



Dietary and Medical Guidelines

Ayahuasca

Preparing for Your Ayahuasca Experience

Working with plant medicines in sacred ceremony requires proper preparation and understanding, both for your safety, and to have a beneficial experience.

Please note: In order to ensure your complete safety and well-being, it is important to discuss with your medical provider any changes in your medications and let our team know of any medications you are taking.

Dietary Guidelines

In general, we encourage you to eat whole foods, limiting processed foods and foods high in salt, sugar, oils, and animal fats.

It is highly encouraged to avoid the following for at least 3 weeks prior to your retreat:

- Plant Medicine (e.g. Cannabis, Psilocybin, Hape, Peyote, Datura, Salvia, Ayahuasca or DMT)
- Synthetic Psychedelics (e.g. Ketamine, LSD, MDMA, 5MEO-DMT)
- Stimulants (e.g. Cocaine, Caffeine Pills)
- Alcohol
- Pork & red meat
- Limiting processed foods
- Limiting salt and foods high in salt
- Limiting foods high in sugar
- Limiting foods high in oils & animal fats
- Limiting News Media and Social Media
- Spicy foods
- Blue cheese
- Peanuts, soy, and fava beans

It is highly encouraged to avoid the following for at least 2 weeks prior to your retreat:

- Caffeine (weaned off by one week)
- Energy Drinks (e.g. Red Bull, Monster, Rockstar, Nos, Xyience, Bang, Amp)
- Refined sugars
- Pickled, fermented, and smoked foods
- Overly ripe foods
- Dairy
- Adrenaline-inducing activities (i.e. sky-diving, extreme sports, endurance activities, getting a tattoo, horror films, etc. – routine workouts OK.)
- Sexual & sensual activity with self or others
- Limit nicotine (vaping, patches, cigarettes, or pouch/ dipping)

The general principle here is that your base energy level or adrenaline levels should not be peaking and dropping. Think of it as trying to remain on an 'even keel' of energy before and during your retreat.



Medical Guidelines

In general, we recommend stopping most medications, if possible, four weeks in advance of your retreat. However, we recognize that this may not be possible for all medications. Please discuss with your doctor any and all medications you are taking and their interactions with MAO inhibitors, particularly if you are taking any medications that would pose a health risk to discontinue. It's not always necessary to discontinue medications, but it's very important to discuss this with your primary doctor as well as the HHP team when filling out your Initial Application and Enrollment Request Form and as well as during your Intake and Medical Screening Calls. Some medications are contraindicated with Ayahuasca and unlike food interactions, whose consequences are usually unlikely to be serious, interaction with some pharmaceutical drugs and medications (including some over-the-counter drugs and certain herbs) have the potential to pose serious health risks.

In particular, the following drugs and medications can be dangerous with ayahuasca and should be discontinued at least four weeks prior to partaking in ceremony:

- Other MAOIs
- SSRI's (any selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitor)
- Antihypertensives (high blood pressure medicine)
- Appetite suppressants (diet pills)
- Medicine for bronchitis; antihistamines, medicines for colds, sinus problems, hay fever, or allergies (Actifed DM, Benadryl, Benylin, Chlor-Trimeton, Compoz, Bromarest-DM or -DX, Dimetane-DX cough syrup, Dristan Cold & Flu, Phenergan with extromethorphan, Robitussin-DM, Vicks Formula 44-D, several Tylenol cold, cough).
- Any drug containing dextromethorphan/ DXM or with DM, DX or Tuss in its name.
- CNS (central nervous system) depressants (Xanax, Ativan, etc)
- Vasodilators
- Antipsychotics
- Barbiturates
- Cocaine
- Amphetamines (meth-, dex-, amphetamine), ephedrine, MDMA (Ecstasy), MDA, MDEA, PMA
- Opiates (heroin, morphine, codeine, and especially opium)
- Dextromethorphan (DXM)
- Mescaline (any phenethylamine) – less dangerous but not recommended
- Kratom – less dangerous but not recommended
- Kava – less dangerous but not recommended
- Herbal supplements - St. John's Wort & 5-HTP

As mentioned above, we also recommend discontinuing the use of cannabis for at least two weeks (one month if you regularly work with this plant) prior to your retreat. Cannabis use can make it difficult for many people to connect strongly with ayahuasca.

Health Conditions and Ayahuasca

The main purpose of screening is to ensure the safety of all participants in a ceremony. Health conditions and medications are also screened. Ayahuasca is not recommended for people with bipolar disorders. Sometimes, when these individuals take it, it potentiates a reaction that can last beyond the ceremony and requires further intervention. For these reasons, screening for mental health disorders is important, as well as honesty about any medical conditions.



Importance of Diet in Preparing for Ayahuasca

Experience with ayahuasca teaches the importance of a clean diet, both before and after the session. Indigenous use of ayahuasca is always accompanied by some kind of diet and, though the restrictions vary, some fundamental guidelines are shared, including avoiding recreational drugs, alcohol, and sexual activity for a period preceding and following the medicine, and avoiding salt, pork, spicy foods or extremely cold food/drinks.

There are more complex diets practiced by those in training to be traditional healers, but following the basics will enhance the results of the ritual for most seekers and allow the medicine space to work most effectively.

Focusing on deprivation is not the purpose of a diet; its purpose is to create an environment in your body that gives the medicine the best chance of permeating and illuminating areas that need healing. Practicing these disciplines shows respect for the medicine, respect for the process, and is believed to lead to more insight and less difficulty in the sessions.

Summary

At Heroic Hearts Project we hold a high standard for every aspect of the healing process. We believe all those who feel the call of the medicine, regardless of where they choose to partake, should understand the potential risks involved as well as the current knowledge, traditions, and recommendations, both spiritual and medical, in preparing for such an experience.