

CHOOSING CREMATION

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO
UNDERSTANDING CREMATION
AND MAKING THE RIGHT
CHOICE FOR YOU AND YOUR
FAMILY.



CHOOSING CREMATION

More and more people are choosing cremation.

The popularity of cremation is based on a number of factors: The personal values of the deceased - or family members. A desire to memorialize a loved one in unique or more personal way. Distance of friends or relatives to attend a service. Concerns for the environment. And so many more.

This document will review the key benefits of cremation, and explore the many unique choices you and your family have to celebrate a life today, and for generations to come.

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WHY CREMATION?



LIFESTYLES

The lifestyle choices most people make today are significantly different than those made even a generation ago.



FLEXIBILITY

Cremation is more than scattering or urns. Cremation offers many choices. Discover which options are best for you.



AFFORDABILITY

Cremation is the most affordable solution. We examine why cremation costs less and how this savings can open other opportunities.



SUSTAINABILITY

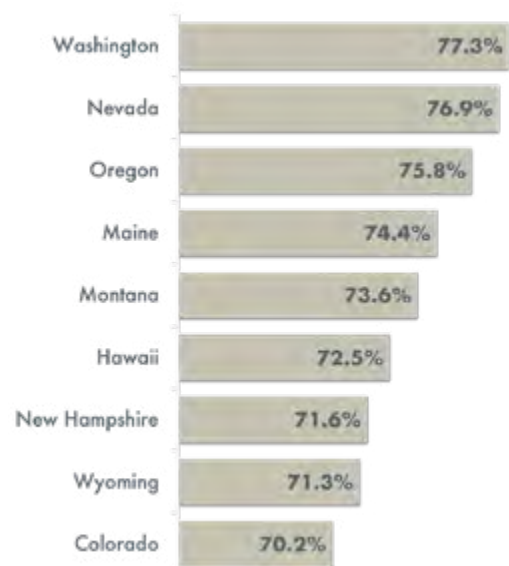
Our understanding of the environment and desire to preserve it is one of the many reasons cremation is a preferred choice.

DID YOU KNOW THAT A MAJORITY OF PEOPLE NOW CHOOSE CREMATION?

Over 77% of families in Washington State now choose cremation, which is more than any other state in the USA.

This is not unique to Washington; it's a trend that is growing nationally at an incredible rate.

As you review this document, you'll understand why this choice is so popular with so many families.





LIFESTYLES

Changes in society are making cremation a much more convenient and practical answer for changing lifestyles.



A MORE MOBILE SOCIETY

Historically, most families would live most of their lives close to other family members.

That is no longer always the situation today. Washington, Oregon, and Nevada are not only the states with some of the highest in-migration rates, but are also the three states with the highest cremation rates in the country!

For the convenience of distance family members, cremation is often a very practical option.



MEMORIAL SERVICE FLEXIBILITY

With traditional burial, memorial services must be conducted quickly after a person's passing.

This urgency for holding a memorial service within days of a death is not necessary with cremation.

Because the natural decomposition of the body is no longer a factor, memorial services can be scheduled many weeks *after* the cremation is performed.

This flexibility allows distant family members and friends time to make travel arrangements to attend a memorial service.



PRIORITIES AND VALUES

Traditional beliefs about the body, and its importance related to spiritual matters, have also been changing significantly in the past few decades.

This change in perspective among people of various faiths, combined with a general shift away from traditional religions in many areas of the country, have also contributed to a greater acceptance and preference for cremation.



UNLIMITED FLEXIBILITY

People from all walks of life choose cremation because it gives them more options, something everyone appreciates.

For example, with cremation, a family may select a traditional cemetery headstone or marker, but can also choose from an entire spectrum of long-term memorialization options that are just not possible with traditional burial.

Some of the most popular options are indoor urn displays, cremation jewelry, basalt and stone memorials, and an amazing array of urns. And most options can be combined to suit the desires of multiple family members.

