

Silence & Connection

A Pilgrimage in the Moroccan Desert



A Zen Hiking Retreat Through the Stillness of the
Moroccan Desert with Plum Village monastics

February 15th to 24th 2027

REGISTRATION

Plum Village

ABOUT

The desert is a place where silence becomes an ancient teacher and peace reveals itself as a quiet, enduring presence. It is one of the world's most powerful landscapes for contemplation, vast, simple, and timeless.

For ten days guided by the monastic Sangha, we will immerse ourselves in the extraordinary beauty of the Maïdr Desert, spending six days walking through its dunes, rocky plateaus, dry riverbeds, and endless horizons. As we meet this landscape with mindfulness and wholehearted attention, every step becomes an invitation to return to the present moment, every breath a reminder of our belonging to the living world, and every sunrise and starlit night an opportunity to rediscover the joy of simply being alive.

While this is not a fully silent retreat, silence will accompany much of our pilgrimage. The desert becomes our teacher, mindfulness our path, and the community of practitioners walking beside us our companions on the road, supporting one another with presence, kindness, and care.

Our journey is made possible through the generous hospitality of our Amazigh hosts, whose families have lived in harmony with these lands for generations. Together with their camel caravans and experienced support team, they will guide us safely across the desert.

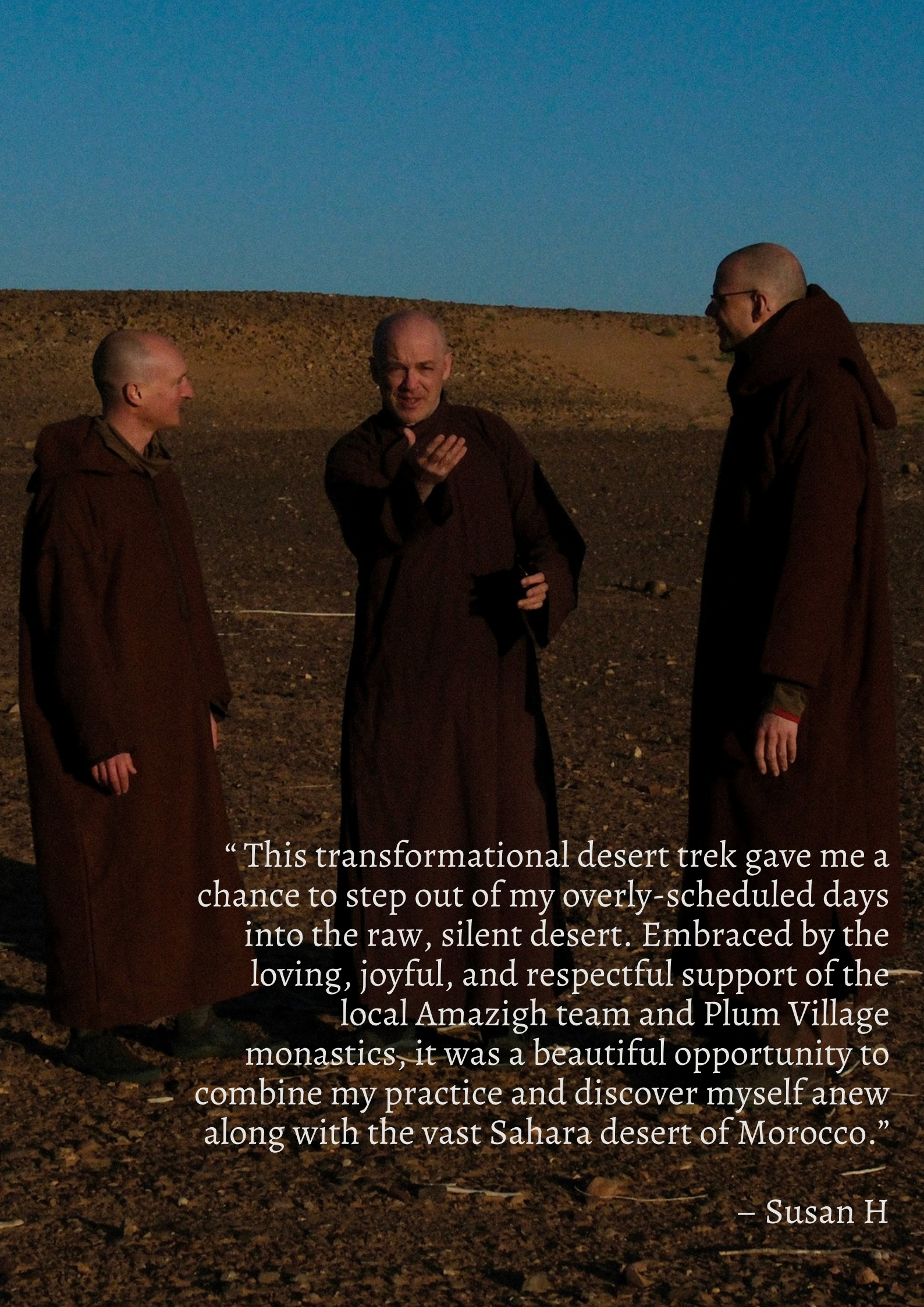


“This experience was deeply transformative. The daily Dharma teachings, together with walking practice and evening sharing circles, allowed me to integrate my insight and transform limiting beliefs. The simplicity and stillness of desert life reminded me that true happiness arises from a loving and respectful connection to others and to Mother Earth. Above all, I was touched by the deep heart connection between people from diverse backgrounds — across differences in culture, upbringing, way of living, and belief — a connection that embraced all participants, the local support team, and the nomads we met along the way, filling me with profound hope for humanity.”

– Silke L

THE DESERT

