

Ready to Retreat?

A Planning Guide for Meditation in Thailand

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Finding the right retreat is one thing. Arriving prepared is another.

Before you book, sit with these questions. They'll help you clarify the retreat that truly fits.

Intention

What is drawing me to retreat right now — rest, deepening practice, or something I can't yet name?

Format

Is this a personal retreat, or would a guided group format serve me better?

Commitment

How many days can I realistically commit — and am I ready for that length?

Experience

Have I done any sitting practice before? Does the center require prior experience?

Setting

Am I drawn to a forest monastery, a city center, or a coastal setting?

Tradition

Do I have a preferred tradition? (Theravāda, Mahāyāna, Vajrayana, non-sectarian, or secular mindfulness)

Language

Do I need instruction in English, or am I comfortable with in a Thai-language environment?

Structure

Am I looking for structured silence, or some guided interaction?



Packing and Preparation

Pack light, pack mindfully. Most centers have minimal storage. Simplicity supports the practice.



Packing Essentials

- Loose, modest clothing in white or muted colors
- White clothing set where required
- Light layers for early mornings
- Closed-toe shoes or sandals for walking meditation
- Personal medications and basic toiletries
- Small torch/headlamp, water bottle, journal, and pen
- Spiritual objects meaningful to your practice
- **Pro tip:** Intentionally leave behind books and journals, allow your mind to rest with impermanence.



Travel Logistics

- Plan your route to and from the center in advance
- Confirm arrival time and check-in instructions
- Allow extra time for buses, trains, ferries, or transfers
- Keep your phone accessible until check-in
- After arrival, silence devices and focus on connecting to your immediate environment
- **Pro-tip:** walk barefoot for the duration of the retreat to settle in quickly



Health & Diet

- Tell the center about allergies or dietary needs early
- Expect simple vegetarian meals at many retreats
- Bring any essential prescriptions with you
- Prepare for long sitting periods with gentle stretching
- Sleep well before arrival and stay hydrated
- **Pro tip:** place balled up socks behind your bent knees while sitting to ease pressure over long durations.

Dana — Offering Generously & Appropriately

- Dana is a foundational practice in Buddhist retreat culture, not a transaction. Most Thai centers operate on dana 4 the retreat is offered freely; your contribution sustains the center and teachers. Prepare cash in Thai Baht (1,000 -3,000 THB suggested for a 10-day retreat).
- If the retreat was transformative, consider a larger offering as it directly enables the next participant's access.

A Two Week Roadmap into Silence

The transition into retreat begins before you arrive. Give yourself time to gently release yourself from the busy world before entering silent reality.

1

1–2 Weeks Before: Notification of Retreat

- Set an email auto-reply: "I am on retreat and unavailable until [date]"
- Inform your workplace, close family, and any dependents
- Settle any financial matters that would otherwise pull your attention
- Leave emergency contact details with one trusted person outside the retreat
- Pre-schedule any time-sensitive tasks or delegate them

2

3–5 Days Before: Digital Wind-Down

- Begin reducing screen time and social media use to less than 2 hrs per day.
- Turn off news notifications
- Cook your own meals for the final 3 days before your retreat, this signals to your body and mind that attention is returning to your center.

3

Inner Preparation

- Sit in meditation daily, even for 10–15 minutes
- Consider writing a brief letter to yourself: Why am I going? What am I hoping for? What am I willing to let go of?
- Hold your intentions lightly, the retreat will take its own shape
- Rest well in the days before departure

"Retreat preparation is itself a practice. The care you bring to these steps is already the beginning of your journey inward."

Not sure which retreat is right for you? We help conscious travelers find and reach meditation centers across Thailand including remote and hard-to-reach monasteries.

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