

PREPARING FOR YOUR RETREAT

Part 1: Create a pre-retreat diet – and stick to it

There is good reason to prepare for your retreat beforehand – and not just for a few days, but for weeks leading up to it. A simple analogy that expresses this well would be to imagine that you have booked a guided trip to climb to the top of an epic mountain. Would you buy your gear at the last minute, try it on once and exercise for a few days before you catch your flight? No way. You would be training and getting ready well in advance because *you know that you want to be prepared for this*.

For ayahuasca, we want our body and mind to be clean and clear by the time we hold the cup in our hands. Clean and clear are subjective terms, but there are some tried and true principles that serve as a good road map. Let's think in terms of what we put into our bodies and minds and make a week by week schedule leading up to our retreat.

Not following these guidelines poses no risk to your physical safety – only a potential risk of limiting what you can experience and gain from the retreat. Remember to separately consider contraindicated medication (which can pose severe safety risks), and add this into your pre-retreat diet plan.

To highlight the fact that this isn't about right or wrong, or a one-size fits all equation, the following page shows two different examples of pre-retreat diets – we'll call them the Basic and the Intensive. Choose one or find something in between – just beware the slippery slope of not sticking to your plan or picking and choosing the parts you find most palatable (yes, coffee and sugar are listed for a reason!).

Ask us if you have any specific questions.

	BASIC DIET	INTENSIVE DIET
4 weeks beforehand:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce intake of red meat and pork ● Reduce intake of alcohol, marijuana and intoxication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cut all red meat and pork ● Cut all alcohol, marijuana and intoxication ● Set a phone alarm and sit with your eyes closed for 10 minutes per day - observe thoughts and feelings
2 weeks beforehand:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cut all red meat and pork ● Cut all alcohol, marijuana and intoxication ● Reduce caffeine ● Reduce all sugars, salt and dairy ● Reduce polyunsaturated oils, fried foods and ultra-processed foods ● Reduce sex, masturbation and sexual arousal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cut all caffeine ● Reduce all sugars, salt and dairy ● Reduce polyunsaturated oils, fried foods and ultra-processed foods ● Cut all sex, masturbation and sexual arousal ● Cut all media that does not inspire and uplift ● Set a phone alarm and sit with your eyes closed for 15 minutes per day - observe thoughts and feelings
1 week beforehand:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cut all caffeine ● Cut all sugars (other than fruit) and dairy ● Cut all polyunsaturated oils, fried foods and ultra-processed foods ● Minimize salt intake (approaching zero) ● Cut all sex, masturbation and sexual arousal ● Cut all media that does not inspire and uplift 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cut all sugars (other than fruit) and dairy ● Cut all polyunsaturated oils, fried foods and ultra-processed foods ● Minimize salt intake (approaching zero) ● Set a phone alarm and sit with your eyes closed for 20 minutes per day - observe thoughts and feelings

Part 2: Self-Analysis and Intention Setting Exercise

Let's take the time to do a quick self-analysis.

Print these pages or recreate them in a pad. It is best if you actually have a physical copy of this to bring with you to the retreat, but no one will ever ask you to see it. It is for your own records – to see how things shift and evolve over time – and to be used as a compass for setting your intentions.

Below, there are five questions, each followed by a set of words. Circle each word that you feel answers the question. Some of the words overlap or may seem redundant, but it's not a test or a riddle – just circle the words that simply and honestly answer each question for you. There are blank spaces to write in anything that is not already listed here.

Question 1: With which of the following do you have a relationship that you would like to change in some way?

Food	Tobacco	Medicine(s)
Alcohol	Nicotine	Drug(s)
Marijuana	Coffee	Shopping
Sugar	Stimulants	Spending

Question 2: With which of the following do you have a relationship that you would like to change in some way?

News	Movies	Mirrors
Social Media	TV Series	Your Phone
Pornography	Shorts	Video Games

Question 3: With which of the following do you have a relationship that you would like to change in some way?

Friend(s)	Work / Career	Life Partner(s)
Parent(s)	Manager(s)	Romantic Partner(s)
Sibling(s)	Employee(s)	Sexual Partner(s)
Child(ren)	Co-worker(s)	Strangers
Family	Client(s)	Public Figure(s)

Question 4: Which of the following do you feel on a regular basis?

Joyful	Hopeful	In Control
Inspired	Excited	With Purpose
Creative	Proud	Secure
Loved	Content	Calm

Question 5: Which of the following do you feel on a regular basis?

Depressed	Anxious	Lacking Control
Sad	Stressed	Lacking Purpose
Angry	Confused	Absent
Frustrated	Fearful	Unattractive
Stuck	Unwanted	Lacking Something
Uninspired	Trapped	Lethargic

After you have answered all five questions, review what you have circled. These are your areas of special focus. Do two things with these focus points in the weeks leading up to your retreat:

- Beginning around one month before your retreat (or earlier), make sure that you acknowledge in a direct way anything you circled as it comes up in your life.
 - For example, if you circled tobacco on the first list, practice acknowledging every time you ingest or desire tobacco – “I am smoking even though I want my relationship with tobacco to change” or “I have been craving tobacco all day”. No guilt, no shame, no cold turkey – just acknowledgement.
 - As another example, if you circled angry or calm, practice acknowledging these things every time you feel them – “I feel super f***ing angry right now”, or “I have felt angry all morning”, or “I have been very calm today”.
- Also beginning around one month before your retreat, practice reduced intake of anything you circled on the first two lists. Then, beginning around two weeks before your retreat, practice zero intake for these things (obviously not food, maybe certain types of food or during certain times of day). Observe what happens for you.
 - Does abstinence feel good? Terrible? Does it feel slightly difficult or almost impossible? Does it make you frustrated or inspire you to keep going?
 - No guilt, no shame, no right or wrong – the point is to be honest with ourselves in a new way about what we are choosing, what we are feeling and how those things overlap.

There is nothing else to it. Just by participating in the above exercises in the weeks leading up to your retreat, you will be learning about yourself and setting your intentions in a way that will open doors for you once you arrive in Peru.

We have had people tell us they felt as though their lives had changed even before drinking ayahuasca, simply by taking the pre-retreat diet and self-analysis seriously. Cutting out alcohol for two weeks to a month? Acknowledging every time we go on social media or look in the mirror? These are powerful actions to commit to – and can be a catalyst for radical change in your life, all before you have the cup of medicine in your hands.

Come up with a plan. Do the work required to stick to it. Feel what goes on inside of you during this process.