



Rooted in Consciousness

2019 Ganeshpuri Retreat with Sadguru Swami Nirmalananda

FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions

Can anyone go attend this retreat?

There is a prerequisite: An application for these studies with Swamiji is due by August 31, 2019.

When you have made your retreat deposit, an application link will be emailed to you to complete.

It is helpful to understand that travel in India can be challenging. More importantly, instead of being a vacation, this is a pilgrimage, a very deep immersion into the ancient roots of our Svaroop lineage. It is a truly transformational journey.

What is the cancellation policy?

All requests for cancellation must be submitted in writing to Svaroop® Vidya Ashram by email or snail mail. Allow 30 days for refunds to be processed. Regardless of the reason, cancellations result in additional costs and processing time for the retreat organizers (both in the USA and in India). The following charges will be assessed for cancellation, regardless of reason:

April 1- September 30 2019 — 25% of your total retreat price per person, not to exceed the amount already paid.

October 1 2019 or later — 75% of your total retreat price per person

If you arrive late or leave your retreat prior to its conclusion, refunds will not be made for the unused portion of your retreat. No refunds will be made for any portion of your retreat that you choose to miss or not to take for any reason.

What is included in the enrollment fee?

Your Enrollment Fees include program tuition, your housing and meals during the retreat, transportation to and from Mumbai airport to the retreat if you arrive with the group.

What are the enrollment fees?

Member* early total (on or before October 30, 2019): \$3,401.00.

A non-refundable deposit of \$781.00 is required to begin your application process. Once you are admitted, your deposit will be applied in full toward your total enrollment fee; if for any reason your application is declined, your deposit will be refunded to you within 2 weeks.

Non-Member early total (on or before October 30, 2019): \$3,651.00.

A non-refundable deposit of \$781.00 is required to begin your application process. Once you are admitted, your deposit will be applied in full toward your total enrollment fee; if for any reason your application is declined, your deposit will be refunded to you within 2 weeks.

Standard total: \$3,901.00.

A non-refundable deposit of \$781.00 is required to begin your application process. Once you are admitted, your deposit will be applied in full toward your total enrollment fee; if for any reason your application is declined, your deposit will be refunded to you within 2 weeks.

Payment Plan must complete by October 31, 2019:

First payment is \$781.00, which begins your application process. Once you are admitted, your deposit will be applied in full toward your total enrollment fee; if for any reason your application is declined, your deposit will be refunded to you within 2 weeks.

Your 6 monthly payments of \$520.00 begin April 1, on your pre-authorized credit card or bank account. Payment plan total \$3,901.00. If your payments begin later, your deposit will be the amount needed to bring you up-to-date with the payment schedule.

Optional Blanket Donation:

5 yoga blankets per person are being purchased in India for our yoga classes. At the end of the retreat, these are donated to the poor, just in time for winter. The Ashram's cost for these blankets is approximately \$75.00 per person. If you can donate toward the purchase of the blankets and their subsequent gift to needy locals, [click here](#) or contact our Enrollment Advisors at programs@svaroopayoga.org or 610.806.2119.

*Memberships that qualify for the discounted early rate: SATYA and Monthly Donors

What is the early bird discount for the payment plan?

The payment plan is not available for the early bird discount.

Why is the tuition higher than in recent India retreats?

We do our best to keep tuition affordable, but there has been an increase in retreat costs compared to prior years. Most of the increase is India's new 18% GST (Gross Sales Tax), which is required to be added on top of our other costs.

Can I use more than one credit card or a combination of check and credit to make payments?

Yes. Contact our Enrollment Advisors to make this arrangement, (610) 806-2119 or programs@svaroopayoga.org.

How long is the flight to India?

You can estimate 13-15 hours for an overnight non-stop flight. Many flights arrive or depart Mumbai in the middle of the night.

What flight do you recommend?

Our recommended group flight is:

To India: United Airlines Flight 48 nonstop, depart EWR (Newark) on 11/30/18 at 8:10 pm, arrive 9:40 pm on Dec 1 BOM (Mumbai)

If you are starting in a different city than Newark, you can have United Air add your connecting flight into your overall India trip. It is usually inexpensive to add your home city.

To USA: United Airlines Flight 49 nonstop, depart BOM (Mumbai) on 12/13 at 12:10 am. Please note that this is 10 minutes after midnight, so you go to the airport on 12/12. Arrives EWR (Newark) on 12/13 at 5:40 am.

Returning flights depart around midnight (India time). If it changes by even a few minutes, it might be counted as a different date (the night before or morning after), so pay close attention to the date and time when you make your reservation.

You are responsible for making your own flight arrangements and paying for your own ticket, whether you travel on the recommended flight or any other. You do need to let us know your flight arrangements once you've made them.

Ground Transportation:

Our India Tour Manager is meeting the group flight at the airport to take everyone to Ganeshpuri, about a 1.5-hour car ride from the airport. If you travel on a different flight, simply meet the group at the airport in order to utilize this ground transportation.

For our group's return flight, ground transport is included. If you are on a different flight, simply plan your return to the Mumbai international airport with the group.

