

About the Centre

Thank you for your enquiry about attending a retreat or workshop at Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Centre. The Centre is a non-profit organisation founded for the study and practice of satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā (insight meditation) in the tradition of Mahāsi Sayādaw of Burma. We are part of the Theravāda tradition of Buddhism, the tradition followed by the peoples of Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, as well as by many in western countries.

The centre offers a variety of retreats of different lengths, from one day and weekend retreats and workshops, to four, nine and up to 40-day retreats. All of these are suitable for both new and experienced meditators. Some of the shorter retreats and workshops are structured with beginners in mind.

About the Retreats

Weekend retreats and workshops

The formats of the short retreats vary:

Workshops are more interactive, providing plenty of opportunity for questions and group discussion with the teacher.

Short retreats are largely held in Noble Silence, with a similar practice schedule to the longer retreats (see below). They may include discussion time, individual or group interviews. Participants are expected to follow the particular practice method being taught on both short and longer retreats.

Longer retreats

Longer retreats run from 4 to 40 days. These retreats provide the opportunity for intensive practice. The whole day is spent in the practice of Vipassanā meditation, a systematic training of attention that develops wisdom and purity of mind through insight into the nature of our experience. The schedule includes periods of formal sitting and walking meditation, as well as mindfulness of daily activities.

Retreats are generally held in Noble Silence. Communication is limited to talking with the teacher in individual or group interviews, and expressing any needs or concerns to the staff. Reading, writing, and communicating with others in any way (including using mobile phones) is discouraged.

On both short and long retreats, meditators are asked to do a housekeeping job. This is both a contribution to the running of the retreat and another opportunity to bring mindfulness to daily activities.

Retreat Conduct

A meditation retreat is a challenging undertaking which requires a degree of effort and self-discipline. It provides an opportunity to practise the teachings of the Buddha: to cultivate sīla (morality or ethics), samādhi (concentration) and pañña (wisdom). The cultivation of sīla is fundamental to the practice, as it provides a supportive foundation for developing concentration. All meditators at the Centre are asked to follow the five training precepts. These are:

1. *To abstain from killing living beings (including insects).*
2. *To abstain from taking what is not given.*
3. *To abstain from sexual misconduct (which means abstention from all sexual activity while at the Centre).*
4. *To abstain from dishonest speech.*
5. *To abstain from intoxicants.*

Retreats led by ordained teachers (monks or nuns) will usually include an extra three training precepts:

6. *To abstain from taking food after midday.*
7. *To abstain from amusements such as singing and playing music, and from using bodily adornments.*
8. *To abstain from using high or luxurious beds.*

Accommodation and Food

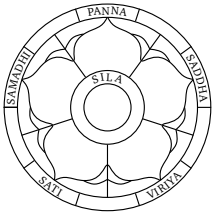
Accommodation is in single rooms with shared bathroom facilities. Women and men stay in separate areas. Mattresses and pillows are provided, but you will need to bring your own bedding.

Please be aware that it can be **very** cold in winter (and cold spells are common in other seasons), so bring suitable bedding and warm clothes. We have a limited supply of blankets, electric blankets and hot water bottles.

Sitting mats, cushions, benches and chairs are provided in the meditation hall, which is centrally heated.

The Centre is located on a sloping site and unfortunately is not currently suitable for wheelchair disabled or the very frail elderly.

We serve vegetarian food, with the main meal of the day at lunchtime. Unless the retreat is an eight precept one, a light supper is served in the evening. Meals are often cooked by volunteers or donated, so generally we are not able to cater for special diets. However, we do try to assist if possible. Please contact the manager to discuss this if necessary.



Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Centre
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COURSE INFORMATION

Retreat Costs

The Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Centre is a non-profit organisation and our charges cover only the basic expenses of running the Centre. There is no charge for the teachings. These are given freely in accordance with Buddhist tradition. Teacher's travel costs are sometimes covered but they are not paid for their teaching or their time.

Generosity, or *dāna*, is the foundation practice of the Buddha's way of liberation. We encourage students to make an offering to their teacher and/or the Centre in addition to the set retreat cost.

We also rely on donations to cover our ongoing maintenance and building and facility improvement programmes. Donations to the building fund are tax-deductible, and a special receipt will be issued if you choose to make a donation to this.

Contributions to the running of the Centre do not have to be financial. There are also opportunities to help out through giving service, for example as a volunteer cook or cook's assistant during a retreat. Volunteers receive one free meditation day for each day they work, and these free days can be used for credit for up to half the value of a future workshop or retreat. If you are interested in being involved with the Centre as a volunteer, please contact the manager.

Although we charge a set fee to cover our retreat costs, we also have a scholarship fund available for those who feel unable to attend a retreat due to financial circumstances. Please contact the manager to discuss this if necessary.

