



IFS & Amazonian Plant Teachers
Retreat in Brazil

DIETARY & MENTAL & EMOTIONAL GUIDELINES

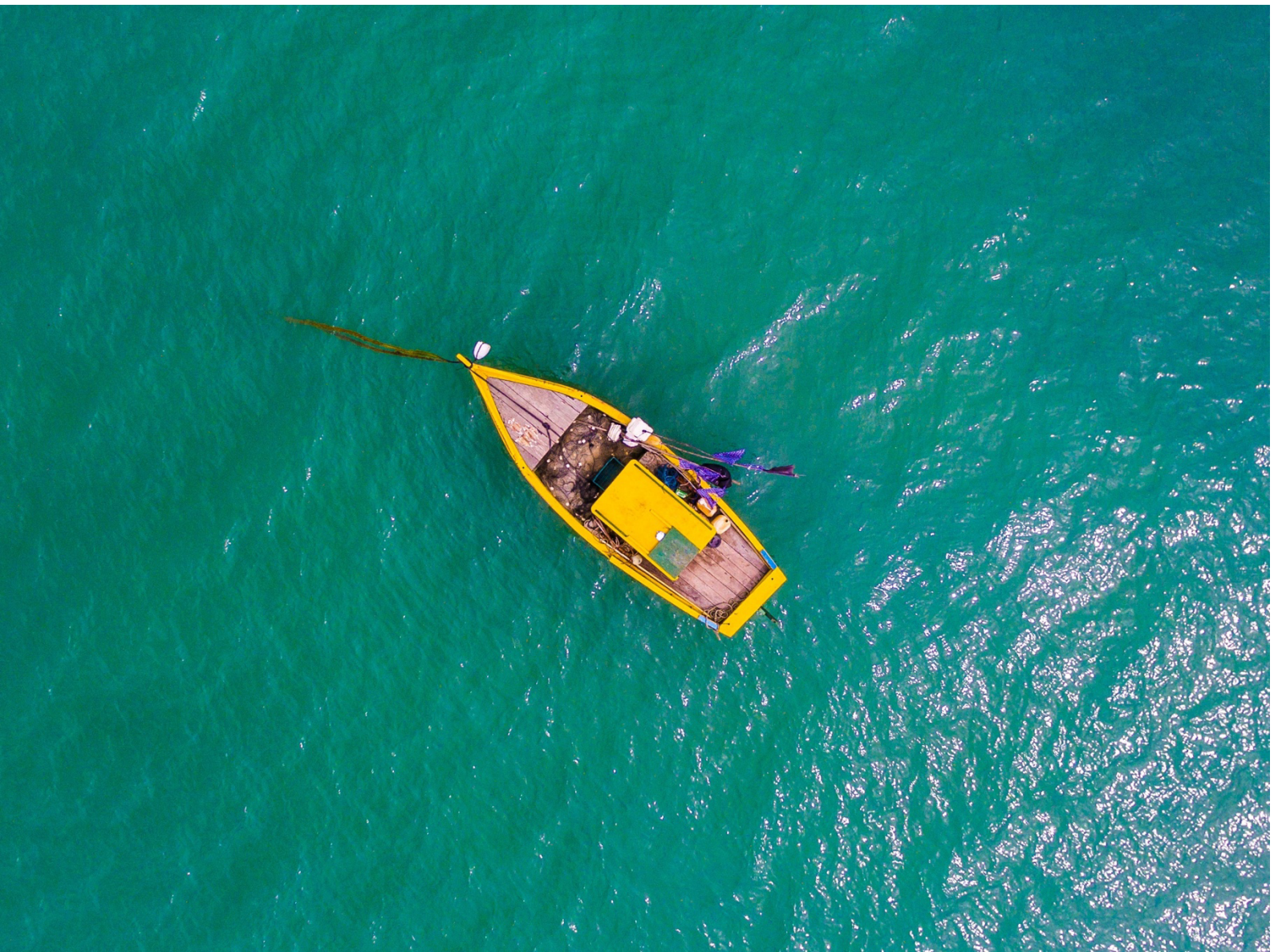


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PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

It's time to turn toward practical preparation for your journey. From understanding dietary and physical requirements to mentally preparing for the experience, proper preparation plays a vital role in the outcome of your ceremony.

Proper preparation is crucial to ensuring a safe and meaningful ayahuasca experience. This section will guide you through the essential steps to prepare your body and mind, as well as help you understand the environment you'll be stepping into. This next chapter will provide insights on how to create the best conditions for a transformative and meaningful experience.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Dietary Guidelines

Your diet is a cornerstone of preparing for an ayahuasca ceremony. A clean, balanced diet minimizes physical discomfort and helps prepare your body for the medicine's effects.



General Recommendations for 7 days before the ceremonies

(10 days is even better than 7 days if you can manage):

- **Eat light and healthy:** Focus on light, wholesome meals, and avoid heavy, greasy, or processed foods.
- **Avoid meat:** Refrain from consuming pork or non-fresh meats, especially liver and processed meats.

- **Fasting:** Avoid eating for at least 6 hours before the ceremony to allow your body to focus on the experience without the distractions of digestion.

Please let us know if you experience low blood sugar or low blood pressure. We will indicate and provide something very light to eat with the 6 hours before ceremonies.

- **Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water in the days leading up to the ceremony, but do not overhydrate immediately before.

Allowed food groups and meal preparation guide

Here's a list of essential food groups that you can mix and match to create meals based on your diet:

Vegetables:

Enjoy a variety of vegetables, but avoid onions, garlic, leeks, watercress, arugula, dandelion, and "peppered" salads. Recommended options include zucchini, green beans, Swiss chard, lettuce, mushrooms, and red beets (in moderation).

