SIVANANDA
Ashram Yoga Retreat
BAHAMAS

Residential Study – Karma Yoga Program

Information Package

"Karma Yoga, or the practice of selfless service, is the best preparation for the practice of meditation. Without purifying the heart and the mind from selfishness and other negative emotions, success in meditation is not possible. The ashram is the best setting for such a practice. Serving others with joy, in the company of other spiritual practitioners, is a safe way to practice Karma Yoga and eventually attain success in meditation and enjoy the bliss of the spiritual life."

—Swami Swaroopananda,
Director, Sivananda Ashram Yoga Retreat Bahamas

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Our Mission

Our Mission is to carry-on the great teachings of Swami Vishnudevananda and his guru Swami Sivananda.

Swami Sivananda (1887-1963, Rishikesh, India), one of the great sages of modern times is the inspiration behind our organization. Swami Sivananda's teachings are a synthesis of the 4 main paths of Yoga (Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga). He has published over 200 books in English integrating all known Yoga systems, teaching a yoga of synthesis which is the basis for the modern practice of Yoga in the West.

Swami Vishnudevananda (1927-1993), disciple of Swami Sivananda was sent to the west in 1957 to spread the teachings of Yoga; the spiritual roadmap to inner peace.

His goal was to set into motion a holistic evolution towards peace. In Val Morin, Quebec, Swami Vishnudevananda began his work and founded the International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres. Swamiji was convinced that outer peace cannot exist without inner peace. He was one of the first yoga masters in the West to develop a comprehensive training program for yoga teachers. He believed that to create a real shift in the world towards peace he needed to teach and train as many people as possible in the ways of Yoga and the path to inner peace and freedom. Today there are more than 70 Sivananda Centers and Ashrams worldwide. His motto is "***Health is wealth. Peace of mind is happiness. Yoga shows the way***."

The Sivananda Yoga Retreat Bahamas, was founded in 1967 by Swami Vishnudevananda. The Yoga Retreat Bahamas carries forward Swamiji's mission by holding 7 Teacher Training sessions/year and offering a diverse spiritual program for vacationers and students. Lead by the Ashrams Director, **Swami Swaroopananda**, the program is filled year round with spiritual leaders, teachers, musicians and healers sharing their wisdom and insights. Swami Vishnu's vision was to bring teachers and leaders of all different religions and walks of life together so they could interact with one another and share their light – ***Unity in Diversity***.

The core staff is a community of residents who have devoted themselves to a spiritual path, living, practicing, and working together to care for the ashram and promote peace in the world through the philosophy and practice of yoga.

Students of the Residential Study Program play an integral role, while immersed in living a yogic lifestyle they support the smooth delivery of these wonderful programs and serve the guests and students in a many different ways. It is their dedication and commitment to their practice that creates a loving and supportive atmosphere for all!

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Your Spiritual Journey

The cornerstone of the Residential Study Program is selfless service, also called Seva or Karma Yoga. Swami Sivananda taught that the act of offering our services for the benefit of others purifies the heart and takes us further along the path in our spiritual evolution.

Egoism, jealousy, resistance, ideas of superiority, and all the kindred negative qualities vanish in the act of selfless service. You develop humility, pure love, sympathy, tolerance, and mercy. The sense of separateness is removed and selfishness eradicated. Karma Yoga develops a broad and liberal outlook on life and you begin to feel oneness and unity. On the path of Karma Yoga, you eventually obtain knowledge of the Self and realize One in all and All in one. You feel unbounded joy.

"Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realize" – these are the teachings and strength behind the Residential Study Program which has inspired spiritual aspirants around the world to live a life of brotherly love and spiritual unity.

The Sivananda Ashram Yoga Retreat Bahamas provides the perfect setting to put the teachings of Karma Yoga into practice. As part of a community of like-minded people you can deepen your knowledge and practice of yoga, open your heart, learn useful skills, and enjoy the beautiful white-sand beach. You do not have to be a yoga teacher in order to join the ashram's Residential Study Program— all that is needed is willingness to serve and to lead a yogic life.

The Residential Study Program gives practitioners an opportunity to fully immerse in the ashram life for 1 to 3 months. It is a structured program that follows a specific daily schedule that includes meditation, participation in all satsangs, 2-hour asana class, philosophical study, spiritual diary, and selfless service. Days begin early 5:30am and end at 10:00pm.

Selfless service (Karma Yoga) is a devotional practice. It is service performed without any expectation of result or reward for the person performing it. It is dedicating all your thoughts and actions for the greater good -not an easy task! Practiced faithfully this path of yoga helps to purify the mind and heart.

