow to the brain and stimulates the release of several neurotransmitters that heightens alertness and uplifts your mood. The indigenous people believe that rapé can increase your focus, presence, and intuition, spiritually opening up your body and mind to higher communication and holistic thinking.

One of the curative qualities of rapé is its ability to make you purge, potentially from both ends. Whether or not rapé is purgative depends a lot on the medicinal

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plants used to make the rapé blend, as well as the quantity of rapé consumed in a session, and how much of it may have passed from your sinuses into your digestive tract.

The desire to vomit may come on immediately or shortly after receiving the rapé. The desire to vacate your bowels may follow a few minutes after that. The “limpeza” is considered to be cleansing and purifying; it is the medicine working to purge your body and mind of anything that is toxic and negative.

Whether or not the rapé elicits vomiting or pooping, it will most definitely clear out your nasal passages and sinuses. Most people will spend a few minutes blowing their nose or hocking loogies after receiving rapé, until all the mucus clears away.

How to Take Sacred, Medicinal Rapé with the Right Intention

Sharing rapé was traditionally done in a ritualistic way. Because the medicine can have stimulating or psychoactive effects (depending on what plants were used to make it) receiving rapé can bring about a profound experience of the Amazonian jungle. Because the medicine is sacred, the indigenous tribes take rapé as a prayer calling upon the forces of Nature, the blessing of the animals of the forest, and the power of medicinal plants to heal us and give us strength.

Nowadays, medicinal rapé is also making its way all over the world, through increasing cross-cultural friendships between the natives and non-indigenous friends, as well as through ayahuasca ceremonies held by traveling shamans. Rapé is also increasingly being consumed in a more social context, in a similar way to how sharing sacred tobacco has shifted to social cigarette smoking.

Tobacco can be addictive, even when consumed through the nose. To prevent from turning your relationship with rapé into an addiction and a personal vice, in the following paragraphs you will discover some proven and efficient tips you can follow to maintain the sacredness of the rapé ritual as a modern shaman.

The Right Way (and Wrong Way) to Consume Rapé

Rapé is administered through two different types of pipes, which are typically made from bamboo or bone. The first type of pipe requires the assistance of another person, who blows the snuff with a powerful blast into each nostril of the partner who is receiving the rapé. For that reason, it is generally referred to as the blow pipe and, in Brazil, the 2-person pipe is called a “tepi”.



*Gorgeous tepi embellished with beautiful gemstones
Image Credit: Carlos HareHaux Neto*

If you don't have a friend whom can help you by blowing the snuff up your nose, don't worry, you can do it yourself with a self-applicator pipe called a “kuripe”. A kuripe is a small V-shaped pipe that connects your mouth to your nostril. While it's always harder to blow yourself than to have a friend blow you, trying to get a non-knowledgeable person to do this is the least desirable option. That is why it is always a good idea to have your own kuripe, and learn how to apply the medicine yourself if you are a “bona fide” rapé enthusiast.

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Modern style kuripes inlaid with stone.

What you don't want to do is to snort rapé off a smooth flat surface with a rolled-up dollar bill or straw. That is a major Amazonian faux pas – it won't score you points with the natives and it might get you arrested by the police mistaking it for public cocaine consumption.

That is why using the appropriate blowing apparatus is necessary, both for the effectiveness of the ritual and for preventing other undesirable effects as well.

The Appropriate Set & Setting for a Rapé Ritual

Because the act of taking rapé is a prayer, the set and setting will impact the experience of your prayer. The best places to take rapé are in the great outdoors - in nature, during an ayahuasca ceremony, or in a quiet sacred space indoors, with high-vibrational music playing.

It is suggested that you avoid taking rapé in common and otherwise “ordinary” situations, such as while waiting at bus stops, in busy commercial areas, in common areas with a lot of movement which are unrelated to spiritual activity, or where you might be interrupted by someone who has no idea what you are doing nor what it means.

An ideal setting allows you to fully experience the effect of the rapé without unwanted distractions and it also offers you the necessary space for quiet contemplation.

Also, depending on the medicinal plants which were used in the rapé blend, you may experience a wide range of sensations after taking your rapé, from emotional upwellings, to vomiting and bowel movements. Here are some timeless tips to set up your space – and yourself – for comfort:

- It's a good idea to have a bottle of water nearby, as well as tissues and/or a roll of toilet paper for blowing your nose.

