



CACAO KING ACADEMY



YOUR FIRST CACAO CIRCLE

A starter guide for future facilitators

BY ANDREAS

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HI, I'M ANDREAS

I have been walking with ceremonial cacao since 2017.

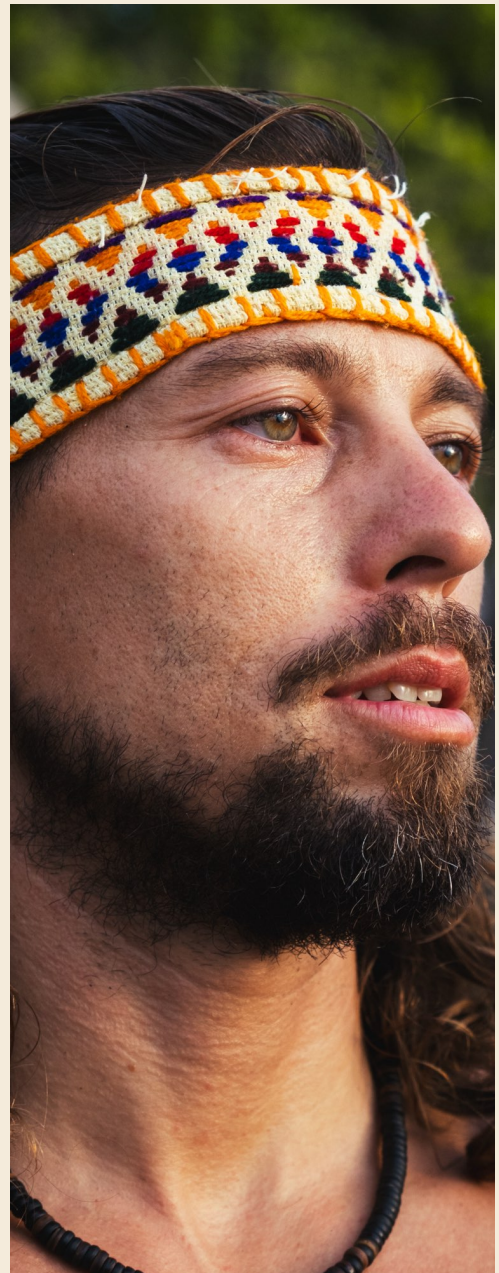
My path took me deep into Panama, where I learned alongside the Ngäbe people — one of Panama's seven Indigenous peoples. What they shared with me changed how I understand this plant, and how I hold space for others.

What I teach today is my own practice — shaped by that time, and by the teachers since. I never present it as someone else's ceremony. Only as the way I learned to hold a circle with honesty and care.

This guide is a small taste of that practice — enough to sit with a few friends, prepare a cup with intention, and open a simple circle. If you feel the pull to go further, to hold space for people you don't yet know, that's what Level 1 is for.

I hope to meet you on Koh Phangan.

— Andreas, founder of Cacao King



WHAT CEREMONIAL CACAO IS — HONESTLY

Ceremonial cacao comes in a few forms. **Paste** is roasted cacao beans ground into a solid block — this is what most ceremonies use, and what this guide walks you through. **Nibs** are crushed roasted beans: good on their own, or ground finely into a drink. **Powder** has had its natural fat pressed out; most ceremonial cacao makers don't recommend it for a ceremony cup.

Cacao is a biologically active plant, not just a symbol. It naturally contains **theobromine** — its main active compound — along with a small amount of caffeine, flavanols and other plant compounds. Theobromine is absorbed more slowly than caffeine, which is part of why cacao can feel different from coffee.

You may notice warmth, a gradual rise in energy, more alertness, or a change in heart rate. You may notice very little.

There is no single experience everyone is supposed to have.

A rough timeline — it varies from person to person:

20–40 MIN	40–120 MIN	2–4 HOURS
EFFECTS BEGIN	PLATEAU	TAPER

Give it time — and don't promise anyone a particular feeling.

