



TRUENATURE  
TRAVELS

EXPLORING THE WORLD, CHANGING LIVES

TRUE NATURE

# GUIDE TO PLANNING CONTENT & SCHEDULE FOR A RETREAT

A group of five people are seen from behind, sitting in a row on colorful yoga mats on a grassy hillside. They are in a meditative pose, with their hands resting on their knees in a mudra. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a sunset or sunrise. In the background, there are rolling hills and a large, stylized sun logo with rays, partially obscured by the sun's glow. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

Planning a retreat requires mindful attention to detail to ensure a seamless and enriching experience for participants. The content and schedule form the foundation of any successful retreat, setting the path to personal growth, connection, and rejuvenation. Here's a guide with supportive tips we have gained over the past 20 years to help you create a transformative retreat with a balanced and inspiring schedule.

# TIPS FOR PLANNING YOUR TRUE NATURE RETREAT



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## DEFINE CLEAR OBJECTIVES/THEMES

Start with a clear understanding of the retreat's purpose. What do you want participants to learn and gain? How do you want to see them grow?

**TIP:** Create an overarching theme that will consistently weave through your retreat that aligns with your goals. Begin to brainstorm a title that will reflect this theme.



## BALANCE STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES AND FREE TIME

A balanced schedule helps maintain energy levels and allows for personal rest.

**TIP:** Include a mix of classes, group activities/excursions, solo reflection periods, and leisure/rest time. Remember that life at home is quite full and tiring, we want participants to return home rested and nourished from the retreat.



## CREATE A FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE

Use your schedule as a blueprint but do not get attached to the exact format.

**TIP:** Allow for adjustments based on the group's dynamics and energy levels. Be mindful with your choice of posting the weekly schedule or just a daily schedule so it can be modified as you go. As the week progresses inquire with the group what they want more or less of. Often the most powerful retreat schedules are those that evolve with the group throughout the week.



## HONOR THE "ARC OF RETREAT" AND THE TOUCH POINTS

Retreats have a natural "Arc". Use touchpoints, practices, and activities to support, acknowledge, and honor the progression of the retreat.

**TIP:** Plan an opening ceremony, a mid-week group sharing circle, a closing ceremony, and any other touch-points to support the arc of your retreat.



## KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Tailor your content to meet the needs, interests, and experience levels of your participants.

**TIP:** As participants enroll, you can utilize True Nature's registration data to learn about participants goals and retreat intentions.



## GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND SHARING CIRCLES

Build community and encourage open communication.

**TIP:** Facilitate regular group circles and discussions where participants can share experiences, insights, and support each other. These "circles" can be the most important and transformative part of your retreat.

# TIPS FOR PLANNING YOUR TRUE NATURE RETREAT



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## SILENT RETREAT PERIODS

Deepen personal reflection and inner peace through periods of intentional silence during your retreat.

**TIP:** *Designate specific times of the day for silent reflection or create an entirely silent retreat day. Silence can be the greatest teacher on retreat and also gives the leader a chance to rest and reflect for themselves.*



## INTEGRATE VARIED CONTENT FORMATS

Incorporate a variety of content formats to keep participants engaged.

**TIP:** *Plan sessions that mix lectures, discussions, practice, and creative activities.*



## INCORPORATE MINDFULNESS AND WELLNESS PRACTICES

Support participants' mental & physical well-being.

**TIP:** *Schedule daily mindfulness sessions like meditation or yoga.*



## ENGAGING AND MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES

Plan activities/excursions that are accessible and enjoyable to as many people as possible and aligned with the retreat's objectives.

**TIP:** *Include activities like guided journaling at the beach, silent walking meditation in the rainforest, or an adventure excursion that reflects on pushing our edges safely.*



## PLAN FOR SMOOTH TRANSITIONS

Ensure smooth transitions between activities to maintain a calm flow.

**TIP:** *Build buffer times between sessions and clearly communicate the schedule while on retreat.*



## BE OF SERVICE

Take your practice off the mat and cushion and into the community where the group can be of service individually and collectively.

**TIP:** *Take part in a True Nature Service Project supporting one of our many non-profit partners around the world. These projects are often the surprise highlight of the retreat experience and are said to be "the most meaningful part of the retreat experience."*



## ALLOW FOR PERSONALIZATION AND CHOICE

Offer participants choices to cater to individual preferences.

**TIP:** *Provide optional sessions or let the group know that "everything is optional." Retreat is a time for participants to let go, to flow, and often the choice to participate can be a welcomed invitation.*



## PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED

Retreats and travel are filled with the unexpected (as is life). Simply be prepared that some things won't be perfect & as they happen, you will be prepared.

**TIP:** *Have some personal strategies and practices ready when you interface with the unexpected so you can utilize your internal retreat toolkit. Know that True Nature is also here to support you.*



## GETTING FEEDBACK & ADAPT

Collect True Nature's feedback to understand what works well and what needs improvement.

