

Steps of Wonder ~ a Hiking Retreat with Plum Village Monastics in Rondane, Norway



Photo Credit: Trond Stordal

Are you called to walk with us?

We warmly invite you to join us on this 9-day hiking adventure, from June 25th to July 3rd. Together we will move through wide open landscapes and changing weather. We will carry only what we need and let the rhythm of walking shape our days. Sharing the simple joy of spending time outdoors in nature.

Our route leads through green valleys and across lichen-covered plateaus. At times the landscape will feel almost lunar, with bare stone and rounded peaks stretching towards the horizon.

Some days we walk for many hours. We feel the strength in our legs and the ache of the climbs. We breathe with each step, letting the body work and mind settle. Along the way we pause - sitting in the heather, closing our eyes, and resting into Mother Earth beneath us.

Together, as lay-organisers, meditation practitioners and the monastics from Plum Village, we create a unique cultural and spiritual retreat. A kind of mobile monastery in the mountains. We will practice mindful walking, meditation and deep listening along the way. Our monastic friends support us with whatever arises; joy, resistance, awe, tiredness or gratitude.

We will stay in six traditional mountain cabins along the route, offering simple comfort, warmth, and hearty meals. The retreat includes a minimum of six full hiking days, with an optional seventh day available for those who wish to join a summit hike. The total hike covers approximately 88 km, with around 3,133 m of elevation gain and about 3,500 m of descent.

Mindful Walking: Our Practice

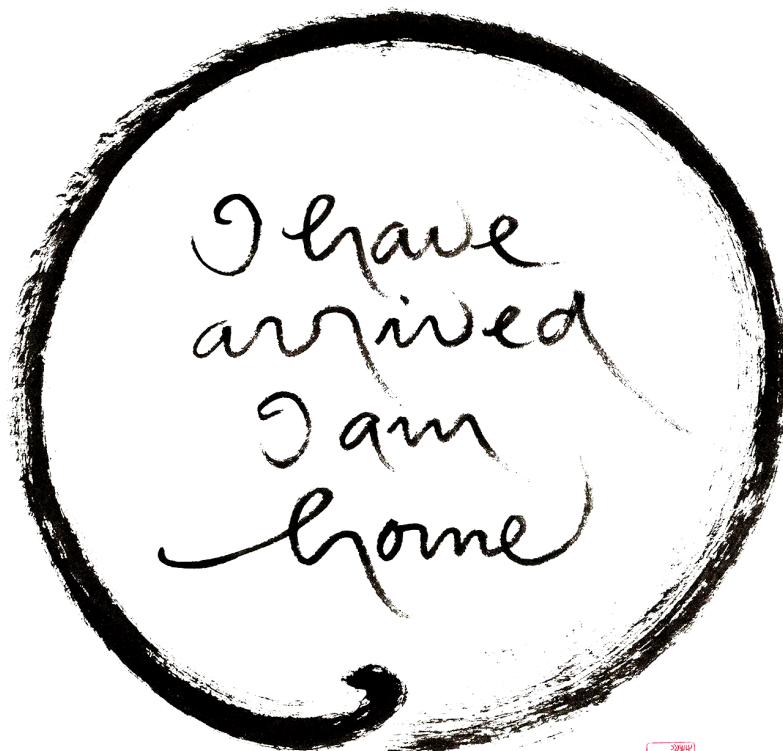
Usually, we walk just to get somewhere. We rush from point A to point B, our minds already busy with the future. In Rondane, we invite you to try something different: Mindful Walking.

This retreat isn't about conquering a peak or checking kilometers off a list. It is about arriving. With every step, we bring our mind back to our body and feel the solid earth beneath our feet. We walk in silence to listen more deeply, to the wind, the mountains, and ourselves.

As Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us:

"The miracle is not to walk on water, but to walk on the green earth in the present moment, to appreciate the peace and beauty that are available now."

We invite you to leave behind the need to "achieve" anything on this trip. Just walk. Together, we will touch our true home with each step.



Rondane Nationalpark

In 1962, Rondane became Norway's first national park, created to protect both landscape and wildlife. This was especially important for the wild reindeer herds that have roamed these lands for 10000 years. Because reindeer are very sensitive and their habitat fragile, human disturbance is carefully managed to ensure their survival. This hiking-retreat is scheduled after their most vulnerable period, which is the calving-season from mid May to early June. Our focus on walking quietly will be important, and if we do encounter wildlife, we will stay still and keep a safe distance.

