

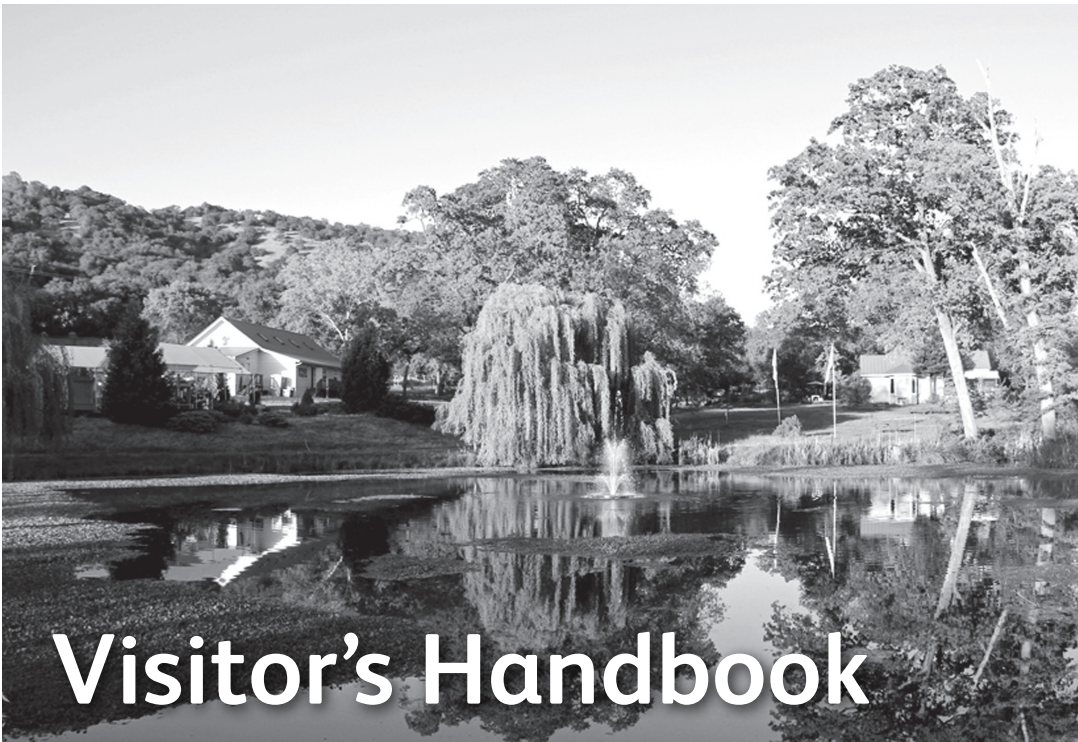
Visitor's Handbook

Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm



Our mission is to create a beautiful environment and an oasis of peace in a chaotic world where people from all walks of life can come together to practice yoga and meditation, and get in touch with their True, Divine Self.

Knowing that only inner peace can create outer peace, we aim to help all realize their highest potential and find inner peace.



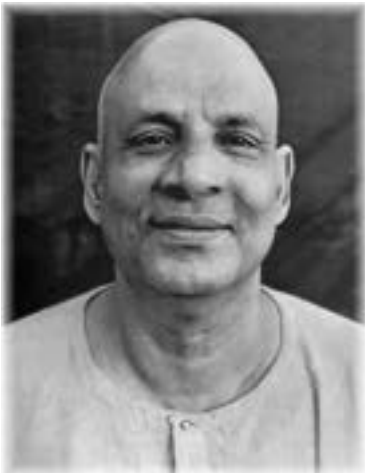
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SWAMI SIVANANDA (1887-1963)

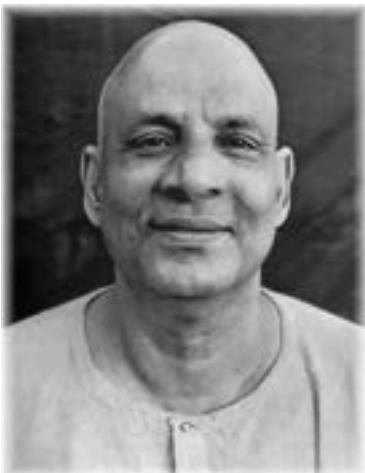
Born September 8, 1887 to an illustrious family in Tamil Nadu, South India, Swami Sivananda displayed spiritual tendencies even in his youth. As a young man—already channeling divine force for the service of humanity—he became a medical doctor and served the poor in Malaysia for many years.

In 1932, he started the Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh; in 1936, the Divine Life Society was born. The Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy was organized in 1948 with the aim of disseminating spiritual knowledge and training people in Yoga and Vedanta. He spread this knowledge far and wide—through the works of his disciples and the 200+ books he wrote in English detailing the methods and techniques of Divine Life and the attainment of Self Realization. The Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm boutique offers a large selection of these priceless books for sale.

Swami Sivananda's life was a radiant example of service to humanity, both during his years as a doctor and later as a world-renowned jivanmukta (liberated sage). To serve all, to love all, to mix with all and to see God in all beings were the ideals that he taught and lived by.

Swami Sivananda's teaching crystallized the basic tenets of all religions, combining all yoga paths into one—the Yoga of Synthesis. He made the teaching accessible to all, encapsulating it in the simple motto: *"Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realize."*

He attained the final goal and left his body on July 14, 1963.