Here are a few of the most important areas where the flexibility of cremation provides more choice and flexibility:

BEAUTY & FLEXIBILITY



While most people are familiar with the idea of preserving a loved one's remains in an urn, many are not aware of the vast number of choices for urns. For example, a small *keepsake urn* can allow multiple family members to keep a small portion of the cremation remains.

Uniquely personalized urns are available featuring a wide variety of interests, such as a persons' favorite activities, teams, hobbies and achievements.

JEWELRY



One of the most popular options today is to combine a loved one's remains within a wearable piece of jewelry.

There are many unique and beautiful settings, pendants and other styles that can be chosen, or custom designed by a local artisan.

A very popular trend is to use take a portion of the cremated remains and transform into a beautiful diamond!

CREMATION GARDENS



A cremation garden is a quiet place of peace and beauty within many cemeteries where a loved one's remains may be placed or scattered without concern for later desecration, development, or concern with permits or permission requests.

MARKERS & BENCHES



Cremation *markers* (*headstones*) come in a variety of shapes and sizes, some with a hollow section for holding a loved one's remains.

A cremation *bench* is a type of marker, but is obviously designed for contemplative sitting.

Each type of marker may be placed within a specific area (such as a cremation garden) or with other burial plots, depending on cemetery rules and guidelines.

PERSONALIZED DISPLAYS



An indoor, glass-front *cremation niche* is intended for the display of the urn, as well as other items the family chooses to accompany the urn, such as photographs, mementos, awards, and other items of significance.

Glass front cremation niches are located in climate-controlled buildings, called a *mausoleum*, at many cemeteries.

GROUND BURIAL



To further underscore the flexibility that cremation provides, yes, even ground burial is an option!

This can be an important choice for family members who want to ensure that cremated family members are located alongside others who used traditional burial, or for families who already own family plots.



AFFORDABILITY

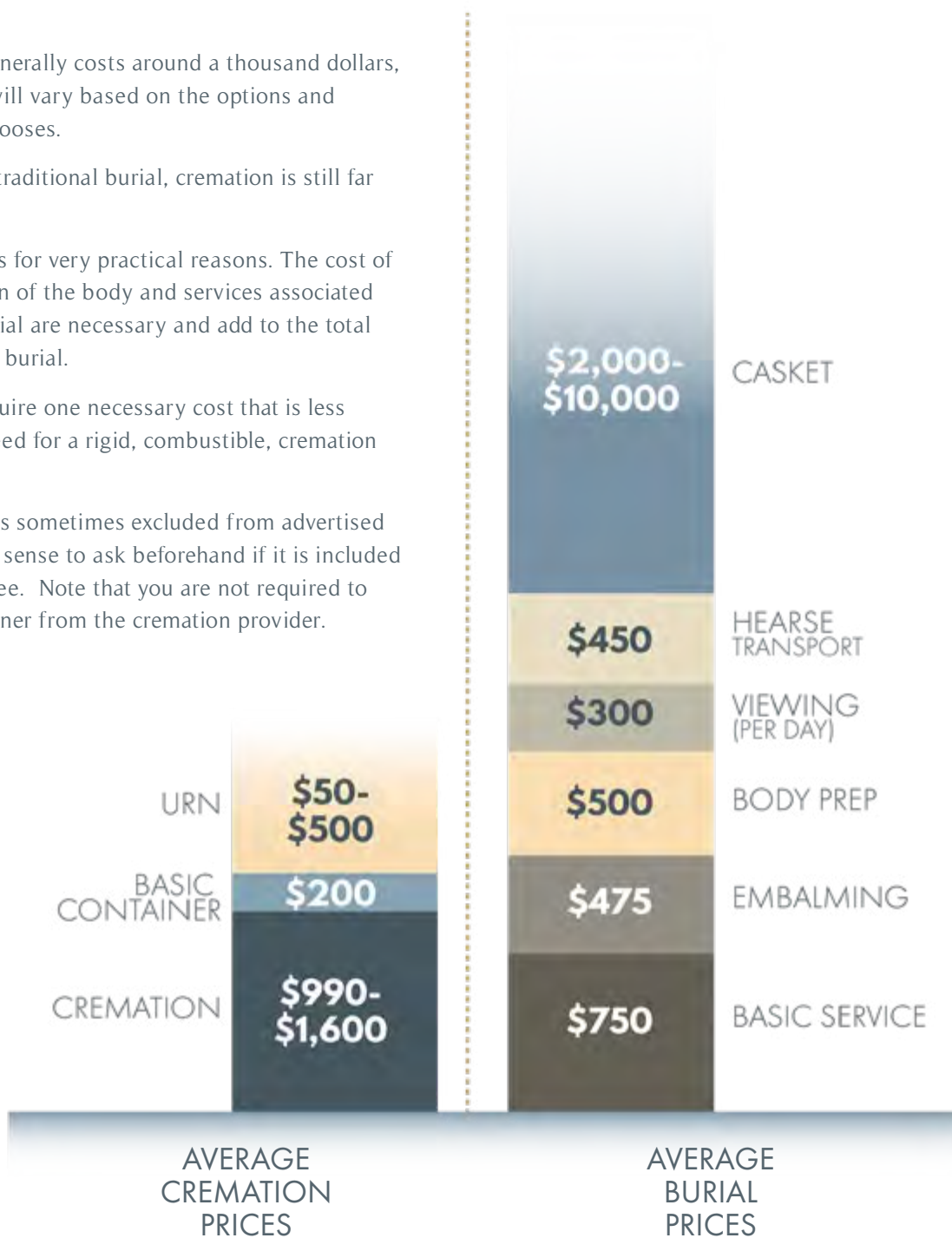
Direct cremation generally costs around a thousand dollars, although the cost will vary based on the options and services a family chooses.

