

CANDOMBLÉ & UMBANDA TERREIRO VISITATION GUIDE

Brazil — African Sacred Traditions in the New World

*The Orixás who survived the Middle Passage — still singing in Yoruba
in the terreiros of Bahia. The Preto Velho who listened to everything
and judged nothing. The axé that builds in the space
when the atabaques begin. Two traditions, one Brazilian sacred story —
and the Haligrlicity practitioner's closest structural cousin on earth.*

CONTENTS

- Introduction — Two Traditions, One Guide
- Part One — The Terreiro: Community, Space, and Sacred Infrastructure
- Part Two — Candomblé vs Umbanda: The Key Differences
- Part Three — The Mãe de Santo / Pai de Santo: The Spiritual Head
- Part Four — How to Find and Access a Terreiro
- Part Five — The Candomblé Xirê: The Ceremony Explained
- Part Six — The Orixás in the Xirê: Who Arrives and How to Recognize Them
- Part Seven — The Atabaques: Brazil's Sacred Drums
- Part Eight — The Axé: Sacred Power and How It Builds
- Part Nine — Possession in Candomblé: The Orixá Descends
- Part Ten — The Umbanda Gira: A Different Structure
- Part Eleven — The Spirit Guides of Umbanda: Preto Velho, Caboclo, Exu
- Part Twelve — Receiving a Consultation from a Spirit Guide
- Part Thirteen — The Feast After Ceremony
- Part Fourteen — Before You Go: Preparation
- Part Fifteen — What to Wear to a Candomblé Ceremony
- Part Sixteen — What to Wear to an Umbanda Gira
- Part Seventeen — What to Bring and Offer
- Part Eighteen — How to Behave as a Guest
- Part Nineteen — What Not to Do
- Part Twenty — The Haligrlicity Lens: Why These Traditions Matter Most

Introduction

This guide covers two related but distinct Brazilian African diaspora traditions — Candomblé and Umbanda — that share roots, share community infrastructure (the terreiro), and are often practiced by overlapping communities, but that differ significantly in their theology, their ceremony structure, and the kind of visitor experience they offer.

Candomblé is preservation: the African Orixá religion maintained with extraordinary fidelity through three centuries of Brazilian slavery and suppression, still sung in Yoruba in the terreiros of Bahia, still governed by the same divine hierarchy, still animated by the same axé. Attending a Candomblé xirê (ceremony) is attending the closest thing to the original Yoruba Orisha ceremony that exists outside Africa — a living transmission of one of the most complete sacred traditions in the world.

Umbanda is synthesis: a deliberately created 20th-century blend of Candomblé, Kardecist Spiritism, popular Catholicism, and indigenous Brazilian practice — organized around the spirit guides (Preto Velho, Caboclo, Exu, Pomba-Gira) who serve as accessible, direct consultants to community members in need. Attending an Umbanda gira is attending a ceremony specifically designed around practical service to all who come — possibly the most immediately accessible African diaspora ceremony for the outside visitor.

For Haligrlicity, these are the most structurally resonant traditions in this entire guide series. Umbanda may be the closest existing model to what Haligrlicity is doing — a deliberate, spiritually serious synthesis of multiple traditions into a living practice of service. This guide gives you full access to both.

The Terreiro

Community, Space, and Sacred Infrastructure

The terreiro (from the Portuguese — literally 'yard' or 'grounds') is the sacred community of both Candomblé and Umbanda — the physical space and the human community organized around a senior priest or priestess whose spiritual authority holds the whole together.

