



Frequently Asked Questions



Where are your ceremonies held?

We hold ceremonies at different venues around the country. We take the climate and your comfort into consideration while creating an energetically sound, protective, and private space for ceremony.

Currently, we're holding most of our ceremonies in Tucson, Arizona. We always recommend that you bring a mat, sleeping bag, and blankets with you to ceremony

(although we do have some spare mats and sleeping bags if you are traveling from a distance and want to borrow some of our gear). It's also good to dress in layers so you can stay at a comfortable temperature at all times of the year. We'll send you some packing recommendations prior to ceremony, so don't worry. And we'll always let you know ahead of time whether or not the ceremony will be indoors or outdoors.

During the summer months we've hosted a large number of ceremonies outdoors in some really eye-popping locations. Most people find it an absolute blessing to have the ceremony outside. While in the medicine, people discover it feels very good to connect to the Earth, the Sky, and the Plants. In the winter, we prefer to have a covered, heated space, but we still think access to the outdoors is important. Mother Nature permitting, we'll set up a fire pit and a social area and encourage people to go outside, sit under the stars, and connect to the Earth.



Arizona Yagé Assembly

Tucson, Arizona ✦ ceremony@aya.guide ✦ (520) 777-1348

Can you hold a ceremony closer to me?

We hold ceremony in Tucson from September to May, travel to California frequently, tour the United States from June to August, and take groups to Peru several times a year. You can sign up for updates and let us know your preferred location by filling out our form at www.aya.guide/locations. We can't make any promises but we will certainly let you know if we're headed your way during our summer travel tour.

How much does ceremony cost?

The cost for ceremony varies by venue and the number of evenings booked, so please consult our Ceremony Schedule at www.aya.guide/ceremonies to find a breakdown of the donation structure for each of our events.

How do I register?

You can register for our ceremonies online at www.aya.guide.

Once you have signed up and provided your donation, you will receive a confirmation email and will be asked to fill out a health form and a questionnaire. Please keep in mind that your registration is not considered complete until you have completed both your health form and your questionnaire. We will email or call you if we notice anything in the information that you submit to us that needs attention.

Once you are registered, you will be sent more details on how to prepare for ceremony—including dietary guidance. It is essential that you start your preparation at least one week before your ceremony date. You will be emailed packing recommendations, location information, driving directions, and everything you will need to come into ceremony with us during the week prior to ceremony.

Should I do one ceremony my first time, or is multiple nights beneficial?

Everybody is different. Some people come in for just one night and have profound insights. Others who are new to the medicine, and new to mind-expanding experiences in general, may find that they are just getting familiar with their own blocks the first night and they may feel like a second night—or a third—may be important as far as learning how to get past those blocks and connect deeper with the medicine. If you are able to sign up for two or more nights, it may be very beneficial—especially if you are new to the medicine.

How many people will be there?

Generally speaking, we will gather groups of about 25 to 30 participants and approximately 5 to 8 facilitators per evening. Although they may be strangers now, you will most likely form a deep bond with other people in your ceremony as you connect to Source and to Spirit. There are always enough facilitators to help. The facilitators have a deep familiarity with the plant sacrament with many years of experience between them and are there to offer a safe, loving, and nurturing environment for your journey.

Will there be Shamans there?

While staying true to the spirit of the vine, our effort is to speak to western culture. After being introduced to [The Ayahuasca Manifesto](#) we thought, wow, isn't that interesting, that's just what we're doing—allowing the vine to speak through the people and culture of our time. As such, we have decided not to use the term *Shaman* in describing the people that facilitate our ceremonies. We wanted to underscore the experience of people engaging with their own personal healing through their direct connection with Source. The term *facilitator* seemed to encapsulate the spirit of that for us. As much as we work to create a secure, kind, and loving environment for our participants, in many ways, as facilitators, our job is to step out of the way in order to support our participants' direct connection with Divine Love. That said, we trust that our deep experience with the medicine allows us to create a loving environment for all those in attendance at ceremony.

Our Lead Facilitator, Scott Stanley, started working with the medicine back in 2009 with an indigenous troupe from Southern Columbia. Scott and other AYA facilitators routinely visit the Amazonian rainforest four hours upriver from Iquitos, Peru; there they work with local Shaman, Eladio Melendez Garcia, who lives and practices as a Matsés curandero in the upper Amazon region. Eladio himself is deeply familiar with the traditions of multiple tribes. His father and grandfather were both *ayahuasqueros*.

The longer we work with the medicine, the more we realize that there is always more to learn. We've been taught so much from the people who've come through our ceremonies. We feel it's our participants' search and collective intent for knowledge and healing that has empowered our ceremonies and our learning. So we're not shamen, we're *facilitators*—just helping people to surrender to their own connection with Divine Love. We feel so honored to be on this path with everyone who has walked with us.