But compared to a traditional burial, cremation is still far less expensive.

Cremation costs less for very practical reasons. The cost of a casket, preparation of the body and services associated with traditional burial are necessary and add to the total cost of a traditional burial.

Cremation does require one necessary cost that is less well known: The need for a rigid, combustible, cremation container.

This required item is sometimes excluded from advertised prices. So it makes sense to ask beforehand if it is included in the pricing you see. Note that you are not required to purchase the container from the cremation provider.





SUSTAINABILITY

As our awareness of our impact on the environment has increased, more people have decided to choose cremation as a more environmentally gentle option compared to traditional burial.

While there are an increasing number of “green” alternatives for traditional casket burials, cremation is still the most environmentally friendly option available.



PERMANENT MEMORIALIZATION

Permanent memorialization provides a *place* to visit and remember the meaningful moments and contributions of a loved one.

Some people believe that a permanent place of memorialization isn't important with cremation.

While this seems practical, it may be a short-term decision that can lead to regret or confusion in the future.

The good news is that even if you are not sure how to memorialize a cremated loved one, cremation allows families to select from better long-term options years or decades after the person has died. So it's never too late.

But everyone should consider the options *now* so that plans can be considered or made which will help to reduce anxiety and frustration in the years ahead.

A GIFT TO DESCENDANTS



At some point in our lives, many of us wonder about our families and our ancestors. Who were they? What were they like?

While a permanent memorial cannot answer all of those questions, it can provide a tangible connection to distant relatives.

Choosing a permanent memorial provides for *your* posterity. It ensures that your future descendants will have a chance to connect with *you* in a specific place. Forever.

DISPLAY AT HOME?



Urns are meant to be *displayed*. Keeping an urn at home is a wonderful way to honor a loved one.

But eventually a move or other life event will require a decision about *where do we put the urn?*

In all too many cases, the urn ends up in a closet. And this is tragic.

A permanent memorial ensures that the urn is *always* maintained and honored the way that is intended.

STRIP-MALL SCATTERING?



Scattering is an honorable tradition with cremation.

But carefully consider the location of the scattering. The scattering location could one day be a strip mall. Or a factory. Or a freeway!

