Therapy with Ancestral Medicine

A ceremony in a setting of respect

Our team · Phone and WhatsApp: 00 52 3331813888

Donations to the Refuge

If the experience moved you, you can make a donation in addition to your standard contribution. These donations support our charitable work in Mexico with young people affected by addiction and with victims of drug trafficking.

You will find a donation box near the entrance to the ceremony room.

We also accept donations in kind on the day of the ceremony, such as fresh or dried fruit, drinks, and organic biscuits. We share them when we break the fast.

Thank you,

The Refugio del Búho team

We encourage you to exercise discretion when discussing these practices with others. Some ancestral therapies to which we attribute therapeutic value are prohibited in certain countries, including France.

We draw your attention to fatal overdoses linked to fentanyl in drugs sold on the black market and encourage you to verify sources carefully.

We guarantee the origin and purity of our sacred plants. We check and test each shipment during a ceremony attended by three guides and a physician.

The purpose of the ceremony

In our tradition, meditation and introspection with the sacred medicine, also known as the Great Spirit, Master Plant, or Grandmother (Abuelita), offer a chance to know yourself better and reconnect with your deepest self and inner teacher. This path toward physical, emotional, and mental healing goes through forgiveness, an understanding of life's events, joy, and unconditional love. In this spiritual view, the vibrational states of the experience can loosen blocks that weigh on our relationships, including our relationship with ourselves. Participation begins with an inner calling and a desire to explore in a setting that feels freeing and respectful.

Thank you for allowing us to accompany you on this journey into your sacred inner world. The answers are within you. The medicina invites you to reconnect with your own wisdom. You are the medicine! We accompany you with respect and a sense of responsibility. We follow a shamanic lineage whose teachings we received from Don Miguel, who was Don Ino’s teacher and initiated him into the tradition. We thank Don Miguel, the teachers who came before him, and the sacred energy of the Abuelita.

The ancestral medicine

As we describe it here, the medicine combines the Amazonian vine Banisteriopsis caapi, associated with MAO inhibition, and chacruna, which contains DMT. In the worldview we describe, this sacred teacher plant represents a rope that lets the spirit leave the body without the body dying.

We trace this tradition back more than 5,000 years to Amazonian shamanic healers who used the medicine to expand consciousness. In Peru it is now used in specialized centers that care for people with addictions to illicit hard drugs. It is also a sacrament in several Brazilian churches, including Santo Daime and União do Vegetal, which have spread throughout the Americas and Europe. Their protocols and rites have been adapted through experience and approved by the Brazilian, Peruvian, and U.S. governments.

The drink contains dimethyltryptamine (DMT). In our tradition, we associate DMT and the ceremonial experience with the pineal gland, dreams during REM sleep, and mystical experiences.

We describe this experience as deeply relaxing and note that Peru recognized it as cultural heritage in 2008 (Resolution 836/INC).

We compare this experience to a dream you experience while fully aware. We link it to DMT and to what dreams, meditation, or yoga can evoke. We understand the images and emotions that arise as an opening onto the subconscious and spiritual worlds.

In our spiritual understanding, the experience involves prolonged vibrational states and heightened states of consciousness.

We describe this as an experience in which people may feel lucid, in control, and connected to those around them. We also describe the absence of dependence and disorientation as characteristics of the experience.

The ceremony calls for a sincere, respectful commitment. It invites you to understand your inner life, everyday life, and relationships more clearly. Take time to acknowledge what you learned and the intention that led you there.

Getting ready

We place considerable importance on dietary preparation. If you cannot follow every recommendation, do what you can and tell us on the day which recommendations you were able to follow. This helps us support you.

The pre-ceremony diet

Diet is an important part of preparing for ancestral therapy.

In Peru, the Shipibo people's diet is very strict. In their tradition, it allows for a stronger connection during the ceremony.

