

Safety, Screening & Contraindications (Plant medicine)

For retreats that do include plant medicine such as peyote and psilocybin, we have a rigorous screening process in place to ensure the best possible care and the safety of all participants. This process includes interviews, the submission of medical test results, and follow-up with our external medical team.

At all peyote and psilocybin retreats, vital signs are checked daily, and drug tests are administered upon arrival and before each ceremony. Taking the plant medicine is not guaranteed until the medical team approves it. Additionally, paramedics are on-site at the ceremony location to respond to any unexpected emergencies.

To avoid risks, we ask that you be transparent during the evaluation process; all information collected is handled with the strictest standards of confidentiality.

Medical Requirements

- For the majority of people, ancestral plant medicines such as Peyote and Psilocybin are completely safe. However, there are rare occasions when it's not so safe due to certain medical conditions and pharmaceutical medication interactions that can occur.
- It is necessary that you agree to disclose any known medical conditions and/or use of any medication during the pre-screening questionnaire and virtual call with our health professional. Withholding any information that can place a risk on your own safety as well as others in the retreat. This information will remain strictly confidential and will only be used in order to ensure the safest possible experience for you and others in the retreat.

Certain drugs and medications have been found to be non-compatible with Peyote and psilocybin. It is essential to stop taking the following substances at the required time frame prior to attending a retreat. This will give your body sufficient time to remove them from your system before attending the retreat.

It is important to clarify you should not discontinue any prescribed medications (including antidepressants) without consulting your physician or medical provider. Suddenly stopping certain prescribed medications without the supervision of a medical provider can be life-threatening. We take your safety seriously and are here to support you in your healing process. When one is working with sacred plant medicine, it is preferable to avoid taking any other substances or medicines. This may interfere with the plant's energy and provoke unwanted reactions. **It is not safe to take Peyote and psilocybin if you take the following medications:**

- **Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs):** Peyote and psilocybin are a potent natural MAOI and should not be used with other MAOIs. Combining MAOIs with Peyote and psilocybin can lead to complications.
- **Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) or any medication which influences the serotonin system:** SSRI medications combined with Peyote and

psilocybin can induce serotonin syndrome. This can be more severe than with food containing tryptophan leading to potentially fatal results. Peyote and psilocybin, which is an excess and/or overload of serotonergic activity in the central nervous system and peripheral serotonin receptors. With most SSRIs you should stop under the supervision of your physician 6 weeks before the start of the retreat, but with Prozac you should stop 8 weeks under the supervision of your physician before the start of the retreat because of its longer half-life. Again, you should not abruptly stop taking them without discussing the matter with your doctor or medical provider.

- **Antidepressants other than SSRIs:** These drugs can cause serious complications when combined with Peyote and psilocybin. These antidepressants include serotonin-norepinephrine inhibitors (SNRI), serotonin antagonist and reuptake inhibitors (SARI), norepinephrine inhibitors (NRI), norepinephrine-dopamine reuptake inhibitors (NDRI), tricyclic antidepressants (TCA), tetracyclic antidepressants (TeCA), noradrenergic and specific serotonergic antidepressants (NaSSA), and serotonin modulators and stimulators (SMS). Stop taking these medications under the supervision of your physician 6 weeks prior to attending the retreat and at least 4 weeks after. As with all medications, it is crucial to give antidepressants ample time to leave your system to avoid unpleasant side effects.
- **Benzodiazepines, Central Nervous System Drugs & Sleeping Pills:** Drugs that suppress the central nervous system (CNS) (benzodiazepines, sedatives, and barbiturates) such as certain anti-anxiety drugs and sleeping pills, should not be used in combination with Peyote and psilocybin. Peyote and psilocybin pose a serious health risk as they can intensify the effects of these drugs, leading to slower brain activity, heart rhythm and labored breathing. Remember to be mindful, dependence on CNS depressants can develop easily, thus withdrawal symptoms may occur when discontinuing the medication. Stop taking these medications under the supervision of your physician 3-4 weeks prior to attending the retreat. Give yourself enough time to avoid unwanted side effects before attending the retreat.
- **Anti-hypertensive medications:** There are a handful of anti-hypertensives used, however the most important and widely used are thiazide diuretics, ACE inhibitors, calcium channel blockers, beta blockers and angiotensin II receptor antagonists. We advise these medications to be stopped with the supervision of your physician up to 2-6 weeks prior to attending the retreat. Other anti-hypertensives not listed above can be discontinued with the supervision of your physician for at least 1 week prior to attending the retreat and 1 week afterwards.
- **Other medications:** It is not safe to drink Peyote and psilocybin in conjunction with decongestants, cold medications, allergy medications, antihistamines, anti-seizure medications, tranquilizers, amphetamines (including Adderall), sympathomimetic amines (e.g. pseudoephedrine and ephedrine), carbamazepine, methylphenidate (Ritalin), macromerine, phenelamine, tyrosine, tryptophan, asarone/calamus, asthma inhalers and diet pills. These must be stopped under the supervision of your physician 1 week prior to attending the retreat and 1 week afterwards.