A safe alternative is to combine scattering with a permanent memorial. This ensures that both the significance of the scattering experience is preserved and the legacy of a life well-lived will *always* be honored.

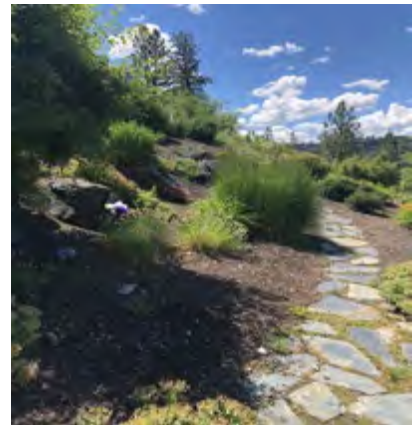


CREMATION GARDENS

An idyllic place of tranquility where a loved one's memory can be honored for generations.

Cremation gardens are dedicated spaces found in contemporary cemeteries. They feature flowers and ornamental shrubs meticulously maintained by cemetery grounds keepers.

A cremation garden provides assurance that a loved one's remains is protected and honored in a place of beauty.



A cremation garden can be used as a place for scattering of ashes and for the placement of a permanent marker.





MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

A permanent monument to a loved one. Markers are available in a variety of sizes and styles - providing an appropriate option for every life and budget.

A cremation marker can be placed within a cremation garden, or in the cemetery itself.

In either case, the loved one is honored by the placement of a marker commemorating their life for eternity.

As with traditional headstones, these markers are often made of granite or other durable materials and engraved with the name and dates of their time with us. Some cremation markers are hollowed to hold the urn or urns.

GRANITE POSTS

These cremation markers are suited to hold one or two urns and can be found in a cremation garden.





MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

NATURAL BOULDERS

When placed outdoors in a cremation garden, these Memorials give the natural look of a boulder and can be inscribed with a message, name and dates. The boulders are hollowed out to hold one to two urns.