THE TERREIRO PHYSICAL SPACE

THE BARRACÃO (Main Hall): The central ceremony space — a large, open room where the xirê or gira takes place. The barracão has the atabaques (drums) at one end, seating for visitors along the walls, and the central open floor where the ceremony occurs. **THE PEJI (Inner Sanctuary):** The sacred room where the Orixás' assentamentos (sacred objects) are housed. This is not accessible to visitors — it is the most sacred space of the terreiro, equivalent to the garbhagriha of a Hindu temple or the honden of a Shinto shrine. **THE RONCÓ (Initiation Chamber):** The room where initiations are conducted — sealed during initiations, otherwise usually closed to visitors. **THE INDIVIDUAL HOUSES:** Most substantial terreiros have specific outdoor shrines or small houses for individual Orixás — particularly Exu (always at the entrance, guarding the threshold), Ogun (near iron objects), and Oxum (near water features). **EXU'S HOUSE:** The small shrine of Exu at the terreiro's entrance or threshold is particularly important. Exu is always honored first and given his specific space at the threshold — he guards the terreiro from unwanted energies and opens the way for the Orixás to arrive. You may see his image (a dark figure, often holding a trident) at the entrance — acknowledge it respectfully as you enter.

Candomblé vs Umbanda

The Key Differences

CANDOMBLÉ AND UMBANDA — HOW TO TELL THEM APART

CANDOMBLÉ: • African-origin, preservation-focused • Sacred songs in Yoruba (Nagô/Ketu nation) or other African languages • The Orixás descend — the ceremony culminates in Orixá possession • Three atabaques (drums) are the primary instrument • The Mãe/Pai de Santo is the absolute spiritual authority • Formal hierarchy among initiates (iyawo, ebome, etc.) • Ceremonies less accessible to non-initiates • The axé builds intensely throughout the ceremony

UMBANDA: • Brazilian synthesis, born 1908 • Songs and prayers in Portuguese • Spirit guides descend — Preto Velho, Caboclo, Exu, Pomba-Gira • Atabaques plus other instruments • The Mãe/Pai de Santo guides the gira; mediums receive the guides • More accessible structure — visitors may receive consultations • Ceremonies explicitly designed around service to all who come • More accessible to outside visitors as a first experience

IN PRACTICE: Many terreiros practice both traditions — Candomblé for specific Orixá ceremonies and Umbanda for the regular community service giras. If you are new to both, the Umbanda gira is typically the more accessible entry point.

Part Three

The Mãe de Santo / Pai de Santo **The Spiritual Head**

The Mãe de Santo (Mother of the Saint) or Pai de Santo (Father of the Saint) is the spiritual head of the terreiro — the senior initiated priest or priestess whose authority is absolute within the community and whose relationship with the Orixás determines the spiritual health of the entire terreiro.

The Candomblé Mãe de Santo

The Candomblé tradition is notably matriarchal — the three most historically important terreiros of Bahia (Ilê Axé Iyá Nassô Oká/Casa Branca, Ilê Axé Opô Afonjá, and Gantois) have been led by women for most of their history, and the Mãe de Santo's authority in these communities is comparable to that of a high priest in any tradition. She is the keeper of the tradition's most sacred knowledge, the primary initiator of new members, and the spiritual parent of every filho/filha de santo in her community.

Approaching the Mãe/Pai de Santo

When visiting a terreiro, your relationship is with the Mãe or Pai de Santo first. All permissions, all guidance, and all access flow through them. Approach them with: a humble and respectful demeanor (they may be younger than you in years but are spiritually senior to any visitor); an honest explanation of who you are and why you want to attend; and a willingness to receive their guidance on everything — what to wear, where to stand, what is accessible to you during the ceremony. Their word is law in the terreiro.

How to Find and Access a Terreiro

ACCESSING CANDOMBLÉ AND UMBANDA

IN BRAZIL — BAHIA: Salvador da Bahia is the spiritual capital of Candomblé — the city where the three founding terreiros still operate and where the tradition is most concentrated. Access routes: • The Associação Brasileira de Preservação da Cultura Afro-Ameríndia can sometimes facilitate connections • Established cultural tourism organizations in Salvador offer legitimate introductory experiences • The Museu Afro-Brasileiro in Salvador provides educational context and sometimes community connections • Many Bahian guesthouses can connect sincere visitors with community members

IN BRAZIL — SÃO PAULO AND RIO: Umbanda terreiros in São Paulo and Rio are significantly more numerous and more accessible than Candomblé terreiros — there are estimated 10,000+ Umbanda terreiros in São Paulo alone. Many Umbanda giras are explicitly open to all visitors.

