

Women's Effortless Meditation & Wellbeing Spring Retreat Thursday 21st - Sunday 24th March 2024

Nourish your whole self with nature, creativity, meditation, rest and play



**Tulach Ard, Lochalsh,
with views to the Isle of Skye, Scottish Highlands**

Nourish your whole self

A four day journey...

Retreating from your everyday life, your programme is designed to bring you rest (because we all need that whatever the season); enable to you find balance at this time of Ostara (the Celtic festival of Spring Equinox) and to provide you with an invitation into nature, creativity, meditation & play as we head into the lighter more outward half of the year.

This retreat will enable to you learn an incredibly accessible effortless meditation practice bringing physical, mental, emotional and spiritual benefits which can be adopted as a regular practice to help you retreat on a day-to-day basis. The practice also supports you in finding connection with yourself, others and in nature; accessing more of your innate creativity and returning to your essence and childlike playfulness.

I'm delighted to share we have Ellis O'Connor, a well-known Scottish contemporary artist who lives on the Isle of Skye, hosting a Creativity in Nature workshop for us (no creative experience or ability necessary) and Isabel McLeish, a wonderful local Shinrin-Yoku practitioner, hosting Forest Bathing in the ancient woodland surrounding our beautiful retreat property.

Woven throughout the retreat are ceremony, poetry, depth, beauty, comfort, nourishment, self-care, learning, quiet and stillness to bring you to a deeper wellbeing... igniting your creativity and inspiring your sense of playfulness at Springtime (the season of the Maiden) as we come out of the cave of Winter (the season of the Cailleach).

Your retreat is designed to include pockets of self-directed time so you can choose to do what feeds and nurtures your soul... whether that be sleeping, reading a book, taking a walk, sketching, relaxing in our shore-side sauna, journalling, enjoying a massage or star gazing under our dark skies (you may catch a glimpse of the milky way).

You'll leave feeling invigorated and full of Spring energy, with a new meditation practice and tools and practices to bring wellbeing into your everyday life; in addition to new friends and the memory of a Scottish Highlands experience you'll never forget!

Your Women's Effortless Meditation and Wellbeing Retreat

What's included?

- A zoom session ahead of the retreat to understand your personal intentions for attending, to ensure together we honour those
- 3 nights accommodation at the beautiful Tulach Ard on the shores of Loch Alsh
- 4 days retreat programme
- 2 half days Effortless Meditation teaching
- 1 Creativity in Nature workshop with contemporary Scottish artist Ellis O'Connor
- 1 Shinrin-Yoku (Forest Bathing) session with qualified practitioner Isabel McLeish
- 1 in-house Sauna session in our shore-side sauna with views to the Isle of Skye
- 1 retreat gift bag with goodies for your stay and beyond
- 3 continental breakfasts*
- 2 vegetarian lunches*
- 3 vegetarian dinners*
- 1 1:1 one hour online accompaniment session post-retreat (to be taken within 2 months)

* vegan and gluten free available on request.

Extras

- You might also choose to treat yourself to a restful and relaxing aromatherapy massage with Sarah-Jane of Wanderlust Holistic releasing tension and stress to create a sense of wellbeing. Massage bookings will be taken at the time of retreat booking (or not less than 1 month prior to retreat start date). £45.00 pp per session.

Your Retreat Experience

(Final programme to be confirmed at the Retreat Welcome Session)

Day 1: Thursday 21st March

Arrive and settle into your accommodation at the beautiful Tulach Ard on the shores of Loch Alsh, overlooking the mountains of the Isle of Skye. Get your bearings, unwind and rest from your journey. Join us for a welcome cuppa, meet one another as we come together to retreat. Let us welcome you into your accommodation and into the programme gently and with an open heart. There will be a little more time to settle in before coming back together for dinner and an opening ceremony where the invitation will be to let go, release, put down the outside world to fully enter into the retreat space. We'll gather our energies together and set group and personal intentions for the days ahead and leave you around the fire to get acquainted.

14.00 – 16.00 Check in to your accommodation

16.00 – 17.30 Welcome

17.30 – 18.30 Free time

18.30 – 19.00 Opening Ceremony

19.00 – 20.30 Vegetarian Dinner with gluten free/vegan options

20.30 – Free time to rest

Your Retreat Experience

Day 2: Friday 22nd March

In the morning Jo will teach you the practice of Effortless Meditation which brings physical, mental, emotional and spiritual benefits. You will gain an understanding of what meditation is and why we meditate. We will explore the benefits of a regular practice and consider how this practice might differ from other practices you've tried, before we move into the teaching. After a leisurely lunch, there'll be self-directed space for you to spend time doing what most serves you whether that be curling up with a book, having a nap, exploring the grounds or having a massage or a sauna. Before dinner we'll get outside in nature and open to the energy of Spring exploring what might want to be created through us with Ellis in her Creativity in Nature workshop. We'll eat together before having time to wind down before bed. Just imagine giving yourself this gift of time and space!

