



7 LEGAL ENTHEOGENS



As you read this list and the information within, be aware that there is a difference between *psychoactive* and *hallucinogenic*. All entheogens are psychoactive, meaning that they will produce mental effects such as lifting mood, encouraging sleep, stimulating alertness. Coffee and tobacco are considered psychoactive. Some are hallucinogenic; they inspire visions and change perception. Magic mushrooms and LSD are considered hallucinogenic.

Important: This list is not a guide and is presented for informational purposes only. Laws change frequently, always check your source and visit your local government's website to check on current regulations for substances. Many herbs and supplements can interact with medications, producing unwanted side effects. Please consult your doctor before using any new substance.

This is not a comprehensive list of all legal entheogens, but a selection of the most used and most asked about. Some of these are legal only in certain states/countries. Some are legal only in certain forms. Again, check your local laws to be sure.

If you try or experiment with any of these entheogens, I'd love to hear about your experience! Feel free to contact me at hello@pheroze.com or DM/tag me on Instagram [@pherozekarai](https://www.instagram.com/pherozekarai).

Enjoy your journey!
-Pheroze



Blue Lotus

It's not an insignificant likelihood that whoever named the Blue lotus (actually a lily) may have also christened the jellyfish (not a fish). Found across Africa and Asia, evidence of Blue lotus use has been traced back as far as 14th century B.C. featured on ancient Egyptian art, papyri, hieroglyphic, and artifacts.

History & Spiritual Use:

The ancient Egyptians associated this plant with the sun god Ra and used it in spiritual/religious ceremonies to induce states of consciousness and as a healing agent. Ayurvedic medicine practitioners use the Blue lotus for urinary problems, diarrhea, dyspepsia, enteritis, fevers, and heart palpitations.

Science:

Active compounds found in Blue lotus are apomorphine and nuciferin. Apomorphine is a psychoactive alkaloid that interacts with dopamine and serotonin systems (neurotransmitters that affect mood and feelings of pleasure). Nuciferine is an alkaloid as well, but a dopamine antagonist which blocks dopamine receptor activity.

Blue lotus is rich in food-derived flavinoids which have shown antimutagenic and anticarcinogenic effects, as well as promising antioxidant activity.

Active ingredients in Blue lotus have shown therapeutic effects in treating several mental health diseases. Apomorphine research proposes potential in the treatment of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and schizophrenia. Nuciferine demonstrates potential therapeutic applications with a similar receptor profile to clozapine, an antipsychotic drug. Limited scientific data has demonstrated that Blue lotus can help to improve symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

While there is official research on Blue lotus, there are currently no existing clinical trials for Blue lotus.



Blue Lotus

Use:

Blue lotus has a long history of use for relaxation, sleep, and mood enhancement. The effects can be euphoric, but also 'chill out' the mind and relax the body. Some people use Blue lotus for its potential to help with anxiety, stress, and insomnia. Usage also has the purported ability to enhance sexual pleasure and function.

A popular use for Blue lotus is to induce lucid dreaming, a state where the person dreaming is conscious that they are dreaming thereby maintaining a level of control over the dream. Dreams in this state are also more vivid. The hypothesis around this is that Blue lotus' unique combination of drowsy and euphoric effects promotes these dream states.

Small doses are generally considered safe for someone using Blue lotus, with potential side effects being nausea, dry mouth, constipation, and dizziness. Large doses have been known to increase heart rate and cause flush, or redness over the face and body.

Consumption:

Blue lotus can be taken in a variety of forms with little impact on bioavailability. Many people sip it as a tea, adding 1 to 2 teaspoons of dried flowers to hot water with honey and lemon and letting it steep for 5-10 minutes before ingesting. Tip: Place a lid over the tea while steeping to recapture any active components from the steam.

Many people also smoke Blue lotus, either by itself or mixed with other herbs. It's a common addition to cannabis. Smoking produces stronger and faster effects but also drastically increases the risk of side effects.

Blue lotus is also commonly ceremonially burned as an incense. Other popular ingestion methods include tinctures and extracts.