The Norwegian Trekking Association (DNT)

The Norwegian Trekking Association, known in Norway as Den Norske Turistforening (DNT) has been an important part of Norway's outdoor life for over a century, deeply rooted in the country's culture and love for nature. By maintaining a wide network of marked trails, mountain cabins, and simple huts, DNT makes the wilderness accessible while encouraging respect and care for nature. Most cabins we use in Rondane are part of this network, providing simple, welcoming spaces where we can rest, recharge, and share a sense of community.

Membership (Required)

We require DNT membership for all participants. Membership provides discounts on accommodation at DNT lodges, and for this retreat it results in a total saving of 210 € (≈ 2400 NOK) per participant across all nights. This means that membership pays for itself and saves you significant money. This discount is already included in the final price.

Becoming a member is very easy to arrange and can be completed in a few minutes.

Follow this link for registration: [Join the Norwegian Trekking Association \(DNT\)](#).

As a member, you gain access to the standard DNT key, opening the doors to more than 450 self-service cabins across Norway. Membership also supports trail maintenance and nature conservation across the country.



Physical readiness

This hike through Rondane is a physically demanding retreat and requires you to have moderate endurance and stability. You need to be comfortable walking for several hours (between 4-8) each day while carrying a backpack of 15-20 % of your own bodyweight, or 10-15 kg.

The Norwegian Trekking Association (DNT) has graded this route to be category red. You can read more about their grading of hikes by clicking [here](#).

On two of the days, the daily hiking distance goes up to 21 km. Most hiking days follow varied but manageable mountain terrain, with ascents and descents on established trails through rocky landscapes. One day we will ascend one of the 2000-meter high peaks in the heart of Rondane. This peak day involves the greatest elevation gain and loss, including areas near cliffs, which may require the use of hands for support. Participation in the peak day is optional, and you can choose to have another rest day if needed.

Because we move as one group, participants should be comfortable maintaining a steady mountain pace on the trail at approximately 3–3.5 km per hour (including during sustained uphill sections). This is a mindful hiking retreat, and while we include pauses and occasionally slow down to deepen our presence, we also walk consistently throughout the day to arrive at our cabins by dinner. Some previous hiking experience is helpful, but it is not necessary. People of different ages enjoy hiking in these mountains and you do not need to be an expert to take part. Hiking poles are recommended for participants who know they have knee issues or joint sensitivity.

Photo Credit: Ekely - iStock



What's included

- 8 nights of accommodation, in your preferred sleeping arrangement. Either a 2-person room or in a dormitory-style room. Bathrooms are shared.
- Duvets and pillows.
- Dinner all evenings from June 25th.
- Breakfast all mornings from June 26th.
- Opportunity to prepare a packed lunch.
- One refill of a thermo flask (hot water/coffee/tea) per day.
- Access to showers.
- Guidance from 3 Plum Village monastics.
- A qualified and experienced nature guide.

What's not included

- Flights to and from Norway.
- Train Tickets and (optional) taxi to Hjerkin Fjellstue.
- Lunch on arrival day June 25th.
- DNT membership.
- Duvetcovers, pillowcovers and bedsheets at accommodations (Available for rent at each cabin for additional cost).
- Insurance coverage.
- Luggage transportation. (Can be added for extra cost on day 1 and 2)
- Bus or taxi from Brekkeseter to Otta on departure day.



Photo Credit: Plum Village

Retreat Costs

The participation fee depends on the type of accommodation and on your ability to support the retreat, based on your actual financial situation. You may choose between the Reduced, Sustaining and Supporting fee. Prices are listed in euros.

Reduced: Covering the essential costs of your retreat. We offer this rate to make our retreats accessible to as many as possible. (Please choose this option only if the Sustaining option is out of your budget.)

Sustaining: This rate fully covers your retreat costs and contributes towards monastic training and facility maintenance of Plum Village.

Supporting: Your generous contribution helps provide scholarships for retreats, healthcare for monastics, fund essential projects, and maintain Plum Village as a welcoming refuge for all. Choosing this rate also helps us offer scholarships to practitioners with lower financial capacity.