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- If you think you are going to be thirsty, drink water BEFORE snuffing your rapé, because any water you might drink afterwards will taste like rapé which can be an unpleasant experience.
- Don't eat immediately before taking rapé, because it may come right out after. It's a good idea to leave at least an hour between your last meal and rapé session.
- Make sure you have an easily accessible place to vomit in case the urge suddenly descends upon you.
- Make sure you are also close to the toilet in case you get a sudden urge to have a bowel movement.
- Make sure your friends are aware of what you are doing (so nobody interrupts your moment of deep contemplation).

What to Expect from Your Rapé Experience

Your rapé experience will depend a lot on the medicinal rapé blend you are consuming. There is a myriad of medicinal plants that can be used in rapé and thus a wide range of experiences from a nice blast of fragrance in your nose, to an eye-opening nasal espresso shot - even to a transcendental, wildly psychoactive experience lasting hours, where you want to fly like an eagle. There are a few common side effects to taking rapé which you should be prepared for (and certainly should not be ashamed of):

- **Your nose will start running, and your sinuses will want to clear themselves out.** Lean forward – try not to tilt your head back, or your rapé-filled mucus

will start back-dripping down your sinuses, which might cause you to gag, and then vomit. Hocking loogies during a rapé session is totally socially acceptable.

- **You may want to projectile vomit.** This is perfectly OK. Rapé is purifying and you are getting well. Try to vomit in the bushes or in a more private space.
- **You may want to go to the toilet.** Bowel movements are good for you. If you have trouble staying regular, try taking rapé in the morning. It is better than coffee.

Rapé Safety Tips for the Modern Shaman

As with any kind of potent medicine, rapé can be abused and consumed in ways which are less sacred, and more recreational. Rapé can be hard on your sinuses, so overuse can create sinus problems and damage to your respiratory system. Also, because the medicinal plants in rapé blends vary, its effects on your system can vary. Misuse can lead to addiction or even send you to the hospital. For this reason, it's important to test your rapé and as with any substance, know where it comes from.

Also, using rapé with other drugs, like MDMA, is not advised as the contraindications may be unknown. Rapé is frequently offered during ayahuasca ceremonies, but you may want to tune in and decide whether rapé is really what your body needs at that moment.

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Here's what one unlucky experimenter has to say about mixing other substances with this sacred medicine...

"I took MDMA at a conscious music festival, and afterwards, I did rapé. It was a terrible combination. I felt nauseated, dizzy, and had no energy to walk around. I immediately had to go to the bathroom. Then I threw up. The rapé totally wiped out my MDMA experience. I will never do that again!" ~ Anonymous

Because rapé is used shamanically, passing rapé can be a means for someone with ill intentions to put an enchantment or curse on you. It's not a good idea to share rapé with people you don't know and trust, or receive rapé from a shaman who you are getting "bad vibes" from.

Hence, you should be very careful who you are consuming this sacred medicine with. This is not "partying" - remember, it is a sacred social context.

Sacred Rapé Kit Storage & Care

As medicinal rapé appreciation grows around the world, rapé kits are increasingly part of the modern shamanic toolkit, and global shamans are finding themselves traveling with rapé and storing their medicine for longer periods of time due to the difficulty of procuring fresh rapé outside the Amazon. In the following paragraphs, you will discover important tips on how to care for your rapé and rapé applicators.



*Modern shaman rapé toolkit
Image Credit: The Arte do Rapé Facebook Group*

Taking Care of Your Rapé Applicator

The care you provide for your rapé applicator is going to depend very much on what materials were used to make it (bamboo, bone), hold it together (beeswax, durapox), and adorn it (string, feathers, stones, paint). Rapé applicators are sacred shamanic tools and typically kept at home on an altar or carried around in a medicine bag.

You may want to keep your feather adorned tepi at home and have a simpler tepi for travel, because it's really a bummer to discover that your beautiful tepi macaw feathers got crushed and broken in your backpack. Kuripe self-applicators tend to travel better.

Rapé Applicator Hygiene

In the Amazon, sharing rapé has become a common social activity. In indigenous culture, everything is shared, so the natives don't tend to place as much importance on keeping personal use items just for themselves.

If you come from an individualistic society, like the United States, your rugged individualism and hangups about your personal stuff is going to stand out. Also, natives tend to have a strong belief that using a shared object to consume medicine isn't going to get them sick, because the medicine is sacred, powerful, and will prevent that – magically. That being said, what do you do in a situation where you have 5 people wanting to pass your tepi pipe around, and one of them visibly has a cold or flu?

