Balanced Rock

Yosemite journeys for mind, body and spirit

Noah Mazé Anusara ® Retreat
Yosemite Yoga and Hiking Retreat
With Noah Mazé and Arin Trook
Yosemite National Park
May 27th-30th, 2011

"I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in…." John Muir

Welcome to Balanced Rock

We are looking forward to having you join us on an amazing journey into wild beauty and deep yoga practice with Noah Mazé amidst the magic of Yosemite National Park. The information in this letter should help with the preparations of your upcoming trip. Please take time to look over the entire letter as there is important information on the logistics and personal preparation for the retreat. Feel free to visit our website at www.BalancedRock.org for more information on this and other courses. Also, don't hesitate to email arin@balancedrock.org or call us at 209-379-9453 with any questions as you prepare for your upcoming Balanced Rock experience.

Trip Overview

This retreat blends the power and magic of Yosemite National Park with the wisdom and skill of Noah Mazé's world-class yoga instruction. Our days will begin with studio-based morning yoga classes with Noah, followed by a catered lunch along the Merced River. In the afternoons, we take our yoga off the mat, exploring Yosemite Valley waterfalls and wildflowers while taking time to more subtle concepts and practices of yoga in a wild setting. Saturday evening we will join together for shared song with a kirtan under the 3000 foot face of El Capitan in Yosemite Valley, and Monday morning (Memorial Day) Noah will be teaching a special yoga class in Yosemite Village to support local social service programs here in Yosemite.

Important Information on Lodging

Please note that accommodations are not included in the course price. Group camping sites have been reserved by Balanced Rock and are available for $10 per person per night for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights--space is limited. Email arin@balancedrock.org to reserve your camping spot as soon as possible. If you prefer to stay in a hotel, it is advisable to reserve immediately as Memorial Day weekend in Yosemite is extremely popular.

Where to go and how to get there

We will gather for our first yoga session at Clark Community Hall on Friday, May 27th. The class begins at 7:00 pm, with doors opening at 6:30 pm. Please arrive at least 15 minutes early to complete paperwork and get settled into our studio space.

Coming from San Francisco, Los Angeles or any point in between, take Highway 99 to Merced. In Merced, take Highway 140 east to Mariposa. Continuing on 140 through Mariposa another 22 miles you will find Indian Flat campground on the right, just past Cedar Lodge. This is where our group campsites are located.

To find Clark Community Hall, continue past Indian Flat east (towards Yosemite) on Highway 140 another 5 miles until turning left on El Portal Road. Follow this road two hundred feet to a three way intersection. Parking is available in the lot here, and the Clark Community Hall is located a few hundred feet to the right on Foresta Road, just past the El Portal post office.

You can also follow this link to a Googlemap from Merced to El Portal: http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&ll=37.680016,-119.674759&spn=0.40323,0.514984&z=11&iwloc=00049adafdb436d427dfe&msid=213121819703928923919.00049adaf6875d475ec64.

Please call the Balanced Rock office at 209-379-9453 if you need assistance with directions, or if you are running late on our first day.

Itinerary

Friday, May 27, 2011

*7:00 - 9:30 pm | **Noah Mazé Yoga Session: Earthen Grounding, Mind Like Sky***
Clark Community Hall, El Portal, California

This evening's yoga class will ground you even as it heats you, through creative vinyasa sequencing, standing poses, and into deep work of hip openers and forward bends. We will culminate our evening in an expansive practice of meditation. You will be grounded in your body and intention, and open to the fullness of an abundant weekend of yoga, good company, and nature's majesty.

Saturday, May 28, 2011

*9:00 am - noon| Noah Mazé Yoga Session: **Fire's Transformation, Water's Graceful Flow***
Clark Community Hall, El Portal, California

This class will stoke your fire of transformation, as we progress gracefully and fluidly into backbends. Backbends are fiery and powerful poses, and the cooling fluidity of water empowers us to tap this power and create an optimal experience in practice. Come with a burning desire to transform, and a fluid and dexterous awareness.

12:30 - 1:30 pm | Catered Group lunch

2:30 - 5:30pm | Yosemite Valley Yoga Hike
Dayhike in the magnificent Yosemite Valley with Balanced Rock program director, guide and outdoor educator Arin Trook while exploring yoga philosophy and practice with Noah.

7:00 pm | Yosemite Valley Kirtan
Optional sunset kirtan, chanting and meditation under Yosemite icon El Capitan.

Sunday, May 29, 2011

9:00 am - noon | Noah Mazé Yoga Session: ***Breath of the Heart***
Clark Community Hall, El Portal, California

The wind's motility, symbolic of the movements of the heart, inspires this class that sequences progressively into hand-balancings, backbends, and inversions. The wind is dexterous, playful, the most powerful of the elements, and invokes the energy of Hanuman (the Monkey Deity). Come prepared to embrace the playful challenge.

12:30 - 1:30pm | Catered Group Lunch

2:30 - 5:30pm | Yosemite Valley Waterfall Hike
The spectacular Yosemite Valley waterfalls in Spring with Noah and Arin extends our yoga practice into the natural flows of Yosemite and the wild.

