

Acsauhaya Retreat Agreement

The years of experience working with this sacred plant medicine have taught us that there is a need to set clear guidelines for our participants. Ayahuasca is often perceived as an intense and vulnerable process and it is important to understand exactly what you are committing to when booking a retreat with us. This Retreat Agreement and our Terms & Conditions aim to prepare each participant for a safe and positive experience at Acsauhaya.

The ayahuasca brew

Peruvian Retreats:

For our ceremonies in Peru, we use a traditional ayahuasca brew made from two sacred Amazonian plants:

Ayahuasca vine (*Banisteriopsis caapi*)

Chacruna leaves (*Psychotria viridis*)

Retreats in the Netherlands:

The brew we use in our Dutch ceremonies is made exclusively from the Ayahuasca vine, *Banisteriopsis caapi*. This “Dutch brew” contains no DMT and is therefore fully legal in the Netherlands. In the Shipibo tradition—one of the most respected Amazonian lineages—the true spiritual power and healing potential of ayahuasca is believed to reside in the vine itself.

In some cases, and always in close consultation with the ceremony leader, participants can choose to work with sclerotia (legal psilocybin truffles) at a later stage to further support their inner process. This is offered with great care and deep respect for each person’s unique path.

The ayahuasca experience

As an effect of drinking the ayahuasca brew, participants may experience changes in their perception of reality and way of thinking, visions (of abstract shapes and/or patterns or clearly identifiable images), increased negative and/or positive emotions, surfacing of fears or difficult emotions, (muscle) tensions, access to detailed memories

that had been forgotten (including, but not limited to, perinatal, transpersonal or other dimensional experiences).

On a physical level, participants may experience nausea, dizziness, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, tremors, tingling, sweating, or other physical inconveniences or ways of purging.

Sometimes, especially if you are new to ayahuasca, you may not experience any visionary effects. This does not mean that the ayahuasca is not having an effect on you.

The ayahuasca experience passes through different phases (or “comes in waves” as some may describe it). These phases can be pleasant, even euphoric, but difficult as well. Ayahuasca works on a subconscious and physical level to reconcile unresolved events, emotions or (physical) blockages that have locked themselves in an individual’s system through trauma, neglect, loss, abuse, or other emotional and psychological difficulties from the past. Therefore, both during and after ceremonies participants frequently experience emotional, psychological and physical discomforts, which can be seen as signs of a healing process.

Your participation in the ceremonies is entirely voluntary. You can ask questions about the ceremonies at any time and you are always free to opt out, if you wish, before the start of the ceremony. Before your first ceremony, you will be asked to sign a statement of voluntary participation.

Acsauhaya’s support & guidance

The shamans and facilitators of Acsauhaya are committed to protecting and supporting you on this journey physically as well as emotionally with whatever you may need, during ceremonies, but also during the preparation phase and the integration phase after your retreat. All our staff members have personal experience with ayahuasca healing and are deeply committed to self-awakening. They have been through the challenges and difficulties of many years of deep healing. From this experience they can hold space for you and offer you authentic compassion, loving kindness, empathy and a genuine willingness to help you.

Once you commit to take part in the ceremony, you must follow the instructions of the facilitators and shamans at all times, so your safety is not jeopardized. To allow us to ensure your safety you will, for example, be asked not to leave the property before consulting one of the staff members. The shamans and facilitators may, at any time, decide to exclude you from participation in a ceremony for any perceived impairment in

your physical or psychological health that risks leading to problems for you during the ceremony, or if you do not meet the requirements for participation for any other reason.

Ayahuasca risks & exclusion criteria

During the booking process you will be asked to fill out a medical questionnaire. You must answer all questions honestly and thoroughly disclose any relevant personal information about your current health situation.

Even though Acsauhaya screens the health situation of each participant using a medical questionnaire and sometimes consults with a physician for advice, it remains your own responsibility to consult with your medical professional about your intention to take ayahuasca in case of any particularities in your medical situation/medicine usage. In case of a chronic illness, it can be dangerous to stop taking the medication with the intent to take ayahuasca; you should always consult your medical professional before abruptly discontinuing the usage of prescribed medications.

Working with ayahuasca is not a substitute for medical, psychiatric or psychotherapeutic treatment or spiritual practices, but may complement these and contribute to personal and spiritual development. If you are currently receiving treatment of any kind or taking any medication, you must provide the full details of your medical situation to us in the medical questionnaire.

For the safety and well-being of all participants, no alcohol or drugs is consumed at our center. Through our dietary guidelines as well as in the (medical) screening process, you will be given exact guidelines with regards to the required abstinence of certain substances or medication before attending our retreat. Committing to booking one of our retreats, means committing to these guidelines. If one decides not to adhere to these, we reserve the right to refuse further admission to our retreat, in which case the fees will not be refunded.

Even though at Acsauhaya we do whatever we can to create a secure space for you to safely surrender to the vulnerable process of an ayahuasca ceremony, it is important to note that there are risks involved with the intake of ayahuasca. We need anyone with the intention of attending one of our retreats to familiarize him/herself with these risks before booking a retreat with us.

Physical risks

The physical risks mainly arise from a few (strong) contraindications. This can be the case with serious cardiovascular disorders (ayahuasca slightly increases blood

pressure), but also when you are taking antidepressants/other psychotropic drugs or any drug capable of interacting with MAO (as MAOIs: Monoamine oxidase inhibitors).

Therefore, each participant needs to disclose precise information on medication usage and the current health situation.

Although not very common, there are cases of people who faint during the ayahuasca experience, which can cause someone to get hurt falling on a hard surface or hard objects around.