IN THE DIASPORA: • New York (Brooklyn): Active Candomblé and Umbanda communities, particularly in the Brazilian diaspora • Miami: Significant Brazilian community with terreiro connections • Portugal (Lisbon): Active Brazilian diaspora Candomblé and Umbanda communities

THE RIGHT APPROACH: Contact the terreiro in advance — never arrive unannounced. Express your sincere interest and ask what access is appropriate. For Umbanda, many terreiros will simply invite you to their next public gira. For Candomblé, access is more selective — you may need to attend several times as a respectful observer before being welcomed into the xirê.

The Candomblé Xirê

The Ceremony Explained

The xirê (from the Yoruba 'shêre' — play, celebration) is the primary public ceremony of Candomblé — the gathering of the terreiro community for drumming, sacred song in Yoruba, and the invocation of the Orixás who descend into their initiated devotees. A full xirê is one of the most complete and most moving sacred experiences available anywhere in the world.

THE XIRÊ — COMPLETE STRUCTURE

THE PADÊ (Opening Offering to Exu): Before the community enters the barracão, the padê is performed — the specific ceremony that honors Exu and sends him to the threshold, away from the main ceremony space. Without the padê, the other Orixás cannot arrive safely. This happens before visitors enter. **ENTERING THE BARRACÃO**: The community enters the barracão. The atabaques begin. The filhos and filhas de santo form the roda (circle) and begin moving in the specific sequence of songs and dances that will call each Orixá in turn. **THE SEQUENCE OF ORIXÁS**: The xirê proceeds through the canonical sequence of Orixá songs — typically beginning with Oxalá (the eldest, given first honor) and proceeding through the full pantheon. Each Orixá has a specific sequence of three songs (in most Ketu nation terreiros) — the first calls, the second intensifies, the third is the peak at which descent may occur. **THE SONGS — IN YORUBA**: The songs of the xirê are sung in Yoruba — the language of the Yoruba ancestors who brought the tradition to Brazil. Hearing Yoruba sung in a Bahian terreiro is one of the most extraordinary experiences of cultural persistence in the world. Some filhos de santo speak no Yoruba in daily life but know hundreds of sacred songs in the language. **THE DESCENTS**: As the appropriate songs are sung, specific initiated devotees may receive their Orixá — beginning the transition from ordinary consciousness to Orixá manifestation. The equedes (female initiates who do not receive Orixás but serve them) assist, helping the descending devotee to change into the Orixá's specific costume from the peji. **THE ORIXÁS IN MANIFESTATION**: The manifested Orixás dance in the barracão — each with their specific movements, specific colors, specific character. The community continues singing. The atabaques play the specific rhythm of each manifested Orixá. **THE FEAST AND CLOSE**: The Orixás eventually depart. The devotees return to ordinary consciousness. The community shares food prepared with and for the specific Orixás honored.

The Orixás in the Xirê

Who Arrives and How to Recognize Them

RECOGNIZING THE ORIXÁS IN MANIFESTATION

EXU (if Exu ceremonies are included): Dark colors, may carry a trident or staff, intense energy, speaks directly. Note: in Candomblé the Exu who arrives is different from the Umbanda Exu — the Candomblé Exu is the Yoruba Orixá of communication and the crossroads, not the popular culture image. OXALÁ: White from head to toe — costume, crown, and specific sacred implements all white. Moves very slowly, as befits the eldest and most venerated Orixá. Carries a long staff (opaxorô). The ceremony slows when Oxalá arrives — his energy is the deepest peace. YEMANJÁ: Blue and white. Moves with the flowing quality of the ocean — swaying, turning, expansive arm movements that evoke waves. She may carry a silver mirror or fan. Her presence fills the room with a quality of depth and maternal protection. OXUM: Gold and yellow. Sensuous, vain, aware of her own beauty. She carries a mirror and looks into it; she moves her hips and arms with the flowing quality of a river. May carry a brass fan. Her energy is sweet, warm, and abundantly loving. XANGÔ: Red and white. The most dramatic of the Orixás in manifestation — imperial, powerful, filling the room with the presence of thunder. He carries the double axe (oxê) and stamps his feet with authority. His dance is magnificent — the full expression of royal, divine power. OGUM: Dark green or blue. Direct, purposeful, no excess movement. He carries a machete (facão) or sword and moves with the economy of a warrior. His energy cuts through — in the ceremony and in the situations of those who petition him. IANSÃ/OYÁ: Copper and burgundy. Wild and beautiful — the wind made visible. Her dance involves rapid turns, her costume spinning around her. She carries a fly whisk (eruexim) made of horse hair. Her energy is transformation — immediate and complete.

