

PREPARING FOR YOUR

# Ayahuasca

Retreat & Diet



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KUMANKAYA  
HEALING CENTER

GUIDEBOOK

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# YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS



Once you decide to work with Ayahuasca, the journey has begun. Preparing to work with sacred plant medicine is as meaningful as the journey itself. Personal choices, dietary decisions and your physical environment all play a role in the preparation stage. Now is the time to cleanse the body, mind, and spirit to set the stage for working with the plants and to connect with emotions and your consciousness on a deeper level.

Engaging with sacred medicines is a deeply personal and intensive experience. To get the most out of your time at the center, we recommend engaging in preparatory rituals/practices several weeks prior to your visit. Taking the time to prepare and begin a process of self-connection and exploration will help you take your healing to the deepest levels possible. Below we offer suggestions of specific ways in which you can prepare on physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual levels before working with the medicine.



# The Medicine of Ayahuasca

Ayahuasca is an Amazonian decoction of the vine *Banisteriopsis Caapi*, which contains the beta carbolines. This allows the stomach to absorb DMT (natural occurring tryptamine) from the leaves of the shrub *Psychotria Viridis* (Chacruna). The vine is the book (knowledge) and the Chacruna is the light (visions) that enables us to read the book. For centuries, the indigenous communities of the Amazon Basin have been using Ayahuasca in their ceremonies to safeguard the health of both the drinker and the community. Today, it is used in many places throughout the world for therapeutic and religious-spiritual purposes and for personal growth. It is *not* a religion, it is a sacred medicine. We use the word medicine as a form of respect. This is *not* a hallucinogenic trip. It is a life-changing visionary experience with ancient roots.








BODY & MIND CARE IDEAS

Meditate  
Get Out in Nature  
Stay Hydrated  
Eat Well  
Breathwork  
Get Adequate Sleep  
Journal  
Movement



# Journal Prompts



-  Start to identify your emotions and where they are being experienced in your body (stick with core emotions of anger, fear, sadness, shame, joy)
-  Your intentions/hopes/fears/feelings about working with the medicine
-  Areas in life you feel inspired/hopeful/curious about or areas where you feel stuck/confused/lost
-  Where you would like to see yourself/how you would like to be after working with the medicine. Think about five months down the road, one year, etc.
-  What does the best case scenario from participating in our retreat look and feel like
-  Starting and ending your day with a gratitude list
-  Tune into your dreams, keep a dream journal.  
Typically, during normal life, your dreams are communications from your subconscious. During the Ayahuasca and master plant diet experience, your dreams will be the vehicle by which your plants communicate with you. The more tuned into them you are the more open they will become and the more you will be able to remember them

# Social Media

Consider reducing the amount of time spent interfacing with social media platforms and electronic devices. While there are benefits and conveniences to social media, they also distract us from our internal experience and limit our ability to be in the present moment. They have also been linked to increases in depression and anxiety, feelings of loneliness/isolation, appearance/body dissatisfaction and decreases in sleep, creativity, focus, real-time social interactions and time spent in nature.

Some questions to ask yourself about the accounts you follow on social media: How do I feel after viewing the content on my social media? For example, do I feel energized, positive, inspired? Or do I tend to feel inadequate, dissatisfied or negative about myself, my body, my life?



## NUTRITION

Try to focus on eating in a way that feeds your body what it needs without trying to limit or over consume foods outlined in the dietary guidelines. Many people find engaging in a mindful eating practice beneficial. Below are links to the why and how of mindful eating:



[Rationale for mindful eating](#)

[Guided mindful eating meditation](#)



## AYAHUASCA DIET

By preparing your body beforehand, you are making a deeper commitment to yourself and to the medicine. In order to prepare it is necessary to follow a nutritional diet at least **ten days** before the start of the retreat.

The Ayahuasca tea works with your body in strong biochemical and energetic ways. Everything put in, on, or around your body (especially food) must be considered in terms of how it harmonizes or clashes with these natural medicines. Think of it as creating a blank canvas within your system, making space for the plants to heal without competition from other sources or interference. Being as clean as possible prior to taking Ayahuasca will allow it to work to its greatest and deepest capacity and will allow you to get the most out of your stay.



# Eating Disorders

Please note, if you have struggled with an eating disorder we understand the following guidelines may be difficult and/or triggering. They may also not align with recommendations from treatment providers/parts of your healing plan. Reach out to Kumankaya directly about concerns to develop a personalized preparation plan that supports you accessing the medicine in the safest way possible.