- **Using a Q-Tip, periodically clean your rapé applicator with alcohol or hydrogen peroxide** - Depending on what materials were used to construct your rapé applicator, the drawback to this is that the chemicals can cause bamboo to crack or adhesives holding the 2 bamboo tubes into a V to dissolve.

- **Use a lighter flame to disinfect the ends of your rapé applicator -**
Again, depending on what materials were used to construct your rapé applicator, the flame can cause the ends to blacken, and look unsightly.

The Amazon is a humid place. Using soap and water to clean your rapé applicator can be tricky as moisture can build up deep inside your applicator and grow mold, which is the last thing you want to be inhaling into your nose.

Storing Medicinal Rapé

In the old days, in the Amazonian tribes, rapé was stored in hollowed out gourds or giant snail shells. Nowadays, rapé made in the Amazon is typically stored in used soda bottles. Old plastic may not be the best container for long term storage of medicinal snuff. A preferred container by non-indigenous Brazilians are glass test tubes with screw tops. Not only are these easy to carry around, it also make pouring rapé into the palm of your hand easier, because the shape of the container minimizes the avalanche effect that bottles with narrow necks can have.

With a container with a narrow opening, you increase the likelihood of not being able to get all your rapé out, or know what's going on at the very bottom if the container isn't clear.

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*Glass test tubes are a great way to store and carry rapé.
Image Credit: The Rapé Sagrado da Floresta Facebook Group*

Rapé needs to be stored in a cool dry place. Moldy rapé will tend to have a distinct, acrid smell to it. If you find that your rapé is starting to go, you can spread it out in cloth or smooth clean surface and dry it out in the sun.

Do bear in mind that medicinal rapé has a shelf life and loses its effectiveness over time, so holding onto it for as long as it will last is not the best idea.

Use it as soon as possible or lose it.

How to Administer Sacred Amazonian Rapé To Someone Else – Step by Step Instructions



Amazonian rapé is consumed in 2 ways:

- As a “soplada” given by a shaman or medicine man via a blowpipe called a “tepi”
- Self-administered, via a blowpipe called a “kuripe”

To uphold the sacred practice of sharing rapé, here are some guidelines to follow when administering a rapé soplada to a friend. Before proceeding, I recommend

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you recall (from the previous chapters) the appropriate context and setting you must have in place before taking this sacred medicine.

When rapé is administered from one person to another via a tepi, an intimate connection is created between the rapé giver and receiver that involves the transfer of energy between the 2 people. That energy might be positive and healthy, or may be negative and unhealthy. For this reason, it's not advised to receive rapé from just anyone, nor to give rapé to strangers.

The person blowing needs to be an experienced tribe member – like a shaman, or your medicine brother or sister – as the blower sends their intention and spirit to the person inhaling. That takes a strong mind and clear focus.

Hence, the essence of this blowing ritual does not depend on the strength of your blowing, but whether you confer the blessing of the medicine & prayer, and empower the receiving user. These 'blowing rituals' are of great importance in the shamanic tradition, which perceives the healing energy of blow (soplada) as a major tool for healing.

How Much Rapé Should You Serve?

Appropriate dosage really depends on the kind of rapé that is being taken and the individual on the receiving end. In Brazil, the indigenous are used to taking copious amounts of rapé in one session. I'm often astounded at the amount of rapé that gets shoveled into the end of a tepi – and the recipient's ability to take it, without throwing up or passing out. Because rapé is more difficult to procure outside of Brazil, North American shamans tend to use smaller quantities of rapé.

For buddy-administered rapé – it's important for the person serving the rapé to make an intuitive and ethical assessment on the appropriate amount of rapé to offer the recipient of your *soplada*. Where are they from? What is their experience? How strong is your rapé?

Too much rapé can make your companion projectile vomit – which may be a good thing from the point of view of purification – but not at all from an immediate personal point of view.

It might be wise if you err on the cautious side - you can always have another round afterwards.

Overdosing is less of an issue with self-administered rapé.

Guidelines for the Soplada Blower

Step 1: Find a quiet location where you can sit face to face. Ground down into the present moment.

Step 2: Look at the rapé recipient in the eyes and connect with that person.