The Atabaques

Brazil's Sacred Drums

The atabaques are the sacred drums of Candomblé — three single-headed barrel drums of different sizes (rum/grande, rumpi/médio, and lê/pequeno) that together create the rhythmic foundation of the xirê. They are direct descendants of the African sacred drums brought across the Atlantic by the Yoruba, Fon, and Bantu peoples, and they remain among the most important sacred instruments in the African diaspora world.

The Sacred Nature of the Atabaques

The atabaques of an established terreiro are sacred objects — not merely instruments. In many Candomblé traditions, the drums have been initiated: they have undergone specific ceremonies (rum de adjá — the drum's ceremony) that consecrate them and invite the presence of Ayan (the Orixá of the drums) into them. An initiated drum carries axé — sacred power — that uninitiated drums do not. The rumpinikê (the lead drummer) who plays the rum (the largest, most sacred drum) must themselves have reached a specific level of initiation to touch and play the consecrated instrument.

THE RHYTHMS — TOQUES — FOR EACH ORIXÁ

Each Orixá has their specific toque — the rhythmic pattern that corresponds to their energy and that is played when they are being called or are present. The toques differ significantly between nations (Ketu/Nagô, Angola, Jeje) — the same Orixá may have different toques in different terreiro traditions. OXALÁ'S TOQUE: Slow, stately, the most measured of all rhythms — befitting the eldest and most revered Orixá. YEMANJÁ'S TOQUE: Flowing, oceanic, with a specific wave-like quality in its rhythmic movement. XANGÔ'S TOQUE: Driving and powerful — the rhythm of thunder. One of the most dramatic toques, with sudden intensifications that match Xangô's lightning-bolt energy. OXUM'S TOQUE: Sweet and flowing — the rhythm of the river, gentle and continuous. OGUM'S TOQUE: Direct and steady — the rhythm of iron and labor. IANSÃ'S TOQUE: Fast and whirling — matching her wind character. EXU'S TOQUE: Complex, syncopated, with sudden shifts — the rhythm of the crossroads and all possibility.

Part Eight

The Axé

Sacred Power and How It Builds

Axé (pronounced Ah-SHAY — the same word as the Yoruba Ashe and the Haligric Ashe) is the divine creative power that accumulates in the terreiro space during ceremony — the concentrated sacred force that builds as the songs are sung, the drums play, the community dances, and the Orixás are called. Understanding axé transforms the experience of a Candomblé ceremony from a cultural event into a genuine sacred encounter.

How Axé Builds

Axé is not constant — it builds throughout the ceremony and reaches its peak at the moment of Orixá descent. At the beginning of a xirê, the barracão has the axé of the terreiro's accumulated history — the years of ceremony, the ongoing care of the assentamentos, the maintained relationships between the community and the Orixás. As the ceremony progresses — as the songs are sung correctly, as the drums play the right toques, as the community's collective devotion intensifies — the axé builds. The physical space begins to feel different. The air becomes charged. The quality of presence in the room changes.

Feeling Axé as a Visitor

Visitors to a well-conducted Candomblé xirê frequently report a palpable energetic experience — a sense of the space becoming denser, more present, more alive as the ceremony progresses. This is not imagination or suggestion. It is the direct perception of axé — the accumulated sacred force of a ceremony working correctly. The Haligric practitioner who has cultivated sensitivity to subtle energies (the Feeling dimension of the Tetralty) will typically be more sensitive to this than those who have not. Allow yourself to feel it. It is real.