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SWAMI VISHNUDEVANANDA (1927-1993)

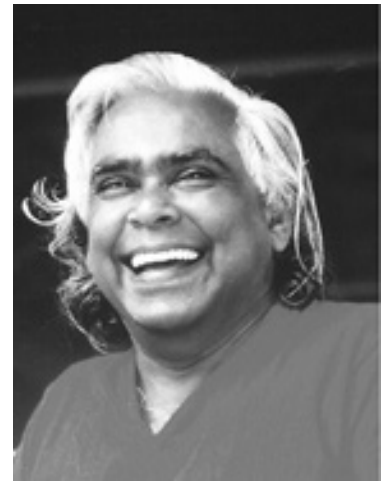
The International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centers movement was founded in the 1960s by Swami Vishnudevananda in the name of his guru, Swami Sivananda. Today, there are ten ashrams and many centers in major cities around the world that contribute to propagating the teaching of the synthesis of Yoga. More than 52,000 Yoga teachers have been trained in this system to date. Swamiji's mission in the West started upon arrival in San Francisco in 1957, at the urging of his guru.

He is recognized as a leading authority on Hatha and Raja Yoga. He was a tireless campaigner for world peace and is the author of the Yoga classics, *The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga and Meditation and Mantras*.

Throughout his life, Swamiji was deeply concerned about the world and the disaster of constant war. This led him to learn to fly. He then personally piloted a small plane over many troubled areas of the world, creating discussion and awareness in the news media. He "bombarded" these war-torn areas with flowers and peace pamphlets while repeating the peace mantra: Om Namo Narayanaya. His life was an expression of "unity in diversity." Swamiji entered mahasamadhi (left his physical body) on November 9, 1993. Swamiji was born in Kerala, South India in 1927.

"Health is wealth. Peace of mind is happiness. Yoga shows the way."—SWAMI VISHNUDEVANANDA

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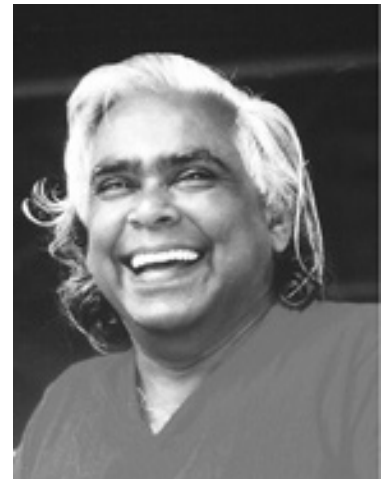
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HISTORY OF THE ASHRAM

The Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm, situated on 80 acres of land located in the gold country of the beautiful Sierra Nevada foothills in Northern California was founded in 1971. The “Yoga Farm,” as Swami Vishnudevananda nicknamed the Ashram, was his favorite place for personal retreat.

In 1974, the Yoga Farm hosted the first Sivananda Yoga Teachers’ Training Course on the West Coast. Since then, thousands of teachers have been trained here as well as countless volunteers and seva study students.

Yoga practitioners are increasingly aware of deeper and subtler aspects of classical yogic teachings and seek a retreat where they can deepen their practice, renew their inspiration and further educate themselves. The Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm responds by maintaining a pure atmosphere where people from all walks of life can rediscover their Divine Self. It is a spiritual, non-sectarian, non-profit organization run entirely by dedicated Yoga teachers who, as volunteers, selflessly teach this ancient system.

“We serve everyone equally with respect.” —YOGA FARM STAFF

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MODERN DAY

Swami Sitaramananda has been the main teacher and director of Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm since 1995. Of Vietnamese origin, she is a gifted speaker delivering jewels of wisdom on a wide range of topics with clarity. She is a tireless worker and generous visionary who has been instrumental in the growth of the Ashram.

Renovations and improvements continue at the Ashram to better accommodate the demand for Yoga, meditation and immersion in nature. The accommodations are beautiful and comfortable, in the spirit of "simple living and high thinking." In addition to our original Om Cabins, guests can stay in Siva Cabins on Siva Hill, Krishna Cabins by the pond, or deluxe Shanti Cabins.

The programs offered are more and more diversified, keeping to the powerful teachings of classical yoga, while at the same time bringing in modern ideas and renowned contemporary teachers. The Ashram has become a flourishing spiritual institution whose presence is known locally, nationally, and globally.

The ashram has started a successful 800-hour Sivananda Yoga Health Educator Training (SYHET) to help bring yoga therapy of body, mind, spirit to the world. We offer health counseling and Ayurveda counseling as well as Ayurveda therapies.

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ASHRAM DAILY SCHEDULE

- 5:30am Wake-up bell
- 6:00am Satsang
- 8:00am Asana and pranayama class
- 10:00am Vegetarian brunch
- 11:00am Karma Yoga
- 4:00pm Asana and pranayama class
- 6:00pm Vegetarian dinner
- 8:00pm Evening Satsang

Yoga Class The Ashram offers daily asana classes at 8:00am and 4:00pm. No reservations are necessary. The classes last approximately two hours and are for both beginner and advanced students. Please do not eat two to three hours before a class. Wear loose, modest, comfortable clothing, preferably cotton. The teachers are graduates of the renowned Sivananda Yoga Teachers' Training Course and are skilled at teaching all levels.

