

THE PHARMYCOLOGIST

presents

A Mini Harm Reduction Guide for the Respectful use of Psilocybin Mushrooms

This guide does not provide information on identifying, sourcing, buying or growing the psilocybin fungi species. However a bibliography is provided for further reading on harm reduction. The information is provided for information purposes only, no part of this document should be treated as medical advice, always consult a medical professional to obtain health information.

Preface



This guide has been written in light of the global COVID-19 pandemic; a pandemic that could be construed as the planet trying to teach humanity a lesson through the CoronaVirus. Aptly named the coronavirus, from the Latin word for 'crown', referring to its characteristic appearance under an electron microscope[1], the virus reminds humanity that we have forgotten the meaning of the word respect and that we do not rule this planet we inhabit, like the selfish kings and queens that we think we are. Unfortunate as COVID-19 is, similar to how humans may cull an animal species due to proliferation: it could be construed that viruses and illness are nature's way of dealing with human proliferation.

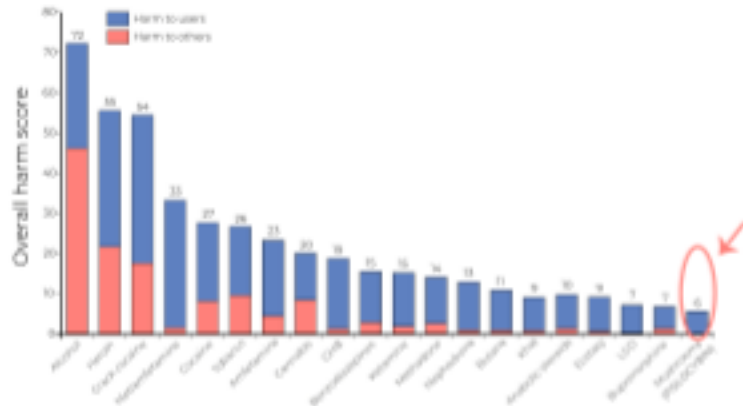
As a mycologist who has been self-medicating with my mental health using psilocybin for some time, I created this guide with the keyword respect in mind. This guide aims to provide knowledge and prevent harm to those enticed by the psilocybin or "magic" mushroom.

Furthermore, this guide has been created with respect to the culture and history of the Mazetec people and curandera (female shaman) Maria Sabina. It was Sabina who introduced the entheogenic properties of the psilocybin molecule to those outside of the Mazetec culture in the 1950s[2].



Respect should be considered and adhered when partaking in a psilocybin journey, be it large, medium, small or even micro. Respect for oneself, others, the planet and the entheogenic properties are paramount when ingesting the psilocybin mushroom.

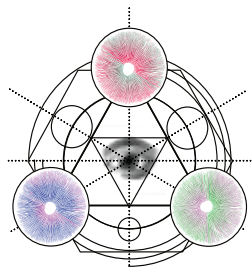
Research published by Nutt, King and Phillips highlight the minimal dangers from ingesting psilocybin (see chart on following page)[3]. However that does not mean there are no dangers; an individual's current and familial history of mental health, should be carefully considered prior to the fungi's consumption. Mental health issues that may not have been evident prior to a psychedelic, can come to the surface, hence the importance of awareness[4].



Psychedelics are not for everyone and they should not be consumed flippantly. Like with most things, the main dangers stems from ignorance and a lack of understanding. For example, the harm that can come from incorrectly identifying and ingesting harmful fungi instead of the psilocybin containing mushrooms. Another example of ignorance, but also arrogance is the creation of prohibitory laws, that wrongly vilify the psilocybin mushroom and those that seek its help. This vilifying and arrogance has been from different governments around the globe both past and present, lacking full insight or knowledge into the subject matter[5].

