

Shanti Wasi Medicine Nights

Ceremony Guidelines 2023

This document should provide you with all the information you need to correctly prepare for your ceremony, and ensure that you get the most out of your experience. If you have any further questions after reading this document, please do not hesitate to contact Jim or Sassy (our facilitators) on one of the following numbers/emails:

Jim: +506 8896-9650 (landofwaterfalls@gmail.com)

Sassy: +506 8426-7199 (sassyandkim@gmail.com)

Please be especially aware of the “Ceremony Dieta Guidelines” as this will help your body and mind to be the most prepared for your time with this work. Also, please let us know of any dietary needs (vegetarian, dairy free, gluten free, etc.) and, most importantly, any food allergies we should be aware of. Our kitchen team are excited to prepare a delicious menu to suit your culinary desires!

Arrival Information

Getting Here

Our Retreat Center Ojo Del Mar is a beautiful property located on the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica, six hours southwest of San Jose. The property is 30 minutes from the town of Puerto Jimenez. It is on the way to the neighborhood of Matapalo, on Playa Carbonera, 100m from Martina’s Bar and Restaurant. If you are in Puerto Jimenez or outside on the way to our property, most people know Jim Holcombe.

So far the Osa peninsula has escaped the impact of mass tourism, due in part to its wild and rugged geography. Most of the peninsula is still off the grid and getting here can be an adventure in itself. However, it is getting easier to reach the Osa.

Local airline Sansa (www.flysansa.com) have daily flights from San Jose to Puerto Jimenez and the old access road from Chacarita is being vastly improved, with new bridges and less potholes. You can see here where we are located on the map:



GPS

N 08° 24.577'

W 083° 16.924'

Google Maps link: <https://goo.gl/maps/sGzicihyoDtGines8>

Driving time from San Jose to Puerto Jimenez is now down to about six hours, even if you are coming by bus. If you do arrive by public transport or plane you have three options for traveling out to the ceremony space at Ojo del Mar:

1. Hire a taxi (cost is around \$45). We can help you to organize this.
2. Take the colectivo (usually a car or pick up that runs out towards Carate twice a day, at 6 am. and 1.30 pm. At the moment this service is only running on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The driver can drop you off right by our entrance - ask for Ojo Del Mar. It's a slow and bumpy ride, but at \$10 is a lot cheaper than the \$45 taxi fare to get out here.
3. Go to the Mango Tree on the way out of town. It is right down from the BM supermarket and the gas station and that is where people generally wait for a ride to hitchhike out to us.

Whatever form of transport you are coming to us with, you are looking for Playa Carbonera. It is approximately 17 km outside of Puerto Jimenez. When you pass over the first large well-built bridge over a little river, it will be the first entrance on your left.

When to Arrive/Depart

We generally gather for ceremony around 5pm and like to have participants arrive to Ojo Del Mar no later than 1pm. You are welcome to come at any time of day on your arrival day and in general the earlier the better so that you will be more relaxed going into the evening. **We do ask that you arrive no later than 3pm so that you have some time to decompress before going into this work.** We finish around 12 or 1am and are able to get a good night's rest. There are many activities and healing modalities you can choose to take advantage of during the course of your retreat. Your days can be as filled as you wish, or you may prefer to enjoy some quiet, contemplative time on the beach or by the river or on walks in the jungle. You may choose freely. We will have our second ceremony the following evening, and on the 3rd day and night we will have time to rest, integrate and have treatments/enjoy the area. We will hold group integration circles on this final day.

Ceremony Suggested *Dieta* Guidelines

As we happily prepare for your upcoming visit, we invite you to begin preparing yourself as well. As we near the date that we join forces to celebrate and sing together, now is a good time for you to begin preparing for your *Dieta* (safety diet). In order to help ensure that you have a magnificent, positive, and healthy retreat experience, please take time to review the safety diet below. Please do your best to follow the *Dieta* below for at least two weeks prior to your first singing date - and definitely for 3 days before and after. The longer you can maintain a clean diet after the retreat, the deeper and longer the medicine will work with you. It is also very important you read our list of medications and supplements below for substances that cause adverse reactions if combined with ayahuasca.

