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Herbal and Holistic Medicine in Mexico and Peru

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ABSTRACT

A variety of herbal and holistic remedies were used in pre-Columbian cultures, especially in Aztec and Incan cultures. Many different herbs were used to provide medical attention to patients directly, while other herbs were used to supplement shaman¹ medicine, which was particularly common in Inca culture. While there is little scientific basis for shamanism, as a viable healing option in modern culture, most herbal remedies had active chemical ingredients that could be or are used today to treat similar symptoms, and, in some cases, are being applied in different scenarios as well. The methods of usage, active chemicals, and symptoms treated are discussed for each herb, with special attention paid to those that can be applied today. The feasibility of herbal medicine is then discussed briefly to determine if it is possible to effectively apply it to modern American society as an alternative to mainstream chemical medicine.

Keywords: Medicine, Andean, Mexico, Holistic, Herbal

¹ Shaman: a priest or priestess who uses magic to cure the sick, divine the hidden, and control events, especially through an ecstasy state (Merriam-Webster)