



## **VOLUNTEER (SEVADAR) AGREEMENT, CODE OF COMMUNITY & HARMONIOUS LIVING**

The Guru Ram Das Ashram is a self-sustained community, a model for the future on how we can grow in Sangat serving each other.

As a volunteer, your presence and energy are vital to maintaining and building this sacred space. In order to spend our time together in harmony, we kindly ask you to read consciously our House Rules and be aware of the systems and functioning of our facilities

Whether you have arrived through Workaway or applied directly, you are not merely a guest; you are an active pillar of our daily community life, helping us maintain the physical and spiritual landscape of the Ashram

We look forward to hosting you,

*In elevated spirits,*

*Sukhdev & Teet*

*Directors of Guru Ram Das Institute and Ashram at Rajamaa*



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## The Ashram

The Guru Ram Das Institute and Ashram at Rajamaa is a sustainable community, which is ever changing. The Ashram is located in the middle of nature with very simple facilities. The ashram's main inspiration has been the humility that is expressed by the life of Guru Nanak, living with and experiencing nature in its raw form.

The micro-climate of the Ashram is **very humid and occasionally windy**. Mornings in the late-spring and summer time are generally humid, misty and cold, with temperatures around 5-7 C. The temperature rises in the day to a warm climate, yet in a rainy or cloudy day it can stay around 12 C.

All facilities, including food preparations, cleaning and all that needs to be done to run the facilities are done by ourselves. The Ashram is changing every year, with new buildings and facilities being built and improved constantly.

Depending on the weather, we will be practicing yoga, Sadhana and Kirtan either inside the geodesic dome, or outside on the grass. We need to be very flexible as the weather might change unexpectedly and we might need to move in the middle of the class.

- We understand that the adjustment may bring up some uncomfortable emotions, feelings or resistances as your body and mind adapt to the different conditions in the Ashram:
- All facilities are entered through the outside—prepare for a camping-like experience, being in the elements for most of the day.
- Living here means sharing space with others, including shared accommodation.
- We practice a yogic (lacto-vegetarian) diet and a yogic lifestyle, which includes early morning practice which we do collectively when groups are around.

We kindly ask you to be patient and tolerant to yourself and others. Listen to what processes are happening within you and communicate with others as needed. If you see anything needs attention please let us know immediately!

# The Guru Ram Das Institute & Ashram

## VISION:

“Build a home where the honesty, tranquility, peace, service and giving can dwell, where tolerance, brightness and spirit can shine and show people that God lives.” - Yogi Bhajan, July 21, 1988

Founded in 2012, the Guru Ram Das Institute and Ashram in Estonia is rooted in the living wisdom of Sikh Dharma and the Teachings of Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan.

Guided by the Khalsa path, our mission is to offer a sanctuary for the soul, a place where anyone is welcome to reconnect with their inner self through spiritual practice, community, and conscious living. The Ashram is also a sacred home for the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, the living Guru of the Sikh tradition in the Dusht Daman Dam Gurdwara (Sikh Temple).

Here we share sacred teachings and technologies such as Kundalini Yoga, Karam Kriya, and the principles of Sikh Dharma, grounded in a way of life that honors both the Earth and the soul. As a fully off-grid, sustainable community in the forest, we are committed to living in harmony with nature and one another, guided by the practices of Simran (remembrance of the Divine) and Seva (selfless service).

Our path is built on three foundational pillars:

Naam Japo – Meditate on the One within your heart;

Kirat Karo – Live and work honestly, in alignment with the highest values;

Vand Chhako – Share what you have and serve all as equals.

Anchored in Saibhung (self-sustaining spirit) and Chardi Kalaa (ever-rising consciousness), we strive to embody these values in every breath, every act, and every moment of daily life.



## General house rules of the Ashram

**Registration & Entry:** Entry is strictly for pre-registered event participants and registered guests who have agreed to the House Rules.

**Private Areas:** The yellow main house, wood workshop, and adjacent house are private. Do not stroll around them, sit on their terraces, or take photos of these areas.

**No-Shoe Policy:** Shoes are strictly prohibited inside all enclosed buildings (dome, kitchen, cabins). Please bring indoor shoes if needed.

**Cats & Doors:** Keep all building and cabin doors closed to prevent cats from entering.

**Cabin Access:** Entry to cabins is restricted exclusively to the residents assigned to them.

**Valuables:** The Ashram is generally safe, but we are not responsible for lost, broken, or damaged belongings. You are solely responsible for your personal items.