Whichever method is chosen, it's important to follow the dosing instructions provided on the product label or by your healthcare provider.

Betel Nut

In all the years of my childhood spent growing up in India and watching people roll up and chew paan, I had no idea it was psychoactive. TBH I didn't even know the term 'psychoactive' existed. Paan is prepared by combining sliced betel nut, lime, and betel leaves as a base and then adding an assortment of other flavoring ingredients like menthol, dates, coconut, saffron, cardamom. It's not swallowed, but spat out after quidding (chewing and holding the mixture against the inside of the cheek). TBH it's always grossed me out because many people have no qualms about letting loose that red spit all over the street, though many places have laws against this now.

But, obviously, most people DGAF about that because Betel nut is the 3rd most popular and used psychoactive plant in the world after caffeine and tobacco, and 4th most popular drug if alcohol is added to that list.

History & Spiritual Use:

The earliest evidence of Betel nut use dates back to around 2,500 BC in the Philippines, where the areca palms originated, and then spread out during the Neolithic expansion of the Austronesian peoples across what is now Micronesia, South East Asia, India, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Persia and the Mediterranean. Betel nut chewing is a popular and important cultural activity across many Asian and Oceanic countries.

Science:

Betel nut stimulates the nervous system and contains alkaloids, tannins, flavinoids, tritepenoids, steroids, and fatty acids. Studies on Betel nut have shown some potential pharmacological benefit in uses for malaria, arthritis, and edema. Potential benefits for anti-aging, hypotensive activity, and memory have been shown as well.



Betel Nut

Use:

In parts of India, the Betel nut appears as a fertility symbol in religious and marriage ceremonies. It is also often offered as a mark of respect and auspicious beginnings and frequently provided to guests at the end of a feast to freshen the breath. In Ayurvedic medicine, chewing betel leaves is a remedy against halitosis (bad breath).

The offering of Betel nut to guests isn't unique to India. Bangladesh, Indonesia, China, Micronesia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Pakistan, and the Philippines all have aspects of the Betel nut used at weddings, feasts, and other social gatherings. Oral tradition in Malay culture includes the phrases "The betel opens the door to the home" and "The betel opens the door to the heart". The Chinese name for Betel nut, bin lang, translates to "honored guest" with an alternate name being bin men yao jian or "guest at the door medicinal sweetmeat".

Casual usage is also prevalent, with Betel nut vendors and paan-wallas selling both raw and prepared versions of the dried seed. However, modern day usage has shown a decline with governments imposing restrictions on where the nut can be used and a current inclination to associate Betel nut use with marginalized and people with lower socioeconomic status.

Consumption:

The nut is frequently chewed as a quid as, or in a similar manner to, paan. But many also take it in both raw and prepared forms.

✦ Look, unless it's cultural and traditional for you, this is probably one to stay away from using on a regular basis.

Syrian Rue

Syrian Rue (also known as *Peganum Harmala*, wild rue, African rue, or harmel) is an herb with woody roots that grows in Mediterranean or temperate desert climates. It's considered an invasive species in the western US and a noxious weed in several other countries because livestock enjoy eating it, but invariably eat too much causing them to get sick or die. So why's it on this list? Well, we're not livestock last I checked (I'm trying not to make a joke about your mom right now).

History & Spiritual Use:

Rue is used in Persian cultural traditions and was theorized to be the Avestan haoma noted in Zoroastrian scriptures (the more likely theory is that haoma is ephedra, instead).

Ancient Greeks used rue to get rid of tapeworms and treat recurring fevers. Rue was sold in European apothecaries in the middle ages to treat a variety of ailments, though mainly the stems and leaves were used. Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo claimed that rue enhanced their eyesight and inspired creative inner visions.

The seeds, roots, and stems also stain red and are used to dye carpets and wool in western Asia. Ink, tattoos, and stains have also been made from Rue seeds. For a time the traditional Ottoman fez hat was dyed red with Rue seeds.