# Foods to Avoid



- **Refined Sugar**
- **Salt & Vinegar:** If you use a little bit of salt, be sure to use a fluoride-free salt. If you use vinegar, only organic apple cider vinegar
- **Vegetable Oil & Fatty Foods:** If you use an oil, only a small amount of organic olive or coconut oil
- **Alcohol**
- **Coffee / Caffeine:** To wean yourself off of caffeine, supplement green tea or black tea instead of coffee long enough before retreat to avoid headaches
- **Red Meat & Pork:** We will advise this as well once starting on the sacred medicine healing or learning path, no more pork, ever
- **Dairies:** Use soy, coconut or nut-based dairies instead
- **Spicy & Super Rich Foods**
- **Drugs:** recreational or pharmaceutical
- **Vitamin supplements:** You can take these up until 2 weeks prior to the retreat, but not afterwards. They are made up of strong plants and can block the medicine or you can have a physically uncomfortable experience during the ceremony

# Ayahuasca Friendly Foods

- Preferably organic
- Alkaline water/food as the medicine does well in this environment
- All fruits are acceptable
- All vegetables are acceptable
- Vegetable milk, such as rice, soy, cashew, almond or oat
- Cereals and all grains
- Bread
- Fish
- Chicken
- Eggs
- Olive oil and coconut oil (limit it to only one tablespoon per day)
- All beans
- Tea: All caffeine-free teas, anise, star anise, chamomile, lime, verbena, etc.



OTHER IMPORTANT INFO

**Sexual abstinence** (including masturbation) aims to conserve the integrity of your vital energy and should not be engaged in one week prior to your stay.

**Menstruation:** Ayahuasca acts as a blood thinner and is not ideal for women to participate in the ceremonies on the first three days of their cycle. Please notify us if it is expected during scheduled ceremony dates.



OTHER IMPORTANT INFO

There are **health conditions** that are made worse with Ayahuasca. Anyone with a medical history (heart problems, psychiatric history, treatment-based anxiolytics or antidepressants, surgery, etc.) must report in advance. This is mandatory, nothing is worth a risk to your health.

Please disclose all medications to us. Some **medications** are contraindicated with Ayahuasca and can cause serious, even fatal interactions. In addition, we ask that participants stop all **supplements** two weeks prior to the ceremony.



# INTENTIONS



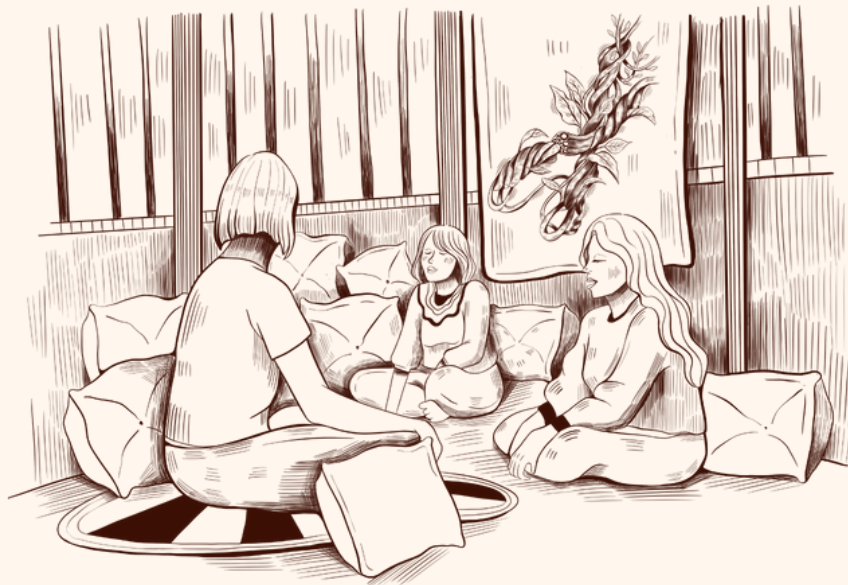
It is very important to come to the Ayahuasca ceremonies with an intention. A clear intention helps you to understand, process and integrate the experience. We can help you if you are unsure why you are being called to this process. Spiritual work that is done with an intention is more effective and produces stronger results.

The intention can be about problems, sadness, traumas, fears, desires, path of life, learning to be a better and happier person, or learning the medicine and how to better work with Master Plant Teachers. The medicine works by showing the drinker what is obstructing them from that which is sought. The healing icaros (ceremonial songs) then seek to remove those obstructions, so one can have a clearer path to their goal. Therefore, when formulating an intention, identify the best case scenario: to live more happily, more freely, with a more opened heart, to connect more deeply with your highest self, etc. Remi and Ashley will want to know what is blocking you from your goal, and in ceremony they will begin removing those blockages. In this way you have more direct access to the best version of yourself and your life.

# Ceremony & Integration

The primary language utilized during the ceremony is English. The healing songs, known as icaros, will be sung in Shipibo. These medicinal songs are received by the shaman from the plant during extensive dieting processes. The shaman then becomes a conduit to the plant by working with its frequencies to create healing songs for the receiver.

We have a sharing circle the days following ceremony. Integration and one-on-one support are available upon request.