**Zero-Discrimination & Behavior:** Practicing equality and mutual respect, the Ashram reserves the right to deny entry or participation to anyone exhibiting discriminatory, inappropriate, or violent behavior (verbal, physical, or psychological).

**Commercial Activities:** Promoting, selling, or offering any products, services, or therapies (including massages, coaching, healings, etc.)—even for free or by donation—is prohibited without written consent from the Ashram directors.

**Off-Grid Resource Limits:** We run entirely on solar power, and hot water is limited to sunny days. Use electricity and water consciously. **No heavy-duty appliances are allowed (e.g., hairdryers, irons, electric kettles);** only phone/device charging is permitted.

**Connectivity:** There is no public Wi-Fi for the ashram, but local 4G/5G mobile networks are available.

**Ashram Shop:** Yogi tea, yoga clothes, books, and turban fabric are available for purchase. Please bring cash.

**Privacy & Media:** Taking photos, videos, or voice recordings of other participants—especially during yoga, meditation, or chanting—is prohibited without explicit consent.

**Ashram Photography:** The Ashram reserves the right to take respectful, wide-angle group photos during events for promotional use (no close-ups). Inform us in advance if you prefer to be excluded.

**Bicycles:** Guests may use the Ashram bicycles; please request them in advance.

## Dress code

Keeping in mind grace, respect and equality, we have decided to establish a code of dress in the ashram, which applies to all persons who come in the ashram:

- Your dress must be discreet and not transparent, tight or too revealing
- We kindly ask you to use loose, comfortable clothing (recommended white and of natural fabrics)
- We kindly ask men not to be without shirt, nor ladies to be wearing revealing clothes during courses and trainings.
- We encourage everyone to use a head cover of natural fabrics during meditation, chanting, kirtan and sadhana. Entrance to the Gurdwara is only allowed with a head cover.

While we recommend white or light clothing for spiritual practices , please ensure you bring durable, practical work clothes and sturdy closed-toe shoes for gardening, building, and forest tasks that can safely get dirty or muddy.



## Food and Kitchen

The diet in the Ashram is lacto-vegetarian, during courses it is mostly vegan.

It is strictly forbidden to bring into the Ashram premises and consume (including the cabins) **meat, fish, seafood, tobacco, alcohol and recreation drugs of any kind.** (Medical drugs as appointed by a doctor do not fall into this category)

If as a volunteer you want to store any food in the fridge or shelves, please write your name on it.

Since our source of electricity is solar, we will explain if and how we can use heavy duty electrical appliances in the kitchen (oven, kettle, electrical stove). Do not use them unless you have checked with us it is ok.



## Accommodation

The Ashram offers at the moment three wooden cabins for indoor accommodation of guests and residents, with individual bunk beds of up to 6-8 person each.

During courses we might need to rearrange volunteers according to ladies-only cabin or gentlemen-only cabin or shared tent.

Your accommodation at the Ashram needs to be previously agreed upon with the organisation of your course.

We kindly ask you to respect other guests in your cabin and to honour their need for silence and quiet.

**Quiet time: 22:00** Please keep the noise down after 22.00, and respect that time also if you are sharing a cabin etc.



## Showers, Sauna & Toilets

**Shower Layout:** Shared showers are located in an outdoor, covered building. The left side has three shared showers for women. The right side features an individual shower for men, families, or anyone requiring privacy.

**Hot Water Limits:** Hot water is highly limited. Keep showers to a maximum of **3–5 minutes**. To allow the boiler time to recover, we recommend showering during the day rather than waiting until the peak evening hours.

**Sauna Rules:** Proper swimsuits and towels are mandatory; naked sauna use is prohibited. Always sit on your towel. Only individuals previously instructed and authorized may heat the sauna during designated times.

**Dry Toilets:** Three outdoor dry toilets are located next to the showers (usage instructions are posted inside). Do not throw non-organic items into the toilets; use the provided bins for all sanitary products.



