

Peaceful Mountain Way

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Ayahuasca Dietary Guidelines and Medication Restrictions

Ayahuasca diet menus:

There are numerous sources that list foods to avoid when adhering to the ayahuasca preparation diet. I'd like to share some ideas for menu suggestions with foods that are appropriate. Avoiding foods high in tyramine is a start, but menu suggestions for a low-tyramine diet might include items that are not recommended for an ayahuasca preparation diet. We also want to avoid processed foods that are filled with salt, sugar and preservatives. Simple, unprocessed foods make us more sensitive to the plants. A vegan diet is most effective for those who are training intensely with ayahuasca to receive the deepest spiritual insights, but it should not be suggested that failure to adhere to such a strict diet, which also includes sexual abstinence, private meditation, and avoiding social interaction is in any way dangerous.

While two or three days would be minimally adequate, the longer you spend with the diet (up to two week), the more effective it may be.

Green leafy vegetables should be number one on your list, except for spinach, which should not be consumed in large amounts.

Other options include:

Lettuce, kale, Broccoli, cauliflower, squash, zucchini, cucumber, carrots, potatoes, beans (except for broad beans).

Eat vegetables raw, boiled, steamed or baked. Avoid fried foods or cooked oils.

Canned vegetables are okay, but canned or potted meats should be avoided.

Fish, seafood and poultry are okay, as long as they are fresh or frozen. Avoid anything fried, smoked, cured, canned or aged.

Most grains are okay, but don't overdo it with white bread, because refined flour mostly converts to glucose.

Breakfast may include eggs and toast, decaffeinated coffee or tea, oatmeal or cereal.

Most people avoid dairy while on the diet, but the most important dairy to avoid is aged cheeses like cheddar, bleu, Gorgonzola, feta, Parmesan, etc. Most soft cheeses and creams are not a worry, but keep in mind most adults are slightly lactose intolerant, so while most dairy products like sour cream and yogurt do not have large amounts of tyramine, they could cause mild gastric upset, which could be amplified during an ayahuasca session.

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Sincerity in adherence to the diet will help to make your ayahuasca journey more productive, but nothing compares to having a positive, creative attitude, and the willingness to surrender the ego to the higher power. If you are unwilling to do this, no amount of dieting will affect your journey in a positive way. The purpose of spiritual exploration should be to seek who you really are so that you can affect true change, not so that you may justify previously held opinions.

Demian Gover -2016

*Disclaimer: The following information is adapted from other online sources, and is not the product or final opinion of Peaceful Mountain Way. It is shared for informational and education purposes only, and should not be considered medical advice. When making decisions about the use of pharmaceuticals and medical treatment, you should always consult a licensed healthcare professional.

It should be understood that spiritual healing and exploration may be guided by experienced and skilled practitioners, but the individual seeker accepts 100% responsibility for the outcomes of the path they follow. All sacramental and meditative healing and exploration should be thought of as energetic healing, which is intended to both compliment and transcend perceived physical limitations. All spiritual counseling and ceremonies provided by agents of the church are religious in nature, and should not be considered, or confused with, state-licensed medical treatment.

The education of Medicine Men and Women comes directly from spiritual experience that is then practiced in the material world. Authority to transmit spiritual instruction comes directly from the Higher Power, and is then moderated by the authority of the church. The use and practice of natural medicines is a long tradition that is separate from, but may be complementary to, the modern medical field. When a spiritual guide refers to a natural "medicine", they are not referring to registered chemicals produced and sold by the pharmaceutical industry.

Prescription medicines:

If you are taking prescription medication (including antibiotics or steroids), are subject to high blood pressure, have a heart condition, or are under treatment for any health condition, please consult your doctor before drinking ayahuasca.

Anti-depressants:

Ayahuasca contains plant-based RIMAs (Reversible inhibitors of monoamine oxidase A), a class of drugs which selectively and reversibly inhibit the enzyme monoamine oxidase A, which are similar to, but not as potent as, pharmaceutical grade MAOIs (monoamine oxidase inhibitors). These are generally in the form of harmine and harmaline, therefore medical consultation is essential if you are taking Prozac or other antidepressants affecting serotonin levels, i.e. serotonin selective re-uptake inhibitors (SSRI). SSRIs block the re-uptake of serotonin in the brain and because MAOIs inhibit breakdown of serotonin, the combination of MAOIs and SSRIs can lead to too high levels of serotonin in the brain. SSRIs are much more common than MAOIs which are found in some anti-depressants. Consult your doctor about the use of temporary monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOI), or more specifically, RIMAs. These medications generally have to be stopped for at least two weeks before drinking ayahuasca. Please contact your doctor.

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Non-prescription medicines:

Non-prescription medications such as antihistamines, dietary aids, amphetamines and derivatives, and some natural herbal medicines, i.e. those containing ephedrine, high levels of caffeine, or other stimulants, may also cause adverse reactions. We recommend that you discontinue all such medications, drugs, and herbs for at least one week prior to and following work with ayahuasca.