How to Book for a Retreat

1. Please first check with us that there is a place available on the retreat that you are interested in. As the Centre is small, with a maximum capacity of less than 20 students, retreats often book out many weeks or months in advance. If the retreat is full, we can put you on a waiting list to be notified in case any cancellations come up.

2. If a place is available, you will then need to complete both sides of the retreat application form and send it to us with a deposit to confirm your place. The deposit can be paid by cheque or money order (made out to BMIMC), or by credit card over the phone if preferred.

3. Deposit amounts required:

\$120 for retreats of a weekend or longer
\$50 for one day workshops
\$25 for *dāna* (donation) retreats, or if you are using your volunteer cooking days as credit

4. When we have received your registration form and deposit we will send you a receipt and a retreat confirmation form that gives more detailed information on what to bring and how to get here.

5. The balance of the retreat cost (if any) is payable on the first day of the retreat or workshop.

Cancellation Fees

Please give as much notice as possible if you need to cancel your booking, so that we can offer your place to another student on the waiting list.

Cancelling your place **one calendar month** or more before the start of the retreat will entitle you to a full refund of the deposit, less a \$5 fee to cover bank charges.

Alternatively, you may transfer your deposit to another retreat within six months of the original retreat you were booked for.

Cancelling your place **two weeks** or more before a retreat starts will entitle you to a 50% refund of the deposit.

Cancelling your place **less than two weeks** before a retreat begins results in loss of deposit.

We cannot give refunds if a student chooses to leave a retreat early, except in emergencies.

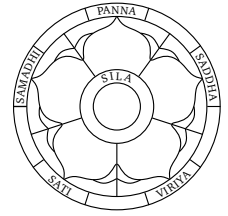
Your forfeited retreat fee will be donated to the scholarship fund, which provides retreat opportunities for financially disadvantaged students.

Contact Details

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us during office hours, Monday to Friday, on (02) 4788 1024, or by e-mail bmimc@eftel.net.au

We hope to see you soon at the Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Centre.

Kind regards
The Manager



RETREAT APPLICATION

Personal details

All information is strictly confidential - this form will be shredded at the end of the retreat

Name Address

Town/suburb State Postcode

Home phone Work or mobile

E-mail

Female Male Do you understand English well? Yes OK No

We would like to add your details to our database, so we can send you information occasionally, such as our newsletter twice a year. (No information will be given to third parties without your consent). Do you wish to be added to our mailing list, and if you do, how would you like to receive the newsletter?

Yes, by e-mail Yes, by mail No, do not add me

General Information

Have you previously attended a retreat at BMIMC? Yes No

How did you find out about us?

Friend Newsletter Our website Buddhnet (internet) Buddhist Library Newspaper Phonebook

How will you be coming to the Centre? Please note, we have limited off-street parking, so if possible please use public transport. We are happy to collect you from Medlow Bath train station, by arrangement. If you let us know your train arrival time we will pick you up from the Railway Parade entrance at the back end of the station (not on the highway side).

Own car Reg. No. Train

Retreat details

(Refer to Retreat Schedule for this information)

Retreat Code	Teacher	Dates	Cost \$
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Deposit Amount \$..... Cheque Money Order Credit Card Balance to pay \$

(Refer to Retreat Information sheet for amount of deposit required)

Credit Card details (Visa, Mastercard or Bankcard only)

Card number Expiry /

Cardholder name Signature

In case of emergency, please contact:

Name Relationship

Phone Mobile

INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER

The information requested here helps your teacher to better understand your background and any difficulties you might encounter during the retreat. *All information is strictly confidential, and this form will be shredded at the end of the retreat.*

1. What experience do you have of vipassanā (insight) meditation in the Mahāsi or broader Theravada tradition? Who were your teachers?

2. Do you practise any other kind of meditation? If so, what kind, and for how long have you practised?

Prior knowledge of a meditator's mental constitution will help the meditation teacher guide a meditator more effectively. Please answer truthfully for the benefit of yourself and others at the centre.

3. Describe any present circumstances which might place your meditation practice under additional stress (eg. recent loss of a loved one, job loss, substance abuse, physical or psychological problems.)

4. Have you been diagnosed with a psychological condition? If so, describe diagnosis, treatment and dates. Yes No

5. Are you currently seeing a psychiatrist, psychologist, psycho-therapist or counsellor? Yes No

If so, does he or she approve of your participation in this retreat? Yes No

May we contact your therapist in a psychological emergency? Yes No

Therapist's name Phone

Are you taking prescription drugs of any kind? Yes No

I have read and understood the Retreat information and agree to attend on these terms.

Signature Date