[Watch a video with pictures of all the facilities at the Ashram on Youtube here](#)

## What to bring

- Please pack light and bring only the minimum that is necessary. The cabins have very little space for suitcases and storage of your personal items.
- Bring very warm clothes - our summer is similar to a winter in southern Europe. Prepare to be outside in humid climate and walk on wet grass.
- Yoga mat /sheepskin that can be used on the grass, shawl/blanket for relaxation, waterbottle/thermos for tea (cups and food utensils are provided)  
*\*we have yoga mats, meditation pillows, relaxation blankets available in a limited quantity. If you use our yoga mats outside, on the grass, please clean it after use.*
- Outdoor equipment: good shoes for walking in wet environment/forest, and shoes for waling in the grass that can be easily taken off (eg. Crocs, etc). Inside shoes and/or woollen socks highly recommended.
- If sleeping in your own tent: bring all necessary equipment, including mattress and sleeping bag.
- Toiletries & shower necessities, swimsuit in case you want to go to sauna or we decide to go swimming in a nearby lake.
- Good clothes for any kind of weather (cold/rain/hot). **Highly suggested to bring a warm pajama, warm sweater and woollen socks. If the weather forecast predicts rain, bring rubber boots. We are walking on the grass most of the time.**
- insect repellent / sunscreen in case you find it necessary
- Clothes for garden or maintenance work, which can get dirty.

## What not to bring

Alcohol, tobacco, meat, fish, seafood, eggs, drugs, pets, anywhere in the premises (including cabins and tents).

Smoking is only allowed in the parking area. If you have any prescribed drugs and/or allergies we should be aware of (eg. hay fever, asthma, wasps etc) please bring your medicine and let us know.



## Gurdwara

Gurdwara means “Door to the Guru”. In our Ashram, our Guru is the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, which is in the tradition of the Sikh Dharma, including all the teachings related to the Technology of Sound. It is in the form of a book, which by reciting, reading and singing gives us the experience of the highest consciousness. It contains compositions from multiple traditions, all in the Quantum Technology of Shabd Guru - sacred sound. Beyond a religion, it is open to all who want to experience their radiant body and the light of understanding, infinite grace, by listening or singing.

There is no need to do anything in the Gurdwara, you can just come and sit, meditate and enjoy the peace it brings. Regardless of your religion, belief, or non-belief, everyone is welcome to come to the Gurdwara.

We kindly ask all guests who visit the Gurdwara, and are in the presence of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib when it is in open book form:

- take your socks off
- keep your head covered (head covers are available at the entrance)
- do not point your feet or back towards the Guru
- the custom is to bring an offering to the Guru, which can be in any form

Everyday after Sadhana we will do an Ardas (Prayer) and take a Hukam (message of the day) in the Gurdwara tradition. Evening kirtan will also take place in the presence of the Guru, and we will do a closing Ardas and Hukam to close the day.



## **General schedule for the Ashram during trainings**

05:00-07:30 Aquarian Sadhana  
07:30-08:00 Ardaas and Hukam from the Siri Guru Granth Sahib (at the Gurdwara)  
08:00-9:00 breakfast  
09:00-13:00 Training / Ashram work  
13:00-14:30 Lunch & Siesta  
14:30-18:30 Training / Ashram work  
18:15-18:30 Kirtan or healing meditation  
19:00 Dinner, Sauna  
22:00 Quiet time

(may change depending on the training, retreat or course)

## **Volunteer working arrangement**

We can come to pick you up at Aruküla train station (from Tallinn it takes 20 minutes by train), we should agree beforehand the time of pickup.

We generally establish a minimum stay of 2–3 weeks for volunteers. The first 3 days serve as a mutual trial period to ensure compatibility with our community lifestyle.

As generally established by Workaway and other volunteer exchange platforms, we will provide with accommodation and 3 meals a day in exchange for 25 hrs a week of work (or 5 hrs per day 5 days a week). You will set up your working schedule as needed, roughly in the 9-13 and/or 14:30-18:00 schedule. You can arrange your working hours evenly through the week or have more intense work days and take free days off.

To prevent misunderstandings: your 5 daily hours strictly cover focused structural, gardening, or kitchen support tasks. General community upkeep—such as keeping your own cabin tidy, cleaning up after yourself in the showers, or washing after a group meal—falls under common courtesy and does not count toward your official 5 hours of daily volunteer exchange

Volunteers assigned to construction or maintenance tasks will be given explicit permission and safety briefings to access specific tools from the workshop. Never use any machinery or tools without direct authorisation from the project coordinator.

You must keep your sleeping area clean and orderly, and perform a thorough cleaning upon your departure

## Roles & Tasks at the Ashram

The following is a list of tasks and roles that are regularly needed to cover at the ashram. Upon arrival, we will show you all the practicalities and we will arrange the different tasks and coordinate who does what.

### FIREWOOD

**Storing firewood:** Moving chopped firewood from delivery or chopping areas and stacking it neatly inside wood sheds or designated dry shelters to ensure it stays dry for the sauna and winter heating.