Psychedelics/entheogens have been part of human history, this is a fact that cannot be ignored: from a neolithic troglodyte in Algeria, to Maria Sabina, to musicians, artists and entrepreneurs like the late Steve Jobs and to current scientific researchers like Robin Carhart-Harris at Imperial College London[6–10]. The people above have been using such things to try answer the array of questions that we all have, in one form or another, relating to the human experience. We just need to break down the variety of barriers that we and the powers that be have built, and open our hearts and minds to receive the answers.

I hope this guide is enjoyable and that the journey chosen by you; with or without psilocybin, provides a positive transformative experience that can be positively considered and integrated into your life.

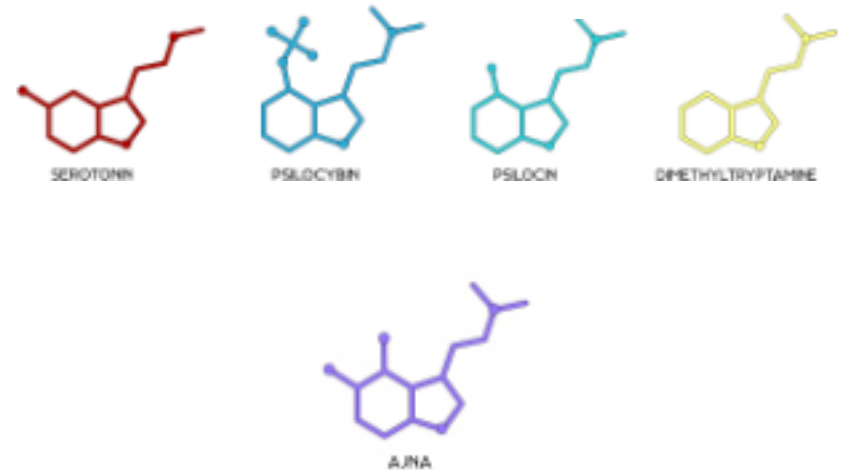


THE PHARMYCOLOGIST

An overview of the Psilocybin Molecule

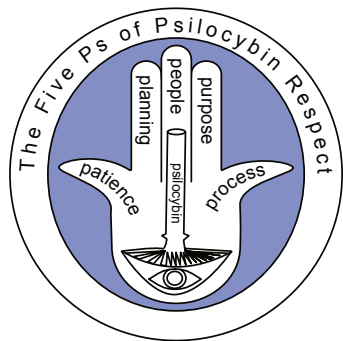
As this is intended on being a mini guide, this section attempts to provide a succinct overview of psilocybin as a molecule. The psilocybin genus of fungi, commonly referred to as “Magic Mushrooms”, take their name from the active compound psilocybin found within it; it is this molecule that leads to the “psychedelic trip”. When a psilocybin mushroom is consumed, the body converts psilocybin to psilocin, the chemical that provides the “magic”[11]. The psilocin activates the psychedelic experience by interacting with the brain’s serotonin neurotransmitter receptors. Serotonin is one of the most important neurotransmitters, with its neurological function being to modulate mood, learning, reward, cognition and memory, amongst other things in our brain and body[12].

By observing the 2D molecular structures below, it is easy to notice how similar psilocybin, psilocin and dimethyltryptamine (DMT, a very potent psychedelic found in ayahuasca) are to serotonin. Overlapping the molecular structure images (final image, *Ajna* Sanskrit for *Third eye*) creates a visual analogy of the chemicals acting like a key that fits the serotonin *door of perception*. It also looks like a caterpillar to me (shrugs).



The Five Ps of Psilocybin of Respect

The following is an explanation of the Five Ps Model of Psilocybin Respect, created for the respectful use of the psilocybin mushroom. I personally don't think that there is such a thing as a bad trip (ever the optimist), as it is possible to turn a negative experience from a journey into something positive through integration. The following can seem a bit obvious to an experienced psychonaut, however I believe to get the most out of psilocybin journeys (no matter the dosage) it is useful to have guidance. The intention of devising the Psilocybin Five P model is to help individuals to make sure that they keep in mind the keyword, respect.