In this program you will be challenged by your own thoughts; physical and emotional habits will surface; and mental limitations may arise. It is a great opportunity to face these habits, preconceived ideas and assumptions that are not serving you well. The daily routine is designed to keep you focused on your higher purpose, to weather the internal storms and to let your light shine. Upon your arrival, you will be assigned to a supervisor who will guide and support you with your karma yoga assignment. Spiritual leaders (Swami's) are available as needed to provide wisdom and insight to your practice.

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Residential Study – Karma Yoga Program Options

A 36-Day Introduction Program
This program is a great way to experience the ashram and further your practice. You will be given an orientation to the teachings and an opportunity to attend the Sivananda Core Courses. Sample daily schedules can be found on page 8 and includes the following.

- begin and end your day with Satsang (meditation, chanting and lecture)
- 2 hour asana class either morning or afternoon depending on your Karma Yoga assignment
- 5 hours of karma yoga (selfless service) daily
- 1 hour study period
- Personal care time
- Two delicious vegetarian meals
- 7 hours of rest

A minimum 36 day commitment is required for first time participants since you will be required to attend the Essentials of Yoga I Core Course in your first week. The cost for the 36-day program is **$1,122.50**. If you would like to serve longer, additional days are calculated at $31.18/day. The cost includes accommodations, Bahamian VAT tax, meals, yoga classes, and participation in some of the Yoga Vacation Programs as work assignment schedule permits.

Three-Month Immersion Program
This program is a complete immersion in ashram life and is suitable for yoga teachers and those interested in fully committing to a spiritual life. The minimum length of stay under this program is three months. An interview with the Residential Study - Karma Yoga Program Coordinator is required for acceptance into the program. First time participants will be required to attend the Essentials of Yoga I Core Course. A sample daily schedule can be found on page 8. The program's daily schedule includes:

- begin and end your day with Satsang (meditation, chanting and lecture)
- 2 hour asana class either morning or afternoon depending on your Karma Yoga assignment
- willingness to offer daily selfless service in any aspect of ashram life for about 6 to 7 hours a day, as needed by the ashram
- 1 hour study period
- personal care time
- two delicious vegetarian meals
- 7 hours of rest

There is no fee for this program.

Seasonal Study and Service Program (6 months or more by invitation only**)**

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Who Can Participate?

The program is open to anyone who is willing to serve and to **lead a yogic lifestyle**. It is most suited to those with a strong yearning to embrace yoga as a spiritual practice.

If you have not completed Sivananda Teacher Training you must arrive on one of the following dates so that you can participate in our Residential Study Karma Yoga Program Training Course.

TTC grads and returning Karma Yogi's have more flexibility in terms of arrival and departure dates, which can be discussed with the Residential Study Karma Yoga Coordinator.

Arrival date	***Departure date (36 day program)***	***Departure date (3 months)***
June 8th 2015	July 14th	September 8th
July 4th 2015	August 9th	October 4th
July 31st 2015	September 6th	October 31st
August 16th 2015	September 21st	November 16th
September 3rd 2015	October 13th 2015	December 6th 2015
October 7th 2015	November 12th 2015	January 6th 2016
November 7th 2015	December 13th 2015	February 5th 2016
November 27th 2015	January 2nd 2016	February 26th 2016
December 29th 2015	February 3rd 2016	March 31st 2016
January 29th 2016	March 5th 2016	April 28th , 2016
February 27th 2016	April 3rd 2016	May 27th 2016
March 29th 2016	May 4th 2016	June 27th 2016
April 28th 2016	June 2nd 2016	July 26th 2016
May 28th 2016	July 2nd 2016	August 25th 2016
June 11th 2016	July 17th 2016	September 10th 2016
July 8th 2016	August 13th 2016	October 7th
August 6th 2016	September 11th	November 5th
September 3rd 2016	October 9th	December 3rd

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Types of Assignments

The karma yoga program involves 5hrs (Karma Yoga Introduction) and up to 8hrs (Karma Yoga Immersion) of selfless service/day. There is a wide variety of assignments which fall under these basic areas:

- Kitchen help (food preparation and dish washing)
- Gardening / composting
- Grounds / Maintenance
- Garbage removal
- Reception / reservations
- Marketing/ promotion
- Programs
- Guest services
- Teaching / coordinating programs
- Boutique
- IT/computer support
- Temple
- AV/sound equipment

Take your time when completing your application form and let us know what your interest and skills are as well as any limitations so we can match you to an appropriate area. Please note part of this practice is to stay open to whatever assignment you are given and do your best. If at any time you are struggling with your placement you can speak with the Residential Study Program Coordinator.