- **Herbal antidepressant St. John's Wort (*Hypericum Perforatum*):** This herb must not be taken directly prior to drinking Peyote and psilocybin. We advise allowing 2 weeks after you stop taking this herb before attending the retreat.
- **Marijuana (THC):** This plant must be stopped 1 month before the start of the retreat. If this is not possible, lower the dose and try your best to abstain completely 7 days before the start of the retreat.

It is not safe to take Peyote and psilocybin if you have been diagnosed with the following:

- Although Peyote and psilocybin haven't been shown to cause psychosis or other psychiatric disturbances, there can be some with a very extensive history of psychological problems to find it difficult to process the experience. If you have psychosis, mania, bipolar disorder, dissociative state, or schizophrenia you cannot be accepted on the retreat. Please inform us about any history of mental health.
- If you have a family history of mental illness, specifically, schizophrenia or bipolar, the individual must present a signed doctor's note stating that it is safe for the individual to consume the ancestral medicines like Peyote and psilocybin and
- If you have a heart condition, chronic high blood pressure, chronic uncontrolled diabetes, pacemaker, organ failure, heart murmur, severe asthma, gastric or intestinal ulcers, or tachycardia you cannot be accepted on the retreat. MAOIs may change the amount of insulin or oral anti-diabetic medication that you need as a diabetic.
- During the Retreat in Real de Catorce we stayed over 2,600 m a.s.l. If you have any conditions (e.g. unstable blood clots, severe heart conditions, severe lung conditions, asthma, etc.) that can be exacerbated during the stay please consult with your health provider before attending the retreat.
- Although most indigenous believe partaking in sacred plant medicines while pregnant gives "force" to the fetus, we cannot offer you any plant medicines while pregnant at our retreat at this time
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Recreational drugs that are very dangerous to combine with Peyote and psilocybin include but are not limited to:

- Alcohol
- Amphetamines (meth-, dex-, amphetamine, aderral, etc.) Barbituraten
- Barbituates
- Cocaine
- Dextromethorphan (DXM)
- Ephedrine
- Ketamine
- MDA, MDEA, MDMA (ecstasy), PMA
- Opiates (heroin, morphine, codeine, opium)
- 5-MEO-DMT

Natural Medicines & Herbs/Botanicals can be unsafe to combine Peyote and psilocybin include but are not limited to:

The following should be stopped at least 2 weeks before taking any sacred plant medicine such as Peyote and psilocybin. Please, inform the team during the assessment of all natural medicines, supplements, herbs, and botanicals you are taking.

- Boswellia
- Cannabis
- Ephedra
- Ginseng
- Kava
- Kanna
- Kratom
- Licorice Root
- Nutmeg
- Rhodiola Rosea
- Scotch Broom
- Sinicuichi
- St. John's Wort
- Yohimbe

Specific contraindicated drugs/substances include but are not limited to:

- **Adderall** Can lead to high body temperature, seizures and, in some cases, coma with MAOIs.
- **Alcohol** May cause side effects such as angina (chest pain) or headache with MAOIs. The headache may mask or be confused with a hypertensive crisis caused by the interaction with MAOIs. MAOIs can also enhance the sedative effect of alcohol.
- **Anaesthetics** May enhance the anaesthetic effect with MAOIs.
- **Bupropion (Wellbutrin)** Use of Bupropion within two weeks of using MAOIs can cause serious side effects, such as seizures.
- **Buspiron (Buspar)** can cause high blood pressure and increased sedative effects with MAOIs.
- **Carbamazepine (Tegretol)** May cause fever and increase seizures, especially in epileptics with MAOIs.
- **Clomipramine** May cause high fever (hyperpyrexia crisis) and seizures with MAOIs.
- **CNS depressants** May potentiate depressive effects with MAOIs.
- **Desipramine (Norpramin, Pertofrane)** May lead to a hypertensive crisis with MAOIs.
- **Dextromethorphan** May cause agitation, hypertension and fever, or brief episodes of psychosis with MAOIs.
- **Diuretics** May cause a greater than normal drop in blood pressure and an increase in MAOI blood levels with MAOIs.
- **Fenfluramine** May cause fever (hyperpyrexia crisis) with MAOIs.
- **Lithium** May cause fever and serotonin syndrome with MAOIs.
- **MAOIs** Using stimulants with MAOIs is extremely dangerous and can cause fatality.
- **Meperidine (Demerol)** Has led to deaths after a single dose with pharmaceutical MAOIs.
- **Metaproterenol or Beta-adrenergic bronchodilators** May cause blood pressure elevation and rapid heart rate with MAOIs.