BASALT MEMORY PLAQUE WALLS

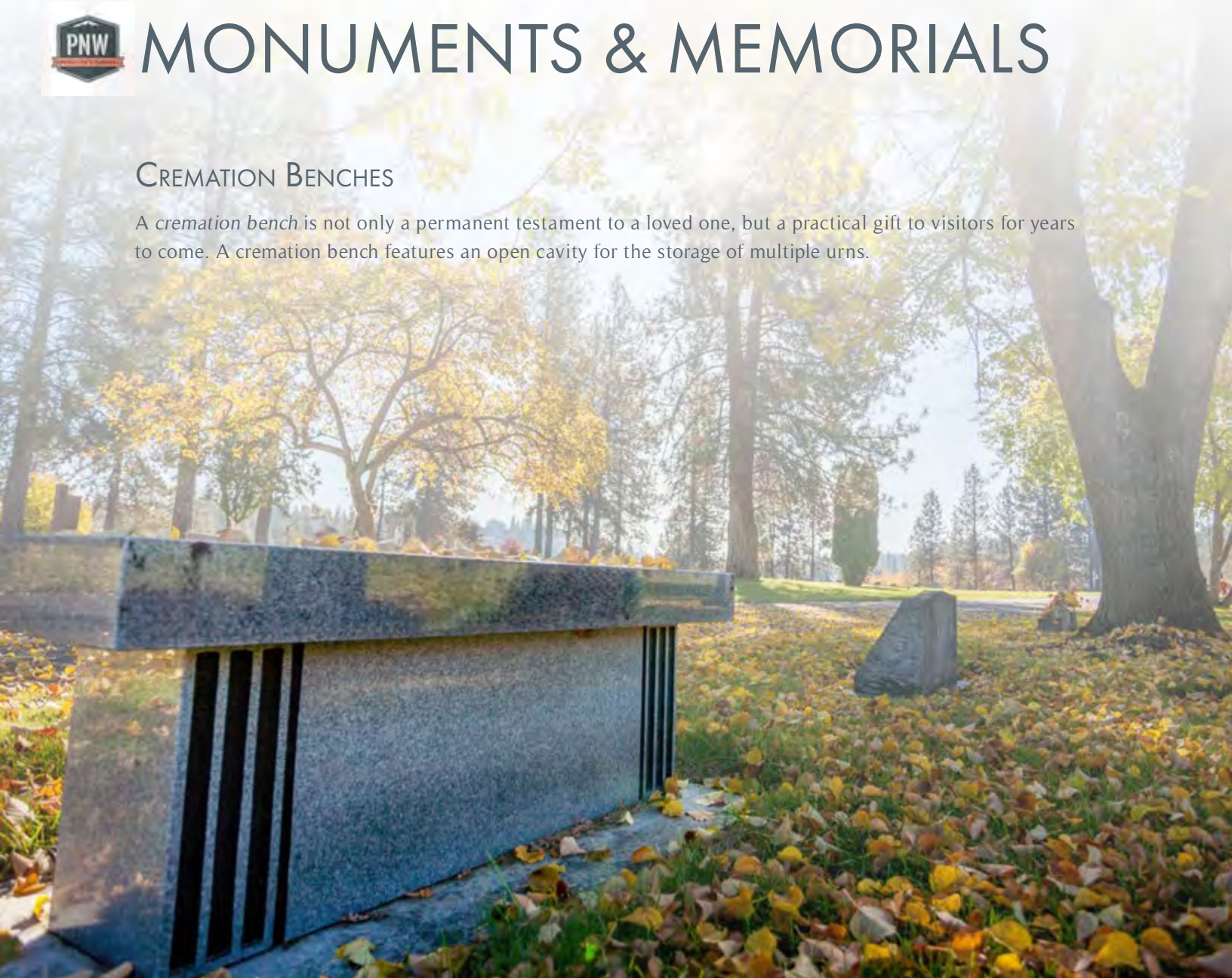
Those whose remains have been scattered in the designated area of the cremation garden can be remembered on a basalt pillar with a memorial plaque where the names and dates are inscribed.



MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

CREMATION BENCHES

A cremation bench is not only a permanent testament to a loved one, but a practical gift to visitors for years to come. A cremation bench features an open cavity for the storage of multiple urns.





EXTERIOR MEMORIALS

Columbariums are outdoor monuments which provide a haven for several urns within the dignified grounds of a cemetery.



AN OUTDOOR COLUMBARIUM

An outdoor *columbarium* is located on cemetery grounds and is typically made of granite.

A columbarium contains multiple compartments for the permanent placing of urns.

On the face of each compartment, the name and date of the person within is inscribed.

The compartments (referred to as *niches*) are available in different capacities; from a single urn to as many as four urns, depending on the size of the niche and the guidelines put in place by the cemetery.





PERSONALIZED DISPLAYS

A glass-front niche is a lasting demonstration of love, accomplishments and passions. These indoor displays provide a home for the urn alongside the display of personal items.



INDOOR GLASS FRONT NICHE

One of the most personalized ways of memorializing a loved one is to tell their story, their personality, achievements, and hobbies with a *glass front niche*.

An indoor glass front niche wall columbarium is a series of enclosed units where an urn is

displayed alongside photographs and other small items.

Framed photos, awards, toys, articles, handiwork as well as more traditional flower and flag displays are quite common and are a very personalized and meaningful way to remember a

loved one.

Since these niches are inside a climate-controlled facility, visitation is easy and convenient regardless of the weather outside.





GROUND BURIAL

Outdoor columbariums, cremation gardens and glass front niches provide many options, but burial is sometimes the right choice for many families.

The flexibility of cremation is best demonstrated by the fact that in addition to all of the options already shown in this guide, you may also choose to bury a loved one's cremated remains.

This option will require the purchase of a plot at a cemetery. If the remains will be buried in the ground, many cemeteries require that the urn be enclosed in an urn vault. Much like a burial vault, an urn vault is used to support the soil around the urn and ensure that the soil above and around the urn will not collapse.