The five Ps consist of patience, planning, people, purpose and process. Five P Model is all about the unmentioned P: *preparation*, however the model's intention is to break things up while simultaneously providing a holistic view that aims to provide guidance. Psilocybin can be like an Instagram filter on your smartphone, making everything more beautiful; whilst simultaneously being like using your smartphone to zoom in on a massive zit on the end of your nose, that you haven't actually noticed before.

Patience

As a mycologist, fungi have definitely taught me the meaning of patience as part of learning to bring the ambassadors of Gaia into fruition[13]. It is paramount not to rush into doing a mushroom journey, especially if you are a first time user. It is not a race to get to the end of the journey, as you can miss some of the sights or crash and burn. A preferred way of preparing psilocybin mushrooms is to dry them; by removing all moisture one can measure the desired amount accurately. It is advisable to do so through the use of a digital scale with the ability to weigh a minimum of 0.1g. With that in mind, the mushrooms can be dried in a dehydrator, but an oven, set at a low heat with the door ajar, also works.

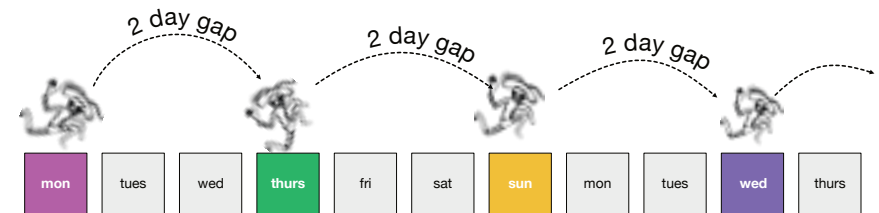
Planning

It is worth taking the time to plan when you are going to partake in a mushroom journey. Even if your journey is a stroll to the local shop, it makes sense to have an idea of what to buy, even with a big shop, it is best to get an idea of what you need. With the microdosing trend on the increase, this form of mycelial consumption is the epitome of planning, as there are different regimens that one could follow. Essentially, microdosing consists of intermittently consuming small "sub-perceptual" amounts of psilocybin (the gaps preventing psilocybin tolerance); to enhance quality of mood and cognition, currently being explored more deeply in current

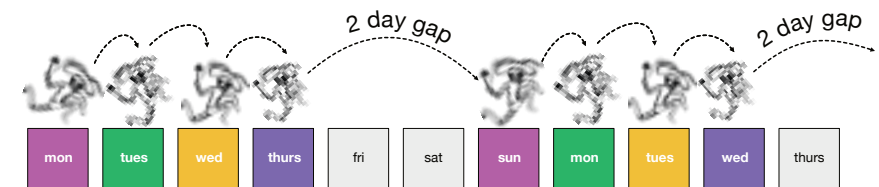
research[14,15]. The two most widely known microdosing regimens are the Fadiman[16] and Stamets Stack (*also includes Lion's mane)[17], these are illustrated by the Tassili mushroom men below. I have created a regimen that works for me, by being mindful of dosage and tolerance.

For a spiritual journey, it would be useful to think about a "set and setting". The term set refers to having a good mindset, this consists of generally being in a good mood and in the right state of mind, and having a purpose and intention (explained later); setting refers to the environment where you partake in the psychedelic journey, maintaining that it is a safe and comfortable place[10]. Outside with nature is the most beautiful experience, but safety and comfort are paramount when returning to a vulnerable infant state of perception.

