

## **Kava: Euphoric Drink that's Sweeping America Now in Albuquerque**

Kava calms the body and mind, it increases sociability, reduces anxiety, and has no negative aftereffects. For centuries this tea has been enjoyed in the South Pacific islands, and now you can try it here in the land of enchantment. BULA! (Cheers!)

Kava is a Polynesian tea made from kava root powder that is mixed with water (it's Keto!). Drunk in small 5 oz pours called "shells" — traditionally coconut shells were used as cups — one first notices a numbing or tingling in the mouth. That sensation soon goes away, but the giddy, lifted, cheerful feeling remains.

Mandy Vickery opened ABQ's first Kava Bar, **Pureland Kava**, last month on the corner of Yale & Cesar Chavez.

"Connecting people is my passion. Drinking kava is all about creating community," says Vickery. "During lockdown, I realized how important connection is for human happiness, so I sold my house and moved to New Mexico to open Albuquerque's first Kava Bar. Crazy, I know," she says with a smile.

From 2016 to 2019 Mandy lived in Tampa, Florida where she was introduced to the kava bar scene — an open minded, accepting, diverse, and fun community of people who revealed the magic of this precious drink.

"There are about 36 kava bars in the St. Pete area now," says local kava enthusiast Kevin Krasko. "When I moved here, I was surprised that Albuquerque didn't have any. It's the perfect drink for those who are done with the alcohol scene."

"When you get a buzz from Kava it's called 'being Muddy,'" Vickery explains. "Traditional style Kava has an earthy flavor and a grayish hue. Now we have Kava drinks that don't taste like Kava, too. I carry Leilo, Body Euphoria, and Stay Cool — delicious, canned kava drinks that come in various flavors."

Everyone who comes to Pureland Kava for the first time gets to try a free shell.

"I understand the idea of a non-alcoholic bar is very new here," says Vickery, "but it's the future."

Kava bars are not just about the subtle euphoric buzz. They are also a safe place to gather without the pressure of drinking alcohol.

"My bar has no TV's. Instead, we play games, talk, enjoy the free WIFI, and unwind together," Vickery says.

Pureland Kava is currently open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 4-8 pm and Saturday from 4-9 pm. Hanging out and study sessions are always encouraged.

"I chose a location close to CNM and UNM because students can enjoy kava at 18," Vickery says. "You can feel free to order food here, too. Door dash, uber eats — I don't mind."

Kava increases clarity of mind and creativity and does not affect fine motor skills like alcohol. Work, play, drink, relax — all with the plant power of Kava. Small groups such as D&D players and PFLAG are encouraged to call or e-mail Vickery, especially if they are interested in gathering during closed hours.

Pureland Kava is located on the corner of Yale Blvd & Cesar Chavez next to the Old Quarters BBQ. Check [purelandkava.com](http://purelandkava.com) for upcoming events like Yoga, Dancing, and local musicians.

“I could talk about these drinks all day, but nothing’s better than when you actually try them and see for yourself. These drinks can change your day, and, I think, change your life. What beer does that?” says Vickery.

The FDA classifies Kava as a supplement, so you must be at least 18 years old to consume it. Pregnant women, nursing mothers or people with Parkinson’s should not drink Kava.

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