Science:

Rue seeds contain beta-carboline alkaloids, prominently the harmala alkaloids, of which synthetic versions have been shown to have neuroprotective, cognitive enhancing, and anti-cancer properties. Studies on harmala alkaloids in the 1920s and 30s showed remarkable improvement in Parkinson's symptoms, but the advent of synthetic anticholinergic (blocking actions of certain neurotransmitters) drugs led to the abandonment of further study. The pharmacological effects and benefits of harmaline are primarily attributed to its MAO properties which lead to dopamine release.

Syrian Rue

Use:

Iranians string up dried capsules from this plant to protect against the evil eye. A similar use occurs in Morocco to protect against Djinn. Kashmiri Hindu weddings and Persian weddings burn the seeds (called isband in Kashmir) to create an auspicious atmosphere.

Rue is used both on its own and as a potentiator for other psychedelic substances. On its own rue presents a feeling of embracing the present and observing each moment as it passes, making it a popular substance to enhance meditation. As rue is a potent MAOI, it's also frequently used for antidepressant and analgesic purposes. However, unlike MAOI drugs the MAOI in rue is reversible, decreasing the risk of serotonin syndrome.

The two substances that rue are commonly mixed with are psilocybin mushrooms and DMT. The effect of mixing rue with psilocybin is primarily needing less psilocybin to produce the same effect, with practitioners noting a sweet spot of 2:1 mushroom to rue. As mushrooms contain MAOI as well, rue essentially increases the balance of MAOI to other compounds prevalent within mushrooms. This can lead to a degree of depersonalization in a full dosed trip, an effect which usually isn't desirable as it's more likely to lead to a 'bad' trip. Combining DMT with rue creates a very potent effect, with practitioners noting a similar effect to Ayahuasca. DMT alone creates a 10-20 psychedelic experience. Combined with rue, this can range from 1 up to 6 or so hours depending on the ingestion method.

★ Consumption:

Rue is typically taken as a tea or ground into capsules. People also cook with rue as an ingredient. The seeds are primarily what are used for psychoactive purposes. As it's an MAOI, it's dangerous to take rue alongside other antidepressants, particularly SSRIs and other MAOI class drugs.

Salvia Divinorum

Salvia Divinorum is perhaps one of the best known substances on this list as its use was popularized by dumb kids smoking it and filming the resultant intense 10 minute trip on YouTube, resulting in a media panic in 2007. Despite idiot kids, it's actually a substance that has a deep traditional history of use for journey work and microdosing.

History & Spiritual Use:

Salvia has a long history of use in indigenous Mazatec people's culture for religious ceremonies and medicinal applications. These days their medicine workers see the plant as an incarnation of the Virgin Mary. Many 'modern' non-indigenous users report the appearance of a 'mother' when ingesting salvia.

Science:

Salvia is distinct in that it doesn't operate in the same pathways as most traditional entheogens. The natural occurring chemicals in the plant are Salvinorum A and Salvinorum B (good job with naming there, scientists) and these are structurally different from the chemicals in THC, psilocybin, DMT, LSD as they contain no nitrogen atoms. As a result, salvia affects the kappa-opioid receptors in the brain without affecting the serotonin receptors (which most entheogens target). Salvia targets the opioid receptors in a different way than opioids like heroin, as Salvinorum A is the only known kappa-opioid agonist. Kappa-opioid receptors are the most abundant of the opioid receptors and are involved in pathways that affect addiction, depression, and pain.



Salvia Divinorum

Use:

At low doses, salvia increases body awareness, euphoria, presence of mind, and introspection. At higher doses salvia induces out of body experiences like traveling to other places, planets, or time periods. Time distortions and vivid imagery are frequently part of higher doses as well. At highest - or heroic - doses, ego dissolution takes place along with synesthesia and dissociation.

Salvia has a sense of chaos to it, with many people reporting communication with extraterrestrials and/or the 'mother' of the earth through it.

Many people report that salvia isn't enjoyable, as its effects are dramatic and it can feel like your body is stretching, splitting, and under intense pressure - a feeling termed 'salvia gravity'.

My take is that salvia is fantastic if consumed in traditional ways, which leads us to...