Proteins:

Choose lean proteins like organic eggs, chicken, or white fish (such as tilapia, sole, halibut, trout, or snapper).

Fruits:

Stick to fresh or dried fruits like berries, apples, bananas, and plums. Fresh apple juice is also a great option.



Whole Grains and Starches:

Incorporate gluten-free options like white rice (semi-complete or complete), quinoa, rice noodles. You can also include whole grains like amaranth, wheat berries, spelt, kamut, or whole wheat if gluten is not a concern.

Healthy Fats and Nuts:

Use sweet olive oil sparingly, drizzling it on plates after cooking rather than using it for cooking. Hazelnuts and almonds are fine in small quantities (avoid mashed forms).

Drinks:

Choose beverages like herbal teas (e.g., linden, rosemary, chamomile, or verbena), coconut water, natural rice milk (limit to one drink a day), or plain water.

General Guidelines

- Avoid salt, sugar, and heavy, high-fat foods such as dairy products.
- Minimize stimulants like coffee, chocolate, and tea.
- Abstain from alcohol, red meat, and substances that alter consciousness.

Cooking Methods

Focus on gentle cooking techniques like boiling, baking, or steaming. Avoid frying.

Additional Notes

This is a sample guide, not an exhaustive list, meant to inspire balanced meal preparation. Adjust according to your dietary needs and preferences.

Substance Restrictions

- Alcohol and drugs: Abstain from all alcohol, stimulants, opiates, and other recreational drugs for at least 2 weeks before the retreat. This ensures that your body and mind are clear and receptive to the medicine.
- Caffeine and sugar: Reduce consumption in the days leading up to the retreat to stabilize your energy levels and minimize withdrawal symptoms.

If you drink coffee or black tea daily, make sure you start minimizing the amounts to avoid headaches and withdrawal symptoms. No coffee or black tea for at least 3 days before ceremonies.

Tyramine Restrictions

To avoid complications with the monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) in ayahuasca, eliminate foods high in tyramine for 48 hours before the ceremony!

These include:

- Processed or aged foods: Aged cheeses, fermented foods, non-fresh meat (including liver and processed meats), shrimp paste.
- Fermented products: Soy products, yeast, and alcohol (including alcohol-free variations such as non-alcoholic beer).
- Certain fruits: Overripe or dried fruit (e.g., bananas, raisins) and avocado or guacamole.
- Dairy: Non-refrigerated dairy products.
- Vegetables and legumes: Broad beans, spinach, and large quantities of peanuts.
- Other foods: Chocolate, aspartame, and raspberries.
- Caffeine: Refrain from coffee, tea, energy drinks, or any other caffeinated beverages.

These dietary restrictions are crucial for safety, as certain foods can interact negatively with the MAOIs in ayahuasca, leading to adverse reactions.

Abstinence

Abstinence from sexual activity before and during the retreat period is a key aspect of preparation for ayahuasca ceremonies. This practice is rooted in the belief that sexual energy, when conserved, strengthens the body's spiritual, emotional, and physical balance, creating a purer connection to the medicine. The Huni Kuin and other indigenous traditions emphasize that sexual activity can deplete vital energy (often referred to as life force or spiritual vitality), which is essential for fully experiencing and integrating the teachings of the plant medicine.

Abstinence helps cultivate mental clarity and emotional stability, enabling a deeper focus on the inner work the ceremony requires. This practice also fosters a heightened sensitivity to the spiritual dimensions of the experience, free from distractions or energetic imbalances. The commitment to abstinence is seen as an act of respect for the sacred nature of the ceremony, creating a clear and receptive state for personal transformation and healing.

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL PREPARATION

Minimize distractions

Limit exposure to overstimulating activities, such as excessive screen time, social media, or stressful situations, to quiet your mind and focus inward. If you watch movies or series on streaming websites, choose nature documentaries or calm and positive movies instead of films full of violence or "low vibration" behaviour. If you are in a relationship, it's good to inform your partner about the importance of not getting into fights just before the retreat.

Relax your body

Engage in activities like yoga, breathing exercises, or meditation to promote calmness and self-awareness. It may be a good idea to have a massage to relieve some tension in your body. When you have a moment, play your favourite music and dance. All of that takes you out of your head and brings you more into your body, which is a beneficial thing before ceremonies with ayahuasca.



Spend time in nature

It's always helpful to go on a long walk with no music to listen to, just you and the sounds of nature. Reflect upon your intention, connect with the parts of you concerned about the coming journeys, or relax in nature.

Journal or reflect

Writing about your thoughts and emotions before to the retreat can help you process and understand any lingering concerns or feelings.

Discuss your fears and hopes

If you are currently in therapy and feel safe sharing your plans with your therapist, it's a good idea to create some space for those parts of you who may be fearful or hopeful regarding the upcoming retreat. You can also explore your thoughts and feelings with your partner during self-inquiry sessions. It may help to calm down these parts so they are more on board with your plans.

Release preconceptions

Each ayahuasca journey is unique, and it is essential not to create rigid expectations about the experience. It may be helpful to write out your "ideal" ayahuasca journey on a piece of paper and then symbolically throw it away, burn it, etc.



Adequate sleep

Ensure you are well-rested before the retreat, as the ceremony can be physically and emotionally demanding. If you need it, you can find time to nap during the day in the days before the retreat, to make up for lost sleep.

Schedule downtime

Plan a few days off before and after the retreat to give your body and mind time to prepare and recover. Plan less work or some days off work before and after the retreat. It may be challenging to go to work right after you return from the retreat. Of course, it may be difficult to take more days off after being away for so many days, so at least plan a slow return, with the more important or demanding projects waiting an additional week.