



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

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 9 Teacher Training sessions/year and offering a diverse spiritual program for vacationers and students. Led 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 many different ways. It is their dedication and commitment to their practice that creates a loving and supportive atmosphere for all!

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 at 5:30am and end at 10:00pm.

Selfless service (Karma Yoga) is a devotional practice. It is a 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 (Swamis) are available as needed to provide wisdom and insight to your practice.

Residential Study – Karma Yoga Program Options

A 36-Day Introductory 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 9 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. The cost for the 36-day program is **\$1044.00+VAT** . If you would like to serve longer, additional days are calculated at \$29/day+VAT. The cost includes accommodations, meals, yoga classes, and participation in some of the Yoga Vacation Programs as karma yoga assignment schedule permits. You will also be required to attend the Essentials of Yoga I Core Course in your first week (no additional cost).

Upon acceptance to the Introductory program, when submitting your flights to confirm your spot, a \$300 deposit will be required. We will send you a link to your reservation where you can make a secure deposit. Two weeks prior to your arrival, the remaining balance will be charged to the card on file. Our standard cancellation policy applies. Please visit our website for full details on our cancellation policy.

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 (90 days). You do not need to take our introductory program in order to take the 90 day immersion program. An interview with the Residential Study - Karma Yoga Program Coordinator **may** be required for acceptance into the program. First time participants will be required to attend the Essentials of Yoga I Core Course (no additional cost) which will begin a few days after the program start date. A sample daily schedule can be found on page 9. 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 8 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 the immersion program, however for students who do not complete the 90 day commitment a charge of \$29+VAT per night may be required for the nights spent in the ashram.

The duration of the advanced karma yoga program is 90 days. Among others, this is due to the Bahamas immigration laws that are currently enforced, and limit the stay of visitors to 90 days at most (regardless of the maximum length of stay that is allowed to certain nationalities according to local law). Therefore, any extension beyond 90 days will necessitate leaving the Bahamas and coming back, as well as specific approval of the karma yoga department. If this is of interest to you, please contact us and we will coordinate a phone call to discuss.

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.

Please note from November through to May, this is considered our *'busy season.'* The ashram hosts around 250-300 occupants at this time, which are composed of our permanent staff, vacationing guests, students and karma yogis. Although we want you to keep in mind that this is a busy time in the ashram and it can feel a bit crowded, it is also one of the best times to join us, as we have a variety of guest speakers, as well as beautiful celebrations planned!

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
- Productions
- Boats

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.

Accommodations

Bring Your Tent (Late October to June)

From October 20th (date to be determined based on needs and grounds condition) to June (date to be determined in June): Tent accommodations (you will need to bring your own tent and



equipment). When considering which tent and what equipment to bring, take into consideration our ground rules (below), that this tent will be your home for some time, and that the climate in the Bahamas is mostly very pleasant, but the nights can get cold, and there are some periods of heavy rain.

To optimize the camping experience of all those who use the camping grounds, we have set out the following guidelines:

- As we have limited camping space, tent sizes can be up to 8x8 in size. Tents larger than 8x8 will not be set up and you will be sent to purchase a complying tent in Nassau. To clarify, an 8x8 tent uses a 9x9 footprint. Anything extending beyond that (extended rain flies, extended front porch etc.) will not be allowed.
- When selecting your tent, make sure you select one that is durable and of good layout, a good rain fly and a good floor (not the thin fabric from which the rest of the tent is made of) are very important. Tents that are too small or very low to the ground are not recommended. By way of example only:
 - We had some very good experience with this affordable Coleman 8x8 tent: https://www.amazon.com/Coleman-Sundome-4-Person-Tent-Green/dp/B004J2GUOU/ref=sr_1_3?s=outdoor-rec+relation&ie=UTF8&qid=1516226000&sr=1-3&keywords=coleman+sundome+4+person+tent
 - For mid-range budget: https://www.amazon.com/Coleman-2000018016-4-Person-Instant-Cabin/dp/B004E4AVY8/ref=sr_1_3?s=sporting-goods&ie=UTF8&qid=1516226308&sr=1-3&keywords=4+person+cabin+tent

When selecting your camping equipment, keep in mind that you will be sleeping on the ground within the ashram. We cannot guarantee a tent location that will be perfectly flat, isolated, or quiet. We are a communal environment, so your tent will be located in areas with other karma yogis! If you are a very light sleeper or have back issues please let us know in advance.

Here is a list of equipment that is usually used by our staff:

- 10x10 good quality tarp
- Air mattress/sleeping mat (remember your tent will be directly on the ground!)
- Sleeping bag and a light blanket for warmer nights
- Pillow, Linen, Shower towel and beach towel
- Flashlight (headlight is best, hand held if not possible)
- Small lock for your tent
- Optional recommended items: Ear plugs/sleeping mask (optional); Battery operated fan (optional), Solar light (optional), Any solar operated devices to charge electronics etc **(Extension cords are not permitted)**

What to expect when you arrive with your tent?

Our staff will show you possible locations – you will need to choose from what is available. You are expected to be able to set up your own tent, but our staff will be available to assist if you run into difficulties. Have issues with your tent before or after it is set up? Your tent got wet? Let our reception office know and they will send staff to assist.

Not sure what it'd be like to sleep in a tent? Try it at home before you join us!

Dormitories (July to late October)

Our single-gender Dormitories are simple and comfortable, furnished with 3-4 single beds and located in various locations around the ashram. Bedding is provided and shared bathrooms are just a short walk away. Bring a towel or two and if you are a light sleeper ear plugs are a good idea!!