Satsang The heart of Ashram life, Satsang consists of half an hour of silent meditation, kirtan chanting and a simple talk on the philosophy and psychology of yoga. Twice daily— at 6:00am and 8:00pm—we gather for Satsang in a calm and reflective atmosphere. Satsang is always an uplifting and inspirational experience.

Meals We serve two vegetarian meals per day and almost all of the food we serve is organic. Many of our vegetables and herbs come from the Ashram gardens. Vegan and gluten-free options are often available.

Karma Yoga The Ashram is run completely by volunteers. Guests offer their services for one hour daily to help in the upkeep of the Ashram.

The Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm is a registered 501(c)(3) volunteer-based, non-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible.



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ASHRAM FACILITIES AND INFORMATION

Drinking Water Our pure drinking water comes from a well in the Ashram grounds. Guests can refill water bottles from our sinks or from the water dispensers in each of the buildings.

Boutique The Ashram boutique is open daily, offering a range of spiritual books, inspirational music, clothing for yoga classes, mats, meditation cushions, and other yoga-related items. Also available are a selection of natural personal care items, dietary supplements, essential oils and Ayurveda remedies. Check with Reception for boutique operating hours.

Laundry Coin-operated washing machines are available during daytime hours. We have clotheslines for drying. Laundry soap can be purchased in the boutique.

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POINTS OF INTEREST

Take a stroll around the Ashram...

Animal Pen Home to affectionate llamas, naughty goats and elegant alpacas, the animal pen is a source of joy for adults and children alike.

Peace Miracle Labyrinth The design is based on sacred geometry and matches the labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral in France, built between 1194 and 1250. Dedicated Karma Yogis built ours. The Peace Miracle Labyrinth offers a 20-minute meditative walk. Take a breath, ask a question, step inside and walk the labyrinth to find your answer. Unlike a maze, there is only one way in and out.

Permaculture Gardens and Lavender Field Yoga Life is deeply connected to Mother Nature. The Yoga Farm is located on 80 acres of beautiful land with meadows, creeks and ponds, landmark oak trees, and a variety of domesticated and wild animals. These resources provide great possibilities to move closer to full sustainability through expanding our already-large food forest, organic vegetable garden, well water and solar power systems.

Moksha Trail Enjoy a gentle walk through natural fields. Follow the trail up the hill to Durga Temple for contemplation.

Shrines There are five outdoor shrines to Ganesha, Hanuman, Moola Ganesha, Dhanvanthari and Jupiter.

Siva Temple Hill Enjoy a more vigorous hike. Count the 108 steps up Siva Hill to reach the highest point of the Ashram and pay homage to Lord Siva. Drink in a beautiful view of the surrounding golden hills.

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THE TEMPLES OF THE ASHRAM

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Radha Krishna Hall The oldest and main altar of the Ashram is dedicated to Krishna and Radha, symbolizing divine love.

Brahma Vidya Hall Lord Siva—in the form of Dakshina Murti, the silent teacher—sits at the center of the altar. This hall of self-knowledge is complete with statues of the lineage of gurus that represent the light behind our teachings, as well as statues of Durga, Krishna, Saraswati, and Ganesha.



BRAHMA VIDYA HALL ALTAR



DAKSHINA MURTI



KRISHNA TEMPLE WITH NINE PLANET SHRINE



RADHA KRISHNA HALL ALTAR



DURGA TEMPLE



SIVA TEMPLE

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Durga Temple This was Swami Vishnudevananda's favorite temple. The powerful, protective energy of mother Durga is felt by all who enter. This private temple is open to guests when accompanied by staff.

Siva Temple This sacred space is located at the highest point of the Ashram. Siva is immortalized in blue artwork painted on rock. His presence protects the altar set in stone.

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THE WELL-BEING CENTER / HEALTH HOUSE

Rejuvenate and detoxify from your daily life. Ayurvedic treatments are available by appointment and take place in the Ayurveda huts adjacent to the main bath house. (See p. 7 for more information.) Appointments can be booked at Reception or in the boutique for:

Ayurvedic Therapies

- Bliss Therapy (abhyanga, shirodhara and swedhana)
- Relaxation Treatment (abhyanga)
- Energy Balancing (marma therapy)
- Vigorous Herbal Oil Treatment (abhyanga)
- Sinus Treatment

Therapeutic Treatments

- Thai Yoga Massage
- Hot Stone Massage
- Head and Neck Massage

Ayurveda & Yoga Health Education Consultations

One-on-one, 90-minute Ayurveda consultations are available with a specialist who can go deep into discovering your unique physical and emotional needs. Your Ayurveda and SYHET specialist can prescribe remedies and recommend lifestyle changes to support your growth and development. Follow-up appointments are available for continuing guidance as your journey back to complete health. Check our website for upcoming detoxification retreats, such as juicing or fasting, as well as our specific health camps..



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Our Foundational Teachings

Whether you come for a weekend or a month, your practice will be based on these core teachings of Swami Vishnudevananda:

The Five Points OF YOGA

These five principles constitute the essence of the teachings of the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centers. To clarify the science of Yoga and make it accessible to the majority of seekers, Swami Vishnudevananda extracted its essence and presented it in these universal principles for physical and mental health as well as spiritual growth.

