

Legal highs

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There are a number of legal highs for sale in head shops and on internet sites. Popular choices are listed below. The list includes highs not necessarily sold in head shops, but that have become known for their hallucinogenic properties or other effects, and are considered 'natural' highs. Costs, where given, are approximate and vary amongst suppliers.

SALVIA DIVINORUM

The leaves of this plant are dried and smoked. Effects range from mild to strong, and are very dependent on dose and individuality. It has hallucinogenic effects, and the 'trip' lasts few minutes. During the peak, disorientation and dissociation from reality may occur.
Cost: ranges from £8-25 depending on strength

KRATOM

A resin obtained from the leaves of this plant, native from Thailand, is used for a tea preparation. The dominant effects seem to be similar to opiate drugs, and are described as both stimulation and sedation. There is a little potential for harm. Effects can last up to 6 hours.
Cost: £10-15

EPHEDRA

Another name is Ma-Huang. Generally sold in capsules. This plant is a source of ephedrine, an alkaloid with stimulant effects similar to amphetamine. It is banned in USA and will probably soon be banned in the UK. Effects last 2-3 hours, depending on the dose. *Sida Cordifolia* is another plant source of ephedrine.
Cost: £6 per 3 capsules

PEYOTE

A Mexican cactus which is cut and dried, or from which mescaline crystals are produced. Mature plants can be bought from head shops but are expensive, and mescaline itself is a class A drug in the UK. Its effects are hallucinogenic.
Cost: 14 year old plant £75

GUARANA SEEDS

From the Brazilian plant *paullinia cupana*. The powdered seeds have stimulant and caffeine-like effects. Often mixed with other stimulants in 'herbal ecstasy' products.

MAGIC MUSHROOMS

The active hallucinogen is psilocybin. Mushrooms can be obtained in the wild though are sold in abundance in head shops, along with growing kits. Trips can be strong and intense (even frightening), depending on dose, but main risks arise from picking and ingesting poisonous varieties.

When prepared, mushrooms adopt illegal status.
Cost: from £10 per 30g

IPOMOEA (MORNING GLORY SEEDS, ARGYREIA NERVOSA)

The seeds of several varieties of Morning Glory (*Ipomoea violacea*) contain a naturally occurring tryptamine called Lysergic Acid Amide (LSA), which is closely related to LSD. Seeds are taken orally, and can be eaten whole or the active alkaloids can be extracted. Psychedelic effects last 6-10 hours

ANGEL'S TRUMPET (DATURA STRAMONIUM)

Available in gardens and parks, this plant has other names such as Thorn Apple. It contains atropine, though it is the ingredient scopolamine which produces the hallucinogenic effects. The user may feel drowsy, 'drugged up' and detached from reality. The doses are difficult to judge and can cause unconsciousness and death.

BABY HAWAIIAN WOOD ROSE SEEDS

As a legal high product, seeds are also available as an extract or mixed with other similar products to create a 'legal psychedelic'. Seeds contain LSA (related to LSD), which increases euphoria, and is a hallucinogenic stimulant. Effects last 4-8 hours.
Cost: £5 per 7 seeds

GRIFFONIA

Extracts of this herb are sold as come down pills, generally mixed with antioxidant and vitamins. Griffonia helps metabolise the amino acid tryptophan, which is a direct precursor to serotonin, the mood enhancing neurotransmitter that is depleted after ecstasy use.

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The list has been compiled with the help of:

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The Psychopharmacology of Herbal Medicine Plant Drugs

That Alter Mind, Brain, and Behaviour, by Marcello Spinella.

The Vaults of Erowid (www.erowid.org)

factsheet