The Maïdr Desert lies south of Morocco's Anti-Atlas mountains, a pristine expanse rarely touched by mass tourism. Its vast plains, sculpted dunes, and ancient rock formations offer a raw beauty and a sense of boundless space. Tamarisk groves and traces of nomadic life punctuate the horizon, yet much of the desert remains untouched, carrying a deep stillness that feels both intimate and infinite. Far from roads and villages, the Maïdr Desert offers an unparalleled environment for this deeply immersive experience.



“This transformational desert trek gave me a chance to step out of my overly-scheduled days into the raw, silent desert. Embraced by the loving, joyful, and respectful support of the local Amazigh team and Plum Village monastics, it was a beautiful opportunity to combine my practice and discover myself anew along with the vast Sahara desert of Morocco.”

– Susan H

WHO IS THIS FOR

This pilgrimage is for practitioners and friends who feel called to encounter the desert in a profound and mindful way. It is not a tourist visit, but an invitation to journey both outward and inward, allowing the silence and vastness of the desert to reveal what becomes visible when the mind grows still.

We welcome both newcomers and experienced mindfulness practitioners who wish to slow down, deepen their practice, and experience the joy of living simply. Together, we will cultivate presence through sacred silence, mindful walking, and the support of a caring community.

This retreat is for adventurers of the inner and outer world, seekers of simplicity and wonder, and anyone curious to discover what unfolds when the desert becomes both teacher and companion.

GUIDELINES

Retreat guidelines

- All electronics (phones, computers, tablets, cameras) will be left behind.
Expect a space free from distractions, no exceptions.
- Emergency contacts will be provided for families.

Physical requirements

- Ability to walk 6 hours per day on varied desert terrain and physical condition for it.

Living conditions

- Six days in dorm-like nomadic tents (private tent option available).
- Bathing under the open sky, with simple washing-up structures provided at basecamp.
- Toilets will also be available at basecamp; while walking, the desert will serve as our bathroom.
- A return to elemental, minimalist living. Simple, but not without basic privacy and comfort.

What this journey calls for

- Stamina.
- Openness.
- A spirit of adventure.