Step 3: Give your recipient an orientation of what to expect, instructions on how to receive the rapé, and invite them to set an intention for the ritual.

Step 4: Ask how much rapé they would like to receive and how hard of a soplada they wish to have. If the recipient isn't sure, follow the guidelines below on how to assess the appropriate amount of rapé to serve. If you are unsure of the appropriate quantity, start with a dime-sized portion of rapé. Pour this amount onto the palm of your hand. You may want to flatten out and shape the quantity of rapé for easier scooping.

Step 5: Begin your rapé chant or prayer, connect with the spirit of the Forest, the spirits of the healing plants and ask them to bless the recipient.

Step 6: Staying grounded in the present moment, load half the amount of rapé from your palm into the far end of your tepi, scooping towards you, in the direction of your heart. Then position the end of the Tepi snug against the opening of the recipient's nostril so no rapé gets blown into the person's eye.

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Step 7: Mindfully blow the rapé into one nostril. Stay present with the recipient and tune into where the person is at with their experience.

Step 8: Check in with the recipient. Did they want a softer soplada? Harder? More rapé? Less rapé? Load the remainder of the rapé into the far end of your Tepi, then position the top snug against the opening of the opposite nostril.



*Beautiful Tepis made of bones.
Image Credits: The Rapé Indígena Facebook Group*

Step 9: Mindfully blow the rapé into the other nostril. Stay present with the recipient and tune into where the person is at with their experience.

Step 10: After the second soplada, you may want to energetically assist in the removal of any blockages. With your fingers, you may trace the movement of the rapé along the bridge of the nose up towards the crown of the head, as well as

along the recipient's temples. You may want to brush with downward strokes along the sides of their heads, and snap your fingers to dispel any negative energy.

Step 11: Close the session with a prayer, Haux, or Aho.

Guidelines for the Rapé Recipient

Step 1: Find a quiet location where you can sit face to face. Ground down into the present moment.

Step 2: Look in the eyes of the person who will give you a *soplada* and connect with that person.

Step 3: Check in with yourself on the amount of rapé you would like to receive, give an eye assessment on what feels like the amount you need when the *soplada* blower pours the medicine into their palm, and let the person know. If you are unsure of the appropriate quantity, start with a dime-sized portion of rapé.

Step 4: Focus on the intention of this ritual. What insight are you seeking? What prayer do you have that you want the spirits of Nature to hear?

Step 5: As the *soplada* blower begins their blessing, tune into Nature and your Spirit Guides.

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Step 6: Inhale deeply. Then assist the soplada blower in positioning the end of the tepi snugly against the opening of one nostril. You may hold the end of the tepi to your nostril with your fingers for support and stability.

Step 7: IMPORTANT - Now contract your throat muscles to close the back of your nasal passage as if you were going to submerge yourself underwater. When you block off the back of your nasal passage, most of the rapé will stay in the front of your nasal passage, and drip forward.

This is very important because IF YOU DON'T close off the back of your nasal passage, you will get a jetstream of rapé shooting into your sinuses, causing you to cough, gag, and potentially vomit on your friend. If you are feeling a lot of gag-causing back-drip, lean forward.

Step 8: Give yourself a moment to pull it together. Ground into the present moment. Feel free to communicate to the soplada-giver anything you need. More rapé? Less rapé? More force? Less force? Ready for the next nostril?

Step 9: Inhale deeply. Then assist the soplada blower in positioning the end of the tepi snugly against the opening of the opposite nostril. You may hold the end of the tepi to your nostril with your fingers for support and stability.

Step 10: REMEMBER to contract your throat muscles to close the back of your nasal passage as if you were going to submerge yourself under-water. Receive the second blast of rapé.

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Step 11: Hold the sacred rapé in your nose as long as possible in order for your sinuses to fully absorb the medicine. Your eyes are probably tearing at this point, and your nose is probably starting to drip. Just hold a wad of tissue paper up against your nostrils. Feel it. Feel the Forest. Open your consciousness. Ground into the present moment.

Step 12: When you feel complete, you can indicate completion to the soplada-giver by moving back or stepping away. Allow the soplada-giver to close the session with a prayer, Haux, or Aho. Close the ritual with your own prayer, “Haux”, or “Aho”.

Step 13: Find a nice, comfortable place to contemplate Nature.

Once the experience of the rapé has subsided, you may want to clean yourself up to feel more fresh, and to wash off any caked rapé buggers that could be sticking to the outside of your nose. Washing your face and rinsing your nostrils out with cold, clean water is also really nice.