Before 9.30 Continental breakfast in cottage & free time

09.30 – 12.30 Learn Effortless Meditation with Jo (part 1)

12.30 – 13.30 Vegetarian Lunch with gluten free/vegan options

13.30 – 15:30 Self Directed Time (with the option to book a relaxing Massage*)

15:30 – 18.30 Creativity in Nature Workshop with Ellis

18.45 – 20.30 Vegetarian Dinner with gluten free/vegan options (I'm hoping Ellis will join us for dinner)

20.30 - Free time to rest

* Massages are available to book at extra cost (45 minute treatment)

Your Retreat Experience

Day 3: Saturday 23rd March

We will continue with the Effortless Meditation teaching in the morning, talking about thoughts and how they're part of this practice. Have another go at meditation and explore the transformational benefits of the practice. After a leisurely lunch, your afternoon will again include self-directed time so you can give yourself what you need to nourish your being whether reflecting in your journal, taking a long bath, listening to music, having a relaxing massage or sauna, painting the landscape, sharing stories. Before dinner we'll again head out into nature to bathe our senses in the beauty of the forest. We'll eat together before perhaps heading out to the fire (weather permitting), cosying up by the indoor fire or returning to the comfort of your room for a good night's sleep, before our final day together.

Before 9.30 Continental breakfast in cottage & free time

09.30 - 12.30 Learn Effortless Meditation with Jo (part 2)

12.30 – 13.30 Vegetarian Lunch with gluten free/vegan options

13.30 – 16:30 Self Directed Time (with the option to book a relaxing Massage*)

16:30 – 18.30 Shinrin-Yoku (Forest Bathing) session with Isabel

18.45 – 20.30 Vegetarian Dinner with gluten free / vegan options (I'm hoping Isabel will join us for dinner)

20.30 - Free time to rest

* Massages are available to book at extra cost (45 minute treatment)

Your Retreat Experience

Day 4: Sunday 24th March

On Sunday, after breakfast and checking out, we'll come together again for group meditation coming into presence together and bringing our minds, bodies and souls to balance, before reflecting on our weekend together...

We'll gather for our closing ceremony, preparing to re-enter the world again and to thank and release one another. We'll say goodbye to new friends... looking forward to reconnecting again.

Before 9.30 Continental breakfast in cottage & checkout

09.30 – 10.00 Group meditation

10.00 – 11.00 Reflective session

11.00 – 12.00 Closing Ceremony

12.00 Goodbyes and sending new friends on their way

Your Hosts

Jo Royle – Retreat Host



Jo has spent over 15 years holding space for individuals and groups often in some of the most challenging and/or beautiful moments life brings. She's taught over 400 people to meditate effortlessly and regularly holds women in workshops, retreats, circles and ceremonies, accompanying them on their journey through life. She previously worked as a coach and facilitator in the corporate sector and understands the importance of holding safe space. In 2020 Jo was ordained as an Interfaith Minister after following her passion to dive deeper into an exploration of her own spirituality. She currently lives on the Isle of Skye with her family after living in a bus for 4 years and being guided to settle there... but that's a story for over dinner one evening!

Sara Taylor – Catering



Since returning to the UK from the US, Sara lives on the Sleat Peninsula of the Isle of Skye, a place she spent many a childhood holiday. Besides running her own self catering holiday accommodation, she's well known in the local community for her work with Skye Bridge Studios, bringing her wealth of theatre and event experience to Lochalsh. Lucky for us, her freelance work also includes catering for retreats in the Skye and Lochalsh area! Sara has long been a keen cook and will be bringing nourishing, comforting vegetarian fare to our retreat table.

Your Retreat Team

Ellis O'Connor, Artist – Creativity in Nature Workshop

Ellis is a well-known contemporary landscape artist who lives on the nearby Isle of Skye. Her artwork captures dynamic energy observed in the landscape... the movement and rhythms of the sea and the land. Ellis regularly hosts workshops sharing her passion for creativity and nature. She often talks about how important both creativity and nature are to her wellbeing. In this workshop, Ellis will be inviting us to connect with the landscape, noticing and honouring nature, and allowing nature to draw us out of the cocoon of Winter and into the creativity and energy of Spring. No art experience necessary... this workshop is about the experience, not what you produce.