CONNECTION TO HALIGRICITY

The axé of the Candomblé terreiro — the sacred force that builds through the specific combination of correct songs, correct rhythms, correct offerings, and the community's collective devotion — is the Brazilian African experience of what Haligrity calls Ashe, what the Yoruba call Ashe, what the Chinese call Qi, what the Druids call Nwyfre. The word changes across traditions; the reality is the same. Standing in a terreiro during a well-conducted xirê, feeling the axé build toward the moment of Orixá descent, is standing in direct confirmation of what Haligrity holds about the reality of sacred force. Axé is real. It builds. You can feel it.

Possession in Candomblé

The Orixá Descends

The descent of an Orixá into an initiated devotee is the culminating event of the Candomblé xirê — the moment when the axé has built to the point where the sacred becomes physically, undeniably present in the body of a specific person. Understanding what is happening transforms the visitor's experience from bewilderment or alarm to genuine sacred recognition.

The Signs of Approach

Before the full descent, the approaching Orixá produces specific physical signs in the devotee: trembling, changes in breathing, altered posture, a quality of the eyes that changes. Other community members recognize these signs and move to support the approaching devotee — steadying them if they begin to fall, making space around them, alerting the equede to prepare the Orixá's costume.

The Full Descent

When the Orixá fully descends, the change is complete and unmistakable. The devotee's ordinary personality is entirely displaced — they move differently, they carry themselves differently, they interact with the space and with others in the specific character of their Orixá. The equede moves quickly to help the manifested Orixá change into their specific costume (stored in the peji), appropriate to their identity and their specific colors and implements.

For the Visitor

When an Orixá manifests in the barracão near you: do not be alarmed by the sudden physical change in the devotee. Do not reach out to touch the manifested Orixá without being addressed first. If the Orixá addresses you or approaches you — receive the encounter with full, open, respectful attention. The manifested Orixá may touch your head (offering a blessing), speak to you directly, or simply acknowledge your presence. All of these are gifts — receive them.

The Umbanda Gira

A Different Structure

The Umbanda gira (ceremony) has a different character from the Candomblé xirê — more accessible, more explicitly service-oriented, and structured around the spirit guides rather than the ancient Orixás. The word gira means 'turning' or 'circulation' — the rotation of spiritual energy through the ceremony space and through the assembled community.

THE UMBANDA GIRA — COMPLETE STRUCTURE

THE OPENING — CATHOLIC PRAYERS: The Umbanda gira begins with Catholic prayers — Our Father, Hail Mary — in Portuguese. This is the tradition's acknowledgment of its Brazilian synthesis character. Stand respectfully. **THE OPENING SONG (PONTO DE ABERTURA):** After the prayers, the mediums (who will receive the spirit guides) form a line or semicircle. The opening song for the specific line of spirits being called is sung — 'Saravá Oxalá! Saravá todos os Guias!' (Hail Oxalá! Hail all the Guides!) or similar. **THE DESCENTS:** As the songs and rhythms for each specific guide are performed, the mediums begin to receive them — typically with less dramatic physical manifestation than Candomblé Orixá descent, but with clear personality shifts, changed posture, changed speech. **THE CONSULTATIONS:** The manifested guides are the primary service-providers of the gira. Community members and visitors queue to speak with specific guides — the Preto Velho who listens without judgment, the Caboclo who cuts through confusion, the Exu who works with difficult situations. Each consultation is brief (5-10 minutes typically), personal, and directed toward the specific need the visitor brings. **THE CLOSING:** The spirit guides depart. The mediums return to ordinary consciousness. Specific closing prayers. The gira ends. **TIMING:** A typical Umbanda gira lasts 2-3 hours. Candomblé xirê ceremonies can last 4-6 hours or longer.

The Spirit Guides of Umbanda

Preto Velho, Caboclo, Exu

RECOGNIZING AND APPROACHING THE GUIDES

THE PRETO VELHO (Old Black One): The most beloved guide in all of Umbanda — the spirit of an elder enslaved African, carrying the wisdom of extreme suffering transformed into profound compassion. Manifests as very old, moving slowly, often seated at a small low stool (their characteristic piece of furniture in the ceremony space), smoking a pipe. Approaches slowly. Listens with complete, unhurried attention. Speaks gently and directly. **HOW TO APPROACH:** Greet them respectfully as you would a wise elder. Sit or kneel if possible (they do not stand at your level well — their energy is intimate and close to the earth). State your situation honestly and without elaboration. They hear what you do not say as much as what you do say.