All rates also contain a small contribution for essential hiking gear for the monastics.

	Reduced	Sustaining	Supporting
Shared dormitory (8-16 bed, mix gender)	€1770	€1870	€2170
Shared 2 bed-room (same-gender or couple)	€1960	€2070	€2370

Scholarship

We understand that retreat costs can be a barrier for some practitioners and hope to make this retreat accessible to those that have financial limitations. Depending on how many participants choose to give generously (dana), we may be able to offer a couple of discounted scholarship spots (discount estimated to be €400). If you feel you would need this support in order to participate, you may choose the scholarship option in the application form. After reviewing applications we will get back to you on whether we are able to offer it.

Detailed route - Rondane north to south



Photo Credit: Tor Ivan Boine

Day 1 : June 25th - Arrival Hjerkin Fjellstue (before 16:00).

We begin the retreat in Dovre National park, spending our first night at a historic, family-run mountain lodge, best known for its Icelandic horses bringing guests around the mountains. If you arrive early, there is an optional 3 km warm-up hike to Viewpoint SNØHETTA, offering panoramic views of the iconic Snøhetta mountain.

Day 2: Hjerkin Fjellstue to Grimsdalshytta.

Distance: 18,3 km, Walking time: ca. 6 h 30 min, Elevation: + 476 m, - 450 m.

Our journey begins on a historic section of the Pilgrimsleden, the traditional route to Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim. From Hjerkin, we ascend gently through Gautådalen, leaving the Dovre plateau behind before continuing across open terrain into Grimsdalen, a wide and beautiful valley with traditional farmhouses.

Luggage transport available for 250NOK.

Day 3: Grimsdalshytta to Øvre Dørålseter.

Distance: 16 km, Walking time: ca. 6 h 30 min, Elevation: + 957 m, - 750 m.

From Grimsdalshytta, the route climbs steadily over Gravhøe, before descending into the lush birch forest valley, called Haverdalen. Then we continue with a steeper ascent through Dørålglopen, often referred to as "The Gate to Rondane".

Luggage transport available for 250NOK.

Day 4: Øvre Dørålseter to Bjørnhollia.

Distance: 21,5 km, Walking time: ca. 7 h 30 min, Elevation: + 500 m, - 650 m.

This is one of the longer hiking days of the retreat. The trail leads through the narrow valley of Langglupdalen, surrounded by steep peaks and dramatic terrain. Along the way, we encounter striking geological features shaped by the Ice Age —

terraces and rock formations formed by ancient glaciers that once covered the mountains.

Day 5: Rest day at Bjørnhollia.

Bjørnhollia is a spacious and warm mountain lodge in Rondane, where we will spend a Plum Village Lazy Day — a day with no scheduled activities, allowing space for complete physical rest, time in front of the fireplace and group connection.

Day 6: Bjørnhollia to Rondvassbu.

Distance: 12,5 km, Walking time: ca. 4 h 15 min, Elevation: + 150 m, - 400 m.

A relatively gentle hiking day through Illmandalen. Rondvassbu lies in the heart of the national park, beautifully situated beside Rondvatnet and surrounded by many of Rondane's highest 2000 meter peaks.

Day 7: Optional Ascend of Veslesmeden peak.

Distance: 12,4 km, Walking time: ca. 6 h, Elevation: + 950 m, - 750 m.

Participants may choose between a restful day around the lodge or joining an optional summit hike. Veslesmeden is one of the easier 2000-meter peaks to climb and provides expansive 360-degree views across Rondane. If we have a clear day the view stretches all the way to Jotunheimen and Norway's highest peaks.

Day 8: Rondvassbu - Brekkeseter Fjellhotell, Høvingen.

Distance: 20 km, Walking time: ca. 6 h 30 min, Elevation: + 300 m, - 500 m.

Our final hiking day begins by crossing the Store Ula river, followed by a gradual ascent toward Ljosåbue, a small stone shelter in open mountain terrain. From here, the route continues gently downhill, passing Peer Gynt-hytta and Smuksjøseter Hotel, before arriving at Brekkeseter as we leave the national park behind us.

Luggage sent from first cabin, Hjerkinn, will be waiting for you at arrival.