In a similar way to working with master plant teachers like huachuma or ayahuasca, when you take rapé you are also signing up for an apprenticeship with the medicinal plants in your rapé blend, but on a subtler level. As you keep taking your rapé, you enter into a dialogue with the plants. I invite you to listen.

How to Self-Administer Sacred Amazonian Rapé – Step by Step



Gorgeous bone kuripes inlaid with semi-precious stones by Carlito HareHaux Neto

In the following paragraphs, you will learn how to administer rapé on your own, without the use of an assistant. This is important whenever you decide to do a ceremony by yourself or if there is nobody like-minded (and energy-minded) to have a ceremony with.

The most important success factor in self-administering medicinal rapé is finding that perfect-fit kuripe. You are really going to need to test this out first-hand as best you can.

Simply holding the kuripe up to your mouth and nostril, or judging it by appearance, does not necessarily mean it will be effective in sending a strong jet of snuff into your nose. You need to test out its effectiveness. If you are shopping for a kuripe, you really do want to put one end into your mouth and another into your nostril and blow before choosing which kuripe to purchase.

If you end up with a kuripe that doesn't snugly connect your mouth with your nose, and you can't just go to the kuripe store and exchange it, don't worry, you have options:

- The best option is to saw down one end until it does fit
- The easy option is to get used to positioning your kuripe at an angle in your mouth. It may feel weird but it works.

Determining Rapé Dosage

Aerodynamically, it's considerably harder to overdose yourself with self-administered rapé via a kuripe. However, if you have a regular practice of consuming rapé on your own, it's good to be mindful so that it does not turn into an addiction or personal vice. When you are receiving a *soplada* in a ritualistic way, it's easier to treat the experience as a medicine ceremony. Alone, it's easier to treat the rapé as a substance.

Ultimately, to fully experience the intensity of the rapé, it's much better to have a friend blow into your nostrils rather than to blow the medicine yourself. However, if you don't have a friend around who knows how to deliver a rapé *soplada*, here are step-by-step instructions on how you can self-administer medicinal rapé.

Guidelines for Administering Rapé to Yourself



How to self-administer rapé with a Kuripe

Here is the complete guide, step by step, on how to self-administer this sacred medicine.

Step 1: Find an appropriate place to take your rapé.

Step 2: Ground yourself into the present moment and focus on your intention for this prayer. What information are you hoping to receive from the plant medicine? What guidance are you seeking from the spirits of the forest?

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Step 3: Recite your rapé chant of prayer as you measure out the amount of rapé you want to consume on the palm of your hand. You may want to flatten out and shape the quantity of rapé for easier scooping.

Step 4: Load up the nose end of your rapé applicator with half the amount on your palm, scooping towards yourself, in the direction of your heart. Tap the V end on a hard surface to remove any stuck rapé or air pockets.

Step 5: Take a deep breath, place the mouth end of your kuripe into your mouth and fit the nose end snugly into your nostril.

Step 6: Lean forward a little, close your eyes (so you don't blow rapé into them) and forcibly blow the rapé into your nostril.

Step 7: Take a moment to experience the first dosage of rapé. Do you need more, do you need less?

Step 8: When you are ready, load up the nose end of your kuripe with the rest of the rapé on your palm. Tap the V end on a hard surface to remove any stuck rapé or air pockets.

Step 9: Take a deep breath, place the mouth end of your kuripe into your mouth and fit the nose end snugly into the opposite nostril.

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Step 10: Lean forward a little, close your eyes (so you don't blow rapé into them) and forcibly blow the rapé into your nostril.

Step 11: Take a moment to experience the rapé. You can move the force of the rapé through your channels with your fingers. Place your fingers on your middle fingers on the top of the bridge of your nose, move the energy of the rapé up your forehead and run all your fingers along the top and sides of your heads. Brush the energy down the back of your head, along your shoulders and off into the air. You can snap your fingers to clear any old, stuck or negative energy that is being moved out of your field.

Step 12: Ground into the present moment and allow your consciousness to connect to Nature, to the healing plants in the medicine you just consumed. Lean forward to minimize rapé backdrip. Feel the ground with your hands.

Once the experience of the rapé has subsided, you may want to clean yourself up to feel more fresh, by rinsing your nostrils or patting cold water on your face. In a similar way to working with master plant teachers like huachuma or ayahuasca, when you take rapé you are also signing up for an apprenticeship with the medicinal plants in your rapé blend, but on a subtler level.