Feel the power of the universe working its magic within you and try to become aware of your purpose or intention in taking part in ceremony. It can be fun to see what manifests along this journey of self-awareness, cleansing and preparation – enjoy the process!

The Safety Diet (Dieta)

In the Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOI) safety diet, we recommend eating foods that are as fresh as possible and not overripe, preserved, smoked, cured, salted or spoiled in any way.

In terms of aiding your comfort level during the ceremony cycles, meals of stir-fried, steamed, or raw vegetables work well to keep your body alkaline, therefore maximizing your cleansing and detoxification. Millet, brown rice, quinoa, and other whole grains, especially sprouted grains, are beneficial. If you digest raw foods well, emphasize salads, raw fruits and vegetables, and raw juices. If you digest eggs, chicken, fish, and other white meats well, small amounts of these foods will serve to keep you strengthened as you clean up other areas of your diet. Please aspire to eat sustainable and happily raised foods, especially meat, as the energy of the animal's life experiences will be

readily apparent to you both during *Dieta* and ceremony. Fresh dairy products such as locally-made, cultured, fresh, soft cheeses; yogurt; and cottage cheese are fine. Keep in mind that the aging process of any food is what produces the contra-indicated substance. If you consume Kombucha, or other fermented drinks, we recommend you abstain at least on the days of ceremony.

Contra-Indicated Foods

Although many people have consumed MAOI contra-indicated foods without consequence, anecdotal reports suggest that when MAOI reactions happen, they are often triggered by very small amounts of the foods to be avoided. (Aged cheeses, soy sauce, peanut butter, stale nuts, and overripe fruits have all been anecdotally implicated by individuals sharing their experiences through various forums. On the other hand, bananas – though they appear on some MAOI-prescribed lists – appear to be completely safe as long as they are not at all overripe.) Basically foods that are aged, preserved, dried, fermented, pickled, cured (meats), rancid, old, outdated, overripe, salt-cured or even slightly spoiled should be avoided.

The following foods are recommended to be avoided with MAOIs:

- Red meat
- Smoked, fermented, pickled (herring) and otherwise aged or dried fish; lox; any fish that is not fresh.
- Sausage, bologna, pepperoni, salami, corned beef
- Aged cheeses (cottage cheese and cream cheese are safe)
- Protein extracts
- Liquid and powdered protein dietary supplements and protein bars
- Brewer's yeast, yeast vitamin supplements, or yeast extracts
- Tofu, fermented bean curd, fermented soybean paste, soy sauce, tempeh, Bragg's Amino Acids
- Soups made with protein extracts or bouillon – eat fresh soup only!
- Miso soup (contains fermented bean curd)
- Shrimp paste and fish sauce
- Sauerkraut and kim chee
- Fruits that are bruised or even slightly overripe, especially bananas and apples; raisins and other dried fruits; figs, grapes, citrus, pineapple, plums, and prunes.
- Avocados, if overripe (slightly underripe avocados are fine in moderation). Guacamole should be avoided.
- Alcohol, especially red wine, chianti, sherry, vermouth, champagne, brandy, beers and ales, including nonalcoholic; whiskey and liqueurs such as Drambuie.
- Dairy products that are close to the expiration date or that have been unrefrigerated (fresh yogurt is safe).
- Aspartame (NutraSweet) and all chemicals and preservatives
- Fava beans, especially if overripe
- Peanuts, in large quantities
- Chocolate is in a gray area; best to avoid when you are just beginning practice.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT SALT AND SODIUM

Although not contra-indicated on a pharmacological level, salt and sodium are traditionally avoided completely for 10 days prior to the ceremony, and for one week after. (Or longer if your metabolism is slow, and takes a while to clear.) Salt can block the visual component of this medicine work. There have been many questions over the years about this salt issue; all we can say is that through many decades of direct experience with this medicine, people have reported “feeling” viscerally that their absorption of the medicine, physically and psychologically, is not as deep or satisfying when they have consumed salty or sodium-laden foods.

