

The Spiritual Significance of the Despacho

In the *Despacho* ceremony, the shaman begins with a large piece of white paper that will serve as a ‘wrapping’ for all of the offerings. All ingredients have significance and each receives prayer before being placed on the paper. Coca leaves or bay leaves are used to hold prayers. Sugar and various sweets bring sweetness and love to the prayers. Corn and other grains are used to nourish participants and the Pachamama (the Earth). Once all ingredients have been added, the shaman carefully folds the bundle into the shape of a square ‘gift’ and ties it.

After a *Despacho* is prepared, the shaman uses it to cleanse the energy body of each participant. To close the ceremony, the *Despacho* is placed in a ceremonial fire, buried in the earth or released into the water.

A *Despacho* is centered in the cosmic world view of the Andean Q’ero it contains elements symbolic of our universe. This sacred ceremony is a feeding to the earth, our ancestors and the unseen beings that watch over ourselves and all living things. The items that are placed in the *Despacho* represent the totality of our interaction with life, the earth and the cosmos. This beauty comes from the Andean cosmology and has been used for generations. Here is a list of some of these *Despacho* items and what they symbolize.

This list was gathered from several sources including [Feast for the Gods](#), an eBook on Despachos.

<i>Ingredient</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Alphabet pasta	Language, wisdom
Amaranth	Spice of life
Animal crackers	All the animals
Beans, garbanzo	protection
Beans, Lima	4 corners of the empire and the places of power that contain the creation energy of the universe so we can tap into this energy and come into synchronicity with our path
Beans, red - small	represent places of emergence, springs
Black licorice	protection
Candle	Celebrating the life
Candy	Sweetness for Pachamama and everything we are in relationship with, bringing harmony throughout our environment, to be in right relationship
Candy sprinkles	multicolored, for the elemental spirits
chocolate	the earth
Colored yarn	Rainbows

Confetti	Joy
Corn	sustenance, gifting back to the earth what we have been given
Cotton	Clouds
Feathers	Connection with path to spirit, flight
Female and male figures	complementary opposites, balance
Flowers	healing
Gold and silve bead	sun and moon
Gold and silver paper	wisdom of earth (gold), wisdom of mountains (silver)
Gold and silver ribbon	Masculine energy, Feminine energy
Incense	Sweet Aroma
Lavender	Harmony
Lentils	the abundance of earth
money	ensures the success of the despacho
Musical instruments	Sound, harmony
Peanuts	old trees, the plant people
Raisins	Elders
Red carnations	Earth, love, compassion
Red wine	Offerings to Pachamama
Rice, Oatmeal	Sustenance
Sage, tobacco mix	Sacred Incense
seashell	holds the intent of the despacho
Silver ribbon	Feminine energy
Starfish	Beings of the oceans
Stars	Connection with the Heavens
Sugar	Love and sweetness
Sunflower seeds	New beginnings
White carnations	Mountains, brings light in, cleanliness, order, honesty and spiritual connections
White wine	Offerings to the mountains
Yarn, rainbow	the rainbow and a bridge between the visible and invisible worlds
Yellow carnations	Heavens, good luck, money