Consumption:

The popularized way of ingesting salvia is by smoking dried salvia leaves in the same manner you would marijuana. This usually results in a short, intense, and generally unpleasant experience.

Other popular ways of ingestion include making a tea out of the dried leaves or creating concentrated tinctures. As salvia is not absorbed in the stomach, any oral ingestion needs to be held for 20 seconds or so before swallowing.

Which leads us to the traditional, and best way of partaking in salvia: quidding.

With quidding, you take a bunch of fresh leaves, chew them, and leave them sitting against your cheek without swallowing the saliva (that's spelled correctly, as in spit). This is done for around 20 minutes. This is the traditional method and induces a gentler, more meaningful experience with the 'mother' - or just a heightened feeling if micro/low dosed. Do it this way.

San Pedro

Chances are there's a gardening center near you that sells San Pedro or, depending where you live, you might see it just hanging out in someone's yard or living room. It's a perfectly legal ornamental cactus that only falls under the 'controlled substance' classification once prepared for consumption.

History & Spiritual Use:

San Pedro (*Trichocereus pachanoi*) and its cousins, Peruvian Torch and Bolivian Torch (*Trichocereus peruvianis*, *Trichocereus bridgesii*) is a tall - or columnar - cactus that originated on the Western slopes of the Andes mountains in Ecuador and Peru. There's evidence that San Pedro was cultivated as early as 200 to 600 BC for its psychoactive effects. Documented first evidential use comes from the Chavin culture in Northern Peru, where the cactus was used in rituals held beneath ancient pyramids based on stone carvings of medicinal practitioners holding the cacti while transforming into jaguars.

San Pedro is a hardy cactus, easy to propagate, and grows about a foot a year adorned with fragrant flowers, which is why it's become a popular garden plant in North America, Europe, and Australia.

Much of the ancient rituals using San Pedro have been lost to time, though there are still huachumeros that employ adapted rituals. Due to its ubiquitous availability, there's much less demand for San Pedro tourism as there is surrounding Ayahuasca, making it an accessible and in my opinion, ethical, option for use. San Pedro is also a much more ethical alternative to Peyote, which is used in religious ceremonies and is increasingly scarce as it grows slowly.

✦ Both plants contain the same primary active chemical.



San Pedro

Science:

Though San Pedro contains many alkaloids, some of which have been found to be mildly psychoactive, the primary contributor to the altered state brought on by ingestion is mescaline, a phenethylamine, in the same class as MDMA. This differs from psychedelics in the tryptamine class, in that that it stimulates the dopamine and adrenaline receptors as well as the serotonin receptors, whereas tryptamines primarily work on the serotonin receptors.

The other alkaloids contained in San Pedro give it different qualities than Peyote or synthesized mescaline.

Use:

San Pedro takes about 2-3 hours after ingestion for effects to be felt. Once it does, the trip lasts 10-14 hours, building up in waves throughout. Users report an energizing and lucid trip, combined with deep introspection and bouts of confusion. Visuals do occur, but unlike ayahuasca or salvia which seemingly transport you to another world, the user remains firmly present in their body. San Pedro has a reputation for being a 'heart' medicine, meaning that instead of hallucinations users are attracted to it due to the gentle, supportive effect it has. It's less intellectual and more of a gateway to what lies beyond the mind.

Consumption:

San Pedro has to be boiled and broken down in order to ingest enough mescaline to experience its effects. It's generally consumed as tea. While not as nausea inducing as ayahuasca, it's still not pleasant and purging can occur.

Amanita Muscaria

Perhaps the most fabled and recognized of all entheogens, Amanita Muscaria is the red and white speckled mushroom seen in pop art, literature, and Mario games. Despite its recognition, this is a contentious mushroom, and there's a ton of discourse on the history and usage of this mushroom, particularly as an alternative to psilocybin mushrooms aka the traditional magic mushrooms.

History & Spiritual Use:

The earliest official reports of amanita use is in 17th century Siberia, where prisoners of war started writing about the local use of the mushroom. There are pictographs in Siberia dating thousands of years back which feature amanita, suggesting its use is ancient. There have been recent genetic studies suggesting that the origin of the species - now found worldwide - is in Siberia.