*Regularity:* As needed (usually large blocks upon delivery, or minor top-ups).

*Time:* 1–2x a week, 2–3 hours at a time (best done as a team task).

\*Volunteers must wear sturdy gloves and closed-toe footwear during firewood seva to prevent splinters and injuries. Stacking should be kept stable so logs do not collapse.

### 2. CLEANING

**Dome:** Sweeping, mopping, dusting props, and wiping down the windows of the geodesic dome to keep the spiritual practice space clean.

*Regularity:* 1-2x a week (or right before and after a major course/retreat).

*Time:* 1 hour per session.

**Kitchen + showers + toilets:** Deep cleaning and sanitizing the communal kitchen counters, scrubbing the eco-showers, and emptying trash in outdoor dry toilets according to instructions.

*Regularity:* Daily upkeep (with a deeper scrub 1x a week).

*Time:* Daily: 45 mins; Deep clean: 2 hours.

**Cabins:** Sweeping communal spaces, wiping down bunk bed frames, and ensuring standard guest cabins remain orderly.

*Regularity:* 1x week or traditionally on changeover days between courses).

*Time:* 1–2 hours depending on guest rotation.

**Gurdwara:** Highly conscious dusting, vacuuming and aligning items or head-cover stations inside the sacred temple space. Always wear a head cover in Gurdwara.

*Regularity:* 2x a week (ideally before major Kirtan or Ardas programs).

*Time:* 1 hour.

**Window washing:** Cleaning the large glass panes of communal buildings, the dome, and cabins to remove seasonal dust, pollen, or rain spots.

*Regularity:* 1x every two weeks (or monthly).

*Time:* 2–3 hours at a time.

### 3. GREENHOUSE & VEG GARDEN

**Watering:** Evenly watering the greenhouse crops and outdoor vegetable beds, monitoring soil moisture based on daily Estonian weather.

*Regularity:* Daily (early morning or late evening to prevent leaf burn).

*Time:* 30–45 mins daily.

**Weeding:** Methodically pulling up invasive weeds surrounding vegetables to maximise crop growth and keep rows orderly.

*Regularity:* 2x a week.

*Time:* 1.5–2 hours at a time.

**Harvesting:** Carefully picking ripe fruits, herbs, and vegetables for immediate use by the kitchen seva team.

*Regularity:* 3x a week (or daily during peak summer).

*Time:* 30 mins to 1 hour.

Coordinates directly with the kitchen team so we harvest only what is needed for daily meals, reducing any food waste

**Crop maintenance:** Applying compost & tying tomato plants, cropping extra growths etc.

*Regularity:* 1x week

*Time:* 1 hour.

**Planting:** Sowing new seeds or transplanting delicate seedlings into designated rows or greenhouse beds.

*Regularity:* Seasonal/As needed (highly active in late spring/early summer).

*Time:* 1-2 hours at a time.

### 4. GARDENING

**Trimming:** Trimming edges of grass and path-blocking flora to keep the main areas safe and clear.

*Regularity:* 1x week.

*Time:* 1–2 hours.

**Flower beds weeding:** Keeping the decorative flower borders free of wild weeds to maintain a peaceful environment.

*Regularity:* 1x a week.

*Time:* 2-4 hours.

**Mowing:** Operating the lawnmower on the communal lawns and walking paths

*Regularity:* 1x a week (during peak growth season).

*Time:* 2–3 hours at a time.

**Bush clearing:** Cutting back wild briars, nettles, or thick brush expanding from

the forest edge into the living zones.

*Regularity:* 1x week.

*Time:* 3 hours (ideal for dynamic project days).

Volunteers must be explicitly shown how to use motorized gardening tools by a resident before operating them, and children are strictly forbidden from these areas while clearing is in progress.

## 5. KITCHEN

**Breakfast prep / cleaning:** Chopping fruits, preparing oats/porridge, boiling water using gas appliances, and doing all associated dishwashing and sweeping afterward.

*Regularity:* Daily (on a rotating volunteer roster).

*Time:* Prep: 45 mins (before 8:00 am); Clean: 45 mins

**Lunch prep / cleaning:** Helping the main cook prepare large pots of vegetarian/vegan food, setting up the dining area, and washing heavy pots and dishes afterward.

*Regularity:* Daily (rotated shift).

*Time:* Prep: 1.5–2 hours (before 13:00); Clean: 1 hour

**Dinner prep / cleaning:** Preparing lighter evening meals or soups, setting out herbal teas, and resetting the kitchen entirely for the next morning.

