

AMERICANS INCREASINGLY CHOOSE CREMATION

In 2006, 34% of deaths used cremation as the final disposition option. This compares to 1% of all deaths a hundred years ago. The rate of cremation in the US continues to climb and is expected to reach 52% in 2025.

What are the factors that contribute to this trend?

- More religions are accepting cremation.
- Many people do not feel the need to preserve their body.
- Some people dislike the idea of being buried.
- Economic hardships create a need for less expensive disposition.
- Cremation is very simple, especially “direct cremation” in which the body goes directly to the crematorium without embalming and viewing.
- People are increasingly less traditional.
- People are increasingly planning their own disposition.
- People are increasingly individualizing their memorials.
- Cremation removes the time constraint of full-body burial.
- Cremation allows remains to be easily transported to a remote location.
- Fewer people have reserved spaces in family burial plots.
- Environmental awareness has raised concerns about full body burial regarding pollution and land use.
- Crematoriums have used technology to considerably reduce emissions.
- More burial grounds are offering columbariums and ground vaults.

Probably one of the most important factors in this trend is the social affirmation. Cremation becomes more acceptable as more people choose it. Basically, people know that others have researched cremation prior to choosing it. People may also factor that society finds cremation acceptable.