**TIP:** *Use surveys and informal discussions to gather participant insights.*

# IMPORTANT TOUCH POINTS



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	PURPOSE	IMPLEMENTATION
<b>OPENING CEREMONY</b>	To deepen personal reflection and inner peace through periods of intentional silence during your retreat.	<i>Include a welcoming speech, intention-setting exercises, and an icebreaker activity to help participants connect.</i>
<b>DAILY CHECK-INS</b>	To monitor participant well-being & gather feedback.	<i>Start each day with a brief check-in session where participants can share how they are feeling and any needs they have.</i>
<b>PERSONAL ONE-ON-ONE TIME</b>	To provide personalized support & attention.	<i>Schedule time for individual check-ins with participants to discuss their experiences and offer guidance.</i>
<b>EVENING REFLECTIONS</b>	To encourage end-of-day reflection & gratitude.	<i>Gather participants for a nightly reflection session to share highlights, challenges, &amp; things they are grateful for.</i>
<b>MID-RETREAT EVALUATIONS</b>	To assess how the retreat is progressing and make necessary adjustments.	<i>Conduct a mid-retreat evaluation through informal discussions or anonymous surveys.</i>
<b>CLOSING CEREMONY</b>	To bring closure and celebrate the journey.	<i>Create a meaningful closing ceremony with gratitude circles, certificate presentations, or a group activity that symbolizes the retreat's end.</i>
<b>FOLLOW-UP &amp; INTEGRATION SUPPORT</b>	To help participants integrate their experiences into daily life.	<i>Provide resources, reading materials, or a follow-up session post-retreat. Encourage participants to stay connected through online groups or periodic meetups.</i>

## ADDITIONAL BEST PRACTICES

### ADAPTABILITY

Be prepared to adjust the schedule and activities based on participant needs and group dynamics.

### INCLUSIVITY

Ensure all activities are accessible and inclusive, respecting the diverse backgrounds and abilities of participants.

### ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Balance high-energy activities with restful periods to maintain a healthy energy flow.

### FEEDBACK LOOPS

Regularly solicit and act on feedback to improve the retreat experience continuously.

### PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Encourage participants to honor their boundaries and needs, promoting a culture of self-care and respect.

# A BRIEF PREPARATION PROGRAM FOR RETREAT LEADERS



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## DAILY

## WEEKLY

### WEEK 1 MENTAL PREPARATION

10 minutes of mindfulness meditation.

*Reflect on and write down your intentions for the retreat.*

### WEEK 2 PHYSICAL PREPARATION

30 minutes of yoga or stretching.

*Plan and follow a healthy meal plan.*

### WEEK 3 SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

15 minutes of your chosen spiritual practice.

*Spend one hour in nature, reflecting on your purpose.*

### WEEK 4 RETREAT CONTENT PLANNING

Dedicate one hour to planning activities and sessions.

*Review and adjust your schedule based on participant needs and feedback.*

### WEEK 5 FINAL PREPARATIONS

Visualize the retreat and practice mindfulness.

*Connect with a mentor or guide for final advice and support.*

By following this preparation program, you will be mentally, physically, and spiritually ready to lead a successful and impactful retreat. Remember, the journey you take in preparing yourself is as important as the journey you will guide your participants through. Embrace it fully, and you will lead with authenticity and grace.

# KEY TECHNIQUES, PRACTICES, AND TOUCH POINTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE RETREAT EXPERIENCE



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	PURPOSE	IMPLEMENTATION
	<b>GUIDED MEDITATIONS</b> To help participants relax, focus, & connect with their inner selves.	<i>Begin and end each day with a short guided meditation. Use themes like gratitude, self-love, or intention-setting.</i>
	<b>JOURNALING SESSIONS</b> To encourage self-reflection and personal growth.	<i>Provide prompts related to the retreat's theme. Allow time for silent journaling followed by optional sharing.</i>
	<b>NATURE WALKS &amp; OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES</b> To connect participants with nature and promote physical wellness.	<i>Schedule daily walks, hikes, or beach activities. Incorporate mindfulness or silent walking practices.</i>
	<b>GROUP DISCUSSIONS &amp; SHARING CIRCLES</b> To build community & encourage open communication.	<i>Facilitate regular group discussions where participants can share experiences, insights, and support each other.</i>
	<b>YOGA &amp; MOVEMENT CLASSES</b> To enhance physical well-being and relieve stress.	<i>Offer daily yoga sessions, tai chi, or other movement-based practices. Adapt the level of difficulty to suit all participants.</i>
	<b>CREATIVE WORKSHOPS</b> To inspire creativity and self-expression.	<i>Organize activities like painting, music, dance, or crafting. Ensure materials are readily available and the atmosphere is supportive and non-judgmental.</i>
	<b>MINDFULNESS &amp; BREATHWORK EXERCISES</b> To promote relaxation and focus.	<i>Integrate short mindfulness practices &amp; breathwork exercises throughout the day, especially before or after more intense sessions.</i>
	<b>SILENT RETREAT PERIODS</b> To deepen personal reflection and inner peace.	<i>Designate specific times of the day for silent reflection or create an entire silent retreat day.</i>

# BEST PRACTICES AND TIPS



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## WELCOME AND CONNECT

Start with a warm welcome session. Allow participants to introduce themselves and share their intentions for the retreat.



## CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Foster an environment of trust and openness. Encourage respect and confidentiality within the group.



## BE PRESENT

Stay present and attentive to the needs of your participants. Your presence and responsiveness will greatly influence their experience.



## ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

Engage participants in discussions and activities. Encourage them to share their thoughts and experiences.



## REFLECT AND ADJUST

After each day, reflect on what went well and what could be improved. Be open to adjusting your plans as needed.

For more information, visit our website at  
[www.TrueNatureTravels.com](http://www.TrueNatureTravels.com)

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