Recreational drugs:

Avoid all recreational drugs, in particular MDMA/XTC, 2CB, cocaine, opiates and amphetamines at least one week before and after drinking ayahuasca. Also, do not drink alcohol on the day before and of ceremony.

Herbal remedies:

Use of herbal remedies for depression such as St John's Wort (which also influence the serotonin levels) need to be discontinued two weeks before drinking ayahuasca.

Food recommendations & preparations:

Eating and drinking patterns can also have an influence on the effect of ayahuasca. All food containing tyramine carry the risk of rising of the blood pressure. Please refrain from taking these foods and drinks at least 24 hours before and after ceremony.

Tyramine:

Tyramine is found in: alcohol as well as alcohol free beer. Yeast extracts, protein dietary supplements, L-tyrosine, Marmite and Tartex, old cheese, cheese spread, Brie, Camembert, Mozzarella, Emmenthaler, Gorgonzola, Gruyere, etc. Chicken liver, salami, cervelat, sausage and some other (smoked) meat, poultry & fish and meat extracts. Soy bean products, broad beans, chocolate, sauerkraut, ripe avocado, yeast, caffeine, raspberry jam, certain nuts, dried fruit and ripe bananas.

The cleansing effect and strength of the visionary experience can be greatly enriched by one's commitment to the following preparations.

Food diet:

You are strongly advised to refrain from all food (fasting) for a minimum of four hours before ceremony.

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An integral element of the preparation is to undertake a diet intended to reduce excessive sugar, salt, oils, red meat, pork, fat, and spicy food in the body in preparation to be in communion with the spirit of ayahuasca. Reduction of these should commence as soon as one commits to the experience. Pork in particular is considered to be impure and is studiously avoided by ayahuasca practitioners.

Complete abstinence from pork and lard for at least two weeks prior to the ceremony is recommended. It is also recommended that this abstinence continue for at least two weeks after ceremony.

After ceremony, it is good to drink mineral water and juices in small quantities.

What foods need to be avoided?

Basically foods that are aged, preserved, dried, fermented, pickled, cured (meats), rancid, old, outdated, overripe, or even slightly spoiled.

The following foods are recommended to be avoided with MAOIs:

- Meat that is not fresh, especially unfresh liver (fresh meat and fresh liver are safe)
- Smoked, fermented, pickled (herring) and otherwise aged or dried fish, lox; any fish that is not fresh
- Sausage, bologna, pepperoni, salami, corned beef
- Aged cheeses (cottage cheese and cream cheese are safe)
- Protein extracts
- Liquid and powdered protein dietary supplements
- Brewer's yeast, yeast vitamin supplements, or yeast extracts
- Fermented tofu, fermented bean curd, fermented soybean paste, soy sauce
- Canned soups, or soups made with protein extracts or bouillon
- Miso soup (contains fermented bean curd)
- Shrimp paste
- Sauerkraut
- Fruits that are bruised or even slightly overripe, especially bananas and apples; raisins and other dried fruits, Fig Newtons, etc. (banana peels also should be avoided — as though you'd eat them anyway)
- Avocados, if ripe or overripe (slightly under-ripe avocados are fine in moderation). Guacamole should be avoided.
- Red wine, especially Chianti; sherry, vermouth, champagne, brandy; beers and ales, including nonalcoholic; whiskey and liqueurs such as Drambuie and Chartreuse
- Dairy products that are close to the expiration date or that have been unrefrigerated (fresh yogurt is safe)

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- Aspartame (Nutrasweet)
- Fava beans, especially if overripe
- Peanuts – in large quantities
- Raspberries – in large quantities
- Spinach, New Zealand prickly or hot weather – in large quantities
- Chocolate – in large quantities
- Caffeine in large quantities (note: in a few rare individuals, there may be a severe interaction with even small amounts of caffeine)

Is it really important to avoid those foods?

The warnings about tyramine interaction sound very serious, because they are adapted from warnings about interactions with pharmaceutical MAOIs. However, food interaction with Ayahuasca is frankly not as serious a matter as it is with pharmaceutical MAOIs. However, while there are no reports of fatalities from food interactions with Ayahuasca, food interactions could conceivably be life-threatening for a person with severe and untreated high blood pressure or serious heart disease. People with these conditions, therefore, should follow the MAOI safety diet very strictly when taking Ayahuasca.

What can I eat?

In terms of the MAOI safety diet, basically foods that are as fresh as possible, and not overripe, preserved, or spoiled in any way.

Drugs and Medications:

Is it really dangerous to combine some pharmaceutical drugs with Ayahuasca?

YES. Unlike food interactions, the consequences of which are unlikely to be serious, interaction with pharmaceutical drugs and medications (including some over-the-counter drugs and certain herbs) can be potentially life-threatening.

Which drugs are dangerous with Ayahuasca?

