

## Hoodoo Medicine: Gullah Herbal Remedies, Revised Edition

Faith Mitchell



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Hoodoo Medicine is a unique record of nearly lost African-American folk culture. It documents herbal medicines used for centuries, from the 1600s until recent decades, by the slaves and later their freed descendants, in the South Carolina Sea Islands. The Sea Island people, also called the Gullah, were unusually isolated from other slave groups by the creeks and marshes of the Low Country. They maintained strong African influences on their speech, social customs, and beliefs, long after other American blacks had lost this connection. Likewise, their folk medicine mixed medicines that originated in Africa with cures learned from the American Indians and European settlers. Hoodoo Medicine is a window into Gullah traditions, which in recent years have been threatened by the migration of families, the invasion of the Sea Islands by suburban developers, and the gradual death of the elder generation. More than that, it captures folk practices that lasted longer in the Sea Islands than elsewhere, but were once widespread throughout African-American communities of the South.

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