Fadiman Microdose regimen



SoloPsiloPseudoStamets Stack* Microdose regimen



*Actual Stamets's stack includes Lions Mane mushroom

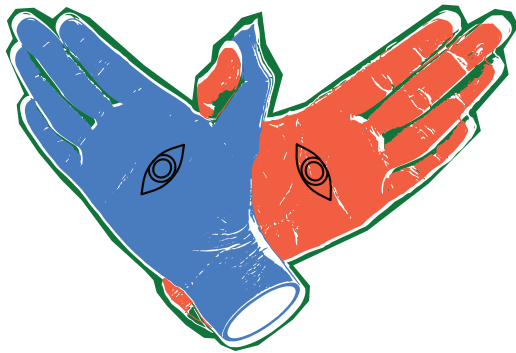
Based on the journey you want to take, it's good to have the right amount of cash for the ticket, the ticket being the dose; the dosage amount also depends on the species psilocybin of mushroom. Planning the correct dose is paramount, without knowing the science of extraction, estimation involved. The celebrated psychonaut Terrence McKenna explains that if you are not sure, start small and increase the amount based on the subjective effect. The following is a table taken from the Erowid website, a go to source for psychonauts, based on the psilocybe cubensis species [14].

Oral Consumption of Psilocybe Cubensis Dosages	
Microdose/Threshold	0.25 - 0.8g
Light	0.8 - 1 g
Common	1 - 2.5 g
Strong	2.5 - 5 g
Heavy	5 + g

People

As a human, it's quite difficult to avoid other humans without adopting solitude. Without a person there is no journey, from the initial interaction of picking a mushroom fruit, to its consumption. Obtaining psilocybin from a trusted source is important, especially if obtaining microdosing capsules or powder, all though the psychedelic community is an embracing one, there may still be some that have a dishonest intent.

Who you consume psilocybin with is also important. If you are consuming them for the first time for a spiritual journey, being with an experienced "trip sitter", someone you know and can trust, would be most beneficial. The presence of a trip-sitter will help reduce the likelihood of a "bad-trip" and can help you to start with the integration process[15]. If you decide to go on a solo journey, it is advisable to do so after you have had a guided journey; as this will provide you with some familiarisation to the psilocybin mode of transport.



Purpose

Having a purpose, reason and intention is paramount. If your purpose is just for fun, then maybe you have not understood what psychedelics are about and you probably are not going to consume them with respect. Whether you are using a natural psychedelic, be it psilocybin mushrooms, mescaline (Peyote or San Pedro) or DMT, in the cultures where these are used as entheogens and medicine, the above compounds are respected portals to the spirit world[16]. A purpose could be for: creative inspiration, self-development, spirituality. At the time of this guide being written, research highlights that psychedelics can help with depression, anxiety, PTSD, ADHD, among others mental health issues[17]. Having an intention not only helps to guide the purpose, this can also be considered as part of the set. Having a written intention, can help the consumer to guide themselves during their journey, whilst helping with the positive integration of the psychedelic journey into your day-to-day life on returning to normality[18].

Process

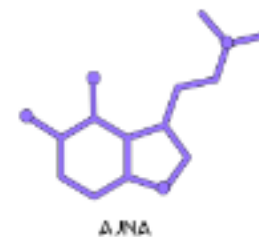
The final 'P' consists of two types of process. The first process is the consumption of psilocybin. After all the preparation the five P model explains, it makes sense to take the time prior to consumption to concentrate on how you consume the psilocybin mushroom too. In treating the journey respectfully and spiritually; take heed from spiritual practice: fasting before consumption. a minimum of four hours before will reduce nausea and help with the effect of the journey[19,20]. The way psilocybin is consumed should be done respectfully too, see the section at the end of the guide entitled *Respectful Recipes*. Incorporating music also is beneficial for the experience; as a musician I create my own and to help me guide my own journey.

The second, and probably most important of the two, is to process what was experienced during the psychedelic journey; through reflection and integration into one's day-to-day life[23,24]. This can be either in a guided group or solo session journey, through written or spoken reflection, through the use of art or music and even through scientific thought or experimentation. I would suggest anything that feels natural and comfortable to you as an individual.

Current research highlights how psychedelics can help addicts master their addictions, the mushroom is one of these[29]. Healing the body of addiction takes practice, the five P model may help with the whole process. With the aim of not only respecting the process, as well as promoting harm reduction, I recommend a free smartphone app: *Dose*. *Dose* is available for both Apple and Android devices and has been created to help an individual track and monitor substances they use, whatever type, for whatever reason. Just do a search for "*Dose*, by Michal Jabczyk" on the Apple App or Google Play store, it's a very useful free resource.