Day 9: July 3rd - Departure

Departure from Brekkeseter by bus or taxi to Otta, with onward train connections several times a day to Oslo or Trondheim.

Be aware that the program is subject to change. Though very unlikely at this time of the year, the route may be adjusted depending on weather, trail conditions and safety considerations.



What a day might look like

The rhythm of each day will vary depending on the hike we have ahead, the weather and the group energy. Times below are approximate.

06:30–08:00

Wake up and morning meditation

08:00–09:00

Breakfast, preparation of packed lunch, and time to pack up

09:00–09:30

Group gathering, setting the morning intention, and beginning the hike

12:00–13:00

Lunch in nature along the trail

13:00–18:00

Continue hiking toward the next cabin (*arrival time varies*)

18:30–19:30

Dinner together at the lodge

After dinner (on lighter hiking days)

Dharma talk or Dharma sharing

On other days: time for rest, relaxation, and connecting with the group

From 21:00

Invitation to silence. *Please note: cabins may have other guests who stay up later (until around 23:00), so earplugs are very recommended.*



Safety & Responsibility

Hiking in the Norwegian mountains involves changing weather, varied terrain, and being in remote nature. The retreat is accompanied by an experienced mountain guide, supported by a local Norwegian assistant with in-depth knowledge of the area.

All hikes are carefully planned day hikes, adapted to weather conditions and the needs of the group. For everyone's safety, you are expected to follow the guide's instructions at all times. We aim to move attentively and without unnecessary risk, allowing the focus to remain on presence and the shared experience in nature.

A more detailed safety briefing and expectations will be shared at successful registration to the retreat.

Insurance

You are responsible for arranging adequate personal travel insurance and accident insurance for the full duration of the retreat.

Norwegian DNT members receive a 26 % discount on annual travel insurance through the Norwegian insurance company Gjensidige.

This retreat takes place in a wilderness setting where weather, terrain, and natural conditions cannot be fully controlled. By choosing to participate, you acknowledge personal responsibility for your belongings and for the risks inherent in mountain hiking. After successful registration, participants will be asked to sign a standard liability waiver in order to participate.

Cancellation

In case of illness your travel insurance should cover the related costs. Whether the retreat fee itself is refunded depends completely on your own insurance. Cancellation fees:

- More than 8 weeks before the retreat: 20 % of the total fee is charged
- 6–8 weeks before the retreat: 50 % of the total fee is charged
- Less than 6 weeks before the retreat: No refund.

If we are able to fill your spot from the waitlist, your payment will be fully refunded.

Payment

Upon successful registration you will receive the necessary details to complete payment. Your spot is confirmed once payment has been received.

Emergency

Once your registration is confirmed, we will share our phone numbers, which you may give to your emergency contacts at home. We will be present throughout the entire retreat and available in case of any emergency.



Photo Credit: Tor Ivan Boine

Food

All breakfasts and dinners will be freshly prepared at the mountain lodges. During breakfast, you can prepare a packed lunch and fill a thermos flask for the day.

DNT cabins normally serve traditional Norwegian food, often as three-course dinners, and meals typically include meat, dairy, and eggs. For this retreat, all meals provided for our group will be vegetarian. Vegan options are possible on request.

If you have additional dietary requirements or allergies, please let us know well in advance. As the lodges are often located in remote areas with limited supplies, it may not be possible to meet all dietary needs, but the cabins will do their best!

It is recommended to bring your own snacks, such as nuts, dried fruit, and dark chocolate to refill energy during the hike.

Arrival & Departure

Arrival - June 25th

Please plan to arrive at Hjerkinn Fjellstue before 16:00. Check-in to your room opens at 14:00. Our first shared meal will be dinner at 19:00.

You can take the train north from Oslo or Oslo Airport (Gardermoen) to Hjerkinn (approx. 4,5 hours) or south from Trondheim (approx. 2,15 hours).

From Hjerkinn station, it's a 30-minute walk (2.4 km) to Hjerkinn Fjellstue. If you prefer a pick-up, you can contact Hjerkinn Fjellstue closer to the date: booking@hjerkinn.no | +47 940 50 429 (cost: 55 NOK).

Please note that trains can fill up quickly, and prices increase closer to the travel date. We recommend booking in advance. Tickets can be purchased at vy.no

Departure

The retreat ends on July 3rd at 10:00, after breakfast and our final group gathering. You may depart by bus or taxi after vacating your room.