Because cremated remains are significantly smaller than a body, most cemeteries will allow for the remains of multiple people to be buried in the same plot.



THE SCATTERING QUESTION

The scattering of a loved one's remains at a location of great scenic beauty or personal importance, is one of the most well-known choices for cremated remains. There can be a timeless element to scattering, but there are important questions to be considered.

Once cremated remains are scattered, it is important to remember that they are irretrievable. While a location may hold special significance for those closest to the individual, it may be difficult to access or prevent future generations from finding a tie to their ancestor.

Are any permits required for the location? Many US and State Parks may require a permit or authorization.

Do you require the permission of a property owner? If the site chosen for scattering is on private property, the property owner's permission must be attained.

While scattering may be a good choice for many, it's valuable to know all your options.

While it may not seem as important today, consider other options which can include scattering, as well as more tangible ways to memorialize your life.

CEMETERY SCATTERING: A SECURE AND DIGNIFIED ALTERNATIVE



The perfect environment for a *scattering* could be the most obvious: a garden-like environment within a cemetery.

A cremation garden will not only preserve the integrity of the location where the cremation remains are scattered, but serve as place for commemoration of the scattering, as well as memorialization for future generations through a variety of memorial options (cremation markers or plaques in a variety of shapes and sizes).

A cremation garden is an ideal location for the scattering and for preserving memories for all future generations.

PERSONALIZING A LEGACY

An urn is any receptacle designed to permanently encase the cremated remains. An urn may seem like a deceptively simple choice since they come in a variety of sizes, styles, and materials as unique as the individual; in fact, there are urns to satisfy every taste, requirement, and budget.

Urn range in size from small keepsakes to larger companion urns for joint placement of remains.

Urn can be elegant and dignified, or whimsical and unique.

They can reflect traditional themes and designs, or unique, one-of-a-kind creations of art.





URNS: ART AND FUNCTION

Having a loved one's remains placed in a decorative urn is a well-known cremation choice. Urns are a beautiful memorial to a loved one that can stay with family members for years, and they come in a diverse range of sizes, styles and functions.

While urns can be great memorials and add beauty to a home, it is true that over time finding an appropriate place in a home to display an urn can become an inconvenience for some families. This can often result in an urn being moved to a closet until a better situation can be found.

A practical solution is to have the urn placed in a cemetery.





URNS: KEEPSAKE URNS

KEEPSAKE URNS

A keepsake urn is smaller in size, where a portion of the cremation remains can be stored.

These are more easily displayed in a home, or combine practical utility through a small key chain urn.

A keepsake is often used by those who wish to distribute the remains of the deceased amongst family members and close friends who live far from one another.





URNS: ART URNS

ART URN

These urns are works of fine art that feature a secret chamber where cremated remains can be stored.

Some art urns are custom made in order to reflect the personality of the deceased precisely.

Such urns are usually handmade by skilled artists in various materials such as bronze, glass or ceramics.

The price of an *art urn* is usually higher due to the required craftsmanship, uniqueness, and labor-intensive creation process.

For those looking for a special and unique option to honor their loved ones, nothing else matches the aesthetic and emotional impact of an art urn.





URNS: PICTURE URNS

RELIGIOUS URN

Religious urns showcase the faith of a loved one. Such urns are available in many styles, shapes, designs and materials, but they all are designed to relate directly to the spiritual realm.



PICTURE URN

A picture or a photo urn is a great way to display a favorite photo of a loved one. This type of urn looks very similar to a photo frame, but it comes with the secret chamber where the cremation remains can be stored.



COMPANION URN

A companion urn is a great way to memorialize the life of a loving couple and help them to remain together for eternity even after their death. The size of a companion urn is usually large as compared to other types of urns so that the remains of two individuals can be stored alongside each other.





URNS: THEME URNS

THEMED URNS

A theme urn is a perfect choice to highlight a particular hobby, interest or passion of the deceased. There are theme urns that depict hobbies such as fishing, painting, sailing, motorcycle riding or music.