What are the ceremonies like?

Our ceremonies draw from a number of South American traditions but are based primarily in the traditions of Peru. We've also worked to stay true to the spirit of *la medicina* in meeting the culture here in the United States.

Our ceremonies include the use of Tobacco and *Hapé* (a form of tobacco powder similar to snuff) for cleansing the sinuses and aiding the breath in ceremony. We also use various smudging herbs such as Sage and Palo Santo throughout our ceremonies. Our ceremonies feature live music and *icaros* (ceremonial songs) and we honor the Great Spirit as well as the sacredness that can be found in silence. We use traditional South American instruments, as well as guitars, flutes, and drums. You can find Ayahuasca Icaros on YouTube and most music sites; and you can also find recordings of the music from previous AYA ceremonies on our SoundCloud account at soundcloud.com/orbzero/sets.

When you arrive, we'll let you know what to expect for the remainder of the evening, show you where everything is located, and make sure you're comfortable before we start our blessings and open ceremony. Many of the questions that you may have now will also be answered once you register and receive more information closer to the time of ceremony.

What is in the medicine and how many doses should I take?

We've sought to hold true to the spirit of ayahuasca. We use a traditional brew consisting of ayahuasca vine and chacruna leaf with the addition of bobinsana and chiric sanango for added positive effects. We offer the option of several doses of the medicine throughout the evening within a structured format that we will explain before the ceremony. Some people find that one dose is all that they need, while others feel drawn to multiple doses. It all depends on what you are experiencing and how deeply you feel drawn to connect with the medicine. Every person is different and our facilitators are there to help with this process.

I'm flying to Tucson, can I take a Taxi Cab or Uber to ceremony?

If you are flying into Tucson, we strongly recommend that you get a rental car to get you to and from ceremony. The ceremonies are often held in the desert off of a series of dirt roads that Taxi Cab and Uber Drivers won't travel down. We also put together a Carpooling List for each of our ceremony weekends. You'll notice in the questionnaire that we ask if you can offer a ride or if you need one. That being said, we cannot attest to any individual's driving skills or the condition of their car. In the end, it's up to you to make your own travel arrangements—but if you can't make something work, please let us know.

Do you have a Facebook Page?

Yes! We have a page for the Church at www.facebook.com/ayachurchaz/ and a closed Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/390101401189349/.

Visiting our Facebook pages should give you a better idea as to what others have experienced by participating in our ceremonies. You are always welcome to post and ask questions to our past participants as well. Our closed group is a pretty active group and a great place to connect with your medicine family.

How can I reach you via phone?

Our phone number is **(520) 777-1348**. Feel free to give us a call anytime. If you can't reach us, please leave a message and we will call you back. And the best way to get ahold of us is always through email at ceremony@aya.guide.

Do you offer refunds if I don't feel the medicine?

Everyone's experience in ceremony is different, and every ceremony is different no matter how many times a person has sat with the medicine. Some people come in for their first time, take only one dose and they have profound insights, others may need two or three doses. We offer multiple doses throughout the night and are there to guide you through any blocks that may arise. There's no way to predict what you will experience. I'm sorry we can't offer refunds if your experience isn't what you expected. There are ways to prepare yourself for the best experience. Diet changes and having your system as clean as possible can help you connect more deeply with the medicine. Also establishing a daily meditation practice is essential in preparation. Please review our [Ceremony Preparation Guidelines](#) for more guidance in terms of preparing for ceremony.

I am feeling nervous or depressed, will I be okay to go into ceremony feeling this way?

No one is ever completely ready for ceremony. Being nervous is actually good; it encourages you to respect the medicine and prepare as fully as you can in advance of attending ceremony. Being nervous is perfectly natural.

That being said, it is also important that you are in the best mental disposition that you can be in. Take the opportunity to utilize the time before your ceremony to take additional care of yourself mentally, spiritually, and physically. The diet can be challenging for some, so find the foods on the dieta that nourish you. Feel free to eat plenty of them. Nourish your soul as well and do things that make you feel good (listen to uplifting music, read uplifting spiritual books, and stay away from TV and the media). It is helpful to surround yourself

with people who are supportive and positive. It is also important to exercise every day, if only for a few minutes. Make it fun: do it as part of your path for mental healing and preparation for ceremony. Yoga is a wonderful way to prepare yourself physically, mentally, and spiritually.

If you don't already, hold to a daily meditation practice. If meditation is new to you, start with just one minute a day. Bring your awareness from your thoughts into your heart, breathe, and allow yourself to feel your heart and body consciousness. Once you master one minute a day, go for two minutes and so on. You may find it helpful to keep it very short. It is more important to focus on quality for one minute than to do a lengthy meditation. Explore the practice of meditation during the period before ceremony. It will prepare you to communicate with Spirit and get the most out of your experience.