1. Proper Exercise (Asanas)

Our physical body is meant to move and exercise. If our lifestyle does not provide natural motion of muscles and joints, then disease and great discomfort will ensue with time. Proper exercise should be pleasant to the practitioner while beneficial to the body, mind and spiritual life. Sivananda yoga teaches sun salutations and 12 basic asanas.

2. Proper Breathing (Pranayama)

Yoga teaches us how to use the lungs to their maximum capacity and how to control the breath. Proper breathing should be deep, slow and rhythmical. This increases vitality and mental clarity.

3. Proper Relaxation (Savasana)

Long before the invention of cars, planes, telephones, computers, freeways and other modern triggers of stress, the Rishis (sages or seers) and Yogis of yore devised very powerful techniques of deep relaxation. As a matter of fact, many modern stress-management and relaxation methods borrow heavily from this tradition. By deeply relaxing all the muscles, the Yogi can thoroughly rejuvenate his nervous system and attain a deep sense of inner peace.

4. Proper Diet (Vegetarian)

Besides being responsible for building our physical body, the foods we eat profoundly affect our mind. For maximum body-mind efficiency and complete spiritual awareness, Yoga advocates a lacto-vegetarian diet. This is an integral part of the Yogic lifestyle.

5. Positive Thinking & Meditation (Dhyana)

Here is the most important point of all: Per Swami Sivananda, "As you think, so you become." Thus we should exert to entertain positive and creative thoughts as these will contribute to vibrant health and a peaceful, joyful mind. A positive outlook on life can be developed by learning and practicing the teachings of the philosophy of Vedanta. The mind will be brought under perfect control by regular practice of meditation.

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OUR DEEPER TEACHINGS

The Four Paths of Yoga

Yoga means union—between the individual self and the Universal Self, and union between body, mind and spirit. Yoga is not just a system of physical exercise. It is a classical system of personal development to bring us to greater awareness of the True Self. There are four main paths to attain this Union, which brings health, happiness and peace of mind. Each path is suited to a different temperament or approach to life. All the paths lead ultimately to the same goal. The lessons of each path need to be integrated if true wisdom is to be attained. Swami Sivananda's approach is the synthesis of all these paths in daily life. The courses and programs at the ashram reflect these teachings.

1. Karma Yoga, The Path of Action

The Ashram is run entirely by dedicated Karma Yogis. By acting selflessly without thought of personal gain or reward—and by detaching from the fruits of actions and instead offering them to God—the Karma Yogi purifies the heart and sublimates the ego.

2. Bhakti Yoga, The Path of Devotion

Through prayer, worship and ritual, the Bhakti Yogi surrenders to God, channeling and transmuting emotions into unconditional love or devotion. The uplifting practices of chanting or singing the praises of God form a substantial part of Bhakti Yoga.

3. Hatha and Raja Yoga, The path of body and mind control

This path is often called ashtanga, or eight-limbed yoga. It is the path of body, breath and mind control, and meditation. Hatha Yoga is part of Raja Yoga. It offers a systematic method for controlling the incessant waves of thought. The chief practice of Raja Yoga is meditation. When the body and energy are under control, meditation comes naturally.

4. Jnana Yoga, The Yoga of Knowledge

The path of Jnana Yoga centers around Vedantic meditation and self-inquiry. Requiring tremendous strength of will and intellect, the Jnana Yogi uses the intellect to inquire into his or her own true nature and into the nature of reality. Before practicing Jnana Yoga, the aspirant needs to have integrated the lessons of the other yogic paths—for without selflessness, love of God and strength of body and mind, the search for Self-realization becomes mere idle speculation.

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OUR DEEPER TEACHINGS

The Four Paths of Yoga

Yoga means union—between the individual self and the Universal Self, and union between body, mind and spirit. Yoga is not just a system of physical exercise. It is a classical system of personal development to bring us to greater awareness of the True Self. There are four main paths to attain this Union, which brings health, happiness and peace of mind. Each path is suited to a different temperament or approach to life. All the paths lead ultimately to the same goal. The lessons of each path need to be integrated if true wisdom is to be attained. Swami Sivananda's approach is the synthesis of all these paths in daily life. The courses and programs at the ashram reflect these teachings.

1. Karma Yoga, The Path of Action

The Ashram is run entirely by dedicated Karma Yogis. By acting selflessly without thought of personal gain or reward—and by detaching from the fruits of actions and instead offering them to God—the Karma Yogi purifies the heart and sublimates the ego.

2. Bhakti Yoga, The Path of Devotion

Through prayer, worship and ritual, the Bhakti Yogi surrenders to God, channeling and transmuting emotions into unconditional love or devotion. The uplifting practices of chanting or singing the praises of God form a substantial part of Bhakti Yoga.

3. Hatha and Raja Yoga, The path of body and mind control

This path is often called ashtanga, or eight-limbed yoga. It is the path of body, breath and mind control, and meditation. Hatha Yoga is part of Raja Yoga. It offers a systematic method for controlling the incessant waves of thought. The chief practice of Raja Yoga is meditation. When the body and energy are under control, meditation comes naturally.