A list of meds to be careful of with MAOIs:

- other MAOIs
- SSRI's (any selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor)
- amphetamines (meth-, dex-, amphetamine)
- antihypertensives (high blood pressure medicine)

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- appetite suppressants (diet pills)
- medicine for asthma, bronchitis, or other breathing problems
- antihistamines, medicines for colds, sinus problems, hay fever, or allergies (Actifed DM, Benadryl, Benylin, Chlor-Trimeton, Compoz, etc.)
- CNS (central nervous system) depressants
- antipsychotics
- alcohol

Some specific drugs that should not be combined with MAOIs:

- Actifed
- Amantadine hydrochloride (Symmetrel)
- Amoxapine (Asendin)
- Benadryl
- Benylin
- Bupropion (Wellbutrin)
- Buspirone (BuSpar)
- Carbamazepine (Tegretol, Eptol)
- Chlor-Trimeton
- Clomipramine (Anafranil)
- Cocaine
- Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril)
- Cyclizine (Marezine)
- Desipramine (Pertofrane)
- Dextromethorphan (DXM)
- Disopyramide (Norpace)
- Doxepin (Sinequan)
- Ephedrine
- Flavoxate Hydrochloride (Urispas)
- Fluoxetine (Prozac)
- Imipramine (Tofranil)
- Isocarboxazid (Marplan)
- Levodopa (Dopar, Larodopa)
- Loratadine (Claritin)
- Maprotiline (Ludomil)
- Meperidine (Demerol)
- Methylphenidate (Ritalin)
- Nortriptyline (Aventyl)
- Oxybutynin chloride (Ditropan)

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- Orphenadrine (Norflex)
- Parnate
- Paroxetine (Paxil)
- Phenergen
- Phenelzine (Nardil)
- Procainamide (Pronestyl)
- Protriptyline (Vivactil)
- Pseudoephedrine
- Quinidine (Quinidex)
- Salbutamol
- Salmeterol
- Selegiline (Eldepryl)
- Sertraline (Zoloft)
- Tegretol
- Temaril
- Tranylcypromine (Parnate)
- Tricyclic antidepressants (Amitriptyline, Elavil)
- Trimipramine (Surmontil)
- Yohimbine

Also avoid the following herbs:

- St. Johns Wort
- Kava
- Ephedra
- Ginseng
- Yohimbe
- Sinicuichi

Using Tricyclic antidepressants within two weeks of taking MAOIs may cause serious side effects including sudden fever, extremely high blood pressure, convulsions, and death.

Using Fluoxetine (Prozac) within five weeks of taking MAOIs may cause high fever, rigidity, high blood pressure, mental changes, confusion and hypomania.

Using Meperidine (Demerol) with pharmaceutical MAOIs has resulted in deaths from a single dose.

Using cocaine with MAOIs may cause a severe increase in blood pressure, increasing the

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chances for stroke and cerebral hemorrhage and making it possible to overdose on a relatively small amount of cocaine. (A fatality has been recorded involving combining Peganum harmala and cocaine.)

Using Bupropion (Wellbutrin) within two weeks of taking MAOIs may cause serious side effects such as seizures.

Using Buspirone (Buspar) with MAOIs may cause high blood pressure.

Using Carbamazepine (Tegretol) with MAOIs may increase seizures. Using CNS depressants with MAOIs may increase the depressant effects.

Using Dextromethorphan with MAOIs may cause excitement, high blood pressure, and fever, or brief episodes of psychosis.

Using Tryptophan with MAOIs may cause disorientation, confusion, amnesia, delirium agitation, hypomanic signs, shivering.

Using alcohol with MAOIs may cause side effects like angina (chest pain) or headaches. The headache may mask or be mistaken for hypertensive crisis caused by MAOI interaction.

Using Kava with MAOIs may result in hypotensive crisis (severe blood pressure drop).

Using Tamaril with MAOIs may increase chance of side effects.

Special note to diabetics:

MAOIs may change the amount of insulin or oral antidiabetic medication that you need.

Notes on Diabetes and Ayahuasca:

How long do you have to stay off them before and after an Ayahuasca ceremony?

Depends on the drug. May be 24 hours; may be six months. Two to six weeks is typical, but do not guess. Find out for sure from your doctor. Ayahuasca works like poison control, soaking up toxins in the body, and pouring them out through your throat, to cleanse the body both spiritually and physically. For this reason, it's important to eat healthy beforehand, and follow whatever dietary guidelines your spiritual group recommends. Usually this means a cleanse of only fresh organic fruits and vegetables for a couple days beforehand, and avoiding eating any processed food, heavy meats, or overripe bananas and avocados (those two are specifically singled out).

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This is in no way intended to be a complete and comprehensive list of medications to avoid, as new discoveries are being made, and new medications being produced, every day. Please consult a licensed healthcare professional before making any decisions about altering your current medication or treatment program. It may simply be that ayahuasca ceremonies are not a good option for you at this time.