Communication with Spirit can happen, but it happens within your heart, not your mind. So the practice of meditation helps in letting go of those things that get us repeatedly caught up in our thoughts. Stepping into ceremony with the practice of meditation certainly helps maintain body awareness and a detached awareness towards internal dialog. Dropping your attention from the constant chatter of the mind into the calm of the heart lends power to the challenges of simple surrender to divine love.

Can dark energies or entities enter the ceremony space with us?

People can bring some pretty heavy stuff into ceremony with them. We work not simply to dispel dark energies, but to transform these static forms with the power of the Earth, the Ancestors, Light Beings, and Divine Source. Language can be tricky sometimes, but we're always honored when the spirits of Ancestors or Light Beings visit us in ceremony to assist with the healing—and we welcome them with love. We are grateful and feel supported in our work by the deep love and healing presence of Spirit.

How does the healing work?

We view the interior of ceremony as a temple: a visible and functional field in which the group energetic mass assists in the healing of the group. We view Divine Love as the heart of the temple. Participants can reside in this space then for as long as they choose. This is the place of silence, peace, acceptance, and healing. Participants claim, through surrender, their unique connection with Divine Source. If a participant drifts into despair, distress, or feels themselves locked in a struggle, our personal aim is to guide their awareness back to center and back to the threshold of surrender. However, it is up to each participant to

surrender and, in doing so, to reclaim their personal power. It can be helpful to remember that *whatever is happening, that's where the healing is taking place.*

Some people are using ayahuasca as a drug. Isn't it intended to be a spiritual practice?

Ayahuasca is one of the most powerful plant medicines on the planet. Anyone who takes ayahuasca to "get high" is most likely in for a rude awakening—and perhaps a little enlightenment. Sad to say though, we've seen ayahuasca used in this way. Our goal, however, is always to honor Spirit and the deep traditions that ayahuasca is rooted in and to use the medicine as a sacrament.

The main purpose of our ceremonies is to further develop a deeper and more conscious relationship with the Divine Spirit, and to look for better and healthier ways to live and relate to self, family, and community. Therefore, it's essential that each participant brings their own purposeful intent with them into ceremony with us. Your ability to focus on your intention will, to a large extent, determine the outcome of your experience.

Purging

Purging in the medicine is much different than if you are sick or say drunk on alcohol. It's not only physical; it is an energetic and spiritual release and can be celebrated. On that note, not everyone throws up. There are different kinds of purges: including sweating, crying, yawning, clearing your throat, laughing, diarrhea, and even the need to move, shake, or dance. The medicine will decide which purges you will experience and they will end up being exactly what you need. With each surrender and release, you move closer to the divine.

We provide everything you need to facilitate any purging and there is no need to bring anything that isn't listed in the emails you will receive prior to ceremony. We have buckets and tissues for everybody and you'll always have access to a wash area and toilet. We are there to support the intent of everyone in attendance. After anyone uses their purge bucket, the facilitators take it away, empty it, and provide you with a new one. This is very symbolic because we take away what no longer serves you and we give it back to the Earth.

I have a drug test for work. Will ayahuasca show up on my test?

You most certainly would pass a drug test if the only questionable thing you took was ayahuasca. There are two types of substances in the ayahuasca brew: a reversible monoamine oxidase inhibitor (which, in the brew, is found in the ayahuasca vine) and DMT (which is found in the leaves of the chacruna plant).

If you were ordered to take a drug test specifically for DMT, those testing you may be able to determine if you had taken DMT in very large levels right before the test, but the only reason you would have to do that is if you had a situation where those testing you were looking for DMT specifically.

We'd just like to stress that *DMT occurs naturally within the body* and a normal, work-related drug test would not test for DMT. Ayahuasca and larger levels of DMT are quickly eliminated from the body as well.

Can I bring a friend or loved one to support me through the experience? They don't want to participate.

This is a very common question and we understand the comfort given knowing a loved one is there to support you. We only allow people who are participating and drinking the medicine with the group to attend. Your friend or loved one could get a hotel nearby and come to meet you in the morning if you'd like. Our facilitators are there to support your intentions and offer a safe, loving, and nurturing environment to help you through any blocks. We are experienced and know how to help guide your journey. We all step into the temple together. If someone were present and not participating, it would bring an undesirable energy into the space. Please call us if you'd like to talk more about it.



We are looking forward to sharing sacred space with you!

We hope that this document has answered most of your questions about attending ceremony with us. If you have additional questions at any point during the ceremony registration process or while you are preparing to come into ceremony with us, please give us a call at **(520) 777-1348** or send us an email at ceremony@aya.guide.

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