BIODEGRADABLE URNS

Biodegradable urns are designed to be placed in the ground in a natural environment where they will biodegrade over time.

A biodegradable urn is made from environmentally friendly products and non-toxic materials and is one

of the most popular types of urns in the industry today.

Some of the materials used for making a biodegradable of urn are mulberry bark, organic compost, newsprint, cornstarch, blocks of salt, paper clay, earthenware clay and unglazed ceramic.





CREMATION JEWELRY

CREMATION JEWELRY

Memorializing a loved one through *cremation jewelry* is extremely popular.

Cremation jewelry can either be worn, or displayed at your home in an elegant display dome or jewelry box. It is a growing trend nowadays to hold a small portion of the cremated remains in a piece of cremation jewelry designed for this purpose.

New options are available through the transformation of the cremated remains into a beautiful diamond - an elegant and timeless memorial.



CREMATION DIAMOND



STERLING SILVER



THUMBPRINT





PLAN TODAY

Most people would agree that having a plan in place for anything in life is a good idea. And that is particularly true with something as significant as the death of a loved one.

Selecting and prearranging ones cemetery and funeral plans in advance allows for the opportunity to compare the many available options and to insure that one's wishes are met.

Doing so will also relieve family members of making emotionally difficult decisions when they are suffering from a loss.

Through the process of pre-arrangement, pre-funding will insure that funeral expenses will be paid for; with arrangements being made at a time when ones financial setting is more predictable. Pre-planning is a true and gentle gift to loved ones, easing the burden for those left behind.

DEFINE YOUR VALUES

Consider what is most important to you and your family.

ESTABLISH YOUR PRIORITIES

Establish your budget and memorial preferences.

ARRANGE A PLAN

Contact a cremation provider or funeral home.

INFORM LOVED ONES

Ensure your family is aware of your choice.

ENJOY PEACE OF MIND

You've taken a huge step to remove stress for you and your loved ones.

WHEN THERE IS NO PLAN

When there is no plan in place, you may be leaving a financial and organizational burden on family and loved ones when you pass.

For example, if there was no plan or documentation that you prefer cremation over a traditional burial, the much higher cost of a traditional burial may be passed on to your family.

This additional cost, and the different beliefs of family members and their ability to take on an unexpected expense, can cause considerable distress at a time when they should be focused on more important things.

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT CREMATION

HOW MUCH DOES CREMATION COST?

Cremation costs can are typically around \$1,000. Compare this cost to more traditional funerals which can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to more than \$15,000.

And even though the cost of cremation is much lower than a traditional burial, families that choose cremation can still select many of the same services as a traditional funeral, such as a public viewing or grave-side service.

These additional services will add to the total cost. Your budget should plan for additional items such as memorial markers, urns, jewelry, and related memorial items.

A good idea is to ask your cremation or funeral provider for a **General Price List**. This will provide a list of costs for all services, and will also provide information on additional expenses that may not be included in the 'advertised price' on their website or in advertising.

For example, a necessary item for every cremation is a rigid, fully combustible container, which is sometimes not shown in an advertised price, even though it is a requirement for all cremations.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A DEATH OCCURS?

A member of the family or a next of kin should notify the proper local authorities. The family member should also make contact with a cremation or funeral services provider.

COMMON QUESTIONS

WHO TRANSPORTS
THE BODY?

The cremation or funeral provider will make arrangements to transport the deceased to the appropriate care facility.

ARE VIEWINGS
POSSIBLE WITH A
CREMATION?

Yes. Just as with traditional funerals, a viewing is an option with cremation. Some funeral providers may require embalming if this is your preference.

IS EMBALMING
REQUIRED WITH
CREMATION?

Embalming is done to preserve the body by treating it to minimize short-term decomposition. Embalming is optional for burial or cremation.

ARE TRADITIONAL
FUNERALS POSSIBLE
WITH CREMATION?

