

## 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.

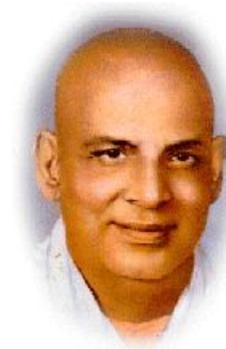
His goal was to set into motion a holistic evolution towards peace. In Val Morin, Quebec, Swami Vishnudevananda began his work and founded the International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres. Swamiji was convinced that outer peace cannot exist without inner peace. He was one of the first yoga masters in 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 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!

## 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 (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 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 may be 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, however for students who do not complete the 90 days you will be required to pay the nightly Karma Yoga rate of \$31.18 for the nights spent in the ashram.**

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

## 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.

<b><i>Arrival date</i></b>	<b><i>Departure date (36 day program)</i></b>	<b><i>Departure date (3 months)</i></b>
April 29th 2017	June 4th 2017	July 28th 2017
May 12th 2017	June 17th 2017	August 10th 2017
June 9th 2017	July 15th 2017	September 7th 2017
June 20th 2017	July 26th 2017	September 18th 2017
July 7th 2017	August 12th 2017	October 5th 2017
August 4th 2017	September 9th 2017	November 2nd 2017
September 8th 2017	October 14th 2017	December 7th 2017
October 7th 2017	November 12th 2017	January 5th 2018
October 22nd 2017	November 27th 2017	January 20th 2018
November 6th 2017	December 12th 2017	February 4th 2018
November 26th 2017	January 1st 2018	February 24th 2018
December 11th 2017	January 16th 2018	March 11th 2018
January 23rd 2018	February 28th 2018	April 23rd 2018
February 20th 2018	March 28th 2018	May 21st 2018
March 24th 2018	April 29th 2018	June 22nd 2018
April 12th 2018	May 18th 2018	July 11th 2018
May 14th 2018	June 19th 2018	August 12th 2018

## 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** (November to 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 mid-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.

# 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.

<b>Ashram Schedule</b>	<b>Group 1 - KY Immersion</b>		<b>Sample 1</b>	<b>Sample 2</b>	<b>Sample 3</b>
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
			Selfless Service		Selfless Service
9:00	Asana	Asana		Asana	Selfless Service
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		Selfless Service	Personal Care
4:00	Asana	Selfless Service	Asana	Selfless Service	Personal Care
			Asana		Asana
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 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 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 within and outside the ashram
- Smoking is not permitted in or off ashram property
- 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.**

# 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). 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.

# 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](http://Bahamas.com) or by contacting your local Bahamian Consulate).

**Due to immigration laws in the Bahamas, we are only able to allow students to stay in the Ashram and participate in the program for 90 days. If you wish to extend you will require approval and you will be required to leave the Bahamas for a minimum of 1-2 nights, in which you will then be allowed to return to the ashram for additional Karma Yoga. Unfortunately, no exceptions can be made in this area.**

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

# 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](http://www.sivanandabahamas.org).

1. 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.
2. SEND an email to [karmayogabahamas@sivananda.org](mailto: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
3. Complete the Application Form online found at the link below or on our website [https://www.sivanandabahamas.org/visiting-the-ashram/residential-study\\_karma\\_yoga/](https://www.sivanandabahamas.org/visiting-the-ashram/residential-study_karma_yoga/)
4. The Residential Study - Karma Yoga Coordinator will be in contact with you within 1 week of receipt.
5. Receive confirmation of acceptance of your application.
6. Book your flight!
7. 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.

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