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Accommodations

Bring Your Tent (November to mid-June)

From October 25th to July: Tent accommodations only (you will need to bring your own tent). Pitch your tent near the beach, the bay, or amongst the palm trees in the garden and create your own private space in the ashram. Bring your own tent, camping gear, mattress, bedding and towels. You are welcome to bring a tent up to a size of 8'X 8'. We have limited spaces. Smaller tents have more options.

Dormitories (July to October)

Our single-gender Dormitories are simple and comfortable, furnished with 3-4 single beds and located in various locations around the ashram. Bedding and towels are provided and shared bathrooms are just a short walk away.

Meals

The yogic diet is a vegetarian diet that is conducive to the practice of yoga and progress in spiritual life. It draws on a balance of fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grains, milk products, legumes, and nuts and seeds, in both raw and cooked forms. Based on the ancient science of Ayurveda, a yogic diet promotes health and balance, reduces stress, and increases vitality, energy, and joy in your life.

Two buffet-style lacto-vegetarian meals are served at the ashram daily, at 10:00 am and 6:00 pm, prepared with love and care according to yogic dietary principles.

Both brunch and dinner offer nourishing vegetable, grain, and/or bean dishes as well as hearty soups. Brunch also includes delicious fruit, homemade granola, or freshly made yogurt. Raw fixings to make your own salad are offered at both meals, as well as our own baked bread. You are also welcome to enjoy a cup of our daily herbal tea selection.

Enjoy your meal by the ocean, in the tropical gardens, or in the main dining area amongst other yogis staying at the ashram.

Some participants recommend to bring snacks like nuts, bars, etc. because they are limited and expensive in the Bahamas.

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Sample Daily Schedules

Your daily schedule will depend on the times you are needed for Karma Yoga. Below are some examples but there are many different ways your day may be organized depending on your karma yoga assignment. You will finalize your schedule with your counsellor. The first example is for the Immersion Program, sample 1 to 3 is for the Introductory Program.

	Ashram Schedule	***Group 1 - KY Immersion***	***Sample 1***	***Sample 2***	***Sample 3***
5:30	Wake-up	Personal Care	Personal Care	Personal Care	Personal Care
6:00	Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang
7:00	Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang
8:00	Asana	Asana / Study	Asana	Asana	Selfless Service
9:00	Asana	Asana / Selfless Service	Asana	Asana	Selfless Service
10:00	Bunch	Nutrition	Nutrition	Nutrition	Nutrition
11:00	Karma Yoga	Selfless Service	Personal Care	Selfless Service	Selfless Service
12:00	Workshop	Selfless Service	Personal Care	Selfless Service	Selfless Service
1:00	Workshop	Selfless Service	Study	Selfless Service	Selfless Service
2:00	Workshop	Selfless Service	Selfless Service	Selfless Service	Personal Care
3:00	Workshop	Selfless Service	Selfless Service	Personal Care	Study
4:00	Asana	Selfless Service / Asana	Selfless Service	Personal Care	Asana
5:00	Asana	Study / Asana	Selfless Service	Study	Asana
6:00	Dinner	Nutrition	Nutrition	Nutrition	Nutrition
7:00	Free time	Personal Care	Selfless Service	Selfless Service	Personal Care
8:00	Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang
9:00	Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang
10:00	Sleep	Personal Care	Personal Care	Personal Care	Personal Care
10:30		Rest	Rest	Rest	Rest

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Expectations of Participants

Depending on your Karma Yoga assignment you will follow similar but slightly different routines. Most routines follow the schedules shown on the previous page. Please read the expectations carefully