- **Mirtazapine (Remeron)** May lead to hypertensive crisis with MAOIs.
- **Nephazodone (Serzone)** May lead to high fever with MAOIs.
- **Opiates** Carries a risk of respiratory depression with MAOIs.
- **Other medications** the use of Benzedrine, Benzphetamine, Desipramine, Desoxyn, Dexedrine, Dopamine, Ephedrine (contained in Marax, Quadralin, and other asthma drugs), Epinephrine, Guanadrel, Guanethidine, Hydralazine, Isoproterenol, L-dopa, Metaraminol, Methyldopa, Mirtazapine, Norepinephrine, Oxymetazoline, Phendimetrazine, Phentermine, Phenylephrine, Phenylpropanolamine, Pseudoephedrine, Ritalin, or Venlafaxine with MAOIs can cause a hypertensive crisis (severe blood pressure spike).
- **Prozac** Use of Fluoxetine (Prozac) within five weeks of using MAOIs can cause high fever, rigidity, high blood pressure, mental changes, confusion and hypomania.
- **Sleeping pills, sedatives (major or minor) or barbiturates** May enhance the sedative effect with MAOIs.
- **SSRIs** Can lead to serotonin syndrome with an MAOI. The main symptom of serotonin syndrome may be severe and prolonged headache and/or fever (up to 40 °C / 104 °F or more). Other symptoms of serotonin syndrome may include sweating, rapid heartbeat, shivering, dilated pupils, intermittent tremors or convulsions, overactive or overreacting reflexes, hyperactive bowel sounds, and/or high blood pressure. Severe serotonin syndrome can cause agitated delirium, muscle rigidity, high muscle tension, and shock. renal failure, seizures, and can be life-threatening.
- **Stimulants** The use of cocaine, amphetamines or MDMA with MAOIs can lead to severe increase in blood pressure, resulting in increased risk of stroke and cerebral hemorrhage. This combination can also lead to an overdose of a small amount of cocaine possible.
- **Temaril** May increase the risk of side effects with MAOIs.
- **Terfenadine** May cause an increase in MAOI blood levels with MAOIs.
- **Theophylline** May cause rapid heart rate and anxiety with MAOIs
- **Trazodone (Desyrel)** May cause high fever with MAOIs.
- **Tricyclic antidepressants** Using tricyclic antidepressants within two weeks of using MAOIs can result in serious side effects, such as sudden fever, extremely high blood pressure, convulsions and death.
- **Tryptophan or L-tryptophan** May cause disorientation, confusion, amnesia, delirium, agitation, memory impairment, hypomania and chills with MAOIs.
- **Venlafaxine (Effexor)** Can lead to a hypertensive crisis with MAOIs.
- **Ziprasidone (Geodon)** May cause serotonin syndrome with MAOIs

Pre-Retreat Diet

1 week before the retreat abstain from:

- All pork products
- Alcohol
- Cannabis: If you use cannabis regularly, slowly lower your usage and stop completely at least 7 days before the retreat. This clears your mind so you can focus better. It also gives your body and energy the space needed to fully absorb the retreat's process
- Fried foods

- Processed foods including fast foods
- Self-medicated pharmaceuticals including excessive doses of aspirin and ibuprofen

Decrease consumption of:

- Coffee
- Industrial sugars Suggested replacements: honey, stevia, dates, organic maple syrup, panela, agave
- Salt and spicy foods
- Dairy products (including yogurt)
- Raw seafood, shellfish, and seafood with strong odor

Prohibited

All hard drugs including cocaine, heroin, crystal meth, crack, and prescription opiates In the case that this cannot be realized, contact us at least 1-month before the retreat. The treatment for those who use the substances is distinct and requires a deeper cleansing process prior to the retreat.

A drug test is administered prior to each ceremony; if the test is positive, participation in the ceremony is not guaranteed until the doctor and paramedics have properly assessed the risks.