

Information for Guests Staying at Temple Forest Monastery

Greetings,

We appreciate your interest in staying at Temple Forest Monastery.

First time guests may stay for up to one week if coming from within New England (or for up to two weeks if coming from further afield). If your first stay goes well, you may request to stay for a longer period of time when returning for a second visit. We discourage making reservations more than two months in advance of the date you wish to stay.

All guests staying at the monastery are expected to abide by the Eight Precepts, including not eating again after the main meal, which ends around noon, until the 7 a.m. breakfast the next day. (Tea and juice and sometimes some sweets are available around 5 p.m.) Guests are also expected to participate fully in the daily routine, including the morning group meditation, which begins at 5 a.m., and the evening group meditation, which begins at 7 p.m. The morning routine includes a brief chore period and a longer work period.

This document provides more detailed information for guests. Please read through it, and feel free to ask any questions by email to the Guest Monk at guestmonk@jetagrove.us.

Staying at the Monastery

The monastery is located on about two hundred and forty rustic acres in Southern New Hampshire. Temple Forest Monastery is not a retreat or meditation center; it is a monastery devoted to the training of monks in the Forest Tradition of Theravada Buddhism, with facilities for interested laypeople to practice and learn alongside them for a time if willing to follow the same routines.

In keeping with our tradition there is no charge for anything at Temple Forest Monastery, which is supported entirely by voluntary donations in the form of food and other material requisites, money, and work. While there is no obligatory charge to stay, guests are encouraged to consider how they might contribute to the needs of maintaining the monastery, developing the virtues of generosity, gratitude and kindness which are important qualities supporting the practice of mental cultivation.

Cancellation Policy

We ask that reservations not be made until one can firmly commit to those dates without the likelihood of changing or canceling.

Arranging for Transportation

The monastery can neither arrange nor provide transportation for guests. Please plan to arrange for your own transportation to and from the monastery.

Outside Business and Coming & Going while Staying at the Monastery

A monastery is a sanctuary from usual worldly concerns for those who have dedicated themselves to spiritual practice; we try to maintain a quiet, contained, contemplative atmosphere. For the duration of your stay you become part of the life of the community, and how you behave affects everyone in the monastery. It is therefore inappropriate to come and go from the monastery without notice, or to engage in external business during your stay. Please take care of all relevant business before your arrival so that you can put everything aside during your stay. As an overnight guest of the monastery, you are expected to stay within the monastery grounds or the immediately surrounding area for the duration of your visit. If you need or wish to go into town or otherwise go out for any reason, first ask permission from the Abbot or the Guest Monk.

Communication: Phone & Internet

To help make the monastery a haven of quiet, simplicity, and solitude, you are asked to refrain from using phones, tablets or computers while staying here. You are encouraged to leave tablets or laptops at home – and to turn off your mobile phone during your stay.

If you have a need that requires use of the telephone or Internet, you can request access from the Guest Monk or the Abbot, and provision to use the monastery phone or computer can be made. Wi-fi access for your own device will not be available.

Special Diets and Times of Eating

Please note that we are unable to host overnight guests who require a special diet (any type of food, outside of what is offered to everyone on a daily basis) or guests who need to eat outside of the two meal times at 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. An exception can be made for diabetics who are on medication, or for similar serious medical needs (please inform the Guest Monk in your follow-up email if this would include you). Guests can have some tea or juice with honey or sugar, and sometimes certain “allowable” chewable calories such as boiled sweets or dark chocolate, in the afternoons at around 5 p.m. These items will be made available to guests on each afternoon – please refrain from keeping your own supplies (like all food offerings, they can be offered to the monastery and will be subsequently shared). Food items should not be stored individually by guests in their rooms or elsewhere.

Lodgings for Men and Women Guests and Monastic Residents

When arriving at the monastery, please pay attention to which areas are designated for Sangha (the monastic community) only, for men only and for women only. Men should not

enter spaces designated for women, and vice versa, without permission from a senior monk, and should be accompanied by another man or woman respectively.

One side of the Sala, which is the main area for meetings, cooking and meals, is also a monastic living space. Please be respectful of this by refraining from lingering in conversation in or near the building after 1 p.m.

Items to Bring with You when Staying Overnight

Bedding and towels are available if needed, but due to the difficulty of washing/drying/returning used laundry the day of your departure, it could be helpful if you bring your own:

- bedsheets
- (or) sleeping bag
- pillow case
- towel

Other items to bring:

- toiletries
- flashlight
- alarm clock
- portable timepiece such as a wrist watch
- sturdy work boots/shoes
- work clothes
- optional: work gloves, sun hat

Recommended seasonal clothing:

Summer: bug clothing or spray, sunglasses or lotion (if sensitive)

Spring/Fall: warm clothing, rain gear

Late Fall/Winter: very warm clothing (gloves, hat, coat), snow boots

Pets at Temple Forest Monastery

As a monastery policy, for various reasons, we do not allow pets in the monastery.

