

Guidelines for female Guests staying at Dhammagiri Forest Hermitage on Retreat

1) **Guests observe the 8 Precepts throughout their stay without exception:**

1. Not to intentionally kill any living beings (including ants, mozzies and so on)
2. Not to steal
3. Complete celibacy
 - Abstinence from any sexual activity in action or words
4. Not to lie
5. Not to consume alcohol or any drugs causing intoxication
6. Not to take any food from noon till next dawn
 - Eating restricted to light breakfast at 6.00 am & meal at 10.30 am
 - Juice, tea/coffee, honey/sugar, some dark chocolate can be consumed in afternoon, if available
7. No dancing, singing, music, shows, entertainment, garlands, perfumes, cosmetics, make-up, jewellery, ornaments
 - No smartphone/internet use (very poor reception anyhow). A landline phone is available in kitchen that can be connected & used in real emergencies
8. Not to use high or luxurious beds/furniture
 - Sleeping on 'Thermo Rest' inflatable camping mattress on plain, flat beds

2) **Dhammagiri Forest Hermitage is primarily a residence for Bhikkhus (Buddhist monks) in the lineage of Ajahn Chah and comparable lineages in the wider Theravada Forest Tradition. We are not a business or an institution commercially catering for customers, like a hotel or hostel or a 'Retreat Center'**

- The monks, supported by the lay community, make the opportunity available for retreatants to stay as their guests in the monastery
- Thus a retreat could be compared to visiting someone at their house, and staying at their private home as a guest - except that the 'home' extends over 85 acres, and residents live in separate buildings
- No payment is required (voluntary donations are, of course, always possible), and guests accept facilities as available

3) **Dhammagiri is part of the 'Forest Tradition', with emphasis on simplicity and renunciation of sensuality**

- Facilities are generally simple and plain. We cannot accommodate minors under 18 years
- Only two female retreatants can be accommodated in the two female retreat-rooms inside the Dhamma hall. Minimum length for one booking is three days, maximum is two weeks.
- Under present conditions, it would not be suitable for one woman to stay alone in the Dhamma hall. Thus, all bookings require two women to stay together for the whole retreat. If you do not have a co-retreatant, our female retreat coordinator may be able to help you finding one. Please also contact her for any other questions regarding your retreat at: dhg.female-retreats@protonmail.com
- We depend on the daily food offerings of the laity, and train to be content with whatever food is offered: No special food requirements/diets can be accommodated for

4) **Daily Schedule:**

- 04.30 am: Wake up (voluntary - one may get up earlier :-)
- 04.45 am: Private Morning Chanting / Meditation in Kuti

- 06.00 am: Breakfast - For simplicity, breakfast is limited to cereals with milk or soy milk, to be eaten out of a single bowl. No special diets can be accommodated. If no male retreatants are staying, offer breakfast items to monks at 06.00 am before taking breakfast yourself.
- 06.45 am: Work period: Shrine to be cleaned daily (dusting; change/remove old flowers).
According to need: Clean shrine room. Keep kitchen neat & clean (including waste bins & inside cupboards). Clean toilet/laundry/bathroom. Sweep verandahs & remove cobwebs from ceilings. Remove bird droppings.
- 09.00 am: Personal Time
- 10.00 am: Silent meditation in own room, or interview with senior monk. If you require interview, please let the senior monk know the day before.
- 10.30 am: Join offering of rice at almsround. Then take almsfood from buffet right after monks & male retreatants. Take all food into one bowl/plate, and eat quietly in own room in noble silence. No need to interact/talk with lay visitors, except to help them carrying/arranging almsfood in case they are elderly/weak
- 11.45 am: If you wish, you can join the Dhamma discussion with supporters
- 01.00 pm: Suggested rest period
- 02.30 pm: Meditation practice, alternating sitting and walking periods. The verandahs offer excellent opportunities for walking meditation
- 06.00 pm: Evening drink (voluntary): Fruit juice/tea/coffee/herbal infusions. For those who feel weak, honey/dark chocolate/candies/jelly beans can be taken
- 07.00 pm: Buddha Puja in shrine room (voluntary), or else continue individual meditation, or study of suttas/Dhamma-books, or listen to audio Dhamma talks
- 09.30 pm: Retire to own room

Except for breakfast, chores & main meal, this schedule is flexible and can be adopted by experienced meditators to suit their individual needs. If in doubt, discuss with senior monk

- Sundays 03.00 - 05.00 pm: Join Meditation Session & Dhamma discussion
- Saturdays 07.00 - 07.30 am: Join small group taking Triple Refuge & 8 Precepts
- There can be additional programs/working bees for major Buddhist occasions like Vesak, or Western holidays like Xmas & New Year, or for visiting senior monks

