

# **NATIVE AMERICAN TAROT DECK**



## **INSTRUCTIONS**

by

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## INTRODUCTION

Many styles of tarot decks exist today. My husband and I have collected numerous decks, but none seemed to speak to us or reflect our way of life. My husband is of Spanish descent and has been reading tarot since his college days. I was raised in a family that believes in seances, ouija boards and card reading. My mother is half Shawnee and half Boston Irish and she is from the Cumberland mountains of Kentucky. Her mother, a Shawnee, was a spirit speaker. Papa was Gypsy and Dutch.

At sixteen, I started to investigate the folklore and occult beliefs of my ancestors and have continued to do so over the years in both academic studies and personal research. Strong feelings of kinship with my Shawnee relatives and meetings with Native Americans of many tribes have encouraged me to learn much about Native American symbolism. An especially helpful teacher has been a Blackfoot medicine man, Harry Sparrowhawk.

About six years ago I envisioned a tarot deck with a Native American theme encompassing lore from all of the North American nations. I knew exactly what I wanted but didn't have the skill to do the art work. After marrying, I mentioned the idea to my husband, an artist and musician. He became fascinated with the project and immediately began work on it. We now present to you the culmination of our efforts—the Native American Tarot deck.

At first we thought of modifying the illustrations of traditional tarot decks, but this

method was too limited. It became more and more apparent that the spirit and feeling of the Native American Way was more important than standard interpretations. Inspired by the fusion of European and Native American ideals, we modified the card titles and illustrations in both obvious and subtle ways.

The complete tarot deck is comprised of 78 cards divided into 22 Major Arcana and 56 Minor Arcana. The titles of the 22 Major Arcana in traditional tarot decks and in the Native American Tarot deck are as follows.

<b>Traditional</b>	<b>Native American</b>
0 The Fool	0 The Fool
I The Magician	1 Hosteen Coyote
II High Priestess	2 Corn Maiden
III The Empress	3 Medicine Woman
IV The Emperor	4 Council Chief
V The Hierophant	5 Shaman
VI The Lovers	6 The Lovers
VII The Chariot	7 The Sled
VIII Justice	8 Strength
IX The Hermit	9 The Hermit
X Wheel of Fortune	10 Medicine Wheel
XI Strength	11 Justice
XII The Hanged Man	12 Sun Dance
XIII Death	13 Death
XIV Temperance	14 The Weaver
XV The Devil	15 The Devil
XVI The Tower	16 The Tower
XVII The Star	17 The Stars
XVIII The Moon	18 The Moon
XIX The Sun	19 The Sun
XX Judgment	20 Judgment
XXI The World	21 The World

The four suits of the Minor Arcana cards have interesting correspondences.

<b>Blades</b>	<b>Pipes</b>	<b>Vessels</b>	<b>Shields</b>
Spades	Clubs	Hearts	Diamonds
Swords	Wands	Cups	Coins
Air	Fire	Water	Earth
Spirit	Intellect	Emotions	Material
East	South	West	North
Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Dawn	Noon	Dusk	Night

The four tribal figures (court cards) in each suit have titles that are modified in the Native American Tarot deck.

<b>Traditional</b>	<b>Native American</b>
Queen	Matriarch
King	Chief
Knight	Warrior
Page	Maiden

People may wonder why we have not used the word "squaw" in our deck. "Squaw" is a bastardization of the Iroquois word for male genitalia. When the white explorers first met the Iroquois, they asked where they could find women. Not being understood, the explorers pointed to their genitalia. The braves told them the word for penis, which the explorers mistook to mean "woman." This mistake has persisted ever since. We feel the use of the term "squaw" would be an affront to all women and we have chosen not to use it.

Native American matriarchs are older women respected for their skills and wisdom. Chiefs are not considered rulers. Rather, they

are wise and respected men who have earned their title and its responsibilities. Warriors are young men still proving themselves. Maidens are young women, married or single, who must also prove their worth.

The tribal figures do not represent set personalities, but rather the essence of the powers of personality that people project. The four basic power essences are:

<b>Matriarchs</b>	Power Within	Spiritual
<b>Chiefs</b>	Power Potential	Intellectual
<b>Warriors</b>	Power Activated	Material
<b>Maidens</b>	Power Flowing	Emotional

The imagery of the Native American Tarot deck is drawn from the four corners of North America.

**Eastern Nations:** Two Major Arcana and fourteen Minor Arcana.

**Major Arcana:** 3 Medicine Woman, 8 Strength.

**Minor Arcana:**

*Suit of Blades:* Maiden, 9 Polygamy, 6 Journey.