From Otta, there are several train departures during the day. After successful registration, we will be happy to help you with train times and booking information.

Photo Credit: Plum Village



What to bring

Clothing Guidelines

We highly recommend packing wool base layers and to avoid cotton and synthetic fibers on the innermost layer of the body. Wool is preferred when temperature drops below 10°C and stays warm even when wet (sweaty) and dries up quicker. It also provides superior comfort to synthetic alternatives.

For this retreat, we ask you to wear modest, comfortable and relatively loose-fitting clothing, covering shoulders and upper legs. Some of the lodges are located near lakes, where swimming is possible. Although there are no specific rules, we encourage everyone to remain mindful and respectful of the monastic presence.

Pay attention to yr.no in the week before the retreat and pack according to the weather forecast.

Clothes

- Rain jacket (Hardshell, with a water column of at least 15,000 mm)
- Rain trousers
- Thin windbreaker and hiking pants (with good moisture transport)
- Wool blend base layer (long-sleeve and leggings) + Extra change if forecast is colder weather.
- Socks with wool and a good fit
- Extra change of clothes
- Wool sweater/jacket or thin down jacket
- Hat / cap / headbands
- Wool mittens or other mittens (that are warm even when wet)
- Tube scarf (Buff)
- Light indoor slippers/shoes
- Comfortable indoor clothing for cabins
- Mountain hiking boots (optional gaiters)
- Shorts and t-shirt if warm weather is forecasted
- Swimwear

Weather conditions

In June, the weather in Rondane is generally mild but changeable. Daytime temperatures usually range between 10–20°C (50–68°F). Temperatures can reach minus degrees celsius at the highest altitudes and at night. Some snow may still remain on mountain peaks or in shaded valleys. Rain showers, and even sleet and snow are possible, so waterproof clothing and layers are absolutely necessary to bring. Days are very long, with the sun being up for 19 hours and true darkness never really setting. Because of this we highly recommend a sleeping mask at night, to support deeper rest. The long days offer endless light for hiking and for witnessing beautiful sunsets and sunrises.

Equipment

- 45 - 60 litre Backpack
 - *General guideline:* Carry approx. 15-20 % of your body weight
 - *We recommend keeping it light:*
Men: ~ 10–15 kg | Women: ~9–14 kg.
- Raincover for backpack
- Small day backpack (if you choose luggage transport on the first 2 days).
- Optional separate bag for luggage transport to the final destination (Hjerkinn → Brekkeseter)
- Linen sleeping bag for the cabins
- Pillowcase (Duvetcovers, pillowcovers and bedsheets are also available for rent at each cabin for additional cost)
- Water bottle(s) 2 litre
- Optional thermos flask for hot water or coffee
- Lunch box / beeswax wrap
- Hiking poles (especially if you have knee problems)
- A light sit pad for lunch during hikes
- Toiletries (tooth brush, paste, little shampoo/soap, moisturiser,...)
- Light travel towel (also for rent)
- Earplugs and sleeping mask
- Some toilet paper and a garbage bag
- Sunglasses and sunscreen min. 30+
- Small travel-size First Aid Kits
- Compeed-type blister plasters
- Personal medications
- Small mosquito repellent (we will bring some as well).
- Snacks (Nuts, dried fruit, dark chocolate etc)
- Optional Electrolytes
- Money / cards
- ID card
- Health insurance number / card
- Notebook & pen
- Extra small bag for luggage transport from first to last destination (read more further down)

Electronics and Cameras

This retreat is an invitation to unplug from everyday digital life. We encourage you to turn off your phone or keep it on airplane mode throughout the journey. Mobile reception is limited or unavailable at several cabins along the route, supporting the retreat's intention to disconnect. If you do not have a small and light alarm clock, you may use your phone for waking up in the morning. In case of emergency, phones can of course be used.

The facilitators will bring a camera and take some photos, so you don't need to use your phone. If you have a larger camera and really enjoy photography you are welcome to use it mindfully and sparingly.

Packing Guideline

When packing, it is highly important to keep your backpack as light as possible. Less weight means more comfort on the trail, especially over several consecutive days of walking. As a general rule, aim to carry only what you truly need during the hiking days.