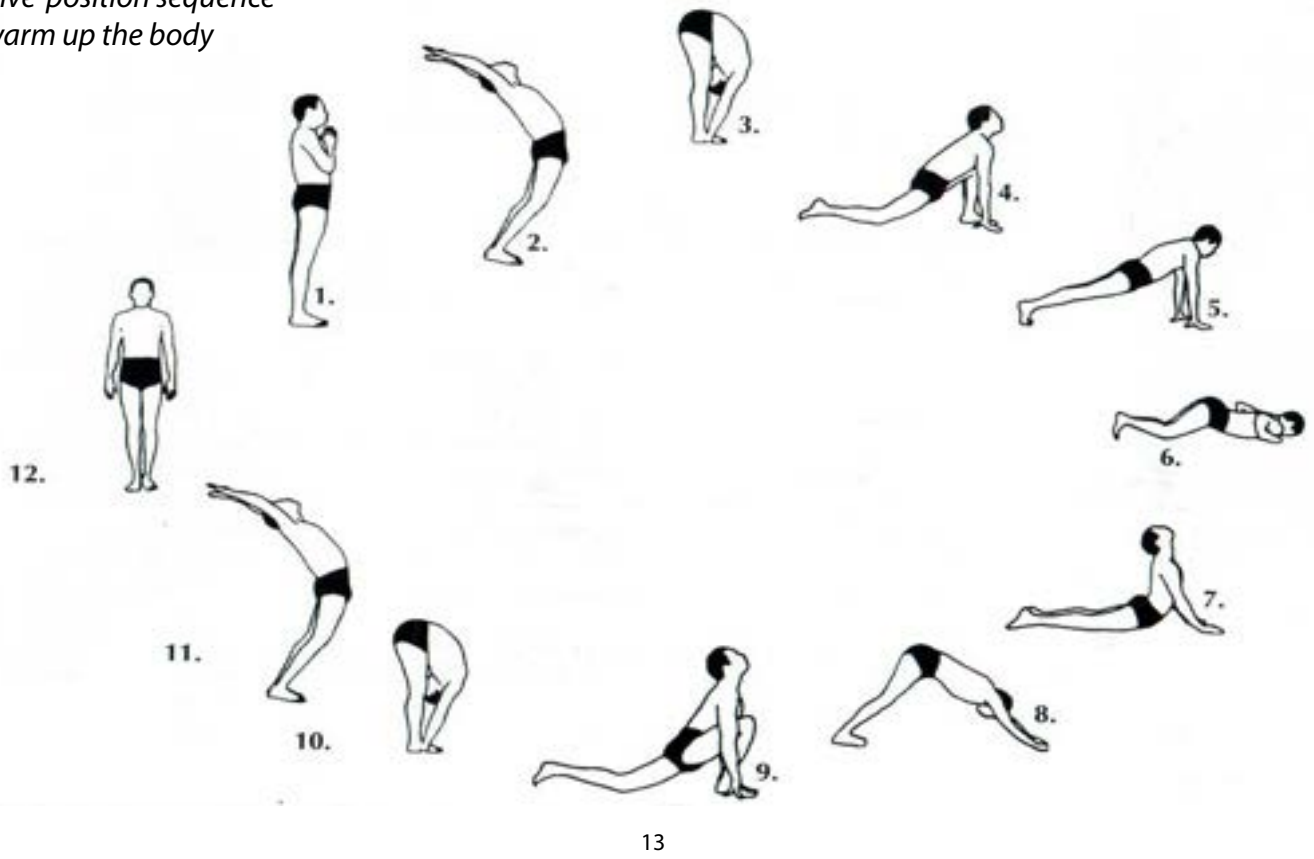
4. Jnana Yoga, The Yoga of Knowledge

The path of Jnana Yoga centers around Vedantic meditation and self-inquiry. Requiring tremendous strength of will and intellect, the Jnana Yogi uses the intellect to inquire into his or her own true nature and into the nature of reality. Before practicing Jnana Yoga, the aspirant needs to have integrated the lessons of the other yogic paths—for without selflessness, love of God and strength of body and mind, the search for Self-realization becomes mere idle speculation.

