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7 Reasons You Should Go On A Retreat, What To Expect And Where To Go

A retreat can provide much-needed rest, relaxation and restoration to your body and mind. It's easy to get caught up in the hectic pace of modern living. We live constantly connected, constantly "on," barely able to give attention to our inner lives while they quietly suffer from neglect. Like everything in nature – the day that fades to night, the rest essential for activity, the dormancy necessary for growth – we are creatures that need periods of downtime.



By Kathy Simpson

A personal retreat is a powerful way to attend to your cyclical need for downtime. Whether for a day or two, or a week or more, an intentional pause from day-to-day life can be tremendously restorative – a quiet time to let go of the fetters of life, reclaim a sense of balance and ease, nourish and renew your innermost spirit, and simply rest.

Why go on a retreat?

The reasons to go on retreat are as personal as you are, but some common motivations are to:

1. **Adjust to a life transition**
2. **Dedicate time to spiritual practice and study**
3. **Break unhealthy habits and cultivate healthy ones**
4. **Learn something new or deepen an existing practice**
5. **Slow down, unplug and catch up on much-needed rest**
6. **Meet like-minded people**
7. **Reconnect with yourself**

The options are plentiful

To truly retreat, escape is essential – to a place where your basic needs are attended to and your days are just for you. Retreat centers are bountiful in the U.S. and around the world. There are centers for every faith, contemplative practice, and health and healing modality you can think of, often with idyllic surroundings. Accommodations may be simple or luxurious, shared or private. [Retreat Finder](#) is an excellent resource for exploring what's available by location in your area of interest.

Choosing the right retreat for you

Retreat formats can vary widely. Some are silent; many have little or no silence. Some are teacher-led with a theme, such as yoga or [mindfulness](#), and a pre-set schedule of group activities. Others are unstructured, allowing you to spend your time as you wish, whether it's reading, meditating, journaling, or walking in nature. Optional group activities, such as daily workshops or yoga classes, can provide group interaction mixed in with solo time.

It helps to know your goals so you can choose a center that offers what you seek. So do your research. Call the retreat center you're interested in and ask about the programs, the surroundings, the accommodations and even the food. After all, you want to leave feeling uplifted and recharged, not disappointed.

Who will you meet on a retreat?

People of all ages, backgrounds and ways of life go on retreat. One thing you can be sure of, you'll share a common need for the introspection, peace and perspective that retreat allows. Even on a private retreat, you'll probably meet some interesting, like-minded people.

Returning home

As your retreat draws to a close, set an intention to integrate what you've learned into your life back home. You may want to establish a daily meditation practice, join a yoga studio, change your diet, or simply be more mindful and compassionate with family and friends. Give yourself the luxury of time to ease gently back into day-to-day life and allow all the wonderful benefits of your retreat to settle in.

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