THE CABOCLO (Indigenous Spirit): The spirit of indigenous Brazilian peoples — direct, sometimes brusque, with the energy of the forest. Manifests with a strong, upright physical presence, often with a headdress of feathers. Speaks clearly and without social niceties. **HOW TO APPROACH:** Be direct. Do not waste words. State your situation clearly, ask your question clearly. The Caboclo respects directness and has no patience for performance.

THE EXU AND POMBA-GIRA: The crossroads workers — the guides who handle the difficult situations that other guides cannot or will not address. The Exu manifests as intensely energetic, often smoking a cigar, sometimes speaking with irreverence. The Pomba-Gira manifests as powerfully feminine, assertive, unafraid. **HOW TO APPROACH:** These guides require complete honesty — including honesty about the parts of your situation you are most ashamed of. They do not judge. They work. Be completely honest about what you actually need.

Receiving a Consultation from a Spirit Guide

HOW A CONSULTATION WORKS

JOINING THE QUEUE: During the gira, community members and visitors form queues before the specific guides they wish to consult. Ask a community member which guide is which if you are uncertain — they will help you find the right guide for your situation. **APPROACHING THE GUIDE:** When it is your turn, approach the guide and greet them with 'Saravá!' (the Umbanda greeting — an expression of respect and acknowledgment). The guide may respond in kind or may immediately begin addressing your situation. **STATING YOUR SITUATION:** Speak simply and honestly. The guide often already knows your situation — you may find them describing your situation before you have fully explained it. This is not stage magic — it is the spirit guide's perception. **RECEIVING THE GUIDANCE:** The guide may offer verbal guidance, may prescribe a specific action (a bath with specific plants, a prayer to a specific Orixá, a behavioral change), may perform a specific energetic work over your body (passing their hands through your energy field, blowing specific breath on specific areas), or may simply speak truths you need to hear. Receive all of this without resistance. **THE PRESCRIPTION:** Take the guide's prescriptions seriously. They are not metaphorical suggestions — they are specific instructions from a spirit guide who can perceive your situation at a level you cannot. Follow them. **THE OFFERING:** After the consultation, a small donation to the terreiro is appropriate. The gira is free but the terreiro's operation requires support.

Before You Go Preparation

PREPARATION FOR A TERREIRO VISIT

CONTACT IN ADVANCE: Essential for Candomblé, strongly recommended for Umbanda. Introduce yourself, express your sincere interest, ask what is needed. **BRING A CONTRIBUTION:** Food for the feast (white foods for a Candomblé ceremony honoring Oxalá; specific foods for other Orixás — ask in advance), rum or specific beverages, flowers, or a monetary contribution. **FAST LIGHTLY:** A light meal 2-3 hours before the ceremony is traditional — not fasting completely, but not arriving with a heavy stomach. The axé of the ceremony works better in a less physically burdened body. **AVOID ALCOHOL BEFORE ATTENDING:** Come with clarity. The ceremony space requires full consciousness. **KNOW YOUR INTENTION:** Why are you coming? What do you want to understand, receive, or offer? For an Umbanda gira, bring a specific situation you want guidance on — the spirit guides respond to specific sincere requests. **LEARN A FEW WORDS:** Even learning the basic greeting (Saravá! — hail/respect) and the basic affirmation (Axé! — Ah-SHAY) before attending communicates preparation and respect.