## WHAT TO BRING

- Reusable water bottle
- Head lamp
- Lighter
- Environmentally-friendly, and fragrance-free products. We are a delicate environment and try to make the smallest chemical footprint as possible. If you are dieting a Master Plant it is important to use fragrant-free products, as strong fragrances can interfere. Each bathroom will have shampoo, conditioner, body and hand wash.
- Extra cash (for gift shop, massage, etc.)
- Journal / notebook
- White clothing for ceremony
- Light clothing for the day, it tends to be quite warm here
- 1 long-sleeve shirt or hoodie
- Small rechargeable fan
- We provide laundry services Monday-Friday. Free on-site hand wash laundry. In-town machine wash available (about \$5). Please allow a 2-3 day turn around time
- Towels are provided, you **do not** need to bring your own
- You **will not** need insect repellent. We provide it here if needed, but for the most part, we do not have many mosquitoes

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The Song the Calls You Home** - This documentary will help you understand more about the Shipibo tradition from which we work. It also explains the difference between an Ayahuasca and Master Plant Dieta
- **Fellowship of the River** by Joe Tafur MD - A Columbian-American doctor that is also a trained Shipibo practitioner, Joe explains his journey working Ayahuasca and how true healing is about seeing the human body holistically
- **Cosmic Serpent** by Jeremy Narby - From an anthropological perspective, this book is an excellent introduction to the intelligence of Ayahuasca
- **Listening to Ayahuasca** by Rachel Harris PhD - New hope for Depression, Addiction, PTSD and Anxiety. Harris explains her own healing journey with Ayahuasca and provides interesting research into how it can help with a number of mental and social issues
- **Psychedelic Integration, Psychotherapy for Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness** by Marc B. Aixelà - A good read for post-ceremony. A guidebook for anyone interested in psychedelic-assisted therapy and integration



# Kumankaya Staff

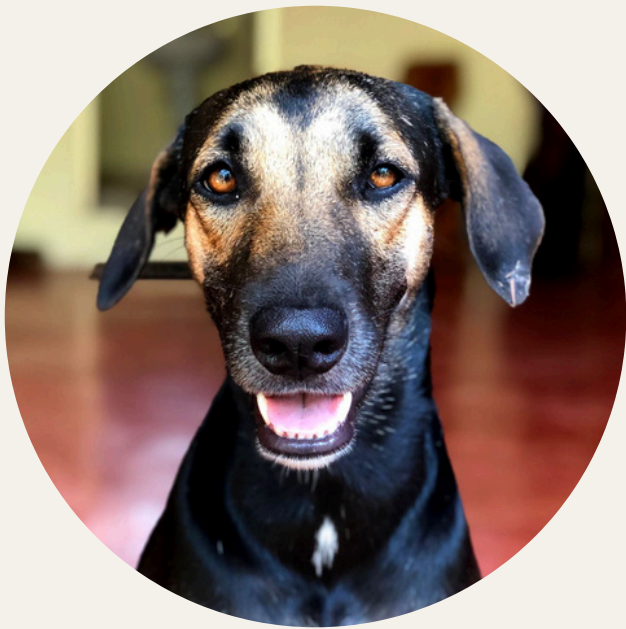


Our staff are happy to provide on site laundry services and mending when needed. Our workers make a living wage and do not expect gratuities. However, if you feel called to show your gratitude for their services, it is deeply appreciated and goes a long way in supporting the greater Mayan community in which we are a part of.

# Dogs of Kumankaya

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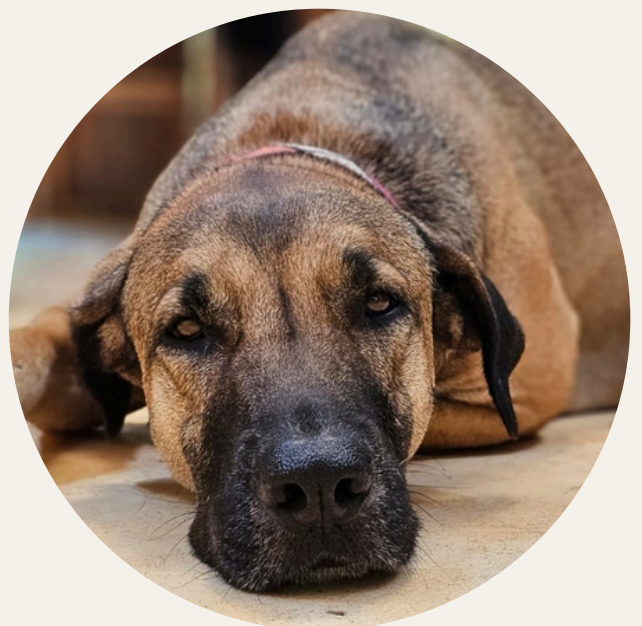
An important piece of our family to understand are the two adult dogs, Ina and Yoda, bred to guard and protect us and the jungle territory. We ask that you do not try to touch the dogs upon arrival. This will make them nervous and scared of you. They may smell and investigate you, but this is so they can understand you. Do not be afraid of the dogs, but please respect their boundaries.



Ina, the black female, is very friendly.



Yoda, the brown male, is more nervous and doesn't like to be touched. Please respect his boundaries, do not try to coax him over, he will come to you if he is ready,





GRACIAS



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