



Dimensions

12 1/2 × 14 in. (31.8 × 35.6 cm)

Bag (Chuspa)

Date

early to mid 20th Century

Primary Maker

Aymara

Medium

Camelid wool

Description

Chuspas are small personal bags used by the Aymara and Quechua people to carry coca leaves. The leaves are chewed to remedy altitude sickness and provide a burst of energy, but they also have spiritual and social significance: to offer someone a cocoa leaf is a sign of friendship, and they are often left as offerings to gods. Chuspas are only worn by men and hang from the shoulder, neck, or waist. They predate both Spanish colonialism and the Incan conquest of the Andean peoples. Despite this, they are still regularly worn as part of traditional dress today and, in some parts of Bolivia, are incorporated into Catholic mourning clothes.