Because Rondane is home to sensitive wildlife, the use of motorized vehicles is strictly regulated. For this reason, luggage transportation is not possible on all legs of the route.



Photo Credit: Jacquesvandinteren - iStock

Luggage Transportation

Optional Luggage Transport

We are able to offer optional luggage transportation only on the first two days of the hike, for an additional cost:

- From Hjerkinn to Grimsdalshytta
- From Grimsdalshytta to Øvre Dørålseter

The luggage transportation service costs up to 250NOK. The final price may be reduced depending on the number of participants who use the service. If you choose to use this service, a smaller day pack is needed for those days.

Arrival Day and Main Luggage Transport

On the day of arrival at Hjerkinn Fjellstue, we will go through packing together and help you organize what to bring on the hike. If you travel internationally you may need additional items for the travel or for onward journeys. Please know that you do not need to pack extremely light when leaving your home country.

We will arrange for extra luggage to be transported from Hjerkinn on the morning of June 26th (when we begin hiking). These items will be delivered to our final destination, Brekkeseter Fjellhotell and will be waiting for you upon arrival on July 2nd. This allows you to travel comfortably and bring what you need for before and after the retreat, while keeping your hiking backpack light and practical.

Photo Credit: Ekely - iStock



Guides & facilitators

Plum Village Monastics

Three brothers from Plum Village will accompany us on the journey, offering daily mindfulness practices and spiritual guidance. Their presence and teachings create a beautiful opportunity to experience walking meditation, mindful breathing, and deep listening in the spirit of peace, compassion, and joy.

Brother Bảo Tích (Br Jewel)

Br Bảo Tích was ordained in 2011 and became a Dharma teacher in 2020. He grew up in India, went to university in the US and worked in the family business before becoming a monk.

He has stayed in Plum Village centers in the US, France and Thailand. He enjoys sharing the practice of mindfulness in many different areas such as for families, education and the environment. His hobbies include hiking, reading and drinking tea.

Brother Đức Phổ (Br Cosmos)

Born in the Netherlands in 1985, Brother Đức Phổ first encountered Buddhism while traveling in South-East Asia. He later found the Plum Village tradition in France and practiced as a lay member from 2010 before being ordained as a monastic under Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh in 2016.

He has lived in Plum Village monasteries in Thailand and France and has supported retreats in Europe, the Middle East, and South-East Asia. He enjoys sitting meditation, walking in nature, playing music, and sharing the practice with people of all ages.

Brother Thien Y (Br True Mind)

Br Thien Y is a zen monk who grew up by the Mediterranean Sea, in the beautiful island of Sicily. He loves hip-hop beats, a room full of house plants and the sound of ocean waves. Thien Y continues to engage in the exploration of Breath, Life, Joy, Sorrow, Compassion and Liberation.

Isabelle Ehegötz, our Nature-guide

Isabelle has been working as a guide since 2016 and has led tours in diverse landscapes including New Zealand, Iceland, the Alps, the Balkan Trail and Norway. She has guided individuals, families and groups of varying sizes across a range of outdoor activities from day hikes to multi-day journeys. Originally from Germany, she moved to Norway in 2021 to study outdoor life and holds a Master's degree in Adventure and Experiential Education.

Martine Setsaas & Maaike Schotanus, the Facilitators

Martine is relatively new to the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh, but has been inspired by the wisdom and healing that Buddhism offers since her early twenties. She grew up at Brekkeseter Fjellhotell, where the hike will end, and naturally feels a deep bond to these mountains. Their pureness and quiet power live within her. It feels like a great gift to guide a group through these landscapes - walking together in wonder to the miracle of life.

Maaike has a natural gift for creating spaces that feel gentle, nourishing, and welcoming. She has a strong connection to Norway and its untouched landscapes, where she finds clarity, aliveness and a sense of belonging. Through her connection with Plum Village, she has been touched by a way of living rooted in humbleness, care, and reverence for all life. For her, this retreat is a natural step of a long-held calling: to invite people back into closer relationships with the natural world and with their own true nature.



Photo Credit: Trond Stordal

Contact

Maaike Schotanus & Martine Setsaas

stepsofwonder.journeys@gmail.com

Click [here](#) to apply.