

How to Schedule a Retreat at The Garrison Institute

Facilities, Policies, and Prices

We have prepared this information to help you plan a successful group retreat at the Garrison Institute. We look forward to discussing the arrangements with you in detail. Please email Jane Kolleeny at jane@garrisoninstitute.org or call her at 845-424-4800 Ext. 103.

FACILITIES

The home of the Garrison Institute is a former monastery of 77,000 square feet that overlooks the Hudson River in a wooded setting just an hour north of New York City. The building and grounds offer many features for contemplative retreats.

MEDITATION HALL

This is the central and most prominent space at the Garrison Institute. The former monastery church is a large, open, beautiful, light-filled area that ideally lends itself to meditation, instruction, rituals, and other large group experiences. The meditation hall, which contains state-of-the-art audio and video systems, can accommodate approximately 200 people in the main section and 50 people in the balcony.

CLASSROOMS

We have three large classrooms that each can accommodate up to 35 people. They can be used for lectures, didactic work, breakout space, seminars, or discussions.

AUDITORIUM

An auditorium located under the meditation hall is an appropriate space for yoga, body movement exercises, moving meditation, structured meetings and other uses. This large, open room has a stage and portable sound system.

DINING ROOM

Our large dining room can seat 200 people for meals, which are served buffet-style. We can offer multiple sittings if necessary. The dining room is furnished with beautiful mission-style furniture, made by Amish craftsmen.

FOOD

We serve food that is healthy, tasty, vegetarian and, whenever possible, organic and locally grown. Meat is available for an extra charge. All of our meals are nutritionally balanced and prepared with care.

We have very limited capacity for people with special dietary needs; those that we cannot specifically accommodate can serve themselves from what is offered or, in some cases, can bring their own food. We offer non-gluten options at every meal and ingredients are listed on the serving tables. Please note that we have a toaster, microwave, refrigerator and limited food storage space.

No food is permitted in the bedrooms. There are tea and coffee stations in the dining room and lounges on the second and third floors; most are available 24 hours a day. Drinks may be brought to bedrooms, but cups and glasses should be returned to the service kitchen after use.

We have a small housekeeping staff, so your assistance in relaying this to your participants is most appreciated. No food is permitted in the meditation hall, and only drinks with lids are allowed.

BUSINESS SERVICES

We can provide retreat groups in residence with an office, including a photocopier, computer, fax, high-speed internet, and phone service for an additional fee.

BEDROOMS

With a total of 90 bedrooms, accommodating up to 165 people, we provide single and double rooms, and a limited number of triples and quads (for the larger groups). All rooms are located on the second, third or fourth floor, with the exception of two handicapped-accessible bedrooms that share a bath on the ground floor. All rooms have windows, and many face out towards the Hudson River.

The building is not air-conditioned; high ceilings, thick masonry walls, and tall windows ensure comfortable temperatures. Fourth floor bedrooms have ceiling fans. All rooms are provided with sheets, as well as a pillow, blanket, and towel for each guest.

BATHROOMS

There are two spacious, communal, unisex bathrooms on each residential floor that can be designated as needed. We recently opened saunas, one for men on the third floor and another for women on the second floor.

LOUNGES

There are three lounges in the building on the second, third and fourth floors. Those on the second and third floors provide tea, water and instant coffee 24 hours a day. We also offer a high-speed internet connection for computer users. Please note: guests must bring their own computer/laptop and be able to configure it to work on a DHCP network—we can supply the Ethernet cable. It is helpful for us to know in advance whether or not you would like to offer this to participants.

GROUNDS

Guests are encouraged to enjoy our remarkable outdoor environment. We have a large walled rear yard containing gardens and a labyrinth. In the front of the Institute is a meadow with benches and a gazebo overlooking the Hudson River. There are trails through the woods that adjoin our property, and a short hike connects up to the Appalachian Trail.

COMMUNICATION

There are no phones in guest bedrooms. You can give out our main telephone number to those who may need to reach you: 845-424-4800.

If you or someone from your group receives a *non-emergency* phone call, we will post the message on the guest bulletin board. If it is an emergency message, we will find the guest and deliver it promptly.

To make a phone call, there are pay phones on each floor. We encourage guests to bring their own coins for making calls. Cell phone service is erratic on our property and not permitted in most spaces in the building.

If you opt to use your phone services as a group leader, you will need a calling card or we can provide a long distance code for outgoing calls—this will be billed to your group after the retreat.

MAIL SERVICES

Mail (through US Postal Service) is picked up/dropped off once a day from the Garrison Institute. We do not have postage stamps or “metered stamps” available for sale, so please plan accordingly. We do have UPS pick-up service (and delivery) once a day—you will need to use your own UPS account number or a credit card to use this service as well as your own mailing envelope. An outgoing mail basket is located in our front lobby for all guests.

- To mail a *letter or small parcel* to the Garrison Institute or a guest while here, use the US Postal Service and mail to:

PO Box 532, Garrison, NY 10524

- To mail a *package (box)*, use UPS or another courier service and address it to:

**Garrison Institute, c/o Glencllyffe,
14 Mary's Way, Route 9D, Garrison, NY 10524**

POLICIES

SILENCE

The Garrison Institute seeks to be a place of refuge, reflection, and peace. Each group at the Garrison Institute will have its own discipline, which will include varying levels of silence. Whatever the practice of your group, guests should be respectful of the contemplative atmosphere of the Institute and any other groups that may be present.

Guests should not bring or use any portable radios or CD/tape players without earphones. Cell phones should not be turned on in any of the common spaces in the building, including the meditation hall, dining room, meetings rooms, lounges, auditorium, or front lobby area.

CHILDREN

The Garrison Institute is a facility geared toward adults. We have no provisions for children or childcare. If your group allows parents to bring children, the following conditions must be met:

- Parents/guardians must take full responsibility for their children and must sign a special waiver of liability form.
- Children 15 and over are only allowed as full participants in your retreat/event.
- Children under 15 must be supervised at all times both inside and outside the building.
- Children 12 and over pay full price for room and board.
- Children 2 to 11 pay full price if they use a bed. If they share a bed with a parent/guardian or sleep on a mat, sleeping bag, etc., they pay \$50 per day.
- There is no charge for children under 2.

SMOKING

There is a designated smoking area outside the building behind the garage next to the loading dock. No smoking is permitted in the building (mandated by NYS law) or anywhere outside other than in the designated area.

DRESS

Dress at the Garrison Institute is relaxed and informal. Guests should bring clothes and shoes that are comfortable and modest. Shorts and tee shirts are fine, but nothing more revealing.

PETS

In the tradition of the Franciscans who lived here, we love animals. However, we cannot accommodate pets other than certified companion dogs.

FRAGRANCE

For the sake of those who are highly sensitive to fragrance, please do not use any perfume or cologne, and please use only unscented, fragrance-free personal hygiene products. (Note that many products labeled “natural” or “organic” do not contain fragrance.) Fragrance-free products are available for sale in our guest services office.

PRICES

Our prices are per person per night and are based on the size and nature of the group and the type of overnight room desired (single/double/triple). Prices include three meals per day and vary according to the size of the retreat group, the time of year and days of the week. Contact our Retreats Director who can provide this information at jane@garrisoninstitute.org.

REGISTRATION

There are three ways that we handle registration for retreats and events.

- **Option 1:** The group can collect both tuition/program fees and the Garrison Institute’s room and board fee directly from each guest, and then pay the Institute with one check for everyone. The Institute will invoice the group a week before the retreat/program with the expectation that the payment will be made upon arrival, with ancillary adjustments settled afterwards.
- **Option 2:** Guests can pay the group for tuition/program fees and the Garrison Institute for room and board fees in two separate transactions.
- **Option 3:** The Garrison Institute can collect room and board and tuition for the group, reimbursing the group after the retreat/program.

You will need to indicate on the contract which option your group will use.

Your group needs to give us a confirmed number of participants expected for your event one week before opening day of the event. This is the minimum number for which we will charge you. Although this number cannot decrease, it can increase after the confirmation date.

We encourage early registration and require that people complete registration before arrival. Except in special circumstances, we do not accept registration for an event after 4pm the day before the event begins, nor do we accept on-site registration on opening day of a retreat/program.

CANCELLATIONS

There is a cancellation policy that applies to a group canceling a whole retreat/program at the Garrison Institute. This policy is detailed in the agreement that is established with each retreat group.

For individuals cancelling attendance at a retreat when Garrison Institute collects room and board fees directly from guests, we assess a \$50 processing fee up to a week in advance of a retreat. For cancellations within a week of the event, in addition to the \$50 processing fee, we will assess a fee of \$40 per day for the length of the retreat to cover our direct costs for food, which will have already been ordered. If you cancel after 4pm the night before a retreat starts, there will be no refund. It is in your best interest to be certain of your intention before registering for a program.

HOUSE JOBS

If you chose this option, we offer a discount to any guest who agrees to help us maintain the facility and serve the group while here.

Jobs normally take about one hour per day and are done as needed during breaks in the program schedule. None of the jobs involves heavy manual labor or requires special skill. Examples are dish washing, bathroom tidying and stocking, and general cleaning of common rooms. No one will be assigned a job he or she cannot do.

The number of available jobs is limited, so anyone wishing to serve in this way should sign up early. For large groups, we offer a work scholarship which includes three hours a day of work for a deep discount.

Contact registrar@garrisoninstitute.org.

CHECK-IN

Retreats usually begin with registration on opening day from 3pm to 6pm. We ask that guests arrive between those times to check in, get their room and job assignments (if applicable), and get oriented. Dinner is usually from 6pm to 7pm.

CHECK-OUT

Retreats generally end by noon on closing day and usually include breakfast and lunch. We ask that guests check out of their rooms by 2pm. Please take a moment to read the housekeeping cards in your room that serve as a guide for exiting your room and the building.

CHECKLIST FOR GUESTS

We encourage guests to bring:

- Comfortable shoes and clothing—for sitting, walking, hiking, etc.
- Bathrobe and slippers—for use in our communal bathrooms, hallways and saunas.
- Extra towels—we provide one bath towel per guest
- Shawl or blanket—for use during meditation or evening walks
- An alarm clock—we cannot provide a “wake-up call”
- Personal fan—we do not have air conditioning. Evenings are usually quite pleasant with river breezes.
- Lightweight luggage—all bedrooms are accessible via stairs to upper floors.

We must ask guests not to bring:

- Candles or incense to burn
- Scented products
- Drugs or alcohol
- Pets—unless certified companion dog