



Going Deeper: Hillwalking & Meditation

About the retreat

Going Deeper retreats are an ideal first regulars' retreat. They are suitable for anyone who has already done an introductory retreat or who has been attending their local Triratna centre and wants to take things deeper.

Going Deeper with Hillwalking takes the established, successful Hillwalking retreat format and by intensifying the practice enables us to connect more deeply with our experience both in the shrine room and in nature. We will continue exploring the Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana and also introduce a stronger Just Sitting element to the practice, and more reflection, both on and off the cushion. These retreats will also include an introduction to Buddhist ritual and the seven fold puja. Longer periods of silence together and quiet walks will all support a deep and rich experience both of ourselves and the world around us.

The retreat will include three days of guided walks. There will be walk options available to suit different levels of fitness. All walks are in the local area, but some require a short drive to get to the starting point. You can also go on your own walks and our walk leaders will be able to advise you. Please note, appropriate clothing is essential for many of the guided walks – see “Is there anything special I need to bring?”

A note on led walks

Typically, we will offer led walks falling into three categories: easier, medium, and more difficult. The relative difficulty is often not in the length of the walk but the steepness of the climb and the difficulty of the terrain under foot.

- **Lower level walks** – Typically 8 to 13 km along hill tracks, but also using quiet roads; made paths; and sometimes short sections of unmade paths. And climbing between 100 and 300m over the course of the walk
- **Medium level walks** – Typically 8 to 13km using a combination of hill tracks, unmade paths and open hill. And may climb between 300 and 600m over the course of the walk.
- **Higher level walks** – Typically 8 to 13km. Will generally be a combination of unmade paths and open hill, including steeper or more challenging sections. And may climb between 600 and 900m during the course of the walk.

Participants who may find the lower level walks challenging are welcome to attend the retreat. We will offer advice on where you can walk in the local area on walk days, but cannot guarantee being able to offer led walks.

Experienced hill walkers with expectations of longer walks over the higher mountains are also welcome, but we invite you to moderate your expectations to fit into the “retreat walking day” (max 6 hours) so you can participate fully in the retreat programme.

Is there anything special I need to bring?

Yes!

A pair of well fitting walking boots with good grip and ankle support is essential for the medium and difficult graded walks as many of these walks include sections of uneven ground. Our guides will not take you on a walk if they consider your footwear unsuitable.

- Waterproof jacket and trousers.
- Water bottle and sun cream.
- Suitable clothing: Light weight trousers (not jeans), an under-layer that will “wick” moisture away from the skin (preferably not cotton), and a fleece for warmth. Have a spare top for additional warmth as well. A hat and gloves are essential.
- A small rucksack.
- Tupperware box or reusable sandwich wrapper for your lunch.
- If you are planning to go for your own walks make sure you also have a map (Explorer 365 -the Trossachs is best) and a compass.

What can you expect from the programme?

The retreat day starts at 6.30am with a rising bell and then a double period of meditation at 7.00. Meditation sessions will have only sparse instruction and will normally last for between 30 and 40 minutes. On walking days, we will meet after breakfast to organise the day’s walks, returning to the centre in the afternoon for another meditation before the evening meal. In the evening there will be a mix of talks, group discussions and an exploration of Buddhist ritual.

On non-walking days there will be practice mornings with meditation teaching and periods of reflection – often taking advantage of the surrounding natural environment. There will normally be an opportunity to discuss your meditation practice with members of the retreat team one to one.

Generally, there are periods of silence, with two to three days of silence in the heart of the retreat.

About the retreat team

These retreats will be lead by our retreat leading team. Each retreat will have a main meditation teacher and two or three walk leaders who will also be practicing Buddhists, familiar both with the local area and retreats. We will also have a retreat organiser and cook.