



Welcome Letter for Residential Retreats

We look forward to welcoming you to Mary & Joseph Retreat Center! This is a wonderful opportunity you have given to yourself to enjoy the tranquility of nature, and we look forward to offering you this experience. In this letter, you will find helpful information regarding your visit to the retreat center. Please reach out to the Retreat Manager if you have any additional questions about the center before your arrival.

To offer or join a ride please click Sign-Up for Rideshare on the Event Page. Thank you for supporting fellow retreatants!

COVID POLICY: We require that all participants provide proof of:

- 1. Proof of full vaccination**
- 2. Proof of negative antigen test taken within 24 hours of arrival**
- 3. Completion of the [Pre-arrival Waiver Form](#) (24-72hrs prior) which will be emailed to everyone 72 hours prior**

WHAT TO EXPECT:

This will be an in-person silent, insight meditation retreat co-hosted by InsightLA and Mary & Joseph Retreat Center. In general, the structure of an Insight meditation retreat includes time for sitting meditation, walking meditation, rest, mindful eating, and Dharma talks to deepen your embodied understanding along with instructions and guidance, and short practice discussion meetings with the teachers to support you within the container of a silent retreat. All guests are asked to remain on the center grounds (apart from the hiking trails) throughout the duration of the retreat.

WHAT TO BRING:

- Food/Snacks (any personal or extra that you'd like to have) for your visit. There is a fridge and microwave next to the Meditation Hall
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Warm layers of clothing for night and early mornings (temperatures may drop)
- Sunscreen and hat
- Unscented/Non-Chemically Scented Toiletries i.e. shampoo, conditioner, soap, lotion because the retreat center does not provide (if you are sensitive, please sit close to a

window and indicate so on your Pre-Retreat Questionnaire so we can create an unscented seating area)

- Hairdryer (if needed)
- Bug repellent (if you plan on hiking)
- Socks or Slippers for meditation hall and rooms
- Shoes that are easy to slip on/off for indoor spaces
- Reusable water bottle
- Reusable thermos for hot beverages (tea and coffee are provided)
- Meditation Cushion and Supplies (i.e. zafu, zabuton, blanket, etc. only chairs are provided and limited zafus and zabutons are provided)
- Alarm clock and/or watch (if needed as we do not have a wake up call)
- Blanket (if you would like to sit/nap on the grass during breaks)
- Yoga Mats and props (if needed)
- Melatonin or sleep aid (if needed)
- Eye mask and earplugs (especially if you registered for a shared room)

NOBLE SILENCE:

Each Insight meditation residential retreat is practiced in silence. Students and the community take the vow of noble silence typically at the opening session (after dinner) and end sometimes towards the end of the retreat. The teachers will share more about this practice during the retreat.

Journaling, reading, and similar activities are discouraged unless you can bring mindfulness to the activity. If you do, please pause to see if you are mindful then continue if you are and if not, cultivate more mindfulness and begin again.

UNSCENTED PRODUCTS:

We ask that retreatants use unscented/non-chemically scented products during their time on retreat, including shampoo, conditioner, body wash, soaps and abstaining from use of perfumes, colognes, and any scented products or sprays. This helps the community to focus on the practice during retreat.

Please note that the provided hand soap and body wash in the bedrooms have a scent.

MEDITATION CUSHIONS AND CHAIRS:

There will be chairs available. Please bring a zafu, zabuton, and any other supplies you may need. [Meditation Posture Information](#)

ARRIVAL:

Your cabin and room details will be provided on arrival at registration. Please plan to arrive between 2pm and 5pm on the day of your arrival. Please allow plenty of time and allow for traffic when planning your drive (especially on Fridays).

MEALS:

Meals are provided for all guests, served in the Dining Hall including three fresh, healthy, vegetarian meals a day - breakfast, lunch, and dinner (with the exception of Day 1 when we will only serve dinner and the final day when we will only serve breakfast). Please indicate on

your registration form and/or the Pre-Retreat Questionnaire that is emailed one week before the retreat starts. We ask that you not change your dietary plan after this nor take from the designated sections (i.e. only take from the gluten-free section if you indicated gluten-free on your form(s)). This helps our chefs adequately prepare and so those who have indicated have adequate food.

The center will provide plenty of food, however yogis are also welcome to bring their own snacks or particular ingredients for the duration of the retreat. Please do not bring food into the bedrooms.

FIRE SAFETY:

Please practice extra precautions in fire safety while on retreat. We ask that you do not light any flames (ie candles, incense).

Emergency Contact Info:

If needed, friends and family from home can contact the retreat center or the Retreat Manager who can then relay a message to you during retreat.

Mary & Joseph Retreat Center (310) 377-4867

Anisa (Retreat Manager) (808) 388-8849 anisa@insightla.org

COVID SAFETY PROTOCOLS

We are delighted to continue to offer opportunities to gather for in-person retreats at the retreat center. In order to continue this offering, we are extremely mindful of the health, safety, and security of all of our guests at the retreat center. In order to provide a space that feels safe, secure, and easeful as best we can, we will continue to follow county (Los Angeles County), state, and federal (CDC) covid guidelines and recommendations covid, as well as our own safety and procedures.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as this allows us to stay open and operate an in-person group retreat ensuring the health and safety concerns of everyone on retreat at the center given individual and public conditions.

Current Safety Protocols at the Retreat Center:

These are the primary safety guidelines and procedures at the retreat center. *If you have extenuating circumstances please email at least a week before the retreat starts:*
anisa@insightla.org

- **Vaccination:** All participants must be fully vaccinated for covid prior to arrival to the center. We do require proof of vaccination.
- **Negative Covid Test:** All participants furnish proof of a negative antigen test
- **Waiver Form:** All guests are required to fill a waiver form 24-72 hours before arrival to confirm covid safety and understanding of policy, with the option to upload vaccine/pcr results in waiver or upon arrival.
- **Masking:** No masking is currently required at the retreat center. This may change due to current conditions or state/county/cdc guidelines. Guests experiencing symptoms may be asked to mask. Current masking guidelines are subject to change.
- **Ventilation/Air Filters:** The meditation hall has several air filters and we practice ventilating the shared spaces as much as possible. Guests are encouraged and welcome to open/close windows at any point. There are several options for outdoor spaces for dining, movement, and stationary practices.
- **Surface Cleaning:** Regular sanitizing and cleaning of high touch areas are practiced at the center. Guests are also highly encouraged to volunteer to clean surfaces and handles regularly, with sanitizer and spray available in shared areas and cabins.
- **Sick Policy:** If a practitioner or teacher becomes sick with Covid symptoms, we will ask them to take a rapid antigen self-test onsite, and if they test positive for COVID-19, they must exit the retreat. If they cannot return home due to travel restrictions, we will support their quarantine to the best of our ability. We will do everything possible to accommodate and allow for continuity of practice during this period.