*Please note that we can not accommodate students in rooms during the high season. We recommend that you consider joining us in the summer when we offer indoor accommodations if you can not sleep in a tent. Unfortunately, no exceptions can be made here.

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 9:45 am and 5:45 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, homemade bread or freshly made yogurt. 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 are recommended to bring snacks like nuts, bars, etc. because they are limited and expensive in the Bahamas.

Although we try our best to accommodate all students dietary needs, if you have a number of restraints to your diet it is important to bring with you any supplements, vitamins or additional food items you may need during your stay.



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
6:00	Satsang	Meditation/Satsang		Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang
7:00	Satsang	Meditation/Satsang		Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang
8:00	Asana	Asana	Study	Asana	Asana
9:00	Asana	Asana	Selfless Service	Asana	Asana
10:00	Bunch	Nutrition		Nutrition	Nutrition
11:00	Karma Yoga	Selfless Service		Personal Care	Selfless Service
12:00	Workshop	Selfless Service		Personal Care	Selfless Service
1:00	Workshop	Selfless Service		Study	Selfless Service
2:00	Workshop	Selfless Service		Selfless Service	Personal Care
3:00	Workshop	Selfless Service		Personal Care	Study
4:00	Asana	Selfless Service	Asana	Selfless Service	Personal Care
5:00	Asana	Study	Asana	Selfless Service	Study
6:00	Dinner	Nutrition		Nutrition	Nutrition
7:00	Free time	Personal Care		Selfless Service	Selfless Service
8:00	Satsang	Meditation/Satsang		Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang
9:00	Satsang	Meditation/Satsang		Meditation/Satsang	Meditation/Satsang
10:00	Sleep	Personal Care		Personal Care	Personal Care
10:30		Rest		Rest	Rest

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 provide proof of your health visa, medical insurance that covers COVID illnesses, full (2 shots) immunization record, negative covid test before arriving
- Wear a face mask at all times in the ashram and while traveling outside the ashram. An exception will be made for Asana class.
- Respect social distancing.
- Use only the assigned toilet, shower and sink and keep them clean and sanitized at all times
- Complete daily health questionnaire, and notify karma yoga coordinator immediately via email if you show any signs of illness,
- 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 your weekly sadhana 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 June you will stay in your own tent
- Between June and November you will be accommodated in a tent hut (June) or same gendered 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 within and outside the ashram
- Smoking is not permitted in or off ashram property
- You will wear modest clothes while in the ashram. Swimsuits are only allowed on the 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 is 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.**

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, you 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 lightweight pants (women can also wear long skirts and dresses). You will also want to **bring a pair of comfortable and closed toe shoes** in the event that you are assigned to the kitchen or gardens. The only exception to this dress code are:

- Face masks
- 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
- Closed toe shoes
- Swimsuit
- Beach towel, washing towel
- Sunscreen
- Rain gear
- Toiletries
- Alarm clock
- Flashlight
- Portable battery charger
- Insect repellent
- Travel mug or tumbler
- Water bottle
- Blanket for cool days
- TTC Grads – Uniform, manual and wrist watch

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

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. The Ashram has free accessible wifi, so downloading calling apps may be of use.

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

Things to Remember Before Registering!

This is a full immersion program, the schedule can feel overwhelming to begin with and it can take some time to settle into the routine. The days are long, with the morning bell ringing at 5:30am and evening Satsang concluding at 10:00pm. If you know that your body requires 8+ hours of sleep, this schedule will only allow for 7 hours with self-discipline.

Selfless service means finding meaning in your service without validation or expectation. In the ashram, assignments are based on the need and not always individual talents. It is important to be open and accepting to whatever assignment you are given.

Remember, that this is a full immersion into a yoga lifestyle. It requires full participation and discipline with the daily schedule. It is important to understand that when you join this program you are coming to focus on your spiritual practice and growth. The schedule does not allow for much time to work remotely or work on personal projects. You must have discipline with the schedule. Meaning, 7 days of service, with no days off but some free time each day.

Attendance is monitored and students are required to attend all aspects of the daily schedule.

It is important to come with an open heart and no expectations. This program can be rewarding in so many ways, and we hope to have the opportunity to practice and grow with you!

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. Complete the **Initial Registration Request Form** found at the link below or on our website <https://www.volgistics.com/ex/portal.dll/ap?ap=882803647>
2. Visit the Bahamas Travel website and familiarize yourself with the COVID requirements (<https://www.travel.gov.bs/>)
3. Upon completion of the Initial Request form, a Karma Yoga Coordinator will send you an additional link via-email for the detailed second portion of the application form. This portion of the application must be completed before applications can be processed.
4. You will need to provide 2 references, name and email. Make sure your references are aware that they will be contacted. We can not process your application without your references. References can be friends, family members, employers or teachers - ideally someone who has known you for some time and is aware of your interest in the program.
5. SEND an email to karmayogabahamas@sivananda.org with the following:
 - a. Your photo (head/shoulder shot) if you were unable to upload one onto your application
 - b. Date which you completed the online survey and your requested program dates
 - c. A copy of your immunization card
6. The Residential Study - Karma Yoga Coordinator will be in contact with you within 1 week of receipt.
7. Receive confirmation of acceptance of your application.
8. Once you receive your acceptance letter you can book your flights!
9. Email the Karma Yoga Coordinator, your flight confirmation and medical travel insurance. Flight details confirm your booking, without these details we are unable to confirm your spot for the program. *If you have registered for the Introductory program a \$300 deposit will be required.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Ashram!
Om Shanti, Om Peace