Caffeine, Sex and Other Sacred Plant Medicines

In a few rare individuals, there may be a severe interaction with even small amounts of caffeine. To cut out caffeine completely for at least one week prior, or preferably one month prior to the ceremony, will optimize your benefits. This also helps cut anxiety to an amazing degree during the ceremony, making the jobs of the helpers and facilitators much easier.

Re other powerful medicines: Please do not engage with any other strong medicine plants for at least one week prior to and after your retreat. (Mama Ganja, mushrooms, huachuma etc., are examples of strong plant medicines that could affect your relationship with this new energy you are feeling called to work with.) Waiting at least one moon cycle before and after the retreat would be preferable, to give your body, psyche and the plant spirits time to adjust. You will get much more benefit from this retreat if you take it one medicine at a time.

Tobacco is thought by many to be the Grandfather of all herbs; the sacred messenger of your prayers. If you choose to use Tobacco, please place it in a prayerful, positive context and change your habitual usage to ceremonial usage, such as at sunrise/sunset or in prayer only for the month prior to ceremony. Please do not smoke during ceremony, as the smell of tobacco breath from habitual usage is overwhelming to the heightened sensitivities of the other participants, whom you will be sitting very close to.

In Tantrik and Taoist healing arts, bringing up sexual energy (and channeling it correctly) is considered to be a powerful and potentially "ultimate healing" medicine. Therefore it is important to abstain from Sex Medicine (and all sexual activity) for at least one week prior to ceremony and one week after if you would like to feel the ceremony's effects more fully.

Medications

Pharmaceuticals to be avoided include some over-the-counter (OTC) pharmaceuticals such as antihistamines, decongestants, and cough medicines, but more dangerous are many antidepressants (including OTCs like St John's Wort). If you are taking prescription medication (including antibiotics), are subject to high blood pressure, have a heart condition, or are under treatment for any health condition, please consult your physician about the use of temporary monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOI). Medical consultation is especially important if you are taking Prozac, Paxil, Wellbutrin, Effexor, Zoloft or other antidepressants affecting serotonin levels, i.e. serotonin selective re-uptake inhibitors (SSRI). These medications may require a period of up to six weeks to completely clear the system and must be reduced gradually.

**** DO NOT go off any medication abruptly, without supervision of a licensed health practitioner. ****

**** Also, keep in mind that MAOI and therefore the vine itself are not illegal; therefore, you should be able to talk to a health professional about the contra-indications of the MAOI-containing plants without fear...just don't mention the names of any specific plant medicines. ****

Some meds may clear the system in a shorter period of time, but they still require a lengthier abstinence period than food. For example, the body should be clear of anti-depressants for five weeks (35 days) in the case of SSRIs other than fluoxetine (Prozac) and eight weeks (56 days) in the case of Prozac. Caapi itself is actually an effective anti-depressant.

The plant medicines lower your blood pressure in order to do their repair and reconstructive work, so please notify your host or inviter **ONE MONTH PRIOR TO CEREMONY** if you are on any blood pressure medications.

There was a report several years ago of a death related to a steroid drug interaction, so please also notify your inviter if you have been using steroids within a month of the retreat. This is why it is very important to be transparent about your pharmaceutical usage, and will be asked to sign a declaration upon arrival.

Contra-Indicated Meds List:

- Other MAOIs
- SSRI's (any selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor)
- Amphetamines (meth-, dex-, amphetamine)
- Anti-hypertensives (high blood pressure medicine)
- Appetite suppressants (diet pills)
- Medicine for asthma, bronchitis, or other breathing problems
- Antihistamines
- Medicines for colds, sinus problems, hay fever, or allergies (Actifed DM, Benadryl, Benylin, Chlor-Trimeton, Compoz, etc.)
- CNS (central nervous system) depressants
- Antipsychotics
- Alcohol & marijuana

These specific drugs should not be combined with MAOIs:

