

About Saranam Retreat Center Spaces

The Common Room/Dining Space

The Common Room offers both a sitting area with couches, chairs, cushions and a table area for table work and meals. The two long handmade tables can seat 20 people. During good weather, people can also use the long folding tables and chairs on the screened porch.

Kitchen

The fully equipped kitchen is suitable for either light use, such as storing and reheating food and beverages, or for full meal preparation. The kitchen is stocked to serve up to 20 people and has a dishwasher. We reduce the cost for lighter use. Plentiful labels should help you find things.

Library/Gathering Space

Also called the Dharma Den, this is where “Dharma Talks” are held on Zen retreats. It is a light and quiet place to talk, read, or relax. The library has texts of various meditation and contemplative traditions. You’re welcome to check out books from the left-side shelves and return them in a timely manner.

Zendo

The Zendo is a spacious carpeted room lit by large windows and a cupola. It is ideal for meditation, ceremonies, teaching, yoga, and the like. Some meditation cushions, benches, back-jack chairs, blankets, yoga mats, and chairs are available.

Dokusan Room

The Dokusan room is a small interview room with insulated fabric on the walls for privacy. It may be used as a “snore-atorium” during overnight events, as one of the few private rooms. It is also useful for private phone calls.

Downstairs Bathroom

This bathroom features a toilet, sink and shower. The downstairs shower may be used during overnight stays and for medical or other important reasons. To save water, we strongly encourage people to use the outhouse beyond the Zendo whenever possible.

Outhouse

Please consider going outside to ease our septic system. The outhouse has two separate bucket toilets spaces. The buckets are filled with sweet-scented cedar shavings. When filled the buckets are emptied on our humanure piles for decomposition and use on our flower gardens.

Upstairs Bedrooms

Upstairs is generally reserved for overnight stays. There are two dorm rooms and three private rooms. Private rooms are used by light sleepers, heavy snorers, and couples. Groups generally assign the dorm rooms by gender. The larger, blue carpet room is straight ahead as you go up the stairs. It sleeps 6, with 2 bunk beds, and two single beds. Adjoining this space is one private room with a queen bed.

Just to the left at the top of the stairs is a private room with a double futon and a single futon, sleeping 3.

The smaller, rose carpet room is to the right as you go up the stairs. It sleeps 4, with 1 bunk bed and 2 twin beds. Adjoining this space is a small private room with a single futon bed.

There are linens available for each bed at Saranam. However, to reduce our need to do laundry and your laundry fees, please consider bringing your own linens.

Other sleeping spaces

In the library there is a couch that comfortably sleeps one, and the library annex has a futon that sleeps 2. There are doors and curtains in these rooms to provide privacy.

There is a tiny room (dokusan room) near the Zendo (meditation hall) that has a futon which will sleep one.

Upstairs Bathrooms

There are two upstairs bathrooms with showers and baths. All have some minimal soap options, but we suggest you bring your own bathing needs, and take them with you when you leave. Towels are available, but bringing your own will reduce our laundry duties and your laundry fees.

The Hermitage

A 10x14' heated cottage up in the woods and surrounded by a covered porch, the Hermitage can be used for personal retreats, a teacher's private residence during retreats, or an extra sleeping quarters during overnight stays when booking the whole property. It offers a full-sized bed, a desk, gas heat, an electric kettle, and a washbasin. Although there are linens available, please consider bringing your own bedding for a double bed.

Outdoor Property

The outside property may be used for community gatherings and ceremonies, meditation and contemplation, education and study, camping and just being in nature.

Saranam is graced by a diverse, oak-dominant hardwood forest. There are walking trails throughout the woods. The top of the knoll and the “grandmother hemlock grove” are great places to gather.

The field to the west of the driveway and the field below the front of the main building are unfenced and open for walking. The other fields are leased to a local farmer, whose cattle and horses can often be seen grazing.

You can also free to walk or play around the stream that runs through the property. We are currently working to naturalize the stream, so be careful not to damage the wetland area.

A cherished feature of the Saranam landscape is our Stupa. Completed in 2018 and built in the traditional Tibetan Buddhist style, it contains numerous prayers, aspirations for peace and realization, holy relics, and other auspicious offerings. It is oriented with the local geography for most benefit. It is a great place for meditation, prostration, circumambulation, and relaxing.

Camping during retreats or other overnight events is welcomed. Campers are asked not to have fires outside designated fire pits.

Groups can reserve use of the outside property with or without using the inside spaces. Special permission is needed for use of the property while the main building is occupied by other groups.

Other usage information

Internet & Phone

We do have Internet and a phone at Saranam, but as this is a retreat center we ask that you use them minimally. Personal phones may be used, but we ask that you try not to disturb others on your phones or devices. If you need to make a phone call, please consider choosing a private room or going outside, so as not to disturb others’ retreat.

Parking We use the roundabout in front of the main building for unloading/loading or when accessible parking is needed. Once unloaded, park cars along the driveway below the prayer flags, or in the field near the gate, so that we can maintain the natural serenity and view.

Children are welcome at Saranam, but parents or guardians should be aware of their whereabouts, and supervise when necessary. We ask that children not be allowed to disturb others in retreat.

Pets are not allowed inside buildings at Saranam except for specific medical needs. If pets are brought to the Saranam grounds, they should not be allowed to disturb gardens, local livestock, or wildlife.