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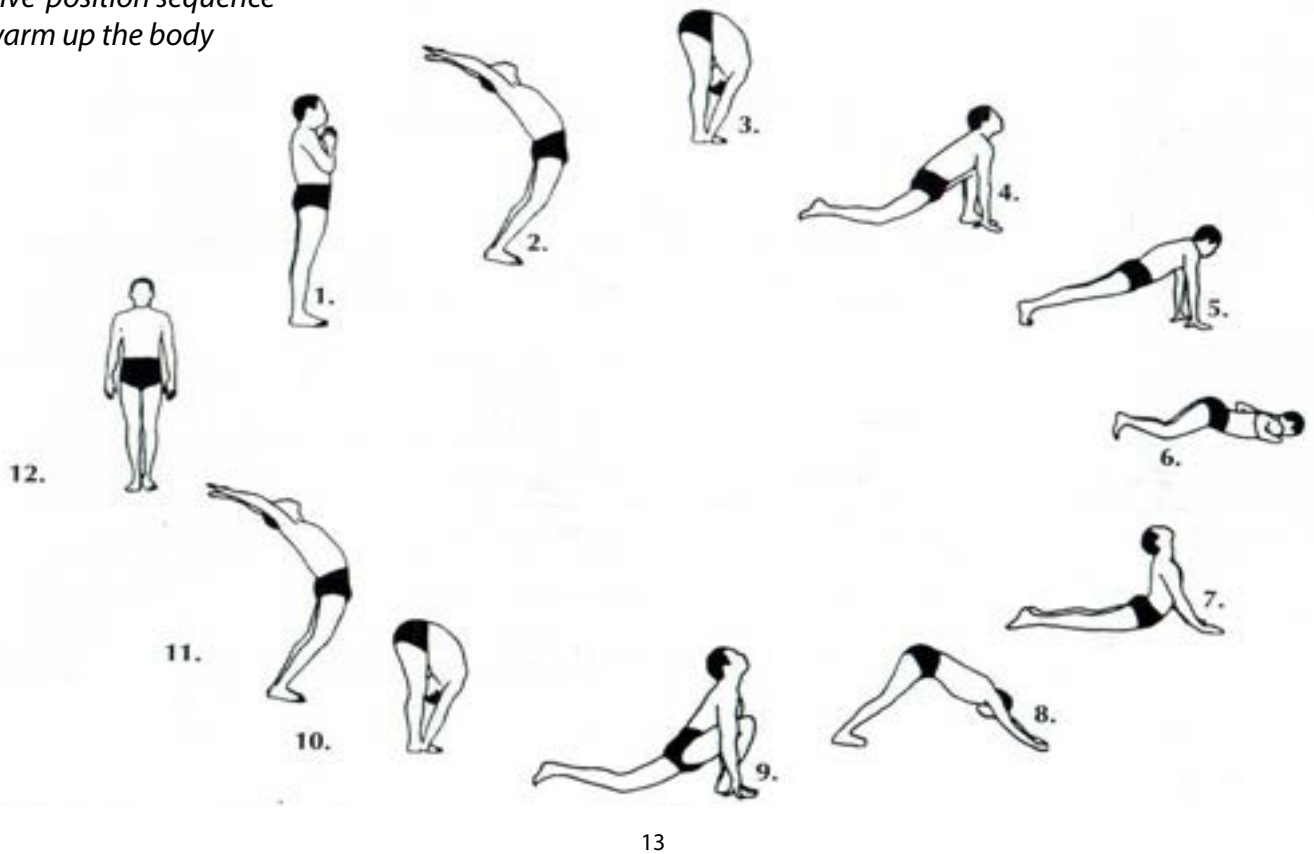
Sun Salutation (Surya Namaskar)

*Twelve-position sequence
to warm up the body*



Sun Salutation (Surya Namaskar)

*Twelve-position sequence
to warm up the body*



**The Twelve
Basic Postures
of a Sivananda
Yoga Class**



Headstand



Shoulderstand



Plough



Fish



Forward Bend



Cobra



Locust



Bow



Spinal Twist



Hands to Feet



Triangle



Corpse Pose

**The Twelve
Basic Postures
of a Sivananda
Yoga Class**



Headstand



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Spinal Twist



Hands to Feet



Triangle



Corpse Pose

GUIDE TO MEDITATION

Through regular meditation, the mind becomes clear and the motives pure. The subconscious mind releases hidden knowledge that allows for better understanding of oneself and one's relationship to the world. The limited personality slowly dissolves into an expanded consciousness. Ultimately, the super-conscious or intuitive forces are released, leading to a life of wisdom and peace. —SWAMI SIVANANDA

- At the beginning of the practice of meditation, gently instruct the mind to be quiet for half an hour.
- Sit in a comfortable steady posture with the spine and neck straight but not tense. A comfortable cross-legged posture provides a firm base for the body. A triangular path is created for the flow of energy, containing it rather than allowing it to disperse.
- Consciously regulate the breath. Begin with one minute of deep abdominal breathing to bring oxygen to the brain. Then slow the breath down to an imperceptible rate, keeping the breath rhythmic.
- Select a focal point on which to rest the mind. Choose either the point between the eyebrows or the point at the center of the chest. Use this focal point each time you meditate. Allow the mind to wander at first. Do not

force the mind to be still; this sets up additional mental waves, which will hinder meditation.

- Repeat your mantra mentally or verbally. If you do not have a personal mantra, use the universal mantra "Om."
- The mind will continue to wander. Again and again, bring it gently back to the breath, the point of focus and the mantra. It will eventually settle.
- Practice every day at the same time for thirty minutes, if possible.
- At the end of each practice session, sit quietly for a few moments before resuming your daily life.

"Be in the world, but not of the world." —ROMANS 12:2
This is the ideal of a yogi.

"Simple living, high thinking" —SWAMI VISHNUDEVANANDA

"Adapt, adjust, accommodate. Bear insult, bear injury, highest yoga." —SWAMI SIVANANDA

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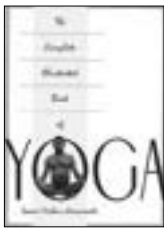
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RECOMMENDED READING



The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga
Swami Vishnudevananda

Meditation and Mantras
Swami Vishnudevananda

Sivananda Upanishad
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The Sivananda Companion to Yoga
Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre

The Yoga Cookbook
Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre

Yoga: Your Home Practice Companion
Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre. Available in Spanish.

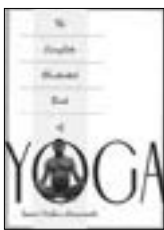
The Sivananda Yoga Training Manual
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Essentials of Yoga Practice and Philosophy
Swami Sitaramananda

Yoga Sadhana for Self Healing
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In addition, Swami Sivananda wrote over 200 books on the philosophy and psychology of Yoga. Many of these titles are available in the boutique.

