

Gutor-Losar Retreat 2023

February 11-21, 2023

Pre-Retreat Information

Covid Policy

The Community Risk Level in Santa Cruz County is currently low, so we are making masks optional in the Shrine Room. Vaccination is encouraged but not required. Good hand washing is still important to maximize health, and you should stay home if ill or exposed. We will continue to use exhaust fans for improved air quality, but social distancing may not be practical and everyone needs to be aware that chanting and playing horn instruments are part of our ritual activities. We encourage unvaccinated and immunosuppressed people to protect themselves with quality masks. We will have masks at the entrance to the shrine room for people who wish to use them.

For those traveling by air or other public transportation to get to Pema Osel Ling, we request that you self-test before leaving home and wear a mask during your travels. If anyone becomes ill and tests positive for Covid while at Pema Osel Ling, they will be asked to isolate and leave the retreat immediately. This policy will be reviewed periodically and may change if Covid risk increases again locally.

Directions, Parking and Driving on the Land

You will find directions for getting to Pema Osel Ling by car and public transportation [here](#). If you are flying into either SFO or SJC please let us know your itinerary so we can try to coordinate transportation to Pema Osel Ling for participants.

If you bring a car, please park in **Parking Lot A** (sign-posted). You may park by the Orchard House or Sangha House only if you are staying there. Please do not park in front of the pond, down by the cabin area or behind the Sangha House. Unless you have a physical disability, please do not drive around on the land. If you need to drive to the Shrine Room or Dining Hall, contact the office for a Parking Permit. Please keep onsite driving speed to less than 5 mph.

Arrival and Departure

Maps and welcome information will be posted at the Information Booth, across from the pond at the entrance to the property. Check-in time is from 3pm February 10 unless by prior arrangement. Check-out time is 12pm February 22. You will receive your housing assignment by email prior to arrival.

Accommodations

Housing is assigned according to your registration.. Each bed comes complete with sheets, a light comforter and pillow with case. You may wish to bring a warm blanket. A bath towel is provided. Rooms and bathhouses are heated. We have space to park but no hook-ups for RVs. If camping in a tent or RV please note that the outdoor bathrooms near the shrine room each have a shower with hot water but are not heated.

Food

We serve vegetarian/vegan options at all meals and meat dishes at most lunches. We will have gluten-free meal options. We apologize for not being able to accommodate individual dietary

restrictions or requirements beyond this. If you have high protein or other nutritional needs please bring supplemental snacks. There is limited refrigeration by pre-arrangement. Tea and hot water are available at the Dining Hall at all times. Coffee is available at breakfast.

Dinner at 5:00 on February 10 will be the first meal of the retreat. The last meal of the retreat will be lunch on February 21st.

What to Bring

- Mask(s) for Shrine Room and public areas
- Water and/or hot drink bottles
- Rain gear: umbrellas, rain coat, waterproof clothing and shoes
- Flashlight
- Ear-plugs (if disturbed by noise)
- Comfortable warm- and cool-weather clothing (layers work best)
- Warm clothing
- A warm blanket for the shrine room, as it is not heated
- Sturdy, closed-toe shoes for uneven terrain
- Special chair and cushion, if needed (we provide both in the Shrine Room)
- Prescription medication, especially asthma medication and heart medicines. The nearest hospital or emergency care clinic is an hour away.
- A notebook and pens/pencils.
- **If you have a personal phurba, you may bring it to be blessed in the mandala.**

Phones and Computers

Verizon provides the best cell phone service for this area. The phone in the Information Booth can be used to make free local calls. You may use a calling card on this phone for long distance calls. WiFi is available at the Dining Hall and the Bookstore; the password will be available at check in. The only WiFi in the accommodations is at the Orchard House and is only for those staying there. Please limit your WiFi use to a minimum, especially during sessions.

Work Assignments

We ask everyone to contribute 30-60 minutes of work each day towards the smooth running of our retreats. These assignments may include changing candles or water bowls, sweeping the shrine room, or preparing and cleaning up for tsok. If physical or other limitations affect your ability to do this, please let us know beforehand. You will receive your assignment prior to arrival.

Payments and Cancellation Policy

Please review our Payment and Cancellation Policies [here](#). Payment in full or an approved Payment Plan is due prior to the beginning of retreat.

Miscellaneous

- This is a rustic location. **Poison oak** is a plant that induces allergic reactions in most people after contact so please keep to the paths to prevent contact with it. **Tick Bites:** If you feel a bite and find a small black spot on your skin you may have a tick bite. Remove the tick with care so as not to leave the head embedded in your skin. Some ticks carry Lyme disease.
- **Wildlife:** Pema Osel Ling is home to many species of animals including raptors, corvids, songbirds, western grey and other squirrels, fox, raccoons, cougars, bobcats, various species of ants,

redwood and other spiders, beetles, flying insects, redwood mice, and wood rats. Please be respectful towards our wild neighbours; kindly do not feed or otherwise interfere with them. Please do not keep food in your room or tent; thank you.

- **Smoking, alcohol and recreational drugs** are not permitted on the land at any time.
- **Candles, fires and incense** are not permitted on the land at all. We are at a high fire risk year-round.
- **Pets** are not permitted at Pema Osel Ling. If you have a service animal please contact the office.

Dharma Treasures Gift Shop

The store stocks practice items, sadhanas, photos, books, gifts, cards, thangkas and other artwork, a selection of clothing, snacks, basic toiletries and flashlights. Cash, checks and credit cards are accepted. Contact details: (831) 761-6274; store@vajrayana.org; www.dharmatresures.com

Offerings

It is traditional for individuals to make an offering to teachers and translators at the end of retreats. Tibetan offering scarves (khatas) can be purchased at the Dharma Treasures store and we provide envelopes for monetary offerings. Please bring enough cash, as the bookstore is only able to offer limited cash back on debit purchases, and we do not have an ATM on the land.

You are welcome to email office@vajrayana.org or leave a message at (831) 761-6266 with any questions you may have. We hope you enjoy your retreat!