

## **Information and Guidelines about Covid-19 and our Retreats at Nibbāna Forest Refuge**



Nibbāna Forest Refuge is committed to help slow the spread of Covid-19. After careful consideration and the careful precautions we've put in place for retreats, we are confident as we move forward with our plans to push forward with our programs. We are making a great effort to mitigate the risk of contracting Covid-19, however, any venture outside our own homes entails risk. We leave it up to your good judgment to determine if going on in-person daylong or residential retreat is right for you.

We believe that Nibbāna Forest Refuge is a responsible and suitable place to hold a retreat, even during the trying conditions of a pandemic. We expect most people to occupy the dorm rooms and native huts as single accommodations, unless an advanced arrangement has been made to share the room with a spouse or good friend. Each room has good air-flow and ventilation. We also have single tent platforms for those who would like to camp.

We will design the program schedule to combine responsible communal elements, along with maximum opportunities for seclusion. Self-scheduled practice periods will stagger occupancy of the common rooms and reduce the number of people in the meditation hall at any one time. Retreatants will have the option of practicing in the meditation hall, their own rooms, or outside. Live daily dharma talks and meditation instructions will be broadcast via speaker which can be heard from other areas on the main building, or attend the live presentation in the meditation hall. Seating will be spaced out at least 6 feet from others in the meditation hall, in the dining hall, and for group and

individual interviews. Social distancing from others of at least 6 feet will be required at all times, both indoors and outdoors. When weather permits, some elements of the program may be held outdoors. There are multiple outdoor seating areas on the property that we can enjoy in the forest setting.

To attend this retreat, each retreatant must agree to respect our guidelines, remain on the property after arrival until the end of the retreat, wear a mask in indoor common areas including the meditation hall, permit the staff to check their temperature daily, and agree to leave the retreat immediately if they become ill or have a temperature above 100F.

Some highlights of Nibbāna Forest Refuge's Covid-19 prevention measures include:

1. Retreat size will be limited. Currently capacity is restricted to 20 guests, but we may choose to limit attendance to a smaller number as we approach the retreat time.
2. Guest rooms are cleaned thoroughly prior to group arrival.
3. Common areas and frequently touches surfaces are cleaned throughout the day and immediately after group use. We may use a disinfectant fog periodically in common areas.
4. Upon arrival, every guest will be asked to sanitize hands, apply a face mask, and receive a courtesy temperature check.
5. Temperatures will be checked daily for all guests and staff. Those with a temperature above 100F will be asked to leave. All guests should have a plan for departure should it become necessary to leave due to illness.
6. Staff will serve guests at meals in a manner that will limit contact with buffet utensils and any objects that guests might touch.
7. Seating in the dining room will be spaced more than 6 feet apart. Guests have the option of eating their meals outdoors. Because we are situated in a wild, forested area with various insects - like ants - that could invade your meditation and sleeping spaces, we prohibit guests from eating anywhere outside of the dining hall.

As they serve other retreats between now and our arrival, the staff will continue to evaluate their procedures and make improvements as necessary.

Anyone who is feeling unwell prior to traveling, or believes they have been exposed to the coronavirus in the 14 days prior to the retreat is asked to please not travel to this retreat. If you must cancel at the last minute due to illness, we will transfer your deposit into a voucher credit for a future event. If cancellations occur due to reasons other than illness, our usual cancellation policy will apply. If we must cancel the retreat, (for example if the local authorities forbid gatherings) we will refund your full deposit.

In the two weeks prior to the retreat, please self-isolate as much as possible. It is a good opportunity to have quiet time to practice more meditation at home. Please do not engage in any activities that would put you in groups of people (such as family gatherings, house parties, gyms, funerals, protest marches, etc.). Please do not interact with anyone outside your own household without wearing a well-fitted face covering. As you register for a retreat and mark the days on your calendar, please also make a note to yourself to limit contact with people in the two weeks prior to the retreat. Diligence in the weeks prior to the retreat will be one of the most significant actions you can take to protect the health of our community.

Hopefully the above will answer any questions you may have about protections in regard to COVID-19 and the retreat at Nibbāna Forest Refuge. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have questions or concerns.

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