Yes! Choosing cremation only indicates how you'd like to care for your loved one after the service and doesn't exclude you from celebrating and honoring their life in any way. Whether you'd like to have visitation beforehand, arrange a funeral service before cremation, or wait and hold the service after the cremation, talk to your cremation provider to make your desires known.

WHAT ABOUT ORGAN DONATIONS AND CREMATION?

Organ donations take place before the cremation process. Ensure that your family members are aware of this so that they can approve or disclose this to the proper parties.

CAN JEWELRY BE WORN DURING CREMATION?

We recommend removing all jewelry from the deceased. These items may have important meaning or value and will be destroyed in the cremation process. A highly recommended option is to preserve jewelry for display in a niche or alongside an urn.

WHAT ABOUT PACEMAKERS?

All pacemakers or battery-powered devices are a combustion hazard and are always removed before cremation.

WHERE CAN I SELECT AN URN?

Since an urn is a important element in the long-term memorialization of a loved one, many people want to evaluate their options. Most cremation providers will have showrooms with their most popular and unique urns on display, as well as an online (or printed) catalog of additional urns that you can choose from.

You can select an urn from any source you choose. You are not obligated to purchase or use an urn (or a casket) from your cremation or funeral provider.

WHERE DOES THE CREMATION TAKE PLACE?

The cremation of the body is done at a *crematory*. Crematories are found at funeral homes, cemeteries, or stand-alone facilities.

A crematory is designed to generate heat up to 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit, which is required temperature for the proper treatment of the body.

COMMON QUESTIONS

HOW LONG DOES THE CREMATION PROCESS TAKE?

The average cremation takes between 2 and 2.5 hours for the actual cremation, followed by a few hours for cool-down before the remains can be distributed into a desired container.

CAN FAMILY MEMBERS BE PRESENT DURING THE CREMATION PROCESS?

Viewing of the cremation is dependent on the policies and facilities of your chosen cremation provided. In some facilities a small window is used by family members to view the cremation chamber. Consider asking this question when selecting a cremation provider.

HOW DOES THE FAMILY RECEIVE THE REMAINS?

The family receives their loved ones remains in the requested urn. This may be a temporary urn meant to hold the cremated remains prior to scattering or transfer to another urn, or it may be the urn being placed at the cemetery.

CAN THE REMAINS BE SEPARATED FOR MULTIPLE FAMILY MEMBERS?

One of the benefits of cremation is that the remains can be placed in separate urns, pieces of jewelry, or other memorial keepsakes to for multiple family members.

COMMON QUESTIONS

CAN I ADD SPECIAL ITEMS TO BE CREMATED WITH THE BODY?

Some items can be placed in the container with the body for cremation, but not everything. Most cremation providers will work with you to ensure your wishes are met, but for safety or practical reasons, some materials and items cannot be included.

HOW MUCH DO THE REMAINS WEIGH WHEN CREMATION IS COMPLETED?

Cremated remains usually weigh several pounds, while the size is dependent on the type of container or urn chosen for the remains.

ARE VETERANS ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS WITH CREMATION?

A veteran with any discharge status (other than dishonorable) from any branch of the US Military is eligible for cremation and burial benefits. A veteran's discharge status is recorded on their DD214 document.

The Veterans Administration provides a monetary benefit to help cover some costs associated with burial or cremation. This reimbursement can be applied for through the VA after services are rendered and paid for.

HOW CAN I BE CONFIDENT THAT THE REMAINS ARE FROM MY LOVED ONE?

Most cremation providers are professionals who follow a rigorous process to ensure that the integrity and the identification of your loved one's remains is meticulously observed. These steps involve careful tagging and identification of the body prior to cremation and multiple checks before, during and after cremation to ensure that this integrity is preserved in the entire process.

LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN HELP.

We hope that you found this document a useful guide to explore your options regarding cremation.

If you would like to speak with a professional funeral director, or even if you just have questions, please feel free to give us a call at the number below, or visit our website.

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