

# DARK RETREAT EARTH DOMES USER MANUAL

2019

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## WELCOME INTRODUCTION

### **SITUATION**

The dark retreats take place in our quiet jungle property near the village of Srithanu in the island of Koh Phangan in Thailand.



## A LITTLE BIT OF BACKGROUND

The first dome was built in 2010. At the time, I was practicing a lot of yoga and meditation. As an alternative builder, I was keen on trying out the earthbag building technique.

When a friend introduced me to the existence of the dark retreat, I fell in love and it all made sense. I wanted to recreate being in the womb of the Mother building an earthbag dome to sit long retreats in the dark.

I was blessed it all happened. Now, so fortunate for offering this opportunity to hundreds of practitioners.



## OUR VISION

They have been designed for solo meditation retreats in complete darkness.

The dark retreats are there to enhance your practice. We welcome any form of spiritual approach. Over the years, many have come to deepen their practice using the light deprivation to reclaim their own.

To know more about being in complete darkness, check our [web page](#) on darkness.

## THE DOMES

The two earthbags domes are a living analogy of the womb of mother earth. Indeed, they are constructed with 15 to 20 tons of earth and its 100% dark.

Their thick earth walls completely insulate you from all the modern radio frequencies.

The simple and efficient ventilation system runs completely on solar energy, making your journey powered by nothing but the elements and your own aspiration.

We will show you in person the usage of the domes, it's quite straightforward.

All the retreats begin and end in the evening, generally between 6:30 to 8 pm. It has been found to be more suitable to emerge in the evening due to the eyes sensitivity to the daylight.

## SHOONYA DOME

The most recent and spacious is roughly 4m inner diameter and 4m high. It has an attached bathroom including a squatting toilet and a bucket shower.

Price: 35 US\$/day

## AMITABHA DOME

Also call the small dome, it's about 2.5m in diameter and 2.5m high. The squatting toilet and the Japanese style squatting shower are within the living space. The toilet is covered by a lid.

Price: 25 US\$/day

## ABOUT THE BOOKINGS

Refer to our web site [darkretreat.center](http://darkretreat.center) for all bookings terms and conditions.

We can only emphasize that your retreat dates are secured only when we receive the deposit.

To book a retreat, you start with a minimum of 3 days. The longest retreat so far has been 21 days. You are welcome to book for any length of time as long as you are fit for it. \*At our discretion\*

We reserve Shoonya dome in priority for longer retreats. Although, you can still book Shoonya short term if available.

We reserve Amitabha dome in priority for short retreats. Although, if it's in your heart you can book it for long retreats.

\*In the event you book Shoonya for a short retreat, a request for a longer retreat during the same time frame will take precedence and we will kindly require you to move your booking to Amitabha or reschedule\*

## THE ESSENTIALS

### WHAT WE PROVIDE:

- Bedding: 1 mattress, 1 pillow, 1 clean bed sheet mattress cover, 1 clean pillowcase.
- 1 blanket.
- 2 meditation pillows.
- 1 chair.
- 1 meditation stool.
- 1 storage box.
- 1 torch (to use during the first hour to get references).
- 1 pen and paper (to communicate, yes you can write in darkness).
- 1 garbage.
- 1 broom and dustpan.
- 1 towel to clean the floor in case of water spilling.
- Organic cleaning soap for the bathroom.

- 1 bathroom mat.
- Laundry for bedding, towel, sarong for a long retreat.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING FOR YOUR STAY:**

- Your drinking water for the entire duration of your retreat, 3L per day. (If you drink more we will provide)
- Your toiletries.
- 1 towel for short retreats, 2 towels for long retreats.
- Sarongs, light clothing, 1 set of warmer cloth (it tends to be warm and cosy inside, its smart to prepare for chilly moments as well)
- Toilet paper if you don't use the bum hose.
- Ear plugs, optional, to aid the overall sensory deprivation experience.
- Sunglasses, optional, to use as you emerge from the dome.

## **NUTRITION**

Basically, anything goes. There are no forbiddances, but some items clearly “feel” better than others. Having said that, everybody is different and while some foods work well for some they won't for others. It is clear that you don't go into the dome to indulge and eat rich and heavy food. Many people find that the need for physical food is greatly diminished in this non-ordinary environment.

