



Retreat Information

[Robert Beatty](#)

[Portland Insight Meditation Center](#)

I am glad you will be joining me on retreat. I am certain that your time on retreat will be beneficial and that you will be glad you decided to offer this gift to yourself.

I am writing to provide a sense of what will happen on the retreat, and an outline of some of the practices we follow in order to maximize the benefits of this time of withdrawal from the active world.

This short [video](#) will give you a glimpse of what happens on retreat.

Schedule: There will be a schedule posted at the beginning of the retreat. It will indicate the times of group meditation (sitting and walking), personal time, and meals. You are not required to attend all of the sessions. I will give instructions at the beginning of the retreat that will provide you guidance in making your decisions concerning what to do and not do on retreat.

Posture: Meditation is a training of the mind and heart. There is no requirement to sit cross-legged on the floor. You will be encouraged to sit comfortably upright as this is conducive to wakefulness. If you have sitting implements that you use to practice at home please bring them so you can be comfortable.

Noble Silence: One of our most potent tools in turning attention inward is the practice of remaining silent. From the first evening of the retreat until the last meal or so you will have the opportunity to relinquish all unnecessary speech. This is not a rule that is imposed upon you, but rather something that participants undertake in order to provide themselves and each other the optimum circumstances for introspection.

Simplicity: Meditation is the practice of coming directly into intimate contact with oneself. In order to do this we leave behind most of the distractions, responsibilities and activities of daily life. You will find your retreat enriched by leaving home items like music players, books, other entertainments and hobbies. Your own body and mind are the most interesting phenomena you will ever encounter. They are the entire world.

Personal Conferences: When the retreat is long enough there will be opportunities to meet with me. These meetings are for the purpose of offering you personal guidance in your practice and to give you a chance to ask any questions that are arising in your meditation. They are informal meetings, which give us a chance to meet and know one another face to face. I will not be on retreat. My sole purpose is to provide you with the instructions, guidance and support that you need in order to make maximal use of your precious contemplative time. If something comes up that it is important that we speak about before your next scheduled meeting please put a note on the board for me, speak to my assistant or come directly to me.

Drugs and Medicines: As our intention is to learn about the human mind it is necessary to leave it as unclouded as possible. Please do not bring mind-altering substances on retreat. On the other hand, please do continue to take all your prescription medications.

Meals and Fasting: There will be three meals a day. Whenever possible I will request of the retreat facility that the main meal be served at noon and the evening meal be light. It is recommended that you eat moderately, as large meals require a lot of energy to digest and leave you sleepy. It is not recommended to fast on retreat. A meditation retreat is already a very significant fast. You will be fasting from speech, reading, working, e-mail, Facebook, cell phone, eating whenever you want, relationship and countless other distractions. Most profoundly, you will be fasting by interrupting and relinquishing the stories of self that the mind weaves.

Dress: Human minds become very sensitive on retreat. It is a kindness for other members of the group if you dress modestly with an intention to minimize sexual distraction.

Perfumes and Scented Products: On occasion there is someone on retreat who has allergic sensitivity to perfumes and scented products. Please do your best to not introduce unnecessary challenges.

Leaving the Retreat Early: if you are deciding to leave before the end of the retreat please speak to me or my assistant before you leave. It is disconcerting to have someone vanish. A conversation prior to leaving may be a significant gift to yourself.

Water Bottles and Drinking: Water bottles with a lid are OK in the meditation hall, but please refrain from drinking during the meditation periods.

Dharma Hall Etiquette: Unless you must do so for health reasons, please do not lie down or do yoga in the dharma hall. This is particularly true during Dharma talks when the intention is to be particularly attentive.

Timeliness: Please do your best to arrive on time for meditation sessions. When I am engaged in assisting others I may not be present at the beginning of each session. Please just settle in and observe the precious life of each moment.

Prior Reading: While not required, you might find it helpful and interesting to read:

[The Power of Mindfulness](#) by Nyanaponika Thera

[The Practice of Recollection](#) by Bhikku Mangalo

I look forward to being with you on retreat.

Sincerely

Robert Beatty