5) General Guidelines

- Be mindful that you are living in the Dhammahall with main Buddha statue & relics. Please practise restraint regarding speech, and always maintain a quiet, meditative atmosphere. If you need to discuss any practical issues with your co-retreatant (e.g. how to share cleaning chores), do so right after breakkie 07.45-08.00 am. Dhamma discussion can be done after evening drink 06.30-07.00 pm, if your co-retreatant agrees, but do not discuss worldly subjects. Please observe noble silence at all other times
- It is not possible to receive visitors during the retreat
- You can practise together in the Dhammahall (except while the monks are there 10.00 am - 12.45 pm), or individually in your own rooms, or on the verandahs for walking meditation
- Food is consumed mindfully in noble silence. Please eat in your own rooms at lunchtime (or kitchen/verandah at breakfast). For simplicity & restraint, we eat from one single dish (plate or bowl), without second helpings.
- The monks use the Dhammahall only during mealtime, and for regular sessions on Sundays. At check in, please pay respects to senior monk in Dhammahall at mealtime.
- The monks and several members of the lay community have got keys to the Dhammahall. However, if you bolt the main entrance & door to monks' section, and close all glass sliding doors, nobody can enter.
- In case of an emergency, you can use the supplied alarm-horns to alert monks and neighbours, and connect the emergency landline phone in kitchen to telephone.

- Please inform the senior monk before leaving the monastery for any reason. Before departure, make sure your room and monastery linen have been thoroughly cleaned and dried, and all monastery property is returned to where you found it.
 - Mobile phones must be switched off at all times, except to make a call in a genuine emergency (e.g. fire, burglar, medical emergency). Please do not send or receive messages or email, or access the internet. (Except with special personal permission by senior monk).
- 6) We live in the Australian bush, which means:**
- One can potentially encounter Australian creepy-crawlies like poisonous snakes & spiders, stinging plants, or our cute (but rather big) 'Carpet-Python'
 - Keep eyes open and be always mindful where you step or what you touch outside, and always use a torch/flashlight at night outside, and keep screendoors closed
 - It is humid-hot in summer (December to March), with strong sunlight/UV
 - However, even in hot weather guests are required to dress modestly: No shorts, singlets, open midriff or revealing clothes. Outside, use sunprotection as required.
 - Winter (June to August) can be a bit cold, with temperatures dropping to light frost at the bottom of the hill on the coldest days
 - However, even in winter most days reach around 20°C in the afternoon
 - There can be fire danger, especially in spring or anytime if there is drought
 - However, we have a very safe, state-of-the-art firebunker for worst case scenarios (which are unlikely anyhow)
- 7) Before booking a retreat, prior attendance at our Sunday afternoon meditation sessions, and participation in the 'Full Moon Meditation Program' on Sundays closest to the full moon is usually required**
- Exceptions are possible for those from overseas or interstate, or those who have experience in monasteries in the same tradition (lineage of Ajahn Chah) or similar tradition (Theravada Forest Tradition)
 - Due to the mostly solitary practice at Dhammagiri, an established regular meditation practice is strongly recommended, to be able to use the stay as guest beneficially
- 8) Good mental and decent physical health are required for retreats at Dhammagiri**
- Due to the solitary nature of our retreats, and intensive personal meditation practice, our retreats are not usually suitable for those presently undergoing treatment for any mental disorder
 - In case of previous treatments in the past, or any doubts regarding mental health, it is recommended to consult a mental health specialist prior to considering a retreat, and follow his recommendations
- 9) This list is not to be understood as exhaustive or definitive in all details (except for 8 Precepts), but may receive adjustments or additions/exceptions by the senior monk at his discretion**
- Schedule, training and routines at the monastery are laid down by the abbot, and guests follow his instructions in this regard
- 10) By booking, you declare that you are aware of the above, and any other risks associated with living in Australian bush, and that you're happy to stay at Dhammagiri at your own risk**

*Wishing you a peaceful, blissful, and insightful retreat.
May all beings be happy and at ease!*

Dhammagiri Forest Hermitage - Female Guest Application Form

- Full Name as in Passport

- Date of Birth

- Address & Telephone Number & email

- Next of Kin Contact Details (for us to contact in case of emergencies)

- Are you a Buddhist? If so, which tradition/teacher?

- Have you ever stayed in Buddhist Monasteries, or participated in meditation retreats? If so, please provide details (teacher, tradition, length of stay etc.)

- Why did you feel inspired to choose Dhammagiri as a place to do a retreat?

● Are you in good physical health, able to live in the Australian bush in simple physical conditions?

Yes

No

▪ If "No", please provide details on separate sheet

● Have you ever had, or are you currently receiving treatment, or used medication, for any psychological or psychiatric condition?

Yes

No

▪ If "Yes", please provide details on separate sheet, or discuss personally with senior monk or female retreat coordinator

● What dates would you like to book for your stay at Dhammagiri?

- Length of stay can not be determined definitely beforehand, but will depend on mutual agreement how well guest is settling in.
- Please consider if you really can commit to the requested dates, as it may be difficult for Dhammagiri to accommodate short term changes or cancellations of bookings. Short term cancellations may negatively effect consideration for your future bookings.
- Check In/Check Out is in the morning 07.00 am to 12.00 pm

Arrival:_____

Departure:_____

● I have read the attached 'Guidelines for Female Guests', and agree to observe them during my stay at Dhammagiri.

Signed:_____

Date:_____

Looking forward to seeing you soon at Dhammagiri.

May all beings be happy and at ease!