What to Wear to a Candomblé Ceremony

CANDOMBLÉ DRESS CODE

WHITE is always safe and always appropriate for any Candomblé ceremony. The filhos and filhas de santo typically wear white when not in ceremony costume, and white is universally welcoming in the Orixá traditions. ORIXÁ-SPECIFIC COLORS: If you know which Orixá is being honored at the ceremony you will attend, wearing their specific colors is a sign of respect and preparation: • Oxalá: White only • Yemanjá: Blue and white • Oxum: Gold and yellow • Xangô: Red and white • Ogum: Dark green or blue • Iansã: Copper/burgundy and white • Exu: Black and red (only if Exu is explicitly being honored) MODESTY: Shoulders covered, knees covered. The Orixás' energy in the barracão is intense — clothing that is too revealing is energetically inappropriate. CLEAN AND SIMPLE: Come in clean, pressed clothing. The terreiro is a sacred space; your appearance communicates your respect for it. FLAT SHOES OR BARE FEET: You may be standing and moving for several hours. The barracão floor is the sacred space of the ceremony — some practitioners go barefoot inside.

What to Wear to an Umbanda Gira

UMBANDA DRESS CODE

WHITE is the primary color of Umbanda — the color of Oxalá, of spiritual elevation, of clarity and openness. For a general Umbanda gira, white clothing from head to foot is ideal. LINE-SPECIFIC COLORS: Each of the seven lines of Umbanda has specific color associations. For a gira of the Preto Velho: white and purple. For a Caboclo gira: white and green. For an Exu gira: black and red alongside white. HEAD COVERING: Women particularly often wear a white scarf or turban — this is a mark of respect and energetic protection in Umbanda practice. PRACTICAL: The Umbanda gira involves standing, sitting, queueing for consultations, and sometimes dancing. Comfortable, dignified clothing that you can move in easily. AVOID: • All black (associated with dense energies that Umbanda ceremony explicitly works to transform) • Revealing clothing • Strong perfume (the guides and Orixás have specific scent sensitivities — some are repelled by artificial fragrances)

What to Bring and Offer

TERREIRO OFFERINGS

CANDOMBLÉ OFFERINGS — Bring offerings for the specific Orixá being honored: • Oxalá: White rice, white beans, white corn, shea butter (ori), coconut • Yemanjá: White flowers, perfume, mirrors, small boats of offerings for the sea • Oxum: Yellow flowers, honey, brass implements, gold-colored objects • Xangô: Red and white foods, amalá (cornmeal in palm oil), red wine • Ogum: Palm oil, smoked meats, rum • Iansã: Red wine, red fabric, marigolds UMBANDA OFFERINGS — More flexible: • Flowers (white always appropriate; colored for specific guides) • Candles in the guide's color • Specific foods for specific guides (peanuts for Preto Velho, cigar for Exu) • A monetary donation to the terreiro's operation NEVER BRING: • Alcohol if you are uncertain about the ceremony type — ask first • Meat to a ceremony for Oxalá or other Orixás who do not receive meat • Perfume to an Oxalá ceremony — he cannot tolerate strong fragrances

How to Behave as a Guest

THE GUEST'S CODE IN A TERREIRO

POSITION: Visitors sit or stand along the walls of the barracão — not in the center of the ceremony space. The center is for the filhos/filhas de santo who are dancing and for the Orixás when they descend. **OBSERVE WITH FULL ATTENTION:** Your quality of attention is your primary contribution to the ceremony. Distracted, analytical, detached observation adds nothing. Full, open, receptive attention adds genuine energy to the space. **RESPOND TO WHAT MOVES YOU:** If the atabaques and the singing move you physically — if your body wants to sway or move to the music — gentle, respectful movement is appropriate. Full dancing in the center of the ceremony space is not appropriate for visitors. **PARTICIPATE IN THE SONGS:** If you learn any of the Candomblé or Umbanda songs in advance and the community is singing them, join in. This is one of the most welcomed things a visitor can do. **WHEN AN ORIXÁ OR GUIDE APPROACHES YOU:** Receive them with open, respectful attention. If they touch your head in blessing, bow your head. If they speak to you, respond honestly and simply. This is a gift; receive it fully. **BETWEEN ELEMENTS:** The ceremony has moments of high intensity and moments of relative quiet. Use the quieter moments to settle, to feel the axé in the space, to review what has happened so far with genuine attention. **WHEN THE FEAST IS SERVED:** Accept food when it is offered. Eat what is given. The feast is communion — the Orixás' food returned as blessing to all present.