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RULES AND GUIDELINES OF THE ASHRAM

Schedule To maintain the purity and spiritual purpose of the Ashram, we ask that all guests and residents follow the schedule of events of our daily program. Attendance at all Satsangs and at least one Yoga class per day is required.

Service All visitors are encouraged to join our staff (all non-paid volunteers) in the Yoga of selfless service during our daily-scheduled Karma Yoga Hour from 11:00am to noon each day.

No smoking, tobacco, alcohol, drugs or weapons are permitted on the Ashram grounds.

Due to fire danger, no matches, incense or candles are allowed.

Dress Please note that this is a traditional ashram and all are expected to observe the dress code. We require you to cooperate with this to maintain the pure energy of the Ashram. No nudity or transparent clothes, tank tops, tight-fitting clothing, exercise shorts, bare midriffs or tights. Trousers should be knee-length or longer and loose. Please dress modestly at all times, including during yoga asana classes.

Ashram Conduct Please respect the nature of our spiritual community. No nudity, promiscuity or sexual harassment. Please sleep at the location where you are registered to stay. This is a retreat promoting inner focus and Self-awareness, and bringing attention away from the physical appearance. Guests and residents are encouraged to turn within and transcend barriers of gender, race and personality, and keep to brotherhood/sisterhood relationships. Please respect the sacredness of the temples and the teachings.

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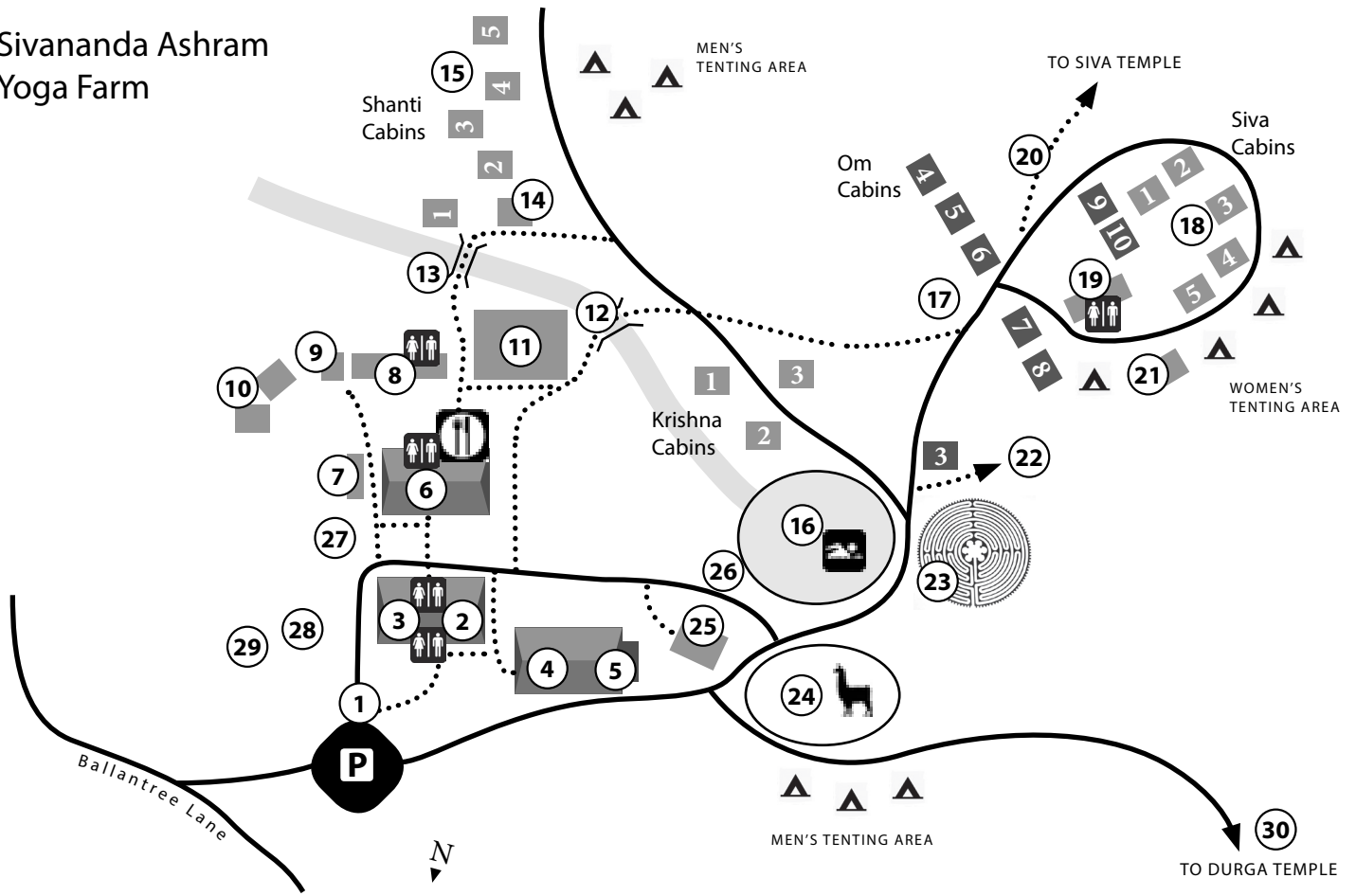
MAP KEY