Keep it simple and in coherence with your actual diet. This is not the place to try a new diet or fasting. Food must be the last of your worries, so all your attention is into seeing the subtle effects of being in the dark onto your practice. If you want to read more on the topic of fasting, check our [BLOG](#) fasting during a solo dark retreat.

Mantak Chia, who authored some worthwhile books on what he calls darkness technology, also touches the subject of darkroom nutrition. He suggests focusing on foods that are rich in tryptophan, one of 20 amino acids. Among his favorites are brown rice, bananas, dates, figs, seaweed, milk and milk products, almonds and some others. For a more complete, access this [PDF](#).

So what are the options to eat food in the domes?

1. Be self sufficient: only valid for a 3 days retreat.
2. Have a friend/partner/restaurant to bring you food.
3. Use our services.

### **BE SELF SUFFICIENT**

Only valid for a 3 days retreat.

You take with you all what you need, it will ask you some preparation. All food must be kept tight in sealed containers like Tupperware type. Mostly dry food such as nuts, seeds, dried fruits, small coconut milk carton, muesli, dates, and your favorite snack. Fruits will last a couple of days and will smell really strong if not kept sealed, the less messy fruit is banana and is readily available anywhere on this beautiful island.

If you bring your own food, we will pick your garbage up every day.

## **HAVE A FRIEND/PARTNER/RESTAURANT TO BRING YOU FOOD**

We will be in close contact with them if they need help or if you left a message for us. If you keep food inside the dome for extra snacks it has to be kept in tightly sealed containers like Tupperware type.

During one of my retreats, my partner once got me a veggie burger with French fries from the restaurant nearby, it was digested without any worries in the fire of practice.

You can also contact a Thai restaurant that caters to food. It will also take you some preparation to organize it with them and to make sure they are reliable.

## **USE OUR SERVICES**

It started to happen in 2018 when Ruta from Lithuania came determinate to sit a 21 days retreat. We had a Skype interview and she convinced me that she was ready for that. It took me a few retreats to jump into the 21 days one and was reluctant to let her go that long from the first retreat. She was the first one to use the dome after two years of stand by as I was away for a while. I was still finishing to work on the fans when she arrived and I finished as she was lying down in the dome after a 20 hours trip. I said what do you want to do for food, she says first nothing, just fasting, I said it's not on. We negotiated and the first menu was created. Here it goes:

- **RUTA'S MENU:**

Early Morning delight, fresh homemade coconut milk (1L):  
Coconut water and flesh blended with a dash of organic  
extra virgin coconut oil.

Early evening refreshments,

Fruit salad (1L container): finely chopped papaya and  
banana in squeezed lime juice.

Or Raw salad. Fresh mixed lettuces from our local grower  
Seed to Feed, plus mixed raw veggies. We will agree on the  
dressing.

Price: 20 US\$/day

- **YOGI'S CLASSIC:**

Morning delight, same as above.

Evening satvic blend: it consist of cereal (brown rice, or  
buckwheat), yellow dal or lentils, and greens with mixed  
veggies quick steer fry with mild Indian spices.

Price: 20 US\$/day

All our meals are pure vegan and we use the best product we can  
find on the island. We are not a restaurant and offer this service to  
make your stay more easy and convenient.

We can't offer special orders, a restaurant certainly can.

You can also decide to alternate the 2 menus during the retreat.  
For example 2 days of Ruta's menu and 1 day Yogi's classic.

**All food inside the dome has to be kept in tightly sealed containers like Tupperware type.**

## FINAL NOTES

So that sums up all practicalities, if you have unanswered questions please inquire further.

If you have any doubts, there is no doubt here. You have come to this threshold in life. Embrace what is calling you deeper. Be absorbed in darkness.

It is our privilege and honor to serve you in this way. We are grateful to all the beings that come here on retreat. It is our commitment to hold the integrity of the sacred space in which you come to stay.

It is our love and joy that carries this integrity throughout all that is done here on this land in total harmony with your retreat. We hope to see you soon...