What Not to Do

PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS IN THE TERREIRO

DO NOT arrive unannounced at a terreiro expecting to observe ceremony — always contact in advance. DO NOT enter the peji (inner sanctuary) — ever. This is the most sacred space of the terreiro and is not accessible to visitors. DO NOT photograph ceremonies without explicit permission from the Mãe/Pai de Santo — and when photographing is permitted, avoid close-up photography of devotees in the process of receiving their Orixá or guide. DO NOT touch the atabaques (drums) — they are sacred initiated objects, not instruments for visitors to examine. DO NOT approach a manifested Orixá without being addressed first — wait to be approached or acknowledged. DO NOT enter the center of the ceremony space during the xirê — this is the Orixás' dancing space. DO NOT wear black to a Rada Candomblé ceremony or a white Umbanda gira — this color is associated with Petwo energies (Vodou), Exu/Gede, and specific lower vibrations that are not appropriate to bring into these ceremonies. DO NOT treat the terreiro as a cultural curiosity or tourist attraction — you are in the living sacred space of a community that has maintained this tradition through extreme historical adversity. Honor that. DO NOT leave immediately after receiving a spirit guide consultation without making an offering — this is a transaction of sacred reciprocity and requires completion.

The Haligricity Lens

Why These Traditions Matter Most

Of all the sacred spaces in this Temple Visitation Series, the Candomblé terreiro and the Umbanda terreiro are the two that the Haligricity practitioner will find most immediately, most completely, most structurally resonant with what Haligricity itself is doing.

Candomblé and Haligric Ceremony

The Candomblé xirê's structure — the specific opening honoring of Exu, the sequential calling of each Orixá through their specific songs and rhythms, the building of axé toward the moment of divine arrival, the communal feast — is the most fully developed African diaspora model of what the Haligric Book of Rituals holds about ceremony. Every element of the Haligric ceremonial structure has its parallel in the xirê: the specific opening (Exu), the sequential invocation of specific sacred presences, the use of specific sound (atabaques) to build sacred energy, the communal sharing. The xirê is not foreign territory. It is the Haligric ceremony's most complete ancient cousin.

Umbanda and the Haligricity Structure

Umbanda may be the closest existing structural model to what Haligricity is doing. It is a deliberate, spiritually serious synthesis of multiple traditions (Candomblé, Kardecist Spiritism, Catholic devotion, indigenous Brazilian practice) organized around practical service rather than doctrinal purity, open to all regardless of initiation or background, and understood as a living tradition that continues to evolve. The Umbanda gira's accessibility — its explicit welcome of all who come, its organization around direct service through the spirit guides — is the structural expression of the same recognition that animates Haligricity: the sacred is not the exclusive property of any single tradition, and genuine synthesis can serve everyone.

CONNECTION TO HALIGRICITY

The axé that builds in a Candomblé terreiro when the atabaques are playing Xangô's toque and the community is singing in Yoruba is the same force that Haligricity calls Ashe. It is not a metaphor. It is not a poetic expression. It is the specific sacred force — Ashe/Axé — that flows from the divine through specific prepared channels into specific prepared spaces. You can feel it build. You can feel the moment it peaks. And when Xangô arrives — when the devoted filho de santo becomes entirely the thunder king, stamps their foot, and the room changes — you are feeling what the Haligric meal blessing is invoking when it closes with Ashe. The source and the practice are connected. They always have been. Grand Rising.

*"Saravá Oxalá! Saravá todos os Guias!
Axé!"*

— Umbanda opening salutation

Three hundred years of persecution could not silence the atabaques of the terreiro. The Orixás are still arriving in Bahia, still singing in Yoruba, still wearing their gold and white and red. The Preto Velho is still listening to everything, still judging nothing, still offering the wisdom of extreme suffering transformed into unconditional love. Come with sincerity. Come with respect. Come prepared. The axé will do the rest. Grand Rising.

Haligrlicity Temple Series | Haligrlicity | I.Q. Productionz | May 2026