

Tea in



the Forest

“The clearest way into the Universe is through a Forest Wilderness” - John Muir

Carry a thermos of hot water along with your favorite tea and a cup. At the end of your walk create an altar or a mandala on the forest floor. Decorate your space with objects you found along the trail e.g. feather, snail shell, leaves, twigs or moss.

MEDITATION: Sit in a comfortable position with spine straight and if possible eyes closed. If you don't feel comfortable closing your eyes simply gaze at the altar you created, a tree, a rock, a stream or a plant. Focusing on your breath, breathe in slowly expanding your belly for 7 counts, hold for 4 counts and exhale for 7 counts. As thoughts enter you mind (as they do for most of us) simply acknowledge them and let them drift on by like clouds in the sky. Return your focus to your breath. Ideally meditate for 10 minutes or longer.

POUR & STEEP YOUR TEA

PRACTICE GRATITUDE by journaling what you are thankful for during this walk in the Forest and in Life. As you make your journal entries savor each one with a sip of tea and feel the emotion it brings forth.

CLOSING—LOVING KINDNESS

Placing your hands on your heart center. Here is a sample of what you might say:

May I _____ myself. May I _____ the World.”

“May I love myself. May I love the World.” OR

“May I be accepting of myself. May I be accepting of others.”

It is our hope you re-enter the world beyond the Forest with renewed vitality, a gentle peacefulness in your heart and a deep reverence for Life.

Tell Me, She Said

What is the story you are telling?
What wild song is singing itself through you?

Listen:

In the silence between there is music;

In the spaces between there is story.

It is the song you are living now,

It is the story of the place where you are.

It contains the shapes of these old mountains,

The green of the rhododendron leaves.

It is happening right now in your breath,

In your heart beat still

Drumming the deeper rhythm

Beneath your cracking words.

It matters what you did this morning

And last Saturday night

And last year,

Not because you are important

But because you are in it

And it is still moving.

We are all in this story together.

Listen:

In the silence between there is music;

In the spaces between there is story.

Shhh now we are listening each other into Being.

-Adapted from Sally Atkins



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Opening to the Wisdom of the Forest - 1 hour



“Into the Forest I go to Lose my Mind & Re-discover my Soul”—unknown

Walking slowly in Nature, breathing deeply, being naturally curious and engaging your senses has a profound calming and restorative effect. The invitations outlined in this brochure are intended to guide you home to your true self. May you be open to the experience and immerse yourself in the healing energy of the forest.

Cleansing



Breathwork

With your feet hip distance apart feel your toes as they find center in the Earth. Relax your legs and allow the knees to be slightly flexed. Stand with spine straight, pelvis tucked in & stomach relaxed. Allow shoulders to fall away from the neck. Relax the brow and gently close eyes. Feel a gentle smile form as you settle into this space.

INHALE-Begin with arms at your sides & raise both arms overhead on the in-breath. Breathing in, allow the stomach to inflate. At the top of your breath, open your eyes & look up at the crowns of the trees.

EXHALE- Gently bring your arms down to your sides on the exhale. Allow your gaze to take in the forest in front of you.

Repeat this sequence 6 times. If you find yourself rushing, intentionally slow down your movements and breath. Tune into the rhythm of the Forest.

Engaging the



Senses

**“Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.”
Psalm 96:12**

Open your child’s sense of wonder & curiosity. Walk slowly for 30–45 minutes using your senses to explore your surroundings. Give yourself permission to stop, touch, ask questions & speak with the incredible beings that inhabit the forest.

Sight Prompts

What colors do I see around me? Are there various shades of the same color? What colors bring a smile to my heart?

What types of trees do I see? How tall and big around are the trees; can I wrap my arms around them? Why do some trees grow straight and others are bent or curved? Where do I find different trees growing? On the ground, in the water, perched on rocks? If trees could talk what stories would they tell? What do they see from “way up there”?

What animals do I notice in the forest? What are they so busy doing? What do the birds see from way up there?

Touch Prompts

Pick up the soil from the trail and feel it’s texture. Is it moist or dry? Does it have rocks in it or grains of sand?

Touch the moss growing on a boulder or the side of a tree. Is it spongy or hard and prickly? Notice the different types of moss and the intricacy of each. Imagine the patches of moss as forests unto themselves, are there forest fairies dancing in the midst?

Touch the petals of the wildflowers, the ferns, the various leaves. Are they delicate to the touch or leathery and tough? Crouch down low to get a good view of the complexity of each.

Mindful Walking



Belly Breathing

“Walk as if your Feet are Kissing the Earth” - Thich Nhat Hanh

Mindful walking combined with belly breathing is an excellent way to ease into the relaxed pace of nature and allow your body to match its rhythm.

Walking forward on the path notice how your feet are touching the ground, be aware of the texture of the path, is it softened earth and leaves or a hard surface? Notice the motion of your body, the use of your leg muscles, your core muscles and your posture. Relax your face muscles by gazing softly ahead and allowing your mouth to smile. Slow down your pace and feel your heart and your chest relax.

Now combine your walking with your breath. For example breathe in, inflating your belly for 5 steps, then exhale for 5 steps. Repeat this for at least 10 rounds of breathing. Slow your pace if you feel winded. This is all about being in the moment, enjoying the journey not exercising to burn calories or reaching the end of the trail in record time. This practice may be difficult for some since we are accustomed to hurrying from one thing to the next. Know you have permission to relax.



Engaging the



Senses

Move forward on your walk continuing to engage your senses. Take your time & allow yourself to fall into the embrace of the forest.

Smell Prompts

Pinch a bit of moss from a boulder or a tree and smell. Pine trees and cones create refreshing aromas – bend a few pine needles to release their scent.

Find different wildflowers, leaves dead and alive...what are you noticing about each?

How does the earth smell after a good rain? If it’s been dry what scent does the air carry? What aromas exist during the beginning of Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter?

Sound Prompts

Sit on a boulder, a fallen tree or the ground. Is your sit-spot solid or forgiving?

Perhaps close your eyes. What do you hear close up? What do you hear from afar? What natural sounds do you hear and what man-made sounds are evident?

Notice bird song? Gaze up into the crowns of the trees. Simply stare with a wide peripheral lens and wait for movement. It may take 3 to 5 minutes but eventually you will see a bird(s) in motion. Follow the movement, be one with its flight.

What other animal sounds do you hear? Squirrels gathering leaves for their nests, chasing one another from tree to tree, cracking open nuts for dinner? Deer walking amongst the greens?

Is water nearby? A lake, a creek, a river, a waterfall...how do you know? Are the mountains weeping water? Pass your hands & feet through water. Stay a while and simply notice how it feels and the sounds that surround you.