- You will follow the rules and values of the Ashram
- You will book your own arrival and return flight and medical travel insurance
- You will wake-up at 5:30am to be ready to begin your day at 6am
- You will attend all morning and evening meditation/satsang
- You will participate in 1 asana class daily
- You will keep a spiritual diary and submit at the Monday morning staff meeting
- You will attend and participate fully to the best of your ability in your Karma yoga assignment
- You will not leave or be out of the ashram in the evenings after 8pm without explicit permission
- There are two meals/day which are vegetarian with some vegan options
- Between November and July you will stay in your own tent
- Between July and November you will be accommodated in a shared dormitory
- You will use the shared washrooms and showers
- You will assist with cleaning your own dishes
- You will attend study sessions as required
- You will refrain from any consumption of alcohol, meat or illegal drug use during your stay
- Smoking is not permitted in the ashram
- You will wear modest clothes while in the ashram. Swimsuits only allowed on beach.
- Shoulders and knees to be covered in the temple and Satsang Hall. As a staff member you are also expected to keep knees and shoulders covered around the ashram
- You will respect the differences in our diverse team of staff, karma yogis, students and guests
- You will respect the ambiance of the ashram environment and refrain from playing loud music and conversing loudly on your cell phone or computers in public areas.
- You understand that living this type of lifestyle, while rewarding and healthy, is challenging. It will be physically, emotionally and mentally demanding. Therefore it is essential that you disclose any health or behavioral issues in your application. Nondisclosure is not acceptable.
- You will seek assistance from your supervisor when you encounter challenges and/or conflicts or simply need some guidance
- **The Ashram and the Karma Yoga program are designed to support you in maintaining the daily schedule and discipline. In some cases, where participants have repeated discipline challenges, they would be asked to change to being a paying guest or leave the ashram.**

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What to Bring

Dress Code

As the ashram is a spiritual community and study center, we ask that clothing be respectable and modest. As members of the ashram staff, your represent the ashram and its values. You are welcome to dress in casual, comfortable clothes suitable for warm days and cool evenings.

At Satsangs and around the ashram, whether you are at work or not, your clothing should cover your shoulders and knees. In Satsang we wear clean, light colored clothes – not jeans or work clothes. You will be most comfortable in light-weight pants (women can also wear long skirts and dresses). The only exception to this dress code are:

- At the beach (although you should plan to bring a cover-up to wear on your way to and from the beach)
- During asana class your clothes should be modest (no halter tops, low necklines or short shorts).

This is a traditional ashram and all are expected to observe the dress code. Remember that while off-site (on Paradise Island and in Nassau), you still represent the ashram and should plan to dress accordingly. Bring your own essential items. Purchasing items in the Bahamas can be expensive.

Other useful items to bring for your stay at the ashram include:

- Yoga mat
- Meditation cushion
- Meditation shawl
- Slip-on sandals
- Swimsuit
- Beach towel
- Sunscreen
- Snorkeling equipment
- Rain gear
- Toiletries
- Alarm clock
- Flashlight
- Insect repellent
- Travel mug or tumbler
- Water bottle
- Blanket for cool days
- TTC Grad – Uniform, manual and wrist watch

For tent space only: bring your own tent, mattress, bedding, and towels.

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Travel Information

Fly directly to Nassau International Airport. Please Note: the Bahamas is an independent country and you will need a passport to travel here. Most citizens from the US, Canada, and European countries do not need a visa to visit the Bahamas (you can verify whether you require a visa to enter the Bahamas at Bahamas.com or by contacting your local Bahamian Consulate).

After collecting your luggage and passing through customs, call the Yoga Retreat at 363-2902 to let us know that you are on your way (there are pay phones just outside airport arrivals*). Take a taxi to our dock, located at **Elizabeth on Bay Marketplace and Marina**. Please note that you can pay for the taxi with American or Bahamian dollars (you can use either currency throughout the Bahamas and at the ashram).

* Please check with your cell phone company to find out how to use your phone in the Bahamas.

Our boat will pick you up from the dock (in accordance with boat schedule (below) during the day time, and upon your arrival for late night arrivals) and bring you to the ashram (an easy five-minute boat ride).

The boat schedule from the dock in Nassau to the Yoga Retreat Dock is as follows:

7:45 am
10:35 am
11:05 am
12:05 pm
1:05 pm
2:05 pm
3:05 pm
3:40 pm
6:35 pm
7:20 pm

We look forward to greeting you at the ashram!

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How to Register

Before you sign-up make sure you reviewed all the information in this booklet and visit our website at www.sivanandabahamas.org.

1. You will need to provide 2 references, name, relationship, phone number and email. Make sure your references are aware that they will be contacted.

2. Send an email to karmayogabahamas@sivananda.org indicating when you would like to come and for what program.

3. Complete the Application Form on line https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RSKYP_Application

4. SEND an email to karmayogabahamas@sivananda.org with the following:

   a. Head and shoulder photo
   b. Date which you completed the online survey

5. The Residential Study - Karma Yoga Coordinator will be in contact with you within 1 week of receipt.

6. Receive confirmation of acceptance of your application.

7. Book your flight!

8. Email the Karma Yoga Coordinator, your flight confirmation and medical travel insurance.