A number of different indigenous groups in Siberia have traditional uses for this mushroom both shamanically and recreationally. As a side note, while I normally shy away from using the colonially spread term 'shaman', the origin of the word comes from Siberian indigenous peoples who called their medicine workers 'shamans', so it applies.

In what is commonplace operations for colonizing forces, many of these indigenous practices were violently targeted to be wiped out by the Soviets/Russians, causing more modern practitioners of amanita based medicine to be understandably reluctant with sharing specific information. Both a fear of persecution and the example of what happened in Mexico with Maria Sabina opening their practices to R. Gordon Wasson, resulting in the west appropriating their cultural practices and resulting in Mexican authorities labeling her a drug dealer, have kept many traditional practices for amanita underground.

One traditional practice that has been noted is the use of amanita as a microdose to enhance energy and stamina for both physical and mundane tasks.

There are many theories about the potential role of amanita in European history, based on folklore and mythologies, including a theory of the creation of Santa Claus being entirely based on amanita.

Amanita Muscaria

Science:

The psychoactive ingredients in Amanita muscaria are ibotenic acid and muscimol. These aren't tryptamines, they work on the GABA and glutamine systems of the brain instead of the serotonergic systems of the brain.

Drying these mushrooms converts the ibotenic acid to muscimol, the stronger of the psychoactive chemicals, making it more potent and also reducing the potential for nausea.

Amanita also contains small amounts of muscarine, which is a poison. There's not enough of it in regular doses of amanita to be lethal, but some people do experience a period of excessive salivation or sweating after consumption. There have been reported fatalities from amanita consumption and each of these has been due to excessive consumption. As a related note: there are very few substances out there that aren't fatal at excessive doses.

Part of the confusion surrounding amanita is that the potency varies from mushroom to mushroom. You can pick two mushrooms growing together and one of them can be 5 times more potent than the other. This is very different to psilocybin mushrooms in which the mushrooms maintain a more steady range. This discrepancy with amanita is one aspect that has led to its reputation as a lethal mushroom, as it cannot be approached with the same dosing methods as psilocybin based mushrooms. Another aspect that has contributed to its lethal reputation is that amanita muscaria is very easily confused with poisonous amanita species, such as Amanita citrina also known as the False Deathcap mushroom, which are fatal if consumed.

There are other different types of psychoactive amanita mushrooms, all with various cap colors, but the muscaria variety is the most recognized and studied.

Amanita is quite an abundant mushroom and fairly easy to find.

However, even expert foragers can get confused by amanita species, so if you are not 100% sure that what you are about to ingest is muscaria and not a deathcap, do not consume it.

Amanita Muscaria

Use:

Amanita is not a 'visual' mushroom, meaning that one won't experience the geometric or life-affirming/spiritual visuals that they may experience with psilocybin mushrooms. There is a general feeling on amanita that things may look the same, but they aren't the same. Amanita also changes size perception, making things seem larger or smaller than they appear. There is valid speculation that this was the basis for the mushroom's size-altering use in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, which in turn was influenced by a book he read (Lewis Carroll kept copious notes on his reading, the OG Good Reads) called *7 Sisters of Sleep* detailing the use of amanita in traditional shamanic settings.

Amanita seems to show the most benefit in very small - micro - dosing uses. It has a positive effect on anxiety, insomnia, and substance dependence with people having reported using amanita to wean off of benzos. At high doses it has been known to provoke disassociation and/or delirium. Stick to low doses or only take a high dose with a trip-sitter or guide to stay safe.

Some people stack a little bit of amanita with macro doses of classic psychedelics to quell the anxiety frequently felt on the 'come-up'.

People who suffer from brain fog due to lyme disease or related causes have found microdoses of amanita help them regain clarity.

Urine recycling - drinking the urine of an amanita user (preferably your own) - has been observed and documented in Siberia as a way to prolong the effects as the active compounds are released in the urine. Non-indigenous partaker's generally ingest amanita another way and, I suspect, the younger indigenous population doesn't do this much any more.