Isabel McLeish, Shinrin-Yoku Practitioner – Forest Bathing Session

Isabel trained as a Shinrin-Yoku practitioner several years ago and regularly hosts sessions in Lochalsh where she grew up. Shinrin-yoku originated in Japan in the 1980's as a wellbeing practice, using our senses to connect to the natural world. Forest bathing does not involve swimming! The idea of 'bathing' comes from bathing your senses in the atmosphere of the forest for relaxation and health. Isabel will be encouraging us to slow down, using mindfulness and meditation techniques and through a set of invitations... to deepen our connection to the land and the rhythms of the seasons. Isabel often times her sessions with the wheel of the year festivals... so perfect to forest bathe with her at Ostara!

Sarah-Jane Anderson

Sarah-Jane is a qualified aromatherapy massage therapist living on the Isle of Skye, whose treatments support you in coming back into balance and wellbeing on all levels of your being... mind, body and soul. She uses a variety of techniques to manipulate soft tissues and decrease muscular tension, pain and stress. Incorporating the wonder of nature into her massage, Sarah-Jane intuitively creates blends of organic essential oils so your massage benefits you in all the ways you need, whether that's peace and tranquility; revitalising energy or something else entirely. If you're in need of some love and self-care, let yourself sink into Sarah-Jane's holding whilst she works her magic.

Your Accommodation

You will be staying at Tulach Ard, an 18th Century listed country house, lovingly restored by the Stewart family. The historic house sits within thirty acres of private farmland.

Each bedroom offers a different aspect and connection to the surrounding landscape, with views to ancient Scottish woodland, misty Skye munros and the private foreshore of Loch Alsh where otters, dolphins, seals and even whales can be seen at times throughout the year.

Tulach Ard, a secluded, yet easily accessible residence, with nature on its doorstep, hosts up to twelve guests in double and twin rooms. With beautiful interiors inspired by the colours of the landscape, this beautiful accommodation enables you to relax in comfort whilst immersing yourself fully in your retreat experience.



Retreat Venue

The breathtaking grounds of Tulach Ard will provide the setting for our outdoor Creativity in Nature and Forest Bathing sessions.

The cosy & comfortable open plan lounge and dining area with its beautiful light, panelling and wood burning stove, will be our indoor retreat space.

And the onsite sauna, doubles as a wildlife hide, right on the water's edge with views across the loch to the Isle of Skye.



From Previous Retreat Guests...

"Thank you for the retreat and the space that you so beautifully held for us all. I wasn't sure how it would play out but it was, and continues to be, a wonderful experience that has felt like an anchoring support to me.

To have the space to just be myself, feeling no sense of obligation to anyone other than myself felt wonderful; however, to feel like that doesn't just come from me, it came from you as well; you provided a safe, nurturing and fun space for us to be!

And, the meditation really was effortless... at no point did I feel under any pressure to be anything in particular and found it a really moving experience and beautifully led. You demystified meditation and made it feel very accessible as a practice.

I've managed a meditation 4 out of the 5 days so far this week and the 5th day was spent with friends over lunch so that felt restorative anyway. I also forgave myself at the end of the day (as you suggested) which was a new thing for me!

Thank you again for a wonderful few days." ~ Emma

*"The retreat, and meeting you, was transformational. I can't begin to tell you how much it has meant to me."
~Maria*

"The whole four days was beautifully designed and thought through, with a great mix of inputs and personal time. You did a great job holding safe space between the participants, and had a lovely calm and measured way of taking us on the journey." ~ Siobhan

With a choice of single occupancy kings, doubles and shared twins.

Main House, 1st Floor

£1,060 Single occupancy king, ensuite (price for ONE person)

£1,020 Single occupancy king, rolltop bath with separate WC (price for ONE person)

£980 Single occupancy king, shared bathroom with one other (price for ONE person)

£940 Single occupancy double, shared bathroom with one other (price for ONE person)

Main House, 2nd Floor

£1,280 Friends shared twin, shared bathroom with one or two others (price for TWO friends)

Annex, 1st Floor

£690 Shared twin, two shared bathrooms with two or three others (price for ONE person)

Book Now

bookings will open 21/12/23
and close 20/02/24.

Rev
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