If you cannot join the group for the ground transportation, we'll give you contact information for making individual arrangements (for which there is an extra charge).

May I use my airline miles?

Yes. You're already making your reservations independently so you may use miles. Please let us know your flight arrangements once you've made them.

If I am not flying with the group what date and time should I arrive?

If you're on a different flight, simply come to the Mumbai International arrival terminal at the arrival time of the group flight, so we can include you in the group transportation to Ganeshpuri. When you give us your flight details, if you want to be included in the group transportation, please let us know so we have a seat for you on the shuttle.

If I am not on the flight with the group, how do I set up transportation to/from the airport to the retreat?

You may join the group for ground transportation. Simply schedule your flight to meet us in Mumbai. If your flight times do not correspond to our group travel times, we will give you the contact information of our Tour Manager so you can make personal shuttle arrangements, for which you will pay a taxi fee.

What airline do you recommend if I am flying separately?

The shortest flights are the least tiring, but they are not the least expensive. Those are offered by United Airlines (out of Newark) and Air India (out of Newark and out of JFK). Check with your travel agent for more information.

What if I arrive early?

If you plan on arriving early, you can set up your own ground transportation and housing arrangements in India; we will give you a contact person to help you. Please be advised that Swami Nirmalananda will not be available prior to the beginning of the retreat, as she will be preparing for it.

Can you explain the money exchange?

Indian currency is the rupee (INR). At the time of this writing, the exchange is approximately 70 Indian rupees to 1 US dollar (USD). For example, 2,000 INR = approximately \$28.57 USD.

You may do an online search for currency exchange information prior to departure. You can exchange money at the airport upon arrival in Mumbai, and our Tour Manager will also have money exchange services at the retreat, which is usually at a better rate.

What if I would like to do more travelling in India before/after the India 2019 dates?

If you are doing any travel before or after Ganeshpuri you must make your own arrangements through a travel agent. The group dates for "Rooted in Consciousness" are December 1- 12, 2019

For additional travel prior to, or after the retreat, Swami Nirmalananda recommends these sites:

Ashrams & Sacred Sites:

Within a few hours drive from Mumbai or Ganeshpuri: Nasik (a temple with one of the 12 Jyoti lingams), Alandi (home of Jnaneshwar), Dehu (home of Tukaram).

In Tamil Nadu: Shree Aurobindo's Ashram in Pondicherry, Ramana Maharshi's Ashram and the sacred mountain in Tivurunmalai

In Kerala: Ashram of Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma)

In Uttar Pradesh: Varanasi, Allahabad (the site of the Kumbha Mela, at the confluence of the sacred rivers). In Varanasi, the Ashram has a guest house on the banks of Ganga and can give you information about how to make a reservation and travel there.

Near Kolkata: Mother Theresa's mahasamadhi shrine, Ramakrishna's Kali temple (Dakshineswar Temple), Swami Vivekananda's Ashram (Belur Math)

North of Delhi: Rishikesh and Haridwar (holy cities)

Tourist destinations:

In Mumbai: Chowpatty Beach, Elephanta Caves

One-hour flight from Mumbai: Ajanta & Ellora caves

Near Delhi: Taj Mahal & Red Fort, Vrindavan (where Krishna lived)

Dharamsala: Dalai Lama and other Tibetan teachers live here

And many other wonderful destinations, with lots of information available to you online and in travel books.

Do I need a passport?

Yes, you must have a passport valid for six months beyond your travel dates. Your passport is issued by your own country's government.

In addition, you must also have a visa, which is issued by the government of India.

IMPORTANT: Your passport must be valid for 6 months after your departure date from India, or valid through June 2020 if you are departing India on December 12 2019. Start this process now!

Do I need a visa in addition to a passport?

Yes, after getting your passport, you must get a visa. Your visa is issued by the government of India. Apply for a TOURIST visa. This usually takes only a couple of weeks or less.

- a) Make sure your passport is valid for six months beyond your stay in India. For this retreat in December 2019, your passport should be valid through June 2020. If you need to renew your passport, you may use an agency or go through the Post Office (USA residents). This is the time to take care of this!
- b) You must have an Indian tourist visa, which you get from the government of India. They use an outside agency to process applications. This usually takes a couple of weeks. While there are services that offer an online application, this is not tried and true. Most yogis have successfully used Travia www.travia.com
- c) When applying for the Indian TOURIST VISA, complete the application and following their mailing requirements. You will send your passport to them, with photos and other information. They will return your passport, with the visa document pasted to one page of your passport, in about 2 weeks.

Should I get travel insurance?

It is highly recommended, and we suggest you contact your insurance company or travel agency.

Will I need inoculations?

Visit your General Practitioner or Travel Doctor 4-8 weeks prior to departure so you can make an informed decision about available vaccinations and anti-malarial treatment. Let them know you are visiting the rural Maharashtra region of India, north of Mumbai

The CDC and WHO recommend you are current on the following vaccinations for India; hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, cholera, yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, rabies, meningitis, polio, measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis), chickenpox, shingles, pneumonia and influenza, as well as Anti-malarial medication.