Amanita Muscaria

Consumption:

Due to the high variance in potency across individual mushrooms, if you take 1-2 mushrooms and feel that this is the right dose, the next time around you might get an unexpected experience as the concentration of psychoactive ingredients may be much higher or lower.

This leads to the most popular consumption method of amanita consisting of grinding up a large batch of mushrooms which evens out the concentration across the resulting coarse ground powder. This creates a more homogenous mixture that should be closer to the same experience each time.

This powder can be consumed straight, in capsules, chocolates, gummies or as a tea. If buying prepackaged gummies or chocolates, double check your sources as less scrupulous purveyors have been known to put delta-8, THC, or psilocybin in gummies promoted as pure amanita.

For microdosing the range is generally agreed to be 0.25-1.5gm of batch ground amanita.



Kanna

Kanna (*Sceletium tortuosum*) is a succulent native to southern Africa. It's currently little-known outside of certain circles but is increasing in popularity as it's starting to be cultivated in and outside of its native region.

History & Spiritual Use:

Kanna has a vast history of use amongst the indigenous Khoikhoi and San peoples of southern Africa. To the San peoples, Kanna shares a name with the Eland antelope, a spiritual figure symbolizing love, fertility, and abundance. Official records by Dutch colonizers document the use of Kanna by the San peoples in the 1600s, though it's very likely that the indigenous peoples have known about the plants properties for much longer than that.

Traditionally, the stems, leaves, and roots of kanna are fermented before ingestion. Hunters commonly microdose kanna to boost stamina, mood, focus, and ease hunger and thirst. Mothers add kanna to breastmilk to soothe babies. Kanna is a natural pain reliever with few side effects. In larger doses, Kanna is used in rituals to support practices of divination and spirit communion.

Science:

Kanna is an adaptogenic rich in alkaloids, polyphenols, and terpenes with the main active psychoactive alkaloid thought to be mesembrine. It possess light SSRI effects, and acts as a PDE4 enzyme inhibitor which has been implicated in depression treatment. Animal models have shown improvements in stress-induced anxiety and depression, with one study finding physical and mental performance benefits.

An extract of Kanna is available as Zembrin, a patented nutraceutical that clinical trials have shown promise in treating mood, sleep, cognition, anti-anxiety, and executive function.



Kanna

Use:

Kanna has been shown to be a gentle medicine, positively affecting synapses' ability to efficiently send and receive signals. Macro-doses have been compared to MDMA as both are empathogens which increase feelings of empathy, openness, sociability, and connection. However, kanna lacks the massive dopamine hit and feeling of 'speed' that MDMA possess, which people report feels easier on the body.

People use kanna to ease stress and anxiety, and for its nootropic, empathogenic, adaptogenic, and aphrodisiac qualities.

Consumption:

Kanna is generally taken via tincture or capsule, though indigenous users sometimes keep a braid of fermented kanna to chew on as needed.

Tincture lends the most bioavailability of kanna, as it bypasses the liver. Capsules take longer to feel the effects of, around 30-60 minutes, but also last longer at 2-4 hours compared to a tincture's 1-2 hours.

Microdosing protocols are recommended at 5 days on, 2 days off for 4 weeks in order to experience a shift.

Kanna is quite safe, with the primary danger being interactions with SSRIs or MAOIs as it does affect serotonin levels. Users sometimes report mild nausea or headaches.

THAT'S ALL SEVEN, FOLKS!

Did any of these substances call to you? If you try any of these out, I'd love to hear about your experience! Feel free to contact me at hello@pheroze.com or DM/tag me on Instagram [@pherozekarai](https://www.instagram.com/pherozekarai).

If you're interested in learning the skill of microdosing and how it can unlock transformation in your life, group coaching courses happen several times a year. Click [here to learn more](#).

If you're feeling called or inspired to take a guided journey, get in touch.

Take care of yourself, your spirit, and others!
-Pheroze

"Life-changing. I gained a new perspective I didn't have before."

-Microdosing Group Coaching Graduate

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