Monday, May 30, 2011
9:00 - 11:00am | Noah Mazé Fundraiser Yoga Session
Yosemite Valley
This donation-based event will raise money for Balanced Rock's social service programs like our Women of Color backpacking trip and Yosemite Youth Expedition for youth at risk of chemical dependency.

Note on Itinerary:

This schedule is an outline. It is subject to change depending on the needs of the group and allowing for spontaneous inspiration. This program operates rain or shine.

What to Bring

For those camping during this retreat, the following packing list may help you organize what to bring. If staying in a hotel or lodge, you will still want to bring most of the items on the list, other than a sleeping bag and pad. Please feel free to call if you have any questions about what you should bring.

- Clothing appropriate for a wide range of weather (snowstorms to sunny, summer-like temperatures). Layers are important—t-shirts, shorts, tank tops for day, warm pants and layers for evening.
- Sleeping bag (should be rated to 0 degrees for all programs)
- Comfortable clothing for yoga and physical activity
- Sleeping pad (Ridgerest, Thermarest, or other closed-cell pad).
- Yoga mat and blanket (we will have a limited number on-site to lend)

- Journal and writing utensils
- Water bottle
- Rain jacket and pants
- Warm jacket for evenings
- Hiking boots (waterproof boots are preferable for possible snow or rain)
- Comfortable camp/house shoes
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Bathing items and toiletries (towel, toothbrush, soap, etc.)
- Sun hat
- Warm hat for evening
- Sunscreen and lip balm with sunscreen
- Pillow
- Small day pack for hikes
- Mittens or gloves for evening

Emergency Contact Information

Our programs operate in areas of Yosemite National Park where cell phone service is extremely limited. Our guides carry both cell phones and park radio communication systems to assist with emergency contact, if needed. If it becomes necessary for family or close friends to contact you while on a Balanced Rock course and they are unable to reach you directly, please have them call our office phone at 209-379-9453, and either talk with our on-call staff or leave a message. Phone messages are checked at least 4 times a day when we have a course in the field, and emergency messages will be relayed to our field staff as soon as possible. **Please note this system is for emergency contact only, and although we will act immediately, it will take some time to relay any message to a participant.**

Food

"Food to a large extent is what holds a society together and eating is closely linked to deep spiritual experiences." **–**Peter Farb and George Armelagos

Lunches on Saturday and Sunday will be catered and provided after our morning yoga sessions. As much as possible, Balanced Rock focuses on local, organic, and whole foods in our menus.

Individuals will be responsible for all other meals during the weekend. There are several restaurants and markets in the local area, and we offer direction, assistance or recommendations. Be aware that Yosemite is a rural and remote area, so if you have particular food needs or desires, you may want to bring specialty foods from home.

Our Instructors

Noah Mazé is celebrated in the yoga community as one of the most advanced and proficient practitioners and teachers of Anusara® Yoga. Born into a household of yogis, Noah grew up steeped in the yoga tradition and its practices.

In the 1990s, Noah worked as an outdoor educator and wilderness guide, helping people access the transformational power of nature. After a life long study of yoga, Noah began studying with John Friend in 1995 and was awestruck. Not long thereafter, he also became a devoted student of Tantric scholar, Dr. Douglas Brooks. Noah was certified to teach Anusara® Yoga in 2002.

Widely sought out as a teacher's teacher, Noah is one of only twelve individuals worldwide serving on the Anusara® Yoga Curriculum Committee. He also sits on Anusara® Yoga's Certification Assessment Committee, and has been invited to teach with John Friend at both of Anusara Yoga's "Grand Gatherings." Noah's therapeutic teaching is informed by years of anatomical study, successful practice with rehabilitating injured students and his experiential knowledge of the body and its innate healing capacity. Noah maintains an active local, national and international teaching schedule. In his limited spare time, he enjoys riding his bike, shopping at the farmer's market and reading obscure yogic texts. Noah lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Tracy, and their sweet toddler, Madeleine, and four rescued four leggeds.

In Noah's classes, yoga philosophy, myths, and stories weave together with asana, pranayama and meditation to create a powerful and transformative environment.

Arin Trook, Program Director of Balanced Rock.
With a BA from Stanford and a Masters in Education from UC Berkeley, Arin has been a professional educator for the past 15 years in a wide variety of contexts, and is a credentialed teacher in the State of California. He has led mountaineering and rock climbing programs in the Southern Rocky Mountains for the Outward Bound School, and is certified in CPR and as a Wilderness First Responder. Arin has also served on the faculty of Lesley University's Audubon Expedition Institute leading expeditions across North America, and on the faculty of University of Massachusetts Amherst for their Living Routes India Program. He has worked as a guide, instructor, and speaker with Naturalists At Large, Aspen Center for Environmental Studies, and The Institute of Cultural Ecology. His guiding and teaching work has led him around the world with programs in Alaska, the Colorado Plateau, India, Mexico, and California.

Arin is also an accomplished yoga teacher and student, blending strong asana work with sacred song and breath practice. As the Program Director for Balanced Rock, Arin brings a passion for deep community and ecological citizenship, Wilderness explorations, yoga practice, and transformative education into the organization. He is a California native with deep roots in the mountains, deserts, and seasides of this amazing place, and has also lived on a homestