



## Top Ten Tips to make sure you get the most from your next Retreat – [Online/Onsite](#)

Going on a retreat is an excellent way to relax, rest, and fully recharge your physical, mental, and spiritual batteries. To ensure you have a rewarding, meaningful, and fulfilling experience, I have made a list of the top 10 most important things to remember when you go to a wellness retreat:

### 1. When you make inquiries about a retreat, do so in your real name.

Booking a retreat is not the same as booking a hotel. To ensure you will get along with the other retreat guests, many retreat hosts Google search the names of potential guests before they accept bookings and you are more likely to be accepted on a retreat if the retreat host can find out a bit more about you before they confirm your booking. Personally, I do a Google image search first, sometimes just to see if my potential guest is male or female - first names can sometimes be confusing so that I don't by accident book add a male guest to a women-only retreat. If there is a LinkedIn profile, I also look at that and I'll have a quick look at whatever else comes up.

### 2. Similarly, you should **fully research any retreat that catches your eye.**

Read all the information in the retreat advert, scrutinise the pictures, and read the reviews – it is more believable if there are not only positive but also a couple of negative reviews. Do a Google search of the retreat name and the name of the retreat host, as well as the region where the retreat is located. Make sure the retreat is led by a qualified and experienced instructor/host. Verify the retreat hosts' credentials, and expertise in the areas you're interested in. Is your retreat host an authority on his/her subject? If possible, get to know your retreat host a bit even before you book, most retreat hosts welcome a phone or video call, before or after booking. If the retreat host keeps a [blog](#), reads a few posts, if they

publish a [newsletter](#), subscribe, have a [brochure](#), download it, if they have written a [book/books](#), read one, check your host's [social profiles](#) - your research will help you to get an idea of who your host is and of what you can expect during your retreat.

**3. Look at travel options BEFORE you book**, if they are not clearly explained in the retreat advert, ask your retreat host for clarification. Next, check what time the retreat starts and ends and what travel options are available on the dates you are interested in, so that you can get an idea of prices. The worst thing you could do would be to book the cheapest flights and leave the travel arrangements from the airport to the retreat center till the last moment. Your arrival time is important too, make sure your public transport connection will get you to the retreat before the starting time and that you don't arrive so late that the complimentary pickup or public transport is no longer available. Sometimes it is better to book a slightly more expensive flight, to avoid having to spend a fortune on after-hour transport. In some countries, public transport is not as readily available as in cities, if at all.

**4. Take out comprehensive travel insurance.** If you are going on an activity retreat, for example, one of my [Walking the Camino de Santiago de Compostela retreats](#), make sure your insurance does not only cover cancellations – these days you can never be sure anymore, there may be another pandemic or there might be yet another air traffic controller strike – but your policy should also cover injury during the retreat, just in case. Make sure you understand the refund and cancellation policies and make sure all activities are covered – if you attend a retreat involving horses – like my [Connect with Horses – led by a small herd of Friesian and Falabella Horses retreats](#) – it should also specifically cover activities involving the horses. The same goes if you decide to rent a car to get to the retreat.

**5. Share your medical history and any pre-existing conditions with the retreat organisers.** This is crucial for your safety. It is important to know what medical facilities (and at what cost) are available at your destination, in case of an emergency. If you take any medications, bring enough for your whole trip, and then some, in case there are delays. Local pharmacies may not stock or be willing to dispense your regular medications without a prescription, so bring a copy of your regular prescription too. Inform your host, well in advance of any allergies you may have, and that includes food allergies, intolerances, and preferences. Not all retreats cater to all diets, but most retreat hosts are willing to accommodate you if they know far enough in advance, at least two weeks in my case, before I start planning the menus and buying the products I'll need. And if you'll be here for your birthday, please let me know, I love birthdays and I'll want to get hold of some champagne and bake a cake!

**6. Pack appropriately.** Check the weather forecast for the time of year you plan to attend the retreat, before you book, and once you have booked, check it again a week before you travel. Pack according to the weather. Many retreat hosts provide a recommended packing list, which can be invaluable. If no list is forthcoming, contact your retreat host and ask for advice. Do not assume that because it is the south of France the sun will be shining the whole year round. In the spring it can rain for days on end here, and in the winter the temperature can drop to 15°C (5°F.) When you pack, less is always more, organisation is everything and precision is essential.

**7. Inquire about pre-retreat preparation and post-retreat follow-up.** Many retreats now offer optional pre-retreat programs, as well as post-retreat follow-up, often in the form of online courses/calls, to help you prepare and integrate what you have learned during the retreat. Well-designed retreats can be life-changing, but incorporating these changes into our busy day-to-day lives is not always easy. Post-retreat support, especially for my [Detox Your Body and Mind with Intermittent Fasting retreats](#), can help guests keep healthy resolutions and incorporate new habits. Post-retreat, you can help your host by writing a complimentary review, but constructive criticism is just as welcome, both are essential to any retreat business, to inform potential future guests of what to expect as well as improve the quality of our current retreats.

**8. Provide your retreat host with the contact details of your nearest and dearest,** especially the person to contact in case of an emergency. Make sure you have your retreat host's WhatsApp number before you start traveling, and give this number to a friend or family member in case they need to contact you urgently. Some hosts appreciate updates during your travels, I certainly do, both on the way here and on the way back. If not stated in the retreat advert, ask about the availability of Wi-Fi. Some countries are cracking down on hosts who provide internet access to their guests, insisting that the hosts are responsible for the sites their guests visit, so Wi-Fi might become less readily available in the future.

**9. Decide to attend your retreat with an open, eager-to-learn, easily-awed mind.** Your retreat adventure starts the moment you leave your home and lock your front door behind you. You will have endless opportunities during your holiday to make new discoveries. So your flight has been canceled: great opportunity to explore new ways to handle challenging situations! Or you have to wait for other guests to finish an exercise: great opportunity to practice mindfulness or explore the place where you are waiting! Or you find yourself having to do something you have never done before: great opportunity to learn something new! Or another guest doesn't agree with you: great opportunity to explore different viewpoints!

10. This last tip is a bit controversial, but it has made an enormous difference to the retreats I have attended myself since I started applying it: I now get a million times more from my retreats than I did before, so I'm going to be brave and add this tip to my list. These days, when I book and attend a retreat, **I not only think about what I can get from a retreat, I also think about what I can give**, how I can contribute to a retreat, how I can make the experience more valuable to other retreat guests, and how I can help the retreat host and invest in the region that I'm visiting. Hosting retreats for all these years has made me aware of the challenges retreat hosts face, often on a daily basis. Not only that, but I have had the privilege to host many a perfect guest: the guest who brings a small gift from their own country, their favourite tea, maybe, to share with their host and with other guests. Guests who offer to help where help is needed, when it is needed, whatever it may be, like the guest who offered to prune the roses, guests who leave something of themselves behind, like the guest who bought a bag of daffodils and planted them in my garden, I think of her every year when they start to bloom in spring, the guest who did a gorgeous painting of the retreat, and send it to me afterward, beautifully framed. My all-time favourite guests ask me if there is anything they can bring me from their country. Mostly there isn't, but I hugely appreciate being asked. If you want a more meaningful retreat, this is the way to go about it.



In conclusion, attending a retreat can be a transformative experience when approached mindfully, and with an open mind. By using my recommendations, you can ensure that you get as much as you possibly can from your retreat, before, during, and after your actual holiday. Make your mind up to enjoy every moment, the enlightening ones, as much as the challenging ones!

Bon Voyage and Bon Courage,

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This is an extract from my book **Make Your Next Retreat Your Best Ever** which is available [HERE](#).



## Esprit Meraki Online Retreats

### Esprit Meraki Retreats in the South of France