- Actifed
- Amantadine hydrochloride (Symmetrel)
- Amoxapine (Asendin)
- Benadryl
- Benylin
- Bupropion (Wellbutrin)
- Buspirone (BuSpar)
- Carbamazepine (Tegretol, Eptol)
- Chlor-Trimeton
- Clomipramine (Anafranil)
- Cocaine
- Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril)
- Cyclizine (Marezine)
- Desipramine (Pertofrane)
- Dextromethorphan (DXM)
- Disopyramide (Norpace)
- Doxepin (Sinequan)
- Ephedrine
- Flavoxate Hydrochloride (Urispas)
- Fluoxetine (Prozac)
- Imipramine (Tofranil)
- Isocarboxazid (Marplan)
- Levodopa (Dopar, Larodopa)
- Loratadine (Claritin)
- Maprotiline (Ludiomil)
- Meperidine (Demerol)
- Methylphenidate (Ritalin)
- Nortriptyline (Aventyl)
- Oxybutynin chloride (Ditropan)
- Orphenadrine (Norflex)
- Parnate
- Paroxetine (Paxil)
- Phenergen
- Phenelzine (Nardil)
- Procainamide (Pronestyl)
- Protriptyline (Vivactil)
- Pseudoephedrine

- Quinidine (Quinidex)
- Salbutamol
- Salmeterol
- Selegiline (Eldepryl)
- Sertraline (Zoloft)
- Tegretol
- Tamaril
- Tranylcypromine (Parnate)
- Tricyclic antidepressants (Amitriptyline, Elavil)
- Trimipramine (Surmontil)
- Yohimbine

HERBS TO ELIMINATE

The following herbs should not be combined with MAOIs:

- St. John's Wort
- Kava
- Ephedra
- Ginseng
- Yohimbe
- Sinicuichi

NOTE NEW ANTIBIOTIC INFORMATION:

Although antibiotics are considered safe as far as drug interactions, there is a new antibiotic being prescribed that is actually an MAOI: Linezolid is a reversible monoamine oxidase inhibitor-based antibiotic that was developed as an antidepressant but marketed as an antibiotic after it was found effective against methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus and other infections. Like other MAOIs, linezolid can interact with pressor or serotonergic agents to cause serotonin syndrome or, more rarely, hypertensive crises. All available antidepressants interact with monoamine oxidase inhibitors.

In Closing

We understand that this is a lot (LOT!) of information to take in, and that it may seem overwhelming and perhaps a bit scary. Take heart! The simplest way to put your mind at ease on the matter of MAOI contra-indicated foods, substances and medications is to contact us directly to inquire about specific items you're concerned about, unclear on, or feel we should be aware of prior to your arrival. In the case of medications, please contact us immediately so that we may advise you far enough in advance to allow you to participate in ceremony safely.

You may reach us at landofwaterfalls@yahoo.com

sassyandkim@gmail.com

Lastly, due to the sensitive nature of the healing medicine we work with at Ojo Del Mar, **we sincerely request that you do not use the**

names of any specific plant medicines in connection with Ojo Del Mar in any Facebook or other social media posts or public forums. You may refer to your experience here as a transformational retreat, yoga retreat, meditation retreat, life-changing retreat, etc. All who journey here seeking a sanctuary for healing, personal growth and transformation thank you enormously for your respect and discretion.

Thank you for carefully and conscientiously preparing your body and mind for your retreat. We greatly appreciate your advance preparation as it contributes significantly to creating a positive, safe, and healthy experience for all involved.

Woohoo! You're on your way to Ojo Del Mar! If you need to contact the Ojo Del Mar team for any reason before arriving or once you're on the ground in Costa Rica or the Osa, the following phone numbers (for calls or texts) and email are the best ways to reach us:

Jim - 8896-9650

Sassy 8426-7199

What to Expect

Welcome – almost – to Ojo Del Mar! We're delighted you're on your way here to soak up the beauty and magic of Costa Rica and the Osa Peninsula with us. Here are a few details to give you an idea of what to expect during your stay at our tropical beach retreat, and to help make your stay as harmonious and enjoyable as possible:

WIFI: While many guests come to Ojo Del Mar to unplug, we realize you may wish or need to check in with the outside world during your stay. Internet access is available 24/7 in the Ojo Del Mar. While we have the internet available, it is extremely slow and cumbersome and so we do encourage our weekend participants to take this time to do a mini electronics detox and just unplug.

BATHROOMS: As in most bathrooms in Costa Rica, please remember to place all substances not produced by the human body in the trash can, not the toilet. We know this may be unusual for many guests – our sanitary system thanks you for your careful cooperation! Please use biodegradable soaps and shampoos for the benefit of all. .

