



Arizona Yagé Assembly Frequently Asked Questions



Where are your ceremonies held?

While we occasionally travel out of state to hold ceremony, we're currently holding the majority of our ceremonies on land that our church acquired in Tucson, Arizona. The acreage that we own is in a beautiful and secluded area on the outskirts of Tucson, surrounded by hills and mountains, and features a wide variety of the signature Sonoran desert flora and fauna.

What should I bring with me to ceremony?

Bringing a mat, sleeping bag, pillows, and blankets with you to ceremony is always advised (if you happen to be traveling from a distance and want to borrow some of our gear, we have some spare mats, sleeping bags, pillows, and blankets for participant use as well). It's also good to dress in layers so you can stay at a comfortable temperature at all times of the year. We'll be sure to send you an email with a copy of our [Packing List](#) to remind you what to bring before your ceremony weekend as well.

Will the ceremonies be held indoors or outdoors?

We'll always let you know ahead of time whether the ceremonies will be held indoors or outdoors. The majority of our ceremonies are held inside our *maloca* (a large, round-house structure that we constructed at our ceremony site in



Arizona Yagé Assembly

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Tucson, Arizona). While in the medicine, people discover it feels very good to connect to the earth, the sky, and the plants: so we always set up a social area outdoors and folks are welcome to go outside to talk, sit under the stars, and connect to the earth as they wish during the course of our ceremonies.

Can you hold a ceremony closer to me?

Please feel free to email us at ceremony@aya.guide if you have a location in mind where you'd like us to hold ceremony. We can't make any promises, but we will certainly let you know if we're headed your way.

Do you have a mailing list that I can join?

You can join our mailing list by scrolling to the bottom of any page of our www.aya.guide website and filling out the short form to "Subscribe for Newsletter Updates." After you subscribe, you will begin receiving the AYA Church Newsletter as well as periodic emails whenever we open registration for any new ceremony weekends.

How much does ceremony cost?

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

How do I register for ceremony?

You can sign up for our ceremonies online at www.aya.guide and www.ayaguide.org. 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 Ceremony Questionnaire. **Please keep in mind that your registration is not considered complete until you have submitted your health form and your questionnaire to us for review. We will get in touch with you if we notice anything in the information that you submit to us that requires attention—but there's no need to wait on further communication from us to book any flights or lodging once your sign-up is complete and you receive your confirmation email.**

How should I prepare for ceremony?

It is essential that you start your preparation by reviewing and following our [Ceremony Preparation Guidelines](#) at least one week prior to the ceremonies you

have signed up to attend. You will be emailed detailed 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 are 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 the medicine the first night, and they may feel like a second night—or a third—may be important as far as connecting deeper and learning more from their experience with Ayahuasca. If you are able to sign up for two or more ceremonies, 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 30 to 35 participants and approximately 5 to 7 ceremony facilitators per evening. 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. And, although your fellow participants may be strangers to you at first, you will most likely form a deep bond with other people in your ceremony as you connect to Source and to Spirit together throughout the course of the weekend.

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, Perú; there we 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. We also structure annual trips to Perú for folks who are interested in traveling and sitting in ceremony and working with the Amazonian Master Plants in a retreat setting.

The longer we work with plant medicines, 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, insight, 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 Perú. We've also worked to stay true to the spirit of *La Medicina* in meeting the culture here in the United States. In addition to Ayahuasca, our ceremonies include the use of Tobacco and *Hapé* (a powder, which generally consists of tobacco, wood ash, and various other plants, which is blown up the nose and used for grounding and/or moving stuck energies). We also use Sananga eye drops and various smudging herbs such as Sage and Palo Santo throughout our ceremonies.

Live music and *icaros* (sacred ceremonial songs) are prominently featured in our ceremonies 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, drums, and other world instruments in the context of our ceremonies. You can find recordings of ceremonial music on YouTube and most of the streaming music sites; and you can also find recordings of the music from previous AYA ceremonies on [our SoundCloud account](#). We also host musical recordings on [our YouTube channel](#) and [our Spotify page](#).

What time should I arrive for ceremony and when will the ceremony conclude?

We ask people to arrive between 6:00pm and 7:00pm each evening for ceremony. When you arrive, our crew will greet you and help you to get parked

and find your way to the ceremony space. Our ceremonies run all night long and typically conclude between 6:00am and 7:00am. Keep in mind that 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 is explained 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. Most taxi cab and Uber drivers won't travel down the couple of miles of dirt roads that lead to our ceremony site. 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 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.

Drive times to our ceremony location are as follows:

From Downtown Tucson: Approximately 45 minutes

From Tucson Int'l Airport: Approximately 1 hour

From Phoenix Sky Harbor Int'l Airport: Approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes

I'm looking for lodging in Tucson, do you have any recommendations?

Yes! While you are welcome to stay wherever you wish, you are also welcome to review the [Lodging Page](#) on our website for some local lodging options. If you are looking to book lodging outside of our recommendations, the ZIP Code for our ceremony location is 85637 and we are located in Tucson but also close to the town of Three Points, Arizona. The exact location and driving directions to the ceremony site are provided during the week prior to ceremony.

Do you have a Facebook Page?

Yes! We have a [Facebook Page for the Church](#) and a [Closed Facebook Group](#). Visiting our Facebook pages should give you a better idea as to what others have experienced 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.

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 said, it is recommended that you 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. 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.

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.

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 bring many years of experience into the ceremony and are there to support your intentions and offer a safe, loving, and nurturing environment to help you through 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 reach out to us if you'd like to talk more about it.

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.

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

Ayahuasca and larger levels of DMT are quickly eliminated from the body, so you would 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 also like to stress that **DMT occurs naturally within the body** and a normal, work-related drug test would not test for DMT.

All that said, while we have never heard of anyone testing positive for DMT use after attending ceremony with us, we leave any drug-testing responsibilities up to the individual.

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. There's no way to predict what you will experience. Simply put: we don't offer refunds if your experience isn't what you expected. There are, however, many ways to prepare yourself for the experience as well. Dietary changes and taking steps to prepare your system to be as clean as possible can help you connect more deeply with the medicine. Also establishing a daily meditation practice is essential in

preparation. Please make sure you review our [Ceremony Preparation Guidelines](#) for more guidance in terms of preparing for ceremony.

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*.



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 send us a text or give us a call at **(520) 222-9106** and you are always welcome to send us an email at ceremony@aya.guide as well.