

SKY MIND RETREATS

WOMEN'S WILDERNESS RETREAT IN THE BEAUTIFUL ESCALANTE REGION OF SOUTHERN UTAH

**Guide: Alison Reitz
SEVEN DAYS, OCTOBER 11-17, 2009**

\$500

On the first day, we will hike about four miles to our first camp in the beautiful slickrock desert of southern Utah. The second day we will hike about another four miles to our base camp. For the following three days and four nights we will make our home near the still pools and majestic outcrops of the Navajo Sandstone. On the last two days we will retrace our steps to the trailhead.

Our days will include meditation, meditation instruction, council circle, and periods of silence, as well as plenty of opportunity to explore the beautiful landscape on day hikes. There will be time to write, to talk and share our lives, and to be in solitude. There will be a 24-hour solo on the fifth day. We will be participating in an age-old tradition of going into the wilderness as a support for spiritual practice and the inner journey. Immersed in nature, we will open ourselves to the interconnectedness, preciousness, and beauty of our own true nature.

THE HIKE

Our hikes with full packs will be about four miles long. We will be hiking over desert terrain where there are few trails, at an elevation around 5500 feet. Our route will include the rolling terrain of dunes and open rock, with some short but steep elevation gains. During the week, we will go on day hikes of up to four miles, over the beautiful expanse of the Navajo Sandstone. There will probably be the opportunity to swim.

THE WEATHER

While weather cannot be predicted with certainty, we can probably count on warm to cool days, with chilly nights. A fall rainstorm is certainly possible. Please go over the equipment list carefully to be sure you are prepared for changing conditions.

BEGINNING AND ENDING

We will meet in Escalante at 7:30 p.m. (Mountain Time) the night before the trip begins. You will be informed of the meeting place. Please plan to be in town by 6 p.m. to allow for dinner and getting settled, and please make all your last-minute phone calls and shopping on Saturday. We will drive from Escalante to the trailhead first thing Sunday morning, where we will pack, and then begin our journey.

On the last day of the retreat, we will retrace our steps to the trailhead, probably arriving early to mid-afternoon.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

There is no public transportation to south-central Utah. Las Vegas and Salt Lake City are the best airline destinations; from there you can rent a car. Our hikers are often able to share a car or arrange to be picked up at the airport by someone driving. Please arrange your travel schedule to allow you to get to Escalante by 6 p.m. the night before the retreat starts. Your return flight should be booked for Sunday, as we might not return to Escalante until late afternoon the last day.

Please note that the retreat officially begins and ends at the trailhead. You are responsible for your own transportation to and from the trailhead.

SAFETY AND INSURANCE

In addition to your health insurance, you may wish to purchase evacuation insurance to cover expenses associated with an emergency medical evacuation. This can be a good deal since a backcountry medevac almost always involves the use of an expensive helicopter, which you would otherwise be responsible for. There are several respected providers to choose from, such as Diver's Alert, the American Alpine Club, World Nomads, or Global Rescue, Inc. You may also wish to purchase trip insurance, available at any travel agency. It will protect your investment in non-refundable airline tickets if you have to cancel or if the retreat is canceled due to circumstances beyond our control.

STAFF

Alison Reitz has been guiding wilderness trips for eighteen years. She is a certified Wilderness First Responder. She has been practicing Vipassana meditation for ten years. She has completed Spirit Rock Meditation Center's Dedicated Practitioners Program, and teaches meditation and dharma classes in Santa Barbara, CA, where she lives.

TO APPLY

REGISTRATION

A \$100 deposit is required to reserve a place. The rest of the fee is due 30 days before the retreat. In addition please fill out the **Registration Form, Medical Questionnaire, and Release Form**. We require these forms to be sent in with your deposit. The forms are available on the websites www.skymindretreats.org and www.cloudcanyon.com. Make checks payable to **Sky Mind Retreats**. Send all registration materials to: **Sky Mind Retreats, 4858 Ogram Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105**.

Please remember, when you send in your deposit be sure to send in the three forms. We can only register you when we have this info.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please feel free to contact Alison at alison@cloudcanyon.com or **805-692-9615** with your questions and concerns.

*Today I will walk out, today everything evil will leave me,
I will be as I was before, I will have a cool breeze over my body.
I will have a light body, I will be happy forever,
nothing will hinder me.
I walk with beauty before me. I walk with beauty behind me.
I walk with beauty below me. I walk with beauty above me.
I walk with beauty around me. My words will be beautiful.
In beauty all day long may I walk.
Through the returning seasons, may I walk.
On the trail marked with pollen may I walk.
With dew about my feet, may I walk.*

- Excerpt from a Navajo Prayer