In other parts of the Amazon basin, the diet may be less strict. It calls for avoiding alcohol, drugs, sexual activity including masturbation, pork, red meat, excess salt or sugar, spices, chocolate, stimulants, and all forms of violence.

The diet can be hard to follow if you are unfamiliar with it. We recommend following it for at least five days, preferably seven to ten days, and up to fifteen days, paying closer attention as the ceremony approaches. In our tradition, following the diet loosely may lessen the experience despite repeated servings. Vomiting may occur and is sometimes understood as a purge associated with departures from the diet, such as eating red meat.

In this tradition, the care you take with the diet is linked to the depth of the inner work.

After this sacred process, eat nourishing food and avoid alcohol and other harmful substances the day after the ceremony and for the following two or three days. Then return gradually to your usual diet, in moderation. If you wish to preserve the benefits of your experience, you may extend the diet for seven to ten days to deepen them.

Purity is one aspect of the pre-ceremony diet. Traditionally, shamans and apprentices avoid spicy or heavily seasoned foods, excess fat, salt, caffeine, acidic foods such as citrus, and sexual activity before and after an ayahuasca session. Avoiding these foods is seen as a way to calm the mind and conserve energy for the journey. Following the diet is also a way to show respect for the Spirit of the Earth and for yourself.

We place intention and openness of heart and mind at the center of the experience. We encourage gentleness, quiet, and meditation.

You may undertake ancestral therapy while fasting or following a raw-food diet after consulting a coach who specializes in this area or your physician.

Recommended foods and habits

- Vegetables: green beans, peas, eggplant, zucchini, pumpkin, chard, beets, mushrooms, salad greens except arugula, avocado in moderation, carrots, cucumbers, bell peppers, and asparagus.
- Fruit: apples, bananas, plums, pears, grapes, berries, pineapple, papaya, and mangoes.
- Unsweetened apple juice and applesauce.
- Nuts: almonds, walnuts, and hazelnuts.
- Hard-boiled eggs every two to three days.
- Grains: rice, quinoa, bulgur, and corn.
- Legumes: lentils, kidney beans, split peas, and chickpeas.
- All types of algae, including spirulina and Klamath algae tablets.

Drinks: natural juices with no added sugar, herbal infusions such as rosemary, chamomile, ginger, or verbena, and curcumin. Avoid caffeine, including the caffeine in tea. Choose water and stay well hydrated, especially on the day of the ceremony.

- You may add olive oil to your food. Use it uncooked.
- Where possible, choose organic personal care products such as toothpaste, body wash, shampoo, shaving foam, and deodorant.
- Listen to relaxing, inspiring music and take walks in nature. Get plenty of sleep and rest in the days leading up to the ceremony, especially the night before.

What to avoid

- Avoid alcohol and hard drugs. Stop smoking cannabis and commercial tobacco five days before the ceremony.

- All animal protein, including game, poultry, fish, and seafood.

Avoid violence in all forms, including violent films, music, speech, aggressive emotions, and behavior. Limit screen time, including television and Facebook.

Before the ceremony, please list every medication you take in the questionnaire, including prescription and over-the-counter medications you use even occasionally, as well as all current medical treatments. Please send the completed questionnaire privately to our team.

Antidepressants and prescribed treatments

If you take an antidepressant or any other prescribed treatment, tell your healthcare provider that you are considering an ayahuasca ceremony. Interactions are possible. Continue your treatment as prescribed. Do not skip any doses or change or stop your treatment on your own in order to attend. Postpone your participation until you have received medical advice.

What to cut back on substantially

- Salt, sugar, chocolate, chili, all spices, garlic, onion, and caffeine, including in tea.
- Vitamins, dietary supplements, and protein drinks.
- Fermented, steeped, or marinated products such as miso, yeast, tamari, soy sauce, and sauerkraut.
- Bread, pasta, and all foods made with wheat.
- All dairy products, including butter, cheese, and yogurt.
- Processed and heavily manufactured foods.
- Fried foods.