If you like any of the artwork in this booklet visit my instagram channel

@The_Pharmycologist



Respectful Recipes

PsiCao

The following is the recipe adapted by The Pharmycologist's psilocybin and ceremonial cacao recipe for PsiCao. The following is an explanation of my preferred method that I have nicknamed PsiCao (the combination of psilocybin and cacao), with it I attempt to respect the cultural origin, but it can also enhance the whole experience. It makes use of ceremonial cacao which in itself is psychoactive, due to the compounds phenylethylamine and theobromine: both have mild stimulant properties; literature highlights that both cacao and psilocybin mushrooms have been used together in early mesoamericans religious rituals to the current day [19][20]. Firstly, consume an amount of cacao without psilocybin, then 20 minutes after, consume the PsiCao. Following on from the consumption as you wait for the effect to start, I would recommend mindfulness with a focus on your breath; it is also worth returning to the breath if you become overwhelmed during your journey. If it helps you can also hum or say "Om" with every breath out, till things settle. Remember, focusing on breath is your life source and life force, without it there would be no human life.



Ingredients and equipment

- A mug $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water
- Small saucepan
- Hand whisk or blender
- Knife and chopping board
- Coffee/Spice grinder
- Ground psilocybin mushroom dosage (depending on journey choice)
- 30g Fair Trade Ceremonial Cacao
- Ground cinnamon (half a teaspoon), Cloves (2)
- Teaspoon of wild ginger or ordinary ginger (reduces any nausea from psilocybin)
- Chopped fresh mint (optional, good for the stomach)
- Honey (optional sweetener, cacao can be too bitter for some)

Method

Pour the water into a saucepan and heat just below boiling, then keep it low heat so it stays warm, not hot. Do not at any point let the mixture boil. Grind the mushroom, if in a coffee grinder, wait for the dust to settle, otherwise you'll be inhaling mushroom fairy dust (not good). Chop the ginger up finely and grind the cinnamon and cloves together in a coffee grinder, then pour them into the saucepan. Stir them in the very warm water to create a tea.

Weigh 30g of ceremonial cacao and coarsely chop the cacao up and place into the pan with warm water, making sure to stir with a hand whisk. Pour in the mushroom powder and stir; then whisk or place in a blender till frothy. Consume, then meditate while you wait for the door to open.

Converter Cocktail

Fasting is also important with this recipe, it is my adaptation of what is referred to as Lemon Tek. Essentially this is introducing acidity to the mix; as mentioned earlier, the breakdown of psilocybin to psilocin (by stomach acids after ingesting), is initiated externally and speeds up the onset of the journey. Also, the natural acids are meant to be a good detox, so it will help with the whole "default mode network" reset process.

Ingredients and equipment

- Glass tumbler
- Ground psilocybin mushroom dosage (depending on journey choice)
- Juice of half a lemon
- Juice of half a lime
- Tablespoon of apple cider vinegar (with the mother, not a "bad mother", leave that to James Brown)
- Teaspoon chopped wild ginger or ordinary ginger
- Chopped fresh mint
- Water
- Honey (optional)

Method

Place the dose in the tumbler, add the ginger, mint, vinegar, lemon and lime juice. Let the mixture sit for 20 mins, add some water and optional honey. Sit and do some mindfulness, again as with the *PsiCao*, concentrate on your breath. Consume the *converter* and continue with your mindfulness while you wait for the door to open.

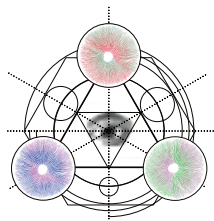


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Further reading

Haden, M. (2018) 'Psychedelic Guide Manual'. Available at: <https://tamintegration.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Psychedelic-Guide-Manual.pdf>.



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