FAQ HERE



PROGRAM

At a glance

- Day 1 - Arrival in Ouarzazate on February 15th, welcome, and opening circle. Sleep in Dar Daif Hotel.
- Day 2 - Transfer to Maïdr Desert and begin walking retreat
- Days 3-8 - Silent walking pilgrimage (3-6 hours/day) with mindful meals, Dharma sharing, evening conversations, and rest under the stars
- Day 8 - Return to Ouarzazate
- Day 9 - Morning rest at Dar Daïf . Afternoon closing circle and integration. Optional Hamam and massage.
- Day 10 - Depart Ouarzazate on February 24th

REGISTER

Daily Practices & Activities

Participants will engage in a balance of silence, mindfulness, and community:

- Sitting and walking meditations
- Mindful eating
- Dharma talks and teachings
- Deep relaxation and reflection
- Daytime hikes of approximately 4–6 hours
- Dharma sharings
- Tea Meditation (if weather conditions allow)
- Personal relaxing time
- Community sharing

Much of the day will be practiced in noble silence, allowing deep contact with ourselves and the stillness of the desert. The retreat is not full-time silence; periods for mindful conversations and Dharma sharing are included. The retreat language is English.



“The world is a wonderful place, overflowing with richness, in its people, its nature, and the countless connections that give life depth. I am deeply grateful (to help me) to be aware of this. It is humbling. It brings me peace. And I feel a genuine desire to radiate that peace to others.”

– Hedwig D

COST

In the Plum Village tradition, we invite you to choose the level of contribution that feels right for your circumstances.

1. **Basic Contribution** – covers the essential costs of the retreat. We encourage you to select this option only if the Sustaining rate is out of your means.

2. **Sustaining Contribution** – helps cover costs and contributes towards monastic training, facility maintenance, and their engaged work in the world.

3. **Supporting Contribution** – includes the above and adds a donation to Plum Village to help provide healthcare for monastics, fund essential projects, and maintain a welcoming refuge for all.

- Basic Contribution Shared - €2,200
- Basic Contribution Private - €2,800
- Sustaining Contribution Shared - €2,500
- Sustaining Contribution Private - €3,300
- Supporting Contribution Shared - €3,100
- Supporting Contribution Private - €3,700



LOGISTICS

Price includes:

- Transfers from/to Ouarzazate airport or bus station
- 3 nights at Riad Dar Daïf in Ouarzazate
- 6 nights in the desert in shared nomadic tents
- Cold-weather sleeping bag
- All meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 10
(vegetarian)
- Guidance from Plum Village monastics and local desert guides
- Camel caravan for baggage transport and assistance
- All group equipment (tents, mattresses, kitchen tent, WC tent, shower tent)

Not included:

- Flights and travel to Ouarzazate
- Travel insurance (mandatory) - This type of insurance is mandatory: before your arrival, please provide a copy of your insurance details.
- Optional extras (private camel, extra nights)

A full GUIDELINES document will be shared with confirmed participants, including packing list, and other travel information.



“Hiking in silence through the desert,
accompanied and supported by
wonderful people and animals, fits so
well with Plum Village. It allowed me
to experience deep inner peace and an
deep connection with other people.”

– Bernd C

GUIDES & FACILITATORS

Plum Village Monastics

Monks from Plum Village, the international community founded by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, will guide the daily mindfulness practices. Their presence and teachings offer a rare opportunity to experience walking meditation, mindful breathing, and deep listening in the spirit of compassion and joy.

Joanna Riquett

Mindfulness practitioner in the Plum Village tradition and a newly ordained member of the Order of Interbeing. She is the founder of Mindful Immersions, co-founder of At Home in the World nomadic sangha, and writer of A Mindful Tea. Based between Colombia and Morocco, she accompanies the group throughout the pilgrimage with care and presence.

Désert et Montagne Maroc

A local, family-run organization with decades of experience leading mindful and respectful journeys through the Sahara. Their desert guides bring deep knowledge of the land, warm hospitality, and the wisdom of nomadic traditions.

A person is standing on the crest of a large, smooth sand dune. The dune is a deep reddish-brown color. The person is a small silhouette against the horizon. The sky is a clear, pale blue, suggesting dusk or dawn. The foreground shows the slope of the dune with some small, dark green shrubs and rocks.

*The journey begins
with a single step*

REGISTER HERE

Questions?

Email: mindfulimmersions@gmail.com