Meditation and other preparations

You can use this recording to meditate during the five days before the ceremony. Get comfortable and listen through headphones.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7EHidYj9BQ

The recording combines isochronic tones, Tibetan singing bowls, and rain.

We suggest these isochronic tones for relaxation. The exercise uses theta frequencies (4 to 7 Hz) and invites you to observe your breathing and then slow it down. We offer it to support relaxation, imagination, visualization, and lucid dreaming.

It is fine if you fall asleep. You may listen several times a day. The intention is to prepare your brain, mind, and body.

Another suggestion for the evening is a theta-wave binaural session, which we offer as a way to unwind.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpkSyuLEiPI

If you already meditate, continue your daily practice before the ceremony.

If you practice yoga, continue daily for the five to seven days before the ceremony.

Preparation is also mental, emotional, and spiritual. Keep an open mind, clarify your intention, and approach the experience with trust in your own process and in the people accompanying you.

Approach the ceremony with deep respect.

Ideally, take a bath or shower just before going to the ceremony.

The ceremony may involve vomiting, diarrhea, a runny nose, crying, or involuntary movements. In our tradition, these effects may be understood as a purge.

Who cannot participate

We cannot welcome people with a history of epilepsy, severe heart problems, recent major surgery, or ongoing psychiatric treatment.

If you have a question, a concern, or would like to talk before attending, contact our team by phone or WhatsApp at 00 52 3331813888.

On the day of the ceremony

The ceremony can start at 10 a.m. or 6 p.m. We agree on a time that suits you or your group. Ceremonies starting at 6 p.m. take place at night, and you sleep on site.

1. Bring something warm, a blanket or pillow, comfortable clothes, slip-on sandals for trips to the restroom, and mineral water. You may bring fresh or dried organic fruit or biscuits to break the fast.
2. We ask you to fast on the day of the ceremony and stay well hydrated. For a 6 p.m. ceremony, you may have a light, easy-to-digest breakfast before 10 a.m. if you wish, and drink only water afterward. The planned fast is at least eight hours.
3. Turn off your mobile phone during the ceremony.
4. We recommend resting, meditating, and paying attention to how you feel the day after the session.
5. Under our usual practice, women who are menstruating cannot participate, as this may make the process more demanding.
6. Please leave valuable jewelry at home.

During the first hour, Don Ino welcomes you, offers a period of meditation, and performs a personal ritual of energy cleansing and harmonization. He remains for about thirty minutes at the start of the ceremony. After he leaves, one of the guides featured at elbuho.org/#ceremonias takes over and leads the rest of the ceremony, sometimes with an assistant.

The ceremony lasts about six to seven hours, with an average of eight hours in total.

Out of respect for the ceremony, yourself, and others, please arrive on time.

After the ceremony, participants usually return to their ordinary physical and mental state and may feel more emotionally sensitive. In our experience, some participants have returned to their usual activities, including driving, after integration or the next day. These experiences cannot determine whether any given person is fit to drive.

For your safety, please stay until the close of the ceremony. In our tradition, the ceremony can leave your senses and your physical or spiritual sensitivity heightened. If you have experienced a trance, make sure you have fully come out of it before leaving.

To learn more about ancestral Amazonian ceremonies, seek objective, open-minded sources that are independent of commercial, political, religious, or moralizing interests.

Further resources

ICEERS (International Center for Ethnobotanical Education, Research, and Service), in Spanish.

https://www.iceers.org/

Anthropology of ancestral therapies · Video by Josep M. Fericgla.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-D_t229sDM

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Al7FVkMhg02

TED talk by Graham Hancock · The War on Consciousness · In Spanish · 18:44.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLzgJnh-8pc

DMT: The Spirit Molecule · Video · 1:14:01.

http://youtu.be/k7eaf9NRpN8

Dr. Claudio Naranjo · Video · 1:31:10.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0EmVO1WlWk