ORIGINS

WHERE IT COMES FROM, AND HOW WE HONOR IT



The cacao tree, *Theobroma cacao*, means roughly "food of the gods." It grows in a narrow band near the equator, and people across Mesoamerica have prepared cacao drinks for over three thousand years — the Maya and the Mexica among them. There was never one universal "cacao ceremony." Many peoples held many different traditions, for many different purposes.

What we practice today draws on that history without pretending to repeat it. Andreas learned much of what he teaches from time with the Ngäbe people in Panama. That time shaped his practice deeply — but what he teaches is his own ceremony, not a Ngäbe one, and he's careful never to claim otherwise.

Honoring cacao also means honoring the people who grow it. Choose cacao traceable to its origin, from a supplier who can tell you how it was grown and processed. Most cacao is grown by smallholder farmers, many paid very little for their crop — sourcing fairly is part of the ceremony too.

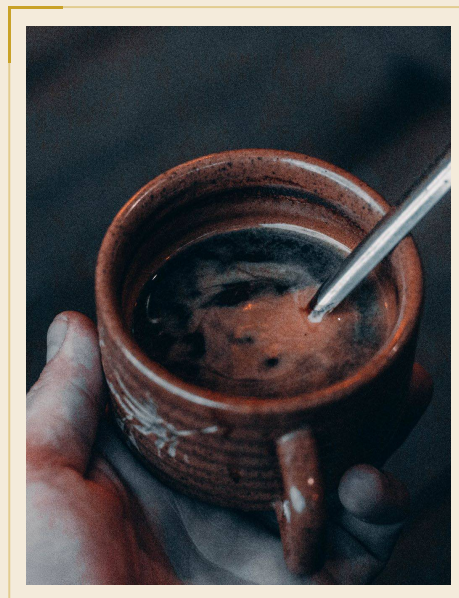
PREPARATION

PREPARING THE CUP

A good cup is simple: cacao, warm water, a little patience.

The ratio. 30–40 g cacao to 150–200 ml (5–7 oz) water or plant milk. Weigh the cacao — don't estimate by eye.

The method. Chop the paste into small pieces. Heat water to 70–80 °C (160–175 °F) — warm enough to melt the cacao, never boiling. Stir in a little hot water first to make a smooth paste, then add the rest gradually, whisking with a molinillo, a small whisk or a blender. Serve warm, not scalding.



The dose. More cacao is not a deeper ceremony — it's just more stimulation for the body.

LEVEL	CACAO PASTE	FOR
Light	20–28 g	First-timers, sensitive drinkers, daytime circles
Moderate	28–42 g	Most group ceremonies
Deep	42–56 g	Experienced drinkers who've tolerated cacao well before
Ceiling	60 g	A hard safety limit — never exceed it, for anyone

When unsure, choose less. Reducing the dose is never a failure of the ceremony.

WHO SHOULD BE CAREFUL

You don't need medical training to run a safe circle. You need honesty, and a willingness to say no.

Ask before you serve. Adjust the dose — or skip cacao and suggest a doctor's advice — if someone:

- ◆ has an irregular heartbeat or a heart condition
- ◆ takes MAOIs — skip cacao entirely; this one matters
- ◆ takes SSRIs or other psychiatric medication — light dose, and check with their prescriber
- ◆ is pregnant or breastfeeding — light dose only, with medical guidance
- ◆ is especially sensitive to caffeine, or prone to anxiety
- ◆ has a nut or dairy allergy — check every ingredient
- ◆ is under 18 — needs a guardian's consent and presence

None of this is about excluding people. It's about choosing, together, what's safe for their body today.

You are responsible for the safety of the space — not for the outcome of the experience.

You can't make someone feel a certain way. You can make sure everyone in the circle is safe enough to feel whatever they feel.

THE ARC OF A SIMPLE CIRCLE

A ceremony has a shape. However small your circle, these eight stages give it one.

