

Great Western Vehicle Wilderness Retreat in the Inyo National Forest

Led by [Jhanananda](#)

Retreat Details



These retreats are at no cost to anyone, that means you are responsible for all of the gear and food you want to bring, carry and consume. The Great Western Vehicle is founded upon a belief that the way to enlightenment (dharma) should be freely given. However, we graciously accept donations, but they are never expected.

Purpose:

Since the object of these wilderness retreats is not to hike all day and meditate a little, but to get to one very conducive spot and remain there while engaging in contemplative practices and spiritual study, then we will drive in to a fairly beautiful and remote spot and just camp and meditate. Four Wheel drive will be desirable, but not necessary.

If you have never camped before, don't worry about it, it is not that big a deal. You will learn all you need in the time you are with us. However, camping experience will be desirable. And do bring the recommended items.

What to bring:

We will all be self contained, so bring everything you think you will need for your stay. The days are warm, so bring shorts and tee shirts and sandals and a broad brimmed hat. The evenings are cool, so bring long pants, long sleeve flannel shirts, socks, and a sweater or jacket and hiking boots or sneakers. You might want some light gloves.

Bring a sleeping bag that will keep you warm as the temperature drops at night, but probably won't freeze. We are on the dry side of the mountain, so when it rains it doesn't rain much, but to escape the wind that picks up every night, and to keep your gear dry in case of the occasional rain, then you may want a tent, or to sleep in your vehicle, as I am doing.

Bring some meditation paraphernalia, such as one or more old blankets, a tarp and a pillow to sit on. We will meditate at dawn, dusk and noon. If you are studying the suttas/sutras, then bring whatever volume of the Nikayas you are working on. There will be a daily sutta discussion group if you want to participate in it.

Food:

Whatever you bring should be contained in rodent proof containers (metal or plastic containers). An old ice chest will work fine. There will be little opportunity for using ice, however the stream water is plenty cold enough, if you refill your ice chest twice a day with stream water, to keep

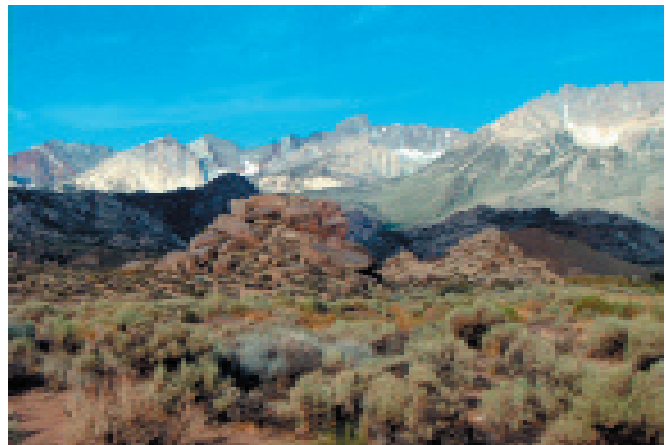
vegetables and fruit and drinks cool. Bring more food than you think you will need to eat, because you may find your calorie intake will increase. We can plan some cooperative food making depending on the diet restrictions of each person.

I recommend granola for breakfast, rice or some other grain for lunch and dinner, do not bring beans to cook, because they take so very long to cook. Millet and corn polenta cook in a few minutes, where as brown rice takes an hour, and pinto beans take 6 hours to cook.

Bring a stove if you have one, however I have several stoves with me, but bring propane to fuel them. There is wood for fires, and there is no fire restriction, however fires are rather messy and a great responsibility. Bring pots to cook in, I also have extras to lend.

Milk will not keep well, so don't bring any dairy, or eggs either. Rice and soy milk, and tofu in the cardboard containers keeps indefinitely before opening, so it is good to bring them. I have been making "milk" out of tahini or peanut butter. It works great for granola in the morning, and it is easy enough to make. Therefore bring lots of your favorite nut butter. The best protein sources for camping are tofu in the boxes, nuts and seeds, nut butters, and nutritional yeast. If you can think of some other source that does not require refrigeration or too much fuel to cook, then bring it, and show us all about it.