The Eight Precepts

All guests at Temple Forest Monastery abide by the Eight Precepts, examples of these include not eating after the main meal, which ends at noon, until the 7 a.m. breakfast the next day; avoiding physical contact between men and women; and not intentionally killing any living creature including an insect. The Eight Precepts are:

1. To refrain from taking the life of any living creature
2. To refrain from taking that which is not given
3. To refrain from any kind of sexual activity
4. To refrain from false and harmful speech
5. To refrain from consuming intoxicating drink or drugs which lead to carelessness
6. To refrain from eating at inappropriate times (after midday)
7. To refrain from entertainment, beautification and adornment (such as music, makeup, and jewelry)
8. To refrain from sleeping on a high or luxurious sleeping place (not overindulging in sleep)

The Daily Routine

Guests participate in the daily routine, including the morning group meditation which begins at 5 a.m. and the evening group meditation which begins at 7 p.m. The morning routine also includes a brief chore and a longer work period.

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| 5:00 a.m. | Morning Puja – chanting and meditation |
| 6:15 a.m. | Chores |
| 7:00 a.m. | Light breakfast/tea |
| 7:30 a.m. | Discussion of the tasks for the morning |
| 8:00 a.m. | Meal preparation and general work period begins |
| 11:00 a.m. | The main meal (the last meal of the day) |
| 1:00 p.m. | Period for personal practice |
| 7:00 p.m. | Evening Puja – chanting and meditation |

On the day of the Lunar Quarter (half, full, new moon), the Evening Puja is normally followed by a Dhamma Talk.

On Sunday there is a meditation workshop offered from 1 p.m.–3 p.m. Guests staying at the monastery are encouraged to attend. After the workshop there are no evening or morning meetings until Tuesday evening. Mondays and Tuesdays presently are Quiet Days, with minimal or no work period scheduled in the morning.

A Guide to Monastic Etiquette at Temple Forest Monastery

This is intended as a guide to laypeople staying at the monastery. People from non-Buddhist backgrounds may find the discipline and customs somewhat unfamiliar. It is hoped that the following information will help in giving greater understanding and sensitivity to the various conventions of monastic life.

Monastic Code

The Vinaya, the code of monastic discipline, establishes a relationship with laypeople without whose daily support the Sangha could not continue. Monks are prohibited from possessing money and from storing food. They are completely dependent on the laity for many simple things, such as the preparation and offering of food, pruning foliage, and digging the earth.

Respectfulness

In monasteries, emphasis is placed on establishing harmony by mindfulness and consideration for others. Guests are invited to share in these observances of beautiful behavior and sensitivity.

Before entering a shrine room or living space it is necessary to remove the shoes. Although visitors are not obliged to, there is the custom of bowing to the shrine or teacher. The triple bow, to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, is usually done upon entering or leaving the meditation hall. At the end of a formal meditation period, respect is usually paid to the senior monk with the triple bow. When in the meditation hall concern need be taken in moving with as little noise as possible. When sitting one should avoid lolling and lounging and sitting with one's back against the wall, especially during a Dhamma Talk. Care should be taken not to point the feet at the shrine or at other people generally, as this can be considered impolite.

When offering something to a monk or nun or talking with them, one should not stand looming over them but rather approach them at the same level at which they are sitting.

Offering

Monks and nuns are allowed to collect and consume their daily meal in the period between dawn and noon. Anything they intend to eat or drink, except water, must be formally offered into the hands or placed on or into something in direct contact with the hands.

Relationships

In our tradition monks and nuns lead lives of total celibacy. This includes refraining from suggestive speech or physical contact with lustful intent, both of which are serious offenses against the Vinaya discipline. To avoid this and to prevent gossip or misunderstanding from arising, a monk has to be accompanied by another male whenever he is engaging in a long conversation with a woman. A similar rule applies for nuns.

Guests are asked to be sensitive to the proper mode of conduct for men and women within a monastic setting. In terms of lodging, men and women stay in separate areas and no men should enter the women's lodgings/public restrooms, or vice versa, without permission from one of the senior monks. Guests are also asked to dress modestly: traditionally this includes covering the shoulders and covering the knees.

Terms of Address

The abbot and any monk who has been ordained for at least ten years may be referred to as "Ajahn" (a Thai word derived from the Pali word *ācariya* meaning "teacher"). Other monks can be addressed as "Venerable" or the Thai equivalent, "Tan." Any monk, senior or junior can be called "Bhante", a more general term of respect. These designations may or may not be followed by the ordained name of the individual.

Anjali and Bowing

"Anjali" is a gesture of respect. The hands are held together in prayer-like fashion raised to the slightly lowered forehead. To bow correctly, kneel with the buttocks on the heels and with the hands in anjali. Bring the palms to the floor about four inches apart, then bring the forehead down to touch between the palms, the elbows close to the knees. Bow three times.

We hope that your stay will be peaceful and enriching to your spiritual life.

Further information about visiting the monastery and a map is available on our website www.forestmonastery.org

Directions to Temple Forest Monastery

On a GPS or maps program, copy or type in:

32 Derbyshire Ln, Temple, NH, 03084

* Please be warned that GARMIN GPS systems tend to give inaccurate directions when very close to the monastery (they do not recognize North Road as the correct way, and can send you onto a very bad dirt road instead). Google and other GPS turn-by-turn systems will get you to the monastery easily.

Directions can be found on the webpage: forestmonastery.org/directions-to-tfm