

# Preparing for a Retreat at The Garrison Institute

We have prepared this information to help you plan for a successful retreat at the Garrison Institute. We look forward to welcoming you in the near future. More specific information on our policies will be given to you on your arrival here.

## FACILITIES

The home of the Garrison Institute is a former Capuchin Franciscan monastery of 77,000 square feet that was restored and renovated in 2002. Originally built in 1932, it overlooks the Hudson River just over an hour north of New York City.

The Institute offers a variety of meeting spaces for groups of different sizes: a large, beautifully lit meditation hall (the former chapel); a lower level auditorium; and four classrooms as well as a communal dining hall.

## FOOD

We serve a variety of healthy and tasty catered food. If you have special dietary needs, we encourage you to bring any supplemental items you may need. We have a refrigerator and storage space, along with a microwave oven and toaster that you may use in the service kitchen located at the end of the dining hall. If you have dietary restrictions, please see the special diet section below.

No food is permitted in the bedrooms. There are water, tea and coffee stations in the dining room and the lounges on the second and third floors; 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 is most appreciated. No food is permitted in the meditation hall, and only drinks with lids are allowed.

## BEDROOMS

With a total of 165 beds, we provide single and double rooms, and a limited number of triples and quads. All rooms are located on the second, third or fourth floors. On our ground floor are two ADA-accessible bedrooms that share a bath. All rooms have windows, and many face out toward the Hudson River. The bedrooms are not air-conditioned but feature high ceilings, thick masonry walls, tall windows, and transoms ensure comfortable temperatures. Fourth floor bedrooms have ceiling fans. All rooms are provided with sheets, a pillow, blanket, bedspread, bath towel and fan for each guest.

Please see the last page of this document for a checklist of suggested items to bring. You may bring anything else you need for your comfort.

## BATHROOMS

There are two communal bathrooms on each floor with Zen-inspired modern finishes including bamboo window shades, slate countertops, the form of the Hudson River sculpted elegantly into the floor tiles, and rustic wood accents in the showers. Saunas are available on the second and third floors for your enjoyment. The first floor ADA bathroom and shower is available to our gender non-conforming guests.

## LOUNGES

There are three lounges in the building located 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 high-speed internet in common areas. There is a computer for your use in the second floor lounge.

## GROUNDS

We encourage you to enjoy our beautiful 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.

## 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 can include varying levels of silence. Whatever the practice of your group, we ask that guests be respectful of the contemplative atmosphere of the Institute and any other groups that may be present. Please be mindful of cell phone use and the potential for disturbing others.

### 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 get a non-emergency phone call, we will post the message on the guest message board. If you get an emergency message, we will find you and deliver it promptly. Cell phone service is somewhat erratic in our building, but usually works outside.

### 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. There is no burning of candles or incense.

### DRESS

Dress at the Garrison Institute is relaxed and informal. Guests should bring clothes and shoes that are comfortable and temperature appropriate. A shawl or dressing in layers is often a good idea. Be sure to bring clothes that are appropriate for hiking so you can enjoy the trails and flip flops for the showers.

## PETS

In the tradition of the Franciscans who lived here, we love animals. However, we cannot accommodate pets other than certified companion dogs. Please notify the Institute before you arrive, so we can accommodate you.

## 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.

## 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.

## CANCELLATIONS

For individuals cancelling their attendance at a retreat when Garrison Institute collects room and board fees directly from guests, we assess a \$65 cancellation fee up to a week in advance of a retreat. For cancellations within a week of the event, in addition to the \$65 cancellation 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. Thank you.

## CHECK-IN

We ask that guests arrive during check in on opening day, normally 3pm to 6pm. The Institute offers pick up shuttles from the Metro North train station during check in hours. Dinner is typically from 6pm to 7pm. NOTE: There are no locks on the bedroom doors at the Garrison Institute, so plan accordingly in terms of bringing valuable items with you.

## CHECK-OUT

Retreats generally end by noon on closing day and usually include breakfast and lunch. There is a signup sheet in the lobby for outgoing shuttles to the train station and guests must sign up in advance. Any unclaimed personal belongings left at the Garrison Institute by guests will be held in our Lost and Found. Please call within a week's time to let us know you've lost a personal belonging. If we have not heard from any guests within a week to claim a lost item, that item will be donated to charity.

## FOOD SENSITIVITY

The Garrison Institute serves vegetarian meals through our in-house caterer, Fresh Company. As much as possible, we select local and organic foods that provide a well-rounded and nutritious meal. Lunch and dinner have a main entrée, two side dishes and salad greens. Each dish on the buffet table has a card, which lists all ingredients in that dish. Many meals have dairy, wheat and/or gluten. Non-gluten options are available.

Because we are a retreat center, we are set up to provide meals to groups, not to individuals. Menus are based on what is in season. Because of this, we are not able to accommodate individual needs. However, because there are many people with food restrictions, we offer a simple salad bar with protein options during lunch and dinner meals. These extra items will be in the service kitchen just behind the dining hall.

We invite guests with extreme dietary limitations to bring what they think they will need to supplement their diet. We offer a refrigerator and shelf space for storage. We also have a microwave and toaster for guests to heat food. We do not have a stove or blender for guests.

Even on a limited diet, most people find they can eat much of what is offered on the buffet, supplemented with what individuals bring. Please identify yourself to a staff person the first night at dinner and he/she will show you where the extra food is available.

If you have a severe allergy, make sure to bring an EpiPen or an equivalent medicine. All food ingredients will be listed at meals. The kitchen asks us to let anyone with allergies know that they cannot guarantee that certain foods have not been contaminated before arriving on site.

## 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
- Any valuables
- Earplugs and Eye masks