



Catering on Gaia Forest retreats

Dear friend,

Thank you for your interest in catering on a Gaia Forest nature immersion retreat. Below is some information to help you decide if this is a role for you. **To apply**, please send us an email with your CV, and don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions: Email: Tenzin@gaiiaforest.org mobile: +61(0) 04323 66789. For information about upcoming retreats: visit our website at <http://www.gaiiaforest.org>

Warmly,

Br Tenzin and the Gaia Forest team

Context:

Our **nature immersion** retreats are modelled closely on Yatra nature retreats. As a not-for profit, we offer our events at what we hope is an affordable base cost. This covers the unavoidable expenses like transport, food and accommodation. Teachings are offered on a donation basis to keep events both accessible and aligned with the ancient tradition of *dana* (generosity). There are two paid roles; admin and caterer, which both call also on a spirit of *seva* (service) and the understanding that as a team member we draw part of our reward from the dharma teachings offered, and the nourishment of community practice. As such the catering role is one which often attracts cooks with a strong interest and background in meditation and/or yoga.

We are currently operating in Australia, in the mid and central coast and hinterlands of NSW. Further events are planned elsewhere in the near future. Our **nature immersion** retreats typically take place in National Park campgrounds in these regions, over three nights and two full days, with a half day either side. The team and participants are all accommodated in their own tents. All practice together to co-create a safe, conducive and harmonious environment for the cultivation of mindfulness, calm and insight, in the context of beautiful wild nature and community connection. The cook's role in this is central, as the kitchen is the hub of any community, so their practice of mindfulness, calm, kindness and compassion is both valued and called upon.

Logistics:

The kitchen set-up is based around a Terra Trek off-road camping trailer similar to the one shown. The trailer is equipped with an awning, slide out stainless preparation bench with drawers, twin



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gas burners, a 100 litre fridge, a 90 litre water tank, pantry



and storage area, led lights, battery and solar power. Where possible we also may make use of Camp Kitchen facilities. During **nature immersion** retreats we do not need to shift camp.

Group size is typically 25 persons. The cook has rostered support from 2 or three participants for each meal for preparation and clean up as needed. Over a retreat of this length the cook is encouraged to pre-cook meals or meal components on the preparation day where possible, knowing these can be kept cold in the fridge and thawed as needed.

Budget and pay rate:

We can offer the caterer a rate of up to \$275 per day. As mentioned above, we recognise that this rate calls upon the spirit of *seva*, and suits cooks with an interest in meditation who feel the benefit of attending the retreat and receiving teachings. On a **nature immersion** retreat this is for two full days, two half days either side, and a preparation day (total \$1,375). Beyond the above guidelines, the cook has control and responsibility for the menu and provisioning. We budget about \$20 per person per day for the purchase of food. Where possible we encourage the cook to select healthy, unprocessed, local, and organic, products, within budget constraints of course. We do not typically have access to a resupply, except in an emergency, so all shopping is done prior. The cook needs to provide their own vehicle, which they can use to carry the food supplies. They may also choose to camp in their vehicle. Travel expenses are covered by the budget with fuel and a daily rate for vehicle use depending on vehicle type and the nature of the roads travelled, e.g. \$50 per day on 4wd roads.

Meals and menu:

The style of cooking is simple, wholesome vegetarian meals, with basic vegan or gluten free options also offered. Breakfast (usually served around 8am) is typically a porridge plus e.g. dried fruit compote and yoghurt. Lunch is typically a picnic (prepared in the morning and taken on walks) including salad wraps, boiled eggs, fruit, and fruit and nut trail mix as a snack. Dinner (usually served around 6:00 pm) is often a soup, curry, stew, pasta and sauce or similar, with lentils, tofu, vegetables etc. Tea and snacks are also supplied throughout the day or when participants are in camp. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us, (details above)