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Gate of Peace Entrance and Ganesha Shrine | 17 Om Cabins (7) and Krishna Cabins (3) |
| 2 Reception, Boutique and Jupiter Shrine | 18 Siva Cabins (5) |
| 3 Administrative offices | 19 Bathrooms, showers, washing machine |
| 4 Brahma Vidya Hall | 20 Siva Hill, to Siva Temple |
| 5 Library | 21 Vishwa Hut (Night Guard) |
| 6 Radha Krishna Meditation Hall, dining area | 22 Moksha Trailhead |
| 7 Dish washing area | 23 Peace Miracle Labyrinth |
| 8 Bathrooms, showers, sauna | 24 Animal pen |
| 9 Laundry hut, washing machine | 25 Krishna and Nine Planet Temple |
| 10 The Well-Being Center | 26 Fire gong |
| 11 Yoga Deck | 27 Organic Garden and Greenhouse |
| 12 Vrindavan Bridge | 28 Tree Orchard |
| 13 Road to Shanti | 29 Solar array |
| 14 Priest Hut | 30 To Durga Temple and Lavender Field |
| 15 Shanti Cabins (5) | |
| 16 Vrindavan Pond | |

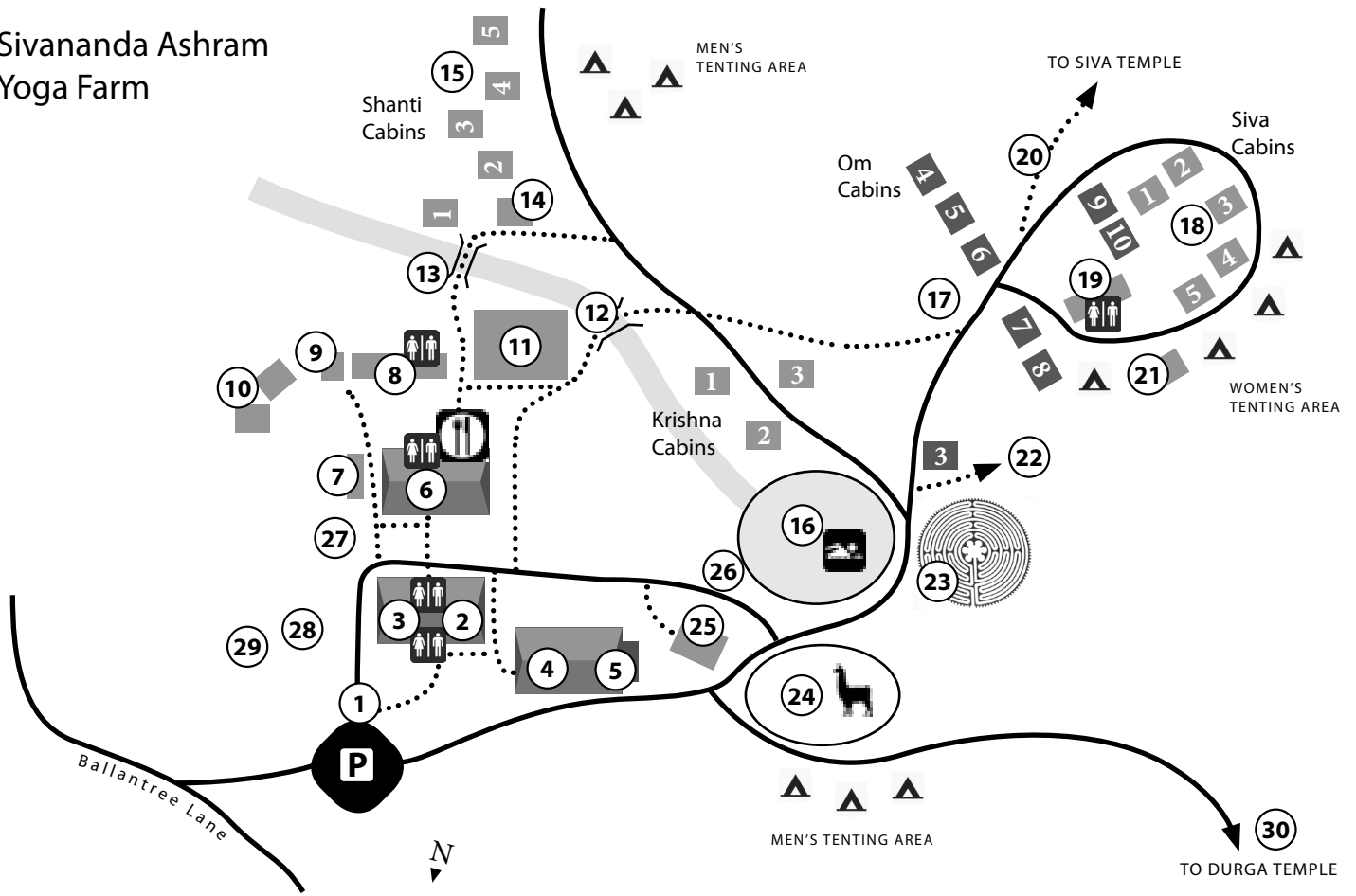
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Sivananda Ashram Yoga Farm



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