

Hillwalking Retreats - Walking, Mountains and Meditation

About the retreat

Nature is for many of us, a vital source of spiritual nourishment in an increasingly busy world. On these retreats, we will combine traditional Buddhist teachings with the simple practice of spending time walking in the rich and beautiful landscapes that surround Dhanakosa. We will cover an introduction to two traditional Buddhist meditations: the mindfulness of breathing and the development of loving kindness (Metta Bhavana), as well as a solid introduction to the principals of meditation. We will also be exploring some of the broader aspects of traditional Buddhism to get a flavour of how these might be relevant to our modern lives. But, perhaps most of all we will be enjoying a reflective and companionable week in the richness and beauty of nature. Exploring how our connection with the natural world supports us to be more fully ourselves.

The retreat will include three days of guided walks, spread throughout the week. There will be walk options available to suit all levels of fitness. All walks are in the local area but some require a short drive to get to the starting point. You can of course also go on your own walks and our walk leaders will be able to advise you. Please note, appropriate clothing is essential for many of the guided walks – see “Is there anything special I need to bring?”

These retreats are suitable for complete beginners to meditation, and those who already have some experience. You can expect there to be between 20 and 26 retreatants on these retreats

Is there anything special I need to bring?

Yes!

A pair of well fitting walking boots with good grip and ankle support is essential for the medium and difficult graded walks as many of these walks include sections of uneven ground. Our guides will not take you on a walk if they consider your footwear unsuitable.

Waterproof jacket and trousers.

Suitable clothing: Light weight trousers (not jeans), an under-layer that will “wick” moisture away from the skin (preferably not cotton), and a fleece for warmth. Have a spare top for additional warmth as well. A hat and gloves are essential.

A small rucksack, a water bottle and sun cream.

If you are planning to go for your own walks make sure you also have a map (Explorer 365 - the Trossachs is best) and a compass.

What can you expect from the programme?

The retreat day starts at 7am with a rising bell and a meditation at 7.30.

Meditation sessions will begin with some instruction and will normally last for between 20 and 30 minutes. On walking days we will meet after breakfast to organise the day's walks, returning to the centre in the afternoon for another meditation before the evening meal.

In the evening there will be a mix of talks group discussions and an exploration of Buddhist chanting. On non walking days there will be opportunities for deeper engagement with meditation practice and periods of reflection – often taking advantage of the surrounding natural environment.

There will be periods of silence on the retreat to support reflection. These will normally be overnight, but may also include substantial periods during the day.

About the retreat team

These retreats will be lead by our retreat leading team. Each retreat will have a main meditation teacher and two or three walk leaders who will also be practicing Buddhists familiar with both the local area and retreats. We will also have a retreat organiser and a cook.