*Suit of Pipes:* Matriarch, 5 Stickball, 2 The Trapper.

*Suit of Vessels:* Matriarch, Chief, Maiden, 8 Indolence.

*Suit of Shields:* Warrior, Maiden, 7 Trail of Tears, Ace of Shields.

**Plains Nations:** Five Major Arcana and fourteen Minor Arcana.

**Major Arcana:** 1 Hosteen Coyote, 5 Shaman, 6 The Lovers, 12 Sun Dance, 15 The Devil.

**Minor Arcana:**

*Suit of Blades:* Warrior, 7 Horse Thief, 4 The Scout, 3 Mourning, 2 Travois.

*Suit of Pipes:* Chief, 10 Mockery, 9 Defiance, 8 Smoke Signals, 7 Counting Coup, 6 Victory, Ace of Pipes.

*Suit of Vessels:* 2 Union.

*Suit of Shields:* 6 Give-Away Dance.

**Southwest Nations:** Seven Major Arcana and eleven Minor Arcana:

**Major Arcana:** 0 The Fool, 2 Corn Maiden, 13 Death, 14 The Weaver, 16 The Tower, 17 The Stars, 19 The Sun.

**Minor Arcana:**

*Suit of Blades:* Matriarch, Chief, 8 Captive.

*Suit of Pipes:* Warrior, Maiden.

*Suit of Vessels:* 9 The Wish Card, 5 Warrior Woman, Ace of Vessels.

*Suit of Shields:* 8 Sand Painter, 5 Cultivation, 2 Kachina Juggler.

**Northwest Nations:** Three Major Arcana and seven Minor Arcana.

**Major Arcana:** 7 The Sled, 9 The Hermit, 18 The Moon.

**Minor Arcana:**

*Suit of Blades:* Ace of Blades.

*Suit of Pipes:* 4 Honor, 3 Joint Effort.

*Suit of Vessels:* Warrior.

*Suit of Shields:* Matriarch, Chief, 3 The Craftsman.

**Universal to All Nations:** Five Major Arcana and ten Minor Arcana.

**Major Arcana:** 4 Council Chief, 10 Medicine Wheel, 11 Justice, 20 Judgment, 21 The World.

**Minor Arcana:**

*Suit of Blades:* 10 Ruin, 5 Spiritualist.

*Suit of Pipes:* None.

*Suit of Vessels:* 10 Happy Family, 7 Vision Quest, 6 Contentment, 4 Pregnancy, 3 Corn Dance.

*Suit of Shields:* 10 Harvest, 9 Thunderbird, 4 The Silence.

Many tribes are represented in this deck including the following partial listing: Apache, Arapaho, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Chippewa, Comanche, Hopi, Huron, Inuit, Iroquois, Kiowa, Navaho, Papago, Pima, Pueblo, Shawnee, Sioux and Yaqui.

Interpretations of all the cards in the Native American Tarot, plus examples of spreads that we have found most in keeping with the theme of the deck, will be found in the subsequent pages of this booklet. Reversed meanings are not given for the Major Arcana cards. We feel that the spiritual, karmic nature of the Major Arcana symbols incorporates all possibilities, creating a balance of positive and negative qualities within the cards themselves.

We sincerely hope that the great wisdom of our Native American heritage will bless and guide you as you use this deck.



# THE 22 MAJOR ARCANA

## 0. The Fool

The Fool in this deck is a kachina. To the Hopi, kachina means a spirit, a masked impersonator of the gods, or a carved and painted doll in the likeness of a spirit. The Pueblo do not use these dolls as idols, but rather hang them on the walls of their homes as lessons to study and reminders of the powers the dolls represent. Respect for the fool is not without precedent. In Europe, the court jester was not necessarily a simpleton and, in fact, often served to remind the monarch of his own folly and humanity. The kachina is used this way also among Native Americans. Though most Pueblo recognize them, the largest pantheon of kachinas is that of the Hopi—about 250 various forms, such as demons, ogres, animals, birds and, as depicted on this card, clowns.

The Fool, a kachina clown, stands on a hillside at dusk. The setting sun and rising moon are both in the sky, representing the balance of all things. The clown is dressed in a breechclout, wears a scarf around his neck and cloth tied like banners around his wrists and knees. His headdress is a cloth turban on which is attached a set of mock horns made of beads and straw. In his left hand he carries a sack. Hanging from his neck are a medicine bundle for protection and cedar boughs representing growth. A scruffy little dog runs at his side.

The most important aspect of The Fool is that its number is zero, representing the void that is the source of all things. The connection between foolishness and holiness is tradi-

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