Check with your physician or travel doctor to see what is necessary for your personal situation, and for travel to Maharashtra India. It is up to you and your physician to decide which of these to take.

What if I have a pre-existing health condition and/or take prescription medication?

You must bring all medication that you require with you. If you are bringing prescription medication, also bring a letter from your doctor specifying the medication you require.

It is often very dusty in Ganeshpuri which could trigger asthmatic symptoms. Even if you rarely suffer from asthma, it is recommended you bring your inhaler with you.

If you have any pre-existing health conditions, including asthma and serious allergies, please let us know on the questionnaire or email rukmini@svaroopayoga.org.

Can I get over-the-counter medications in India?

We will be in village-India, with no local medical facilities. We give you full details for a personal first aid kit to bring but do rely on your travel doctor to give you full information. Once you have enrolled, we have a full information packet for you, which includes more information for your medical preparation.

What do I wear while in India? Do I need special clothes?

Modest dress is suitable for India:

Women should wear long pants or long skirts and cover their shoulders. Your top should be long enough to cover your hips and buttocks, all the way down to the top of your thighs. Low cut tops and sleeveless tops should not be worn, as they are not respectful of Indian village culture. Additionally, women cover the chest area with a scarf called a dupatta, or a simple shawl.

Men should also wear long pants and have covered shoulders (shorts are only for young boys in India).

Nights and early mornings are very cool, so bring a shawl that can serve as an extra blanket or to use as a seat cushion on the temple floor. In the early morning you will need a sweater or jacket.

Afternoons are warm, and you will want lightweight clothing, which is easy to purchase in the village.

Are laundry services available?

While in Ganeshpuri, you may wash your own clothes by hand in a bucket (which is in your bathroom) and hang your clothes to dry in your room or outside on the porch. Or you can have it done by the local village women, which our Tour Manager will make available. You pay by piece; it's very affordable.

What should I pack?

Swami's advice: place everything you want to take (including your money) on your bed — take away half of the clothing and double your money! We will also provide you with a packing list.

Please don't bring:

- Anything too precious or which you would be devastated to lose
- Laptops. Internet connections are not consistent. You can use your phone's data capacity when the internet goes down. Check with your service provider for fees.

Should I bring yoga props?

You may bring your own props but be aware of extra baggage costs your airline may charge.

We are providing you with 5 yoga blankets, though they are less thick than the plaid Mexican blankets most *Svaroopā*® yoga teachers use.

These blankets will be purchased in India, and we donate them to the poor after our retreat, just in time for winter. The Ashram's cost for these blankets is approximately \$75.00 per person. You may want to donate to SVA toward the purchase of the blankets and their subsequent gift to needy locals. If so, [click here](#).

Where are we staying in Ganeshpuri? What are the accommodations like?

Accommodations will be in various B&B's in the town of Ganeshpuri, or in Fire Mountain Ashram in Nimboli (the village across the river). The accommodation is simple and clean, specially prepared bedrooms in local homes. Your bathroom has a western style toilet and shower (which are both in the same room).

Some rooms have en-suite bathrooms and others share a hall bathroom with another room. Usually, only our group will be housed in each facility, so you are sharing with other Svaroopis (2, 3 or 4 to a bedroom). Prior to the retreat, we will be asking you about your sleep needs and if you want to request a specific roommate. Your travel information packet provides more details.

What does a typical day look like while in Ganeshpuri?

Your day's rhythms are built on the Ashram's daily flow with a special Ganeshpuri flair:

- You have an optional early morning start, with ceremonies and meditation at Nityananda Temple beginning at 4:20 am.
- Breakfast is followed by a recess (personal time).
- Our morning Guru Gita chant is followed by a *Svaroopa*[®] yoga class.
- Enjoy a satisfying vegetarian lunch followed by an afternoon recess.
- Swami Nirmalananda gives the teachings of the ancient sages in the late afternoon, in our satsang with chant and meditation included.
- Dinner concludes the scheduled activities, with your evening free.

We will have several group events:

- a group Abhishek at Nityananda's Mahasamadhi Temple with Swamiji performing the ritual bath for Nityananda
- a traditional Vedic yajña (fire ceremony)
- a group visit to Gurudev Siddha Peeth with Swamiji
- and other wondrous events as they manifest!

Activities during your free time may include:

- Gurudev Siddha Peeth
- Nityananda's sites
- Vajreshwari Devi Temple
- Akloli Dam
- Hot spring bathing facilities
- Nearby villages, Ashrams and Temples
- Shopping at the local bazaars
- Our charitable project, Yoga in the Village, may also invite us to observe their classes throughout the week!
- Receiving visits from guests

Must I participate at all events listed?

This trip is a deep spiritual immersion. Consider why it is that you are choosing to make this journey. This time with Swami Nirmalananda is a rare and precious opportunity.

In addition to our planned activities, you will have plenty of time to rest, nap, shop, visit the local sites, or maybe just sit and meditate at a place that beckons to you. Why would you NOT want to participate? It is sure to be an amazing and transformational retreat!

If you have further questions, please email your questions to programs@svaroopayoga.org. Or we can talk with you – just phone our Enrollment Advisors at 610.806.2119.