Tyramine is a monoamine that is naturally present in some foods, mainly fermented products such as aged cheeses, certain meats, soy sauce and wine or beer. One should avoid combining foods with high concentrations of tyramine with ayahuasca, because it can cause hypertensive crisis with symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, sweating, increased heart rate, dilated pupils and, very infrequently, brain hemorrhage and death.

Psychological risks

For people with a history of psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia, psychosis, personality disorders or bipolar disorder, taking ayahuasca involves a high risk, especially if the disorder is active. Ayahuasca carries the risk of symptoms re-emerging. In order for us to understand your psychological situation well, for your own safety and that of others, it is of the utmost importance to be sincere, thorough and honest about your medical history in the questionnaire.

Regardless of thorough screening, in very rare cases, drinking ayahuasca may induce symptoms such as paranoia, ideas of self-reference (“everyone talks about me”), delusions (ideas that are incoherent and absurd, even in that particular state of consciousness), severe confusion or something referred to as drug induced psychoses. These symptoms are very different from episodes of fear or confusion that can occur under the effects of ayahuasca, which are transient, and often part of the experience. They may occur because of a prior psychiatric condition, however, there are some (very rare) cases of seemingly psychologically healthy people that have gone through these experiences after ayahuasca and required medication and/or continued psychological treatment.

Acsauhaya Terms & Conditions

This agreement is between Acsauhaya (the Organizer) and You (the Participant). By booking a retreat at Acsauhaya you agree to the following:

1. The Participant agrees to take part in ayahuasca ceremonies with the Organizer, is aware that ayahuasca is a psychoactive substance and is clear on the meaning of this.
2. The Organizer will do their utmost to ensure the safety and comfort of the Participant, within the context of the retreat (offering support during the retreat as well as supportive tools for preparation and integration).
3. The Participant, in turn, agrees to approach the retreat with a cautious, considerate and respectful attitude towards themselves as well as to others. Disruptive behavior or overt negativity subverts the experience of others.
4. The Organizer is not liable for the injury of any Participant that may occur during or after the retreat. By participating in Organizer's retreat, and accepting these Terms & Conditions, the Participant expresses full understanding of and responsibility for the risks that may encounter during a retreat and are described in the Retreat Agreement. The Participant indemnifies the Organizer, its owners, and employees from all responsibility.
5. The Participant declares that they are in an appropriate physical and mental condition for the activities described in the Retreat Agreement, agrees to participate at their own risk.
6. Prior to entering into this Agreement, the Participant agrees to:
 - a) obtain medical advice from their medical professional as to the effect of the substance that will be ingested, especially in case of any particularities in their medical situation and with regards to the combination with any medication they might be taking.

- b) disclose, in writing, any relevant personal information about their current health situation to the Organizer, by answering all questions in the Organizer's medical questionnaire honestly and thoroughly.
- c) notify the Organizer of any change in their medical situation and understands that withholding medical information could be dangerous to their health or could lead to the Organizer expelling them from participation in the ceremony.
- d) consult their medical professional before abruptly discontinuing the usage of prescribed medications (for example in case of a chronic illness). The organizer is not responsible for a personal decision to stop taking medication or change their medication schedule, and accepts no liability for any adverse effects from withdrawal from any medication.

7. The Participant confirms that they have not been diagnosed with any psychotic disorder, including schizophrenia, schizophreniform, schizoaffective, delusional, or bipolar disorder.

8. The Participant commits to adhere to the dietary guidelines and required abstinence of certain substances as laid out by the Organizer, of which the most fundamental restrictions are street drugs (amphetamines, cocaine, ecstasy, LSD, marijuana), medication, (red) meat and tyramine rich products.

9. The Organizer reserves the right to:

a) expel any individual who is:

I. not following the guidelines that have been laid out by the Organizer, or

II. disrupting the group, staff, and/or shamans or acting in an excessively negative manner

b) physically restrain the Participant and/or expel them from the retreat in case the Participant's behavior presents a threat to the safety of themselves or others. If needed, such restraint will be conducted as gently as possible and with respect for the dignity of the Participant.

In all such cases, the Organizer does not bear the responsibility for a refund, nor for providing accommodation outside of the retreat center.

10. The Organizer may require the Participant to take a drug or breathalyzer test prior to or during the retreat. If the Participant refuses to comply with the test, the Organizer reserves the right to deny them entry to the retreat or to expel them from the workshop immediately without the responsibility for a refund, or for providing accommodation outside of the retreat center.

11. In the case of a medical emergency during a retreat, such as an intestinal infection, broken or damaged bones, etc., the Participant will be accompanied by an Organizer's representative to a medical facility for treatment.
12. The retreat should be paid in full upon booking to guarantee a reservation. The Participant can choose to use PayPal as a payment provider or make a bank transfer. In the case of a bank transfer, the reservation will not become final until the Participant has sent a proof of payment to the Organizer.
13. In case of cancellation by the Participant:
 - a. up to 6 weeks prior to the retreat, the Participant can apply for a full refund. In the case of a refund a EUR 75,- administration fee will be deducted.
 - b. Between 6 to 2 weeks prior to the retreat, Organizer offers the possibility to reschedule to a different date, in which case a EUR 75,- administration fee will be charged. In case of full cancellation, payments will not be refundable.
 - c. Within 2 weeks prior to the retreat, payments will not be refundable and no rescheduling can be accepted, as it is impossible for the Organizer to fill the spot in such short notice.
14. Refunds will be offered via the form of payment that the Participant had chosen upon booking.
15. Should a Participant decide to leave during the retreat, the Organizer is not responsible for the reimbursement of any funds.