SSSHHHH.... Please respect the sensitivities of others and be as quiet as possible while returning to your sleeping space after all evening gatherings, and when exploring in the early mornings.

- **Typical schedule**
 - **Day of arrival - 1pm: begin to unwind and meet the circle family.**
 - **5pm gathering for ceremony**
 - **Morning - breakfast available from 6:30 - 7 until around 9 - 9:30**
 - **Between breakfast and lunch there is either free time or we will use that time to have our sharing circle depending on the desires of the group.**
 - **Mid-day meal served between 11:30 and 12. We generally like to eat together for this meal so encourage everyone to be available during this time for the shared feast.**
 - **Afternoons - free time, opportunities for healing modalities. art work, music, hikes, surfing or swimming, river time or just plain relaxing.**
 - **Gather around 5pm for ceremony**

What to Bring

Flashlight or headlamp. A source of light will be very important for your walk back to your sleeping space at night. This area of the world is completely off grid and so the night is truly night. And we do live in the jungle and so snakes, scorpions and the like are our neighbors and we occasionally do see them. But mainly the flashlight is for your safety, i.e. not tripping in the dark!

Water bottle. The drinking water is wonderful at our property and comes from an on-site well. Please bring your own water bottle to refill and make sure you stay hydrated during the day.

White Clothing. While it is not necessary to wear white in ceremony, we find, and have heard from others, that it helps to set the intention of engaging in a special, ceremonial event. It is up to you but many people find this to be desirable.

Musical instruments. You are invited to bring your musical instruments to share a song with the circle after ceremonies, or to share your talents throughout the weekend.

Camera. Ojo Del Mar's grounds boast an abundance of beautiful species of tropical flora and fauna. If you'd like to make lasting memories, we recommend bringing your camera (or smart phone!) **** Please refrain from taking photo of your retreat-mates and posting them on Facebook or other social media outlets without express permission from each person in the photo.**** Our guests know and appreciate Ojo Del Mar as a quiet and discreet retreat space designed for personal healing and growth. Thank you for respecting the privacy of all fellow guests.

Biodegradable soaps and shampoos. Please help us keep our pristine corner of the jungle happy, thanks!

DEET-free bug repellent. There are some mosquitos here on the Osa as well as mini black flies that come out occasionally. They leave a little red blood bite that comes with a pretty maddening itch. Our favorite earth- and body-friendly defense against these guys is a DEET-free bug spray called Repel Lemon Eucalyptus that can usually be found at REI, Target, or on Amazon. Another DEET-free product called All Terrain Herbal Armor is also good.

Sunscreen. At 8 degrees from the equator, we suggest if your skin is not already acclimatized, that you use sunscreen. Sunscreen is expensive to buy in Costa Rica so we strongly encourage you to buy ahead and make room in your luggage for an SPF of your choice.

Swimsuit. There are plenty of opportunities to get in the water between the Gulfo Dulce and Rio Carbonera. Bring your swimsuit and get refreshed in this beautiful area's pristine waters.

Whatever you might need. Puerto Jimenez is a 30-40 minute drive from Ojo Del Mar or a \$45 taxi ride. Because of this we recommend you plan ahead and bring with you whatever you might need for your stay with us.

Meals

Family-style, buffet meals are served to our weekend guests for breakfast and lunch. Breakfast is generally available after 7am and is as you like while lunch is served and eaten together sometime between 11:30-12. No other food consumption is recommended after the mid-day meal.

All of our meals are prepared from scratch using fresh, seasonal, organic when available products sourced as locally and sustainably as possible.

*****If you are severely allergic to a certain food, please let us know ahead of time so that we may prepare a special menu for you and educate our kitchen staff in advance.*****

WHEN YOU ARRIVE: Get settled in and then check in at the ceremony space for a one on one chat with the facilitators! They will help to orientate you and answer any further questions you may have prior to starting the ceremony weekend.

If you want to keep up with us before arrival, follow our social media pages under [@shantiwasimedicineneights!](#)

SEE YOU SOON, LOVE AND BLESSINGS!