*Regularity:* Daily (rotated shift).

*Time:* Prep: 1 hour (before 19:00); Clean: 1 hour (after dinner).

## 6. BUILDING (*Weather-Dependent Infrastructure Projects*)

**Cabin 3 facade:** Measuring, cutting, and mounting external wooden siding onto Cabin 3 to protect it from weather elements.

*Regularity:* Continuous project until completed.

*Time:* 3–4 hour blocks during dry days.

**Cabin 2 terrace:** Constructing, leveling, or repairing the wooden deck framework and floor planks outside Cabin 2.

*Regularity:* Project basis.

*Time:* 3–4 hour blocks.

**Cabin 2 insulation & Cabin 1 insulation:** Installing eco-friendly insulation material inside the walls/roofs of the cabins to ensure they stay resilient during cold Estonian nights.

*Regularity:* Project basis (high priority before autumn/winter).

*Time:* 2–3 hours at a time.

Building projects are assigned based on prior experience. Volunteers with carpentry skills will help lead these tasks, while others can assist with carrying materials, sanding, or keeping the work area safe.

## 7. MAINTENANCE (*Preservation & Upkeep*)

**Shelter floor gluing:** Applying specific industrial or outdoor adhesives to repair or secure loose flooring sections in the common shelters.

*Regularity:* One-time/As needed.

*Time:* 2 hours.

**Roof washing:** Using brushes and water to clear away moss, fallen pine needles, and grime from cabin or building roofs to prevent rot.

*Regularity:* 1x per season (or as needed).

*Time:* 2–3 hours.

**Dome roof taping + mastix:** Applying specialized weatherproofing tape and waterproof sealant (mastix) to the geometric joints of the geodesic dome to prevent rain leaks.

*Regularity:* As needed (inspected after heavy rains).

*Time:* 1–2 hours.

**Cabins Painting/oiling outside & Painting inside:** Applying protective outdoor wood oil/stain or refreshing interior paints to keep the accommodation buildings beautifully preserved.

*Regularity:* Project basis on dry, warm afternoons.

*Time:* 3-hour blocks.

**Windows and doors sand + paint:** Prepping old wooden window frames and doors by sanding down rough spots, followed by applying fresh coats of weather-resistant paint.

*Regularity:* Project basis.

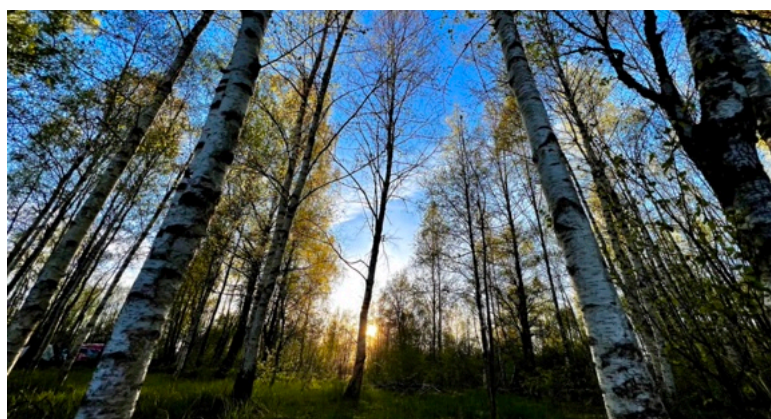
*Time:* 2–3 hours per frame.

**Gurdwara window frames finish & Outside oiling:** Meticulously finishing the delicate window trims of the temple and applying protective wood oil to the external facade to safeguard the home of the sacred Guru.

*Regularity:* Project basis (handled with deep reverence).

*Time:* 2–3 hours at a time.

*Care for tools:* Maintenance tasks keep our sacred space self-sustaining. Volunteers are fully responsible for cleaning their paintbrushes, sealing oil cans tightly, and returning all borrowed tools back to their proper places in the workshop at the end of every shift.



## Feedback

There is always something at the Ashram which can be improved regarding both the environment and the way the Ashram is managed. Constructive criticism is welcome. For that purpose there is feedback box at in the kitchen. Even more welcome, however, is your contribution to the improvements.

If you see anything or anyone that needs attention please let us know immediately!

We know that we can never please all the people all the time.  
We do not even try to please some of the people some of the time.  
We deliver the teaching which will deliver you to your own infinity.

**Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa  
Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh!**



## Contact and location

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