

CREATED BY BETTY LOPEZ

# NAPO TAROT

DECK ILLUSTRATED BY NAPO



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## INTRODUCTION

Argentina is a country brimming with esoteric possibilities. Our aboriginal mythology, rich and profound, delves into mystery, destiny and hope.

In the culture and history of Argentina, playing cards have traditionally occupied a place of social importance. The man from the pampas had only his poncho to protect himself from the rain or the sun, his knife to provide his food and his horse to travel the enormous plain. His arrival in a pueblo was an invitation to rest and gather around a rustic old table. Glasses of wine were quickly filled and decks of cards were scattered on the table. Little did this traveling gaucho know that those painted cards had once been a message for pueblos and individuals, calling from times of long ago, presenting the insurmountable archetypes of man.

The woman from the pueblo who healed with herbs and with the moon, also took a deck of cards to predict

fortunes. Just as the gauchos had an innate ability to decipher the sky during those long nights on the plain, the woman healer could read the cards and relate all their archetypical meanings with deep, yet spontaneous, intuition.

In the Napo Tarot the Magus is a “gaucho” (cowboy) dressed in rich clothing, living out in the country but well-established and respected. The Hierophant portrays Old Vizcacha, a character from the epic poem *Martin Fierro*, by José Hernández, considered as the “Gaucha Bible.” The character’s wise advice is both cynical and cunning. In the Death card, the skeletal figure wears traditional Indian clothing typical of Northern Argentina. The court cards get their grace and harmony from the typical representations of the “show-off,” a character more urban than rural, who handled both the dagger and feelings with the same rapidity. Love and rancor co-exist in this world of men. The female court cards of Napo Tarot deal with dreams and ideals.

Bringing this deck of cards to the reader is the satisfying result of a search for inner symbols. The tarot cards came out of my imagination, and the drawings by Napo came about based on the knowledge of the cycles of life. We thus immerse myth in history and find the same meanings, the same question, as in the tarot of the Middle Ages.

—*Betty Lopez*

## **THE BACK OF THE CARDS**

On beautiful summer nights, the sky above the highlands and mountains of Argentina is illuminated with a myriad of stars, which appear to fall over the earth. The Southern Cross is a very luminous constellation in the skies. By lengthening one of the arms in our imagination, our eyes fall upon a formation of three stars, known by the name the Three Marias. Both the Southern Cross and the Three Marias are related to beautiful legends in which we can observe the perception

of the esoteric in the people of the Argentinean pampas.

The cross is a symbol of the four suits in the deck, the four cardinal points, the four elements, the four evangelists, the elements of nature, which

we know of through the alchemist Paracelsus.

The Three Marias, as the number three, establish a relationship with

the infinite variety of possibilities offered by this number among

which we can consider

the three possibilities of

matter according to Hindu philosophy: Rajas, Tamas and Satwas.



Both constellations remind us of our connection with the cosmos, and remind tarot card readers of their intuitive merger with Eternal Knowledge, which comes whenever one attempts to acknowledge the message given in the cards.

# MAJOR ARCANA

## 0 ♦ THE FOOL

*EL LOCO; Associated with Uranus.*

Almost at the edge of a precipice, the Fool walks unconsciously and happily. He is wearing a poncho over his shoulders and sandals on his feet, typical clothing of the gaucho from the pampas. On his back is a sun that he cannot see, because his head and his face are a whirlwind of ideas from which barely emerges a nose in the form of a triangle. In his right hand is a knapsack in which he keeps his inner valuables, although he does not use them. His foot extends dangerously close to the mouth of an alligator, the typical amphibian of Argentinean rivers. The walking stick in his left hand symbolizes the brief wealth of practical knowledge that he possesses in life, which will not serve to sustain him in the void into which he is about to fall.

*Meaning: Incoherence, nervousness, inability to connect and focus ideas in a*

*solid, conscious way. Confusion, irrationality, uncontrollable passions.*

*Situation: Difficulties, dangers, lack of clarity.*

*Related Meaning: With positive cards, the Fool can indicate creativity, freedom and independence, joy of life, and spontaneity.*

## **1 • THE MAGUS**

***EL MAGO; Associated with Mercury.***

The elegant gaucho wears clothes profusely bordered with flowers indicating his connection with the earth. The table next to him is four-sided, which indicates that the card refers to the land of the Quaternary era, to the manifested world. There is a cup, a sword, a canem flower and gold. With one arm he points toward the sky, with the other the earth, indicating his connection with the cosmos and with things emanating from the earth. The sun represents his ability to see, and the rainbow is a bridge between the superior or abstract intelligence and the inferior or concrete mind. The hat has the drawing of the lemniscate, the symbol of infinity.



*Meaning: Someone well-positioned to face life. Creation, intuition, achievement of plans and projects. Connected with God.*

*Situation: Prosperous, with great initiatives and successes. There are no dangers for the querist.*

*Related Meaning: Surrounded by negative cards, the Magus signals obstacles and challenges on the path.*

## **2 ♦ THE PRIESTESS**

**LA SACERDOTISA;** *Associated with the Moon.*

Seated between the two pillars of the Tree of Life, the Priestess faces forward with the internal gaze of the true thinker. Her clothing evokes nature, the half moon reveals her status as a medium, and her head is crowned by the triple tiara of feathers, which evokes the three levels of the physical, mental and spiritual. Her knowledge of the occult is indicated in her left hand. The two columns reiterate the symbolism of yin and yang already represented in the two trees.

*Meaning: Peaceful and tranquil individuality, a woman with knowledge of the occult.*

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