- 1 ARRIVAL & GROUNDING 10 MIN
Welcome each person, phones away, water and seats ready.
- 2 OPENING & CONTEXT 10 MIN
Say who you are, what's in the cup, what to expect.
- 3 INTENTION SETTING 10-15 MIN
Ask what people want to give themselves permission to feel today.
- 4 THE SERVING 5-10 MIN
Pour with care; invite people to pause before drinking.
- 5 SITTING WITH THE CACAO 20-30 MIN
Quiet time to notice taste, warmth, breath. Don't over-facilitate this part.
- 6 THE JOURNEY 45-60 MIN
The heart of the circle: music, stillness — or breathwork, if you've trained for it.
- 7 SHARING CIRCLE 15-20 MIN
Invite, never force, people to say what they're noticing.
- 8 CLOSING & RE-ENTRY 5-10 MIN
Water, slow movement, a simple close before people head home.

8	2-2¾ H	1 CUP
STAGES	THE WHOLE ARC	PER PERSON, WEIGHED

THREE PRINCIPLES

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFETY, NOT THE OUTCOME

You can't make someone cry, release or have a breakthrough — trying to will turn care into pressure. Create the container; let people have their own experience inside it.

YOUR CALM IS PART OF THE CONTAINER

People read your voice, breath and pace, especially when they're activated. Regulate yourself first — feet on the ground, shoulders soft, breath slow — before you respond to anyone else.

YOU DON'T NEED TO UNDERSTAND IT TO HOLD IT

Stay curious instead of interpreting. "What did you notice?" is almost always the better question.

Distress is not the same as an emergency.

Tears, shaking or feeling overwhelmed can be a normal part of a circle. But chest pain, fainting, severe trouble breathing, confusion or a sudden severe headache means: stop, and get medical help. Cacao and a warm circle are never a substitute for medical care.

IF IT IS AN EMERGENCY

- 1 Stay with the person — one of you focuses only on them.
 - 2 Delegate everything else, by name: "You — call 1669 now" (the emergency number in Thailand), "You — meet the ambulance at the entrance."
 - 3 Stop the ceremony if you need to. You are never required to finish it.
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YOUR FIRST CIRCLE: A RUN-SHEET

BEFORE

- ☐ Ask each guest about heart conditions, medications (MAOIs and SSRIs especially), pregnancy and allergies
 - ☐ Set the space: quiet, warm, phones away, water and seats ready
 - ☐ Weigh each person's cacao by dose; prepare your ratio and water temperature
 - ☐ Have a simple intention prompt ready
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DURING

- ☐ Welcome each person individually
 - ☐ Open with who you are, what's in the cup, what to expect
 - ☐ Give space for intentions; serve warm cacao, unhurried
 - ☐ Sit quietly together
 - ☐ Hold a gentle sharing circle — invited, never forced
 - ☐ Close slowly: water, movement, a few grounding breaths
-

AFTER

- ☐ Check in with each person before they leave
 - ☐ Note anything that felt like a lot, for next time
 - ☐ Follow up the next day if someone seemed shaken
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NOTES FOR NEXT TIME

WHAT LEVEL 1 ADDS

This guide is a taste of the practice, not the training.

A simple circle with friends is a wonderful place to start. Level 1 is where you learn to hold space for people you don't yet know — when it gets harder than a calm afternoon with friends. Over four days on Koh Phangan:

- ◆ Breathwork alongside cacao, and how to guide both together
- ◆ How to stay steady when someone panics, shakes or shuts down
- ◆ A real screening process, and emergency protocols you rehearse before you ever need them
- ◆ Supervised practice with feedback — closing with your own ceremony on day four
- ◆ A certificate for demonstrated competence, not just attendance

BOOK A VIDEO CALL WITH ANDREAS

pick a time online

MESSAGE ANDREAS ON WHATSAPP

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