There are two local grocery stores where all of your food and other material needs are likely to be met. There is also a fairly good local health food store that you will pass on 168, just a block north of 395. They cater to the needs of hikers on the Pacific Crest Trail all of the time, so they have a wide selection of freeze dried soups and stews.



They also have a wide selection of granola and dried fruits. I recommend stopping there for provisioning. Their prices are quite reasonable, but their selection is narrow. There does not seem to be any organic produce of any kind available in Bishop.

Bathing:

The stream is wonderfully clean and fresh, and very nice to bath in, however it is only ankle deep and very cold. So, a solar shower would be desirable to bring. There are local hot springs that are only a half hour's drive where we all can take weekly baths if so desired. Bring a towel and your toiletry, but please leave behind any artificial scented anything, like after shave and deodorant. We all do not care what you look or smell like.

The retreat will be continuous for 2 months, so stay as long as you want. Or, you can come just for the weekend. However, there will be a one day break every two weeks for laundry and re-provisioning. There are Laundromats, grocery stores, health food stores, and even an internet cafe in Bishop (Java Cafe at 395 & 168), and hot springs only a few miles out of Bishop for a warm soak.

Bring enough water for your internal use. One or two "Jerry cans" will be very useful. Or, bring a water filter. I recommend at least 1 gallon of water for drinking and

cooking per person, per day. So, to get through a week you will need 7 gallons of water and 14 gallons for two weeks. We are not down hill from anyone, however the creek water is infected, so it must be boiled to be made safe, however it is fine for washing. The municipal water in Bishop is glacier-melt, so don't worry about drinking it. You can refill your water containers at one of the gas stations you will pass coming up the hill on 168. Their price on gas is as good as it gets here, so don't hesitate to refuel before leaving Bishop as well.

Bring a day-pack and water bottles, for day-hikes. A group can pack-in if they want, so bring a large over night pack and associated gear if you want.

Bring a mountain bike and/or rock climbing gear if you wish, because we will be in the center of a great place to do those sports, however do keep in mind this is a retreat, not an outdoor adventure.

Bring a flash light and twice as many extra batteries as you think you will need, because we always run out of batteries when camping.

Itemized list:

Clothing:

shorts
tee shirts
Hiking shoes and sandals
broad brimmed hat
long pants
long sleeve flannel shirts
socks
sweater or jacket
light gloves

Camping gear:

sleeping bag
tent
tarp
day-pack
water bottles

Optional large pack for over night pack-in
flash light
extra batteries

Meditation paraphernalia:

tarp
blankets
pillow
Any volumes of the Nikayas
(Discourses of the Buddha)

Bathing:

Towel
solar shower
toiletry
tooth brush
tooth paste
biodegradable soap
1 roll of toilet paper per person, per week

Kitchen and cooking:

rodent proof containers
ice chest will work fine
2 or 3 5-gal "Jerry cans" for water
or a water filter
propane or kerosene stove
propane or kerosene fuel
pots and pans
spoon, fork & knife

Food:

granola
rice
millet
polenta
freeze dried tomatoes
tofu in the box
rice or soy milk in the box
pasta
bottled pasta sauce

DO NOT bring:

Leave at home all of your electronic gadgets.

You will not need a radio, CD or MP3 player, or a computer, unless you want to check your email on our biweekly break at the local internet cafe, which does have a wireless (blue tooth) network.

DO NOT bring pets of any kind. Children are best left at home, because they are not going to understand silence, which is what we will be in most of the time.

DO NOT bring weapons of any kind. We will be engaged in harmlessness, so there will be no need for hunting, fishing or self protection. A pocket knife would be fine for spreading peanut butter.

DO NOT bring dairy or eggs or meat, they wont keep.

DO NOT bring scented anything, such as after shave or deodorant.

The Great Western Vehicle, a 4th Wheel Buddhist tradition

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