As you keep taking your rapé, you enter into a dialogue with the plants. I invite you to listen.

Brazilian Tribes that Make Rapé

Most of the well-known rapé blends come from Brazil and are named after their tribe. However, that doesn't necessarily mean that every blend named after a tribe is the same. Within a tribe, you have different people who make rapé, with different levels of skill and knowledge. And each tribe may make a variety of blends, using different medicinal plants with wide-ranging effects. Because so many different factors affect the potency of the plants used to make each blend, like wine, every batch is unique. If you are a rapé enthusiast, here are some of the Brazilian tribes who make rapé and some of the plants you might find included in their blends.

Apurinã

The Apurinã tribe belong to the Aruak linguistic group and consists of approximately 2000 - 4000 members that live in over 27 indigenous territories along the Purus River and its tributaries in the Brazilian Amazon. They are a migratory tribe, which is what accounts for their wide distribution over a large region.

They are best known for making a green rapé blend that is tobacco-free, that has an eye-opening effect that elicits a wakefulness that is free of dizziness or purging that some of the stronger tobacco-based blends can bring.

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Green rapé from the Apuriná tribe is highly stimulating, but doesn't contain tobacco. Image Credit: Rapé Indígena Facebook Group

The Apurinã are secretive about what medicinal herbs are contained in their signature green rapé blend. No other tribes make a rapé blend like this. It is a great rapé blend for a beginner or for those who prefer tobacco-free snuffs.

Huni Kui

The Huni Kui, also known as the Kaxinawá, belong to the Pano linguistic group and inhabit a region that spans the tropical forest of eastern Peru, across the Andean foothills and into the states of Acre and southern Amazonas, covering the areas of the Upper Juruá and Purus, and in the Javari Valley. They share territory with three other tribes, the Ashaninka, the Shanenawa, and the Madija.

They place a high value on their extended family structures, while the shaman and the tribal leader share the guidance of the community. Rapé blends made by the Huni Kui are strong and typically have a tobacco base.

Huni Kui rapé blends may include ashes of the Murici tree (*Byrsonima crassifolia*), which is a plant used in traditional folk medicine to clear energies that accumulate in the lower abdomen. Another common rapé blend might be include Cumaru de Cheiro (*Amburana cearensis*) seeds, and is used as medicine for respiratory problems.

Kuntanawa

The Kuntanawa tribe belong to the Pano linguistic family who live in Acre, Brazil, close to the Peruvian border. The Kuntanawa were assumed to have been exterminated owing to the expansion of rubber production in the upper reaches of Amazonian tributaries. However, in recent years, underwent a process of cultural re-invention and, with the help of a local anthropologist Mariana Pantoja, were able to achieve recognition as a tribal group.

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*Haru Kuntanawa blowing rapé into the nose of another shaman.
Image Credit: Lorna Liana*

Pedro, the chief, and his son Haru Kuntanawa make beautiful, aromatic tobacco-based rapé blends. Blends might include Chamba or Anador, which is a traditional herbal medicine used to alleviate different pains, such as headaches and muscular pains. Alfavaca da Mata another herb that the Kuntawa use in their rapé, which helps clear 'Panema', a general negative energy that brings sickness, unease and bad luck in daily life.

Nukini

The Nukini are a tribe of a little over 600 people that belong to the Pano linguistic group and are found in the Juruá Valley of Acre Brazil, close to the Serra do Divisor (Dividing Mountain) national park, in a region flanked by the Peruvian and Bolivian borders. Their small population is a result of a devastating history of dispossession, violence and exploitation since the mid-19th century at the hands of the rubber industry.

Nukini rapé is tobacco-based and believed to contain feminine power, as the majority of the plants that are used for making medicines are gathered, and even formulated by the women of the tribe. The Nukini like to make their rapé with tobacco powder and Parika ashes, which adds strength, and blend in other herbs such as Mulatinha, used for relaxation, or Trevo Cumaru, used to treat respiratory issues.

Yawanawa

The Yawanawa are a tribe of roughly 900 people from the Pano linguistic group, who occupy 8 villages along the Gregoria river, outside of Cruzeiro do Sol, Acre, between Peru and Bolivia. Its community is, in fact, a conjunction of people that includes members from other groups: Shawādawa (Arara), Iskunawa, Rununawa, Sainawa, and Katukina. This configuration is the result of a dynamic common to many Pano groups – alliances through marriage, women captured during warfare

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conflicts, the migration of families – and a series of historical events, like the arrival of non-Indians (including epidemics and demographic alterations).

The Yawanawa refer to their rapé as “Rume” and their most common rapé blend is made with tobacco powder and ash from the bark of the Tsunú tree. Tsunú is uplifting and strong, and may make your eyes water or cause you to break out in sweat.

How to Establish a Right Relationship with Rapé



*Art inspired by the medicinal rapé
Image Credit: The Arte do Rapé Facebook Group*

Whether you are choosing to administer rapé for yourself using a kuripe, or with others - using a tepi, I hope this guide has provided you with thorough step-by-step instructions on how to consume this sacred medicine and receive optimal results. Mindfulness of the source of your medicine, how it's being administered, dosage, intention setting, and the space in which you use it are all important components for a sustainable, non-addictive relationship to rapé. Context is

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everything when it comes to using rapé in a sacred, safe, and supportive container.

I invite you to be conscious of the attitude you have towards the ceremony itself, as that attitude or intention will greatly affect the outcome of your experience. I welcome you to take to heart the importance of setting a proper environment with clear intention, and use this book as a reference guide whenever you are feeling disconnected. A calm, tranquil, and meditative environment with an air of sacredness, introspection, and respect towards the process of healing and the medicine itself will all greatly enhance and support your experience. Each individual's intention will be unique; the most important thing is to not treat the consumption of rapé as a social ritual or party drug. It is a sacred medicine to be used with prayerful intent.

An attitude of openness, curiosity and courage is also necessary in order to make the most out of your rapé experience. Be extra-careful when choosing the people with whom you will experience this ceremony. It is very important to do this with people you trust and respect, not with less reputable or suspicious individuals – this includes the shaman, should you choose to work with one. Make sure to trust your gut feeling on this one – it is better to postpone or do a ceremony on your own rather than do it in an improper environment or with the inappropriate types of people.

At this exciting juncture in human consciousness and evolution, we can have the opportunity to receive the awakening and transformative power of ancient plant medicines and practices. Sacred medicines are gaining more and more

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popularity amongst modern shamans and spiritual seekers looking to heal, cleanse, transform, and connect to other realms. With great power comes great responsibility. It is our intention that this guide has helped empower you with the ancient wisdom of how to make use of the powerful medicinal properties of rapé in a responsible, sacred, and ceremonial way.

About the Cover Art



Geenss Archenti Flores

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Geenss Archenti Flores was born in the city of Tarapoto, San Martín – Peru with self-taught artistic training. The essence that gives life to the artistic exuberance of Geenss Archenti's brush owes the strength and richness of its outline to the high jungle of Peru. Immersed in the jungles of the jungle, he paints his works with resins, saps and fruits

extracted from the forests, as he calls them "medicinal pigments" and inspired by Amazonian Cosmo Indian medicine. Their works start from a fact a tradition an expression a daily life.

"I draw dreams, plazmo emotions, I paint life ... it makes me free"

~ Geens Archenti Flores

Original Photo by Gustavo Miranda

Portfolio: https://www.flickr.com/photos/gustavomiranda_fotoarte/

Gustavo Miranda has worked for Agência Nacional, EBN, O Globo, Jornal do Brasil and again at O Globo where he has been since 1991. He has traveled all over Brazil and 35 countries doing photo coverage. From presidential trips to indigenous problems, from major accidents to invasions of the MST, covered almost all the issues of repercussion in Brazil and abroad in the last 33 years. Seven presidents, Brazilians, hundreds of politicians, artists and people from day to day have passed through their lenses. His photo is included in the book launch in Parque Lage, pajés smell snuff, a mixture of tobacco with ashes of leaves of trees. A Pioneer project presents the therapy of Huni Kuin Indians 'Book of Healing' brings together texts and photos of more than 100 medicinal species used by indigenous people.

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We encourage the responsible use of entheogens for the purposes of self-awareness and self-mastery. We do not explicitly encourage the use of psychedelics for every individual, nor do we endorse activities that may be considered illegal in your locale. We strongly encourage a discerning mind when approaching powerful visionary substances, and respect when participating in the cultures that consider these medicines sacred.

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Photo of Tepi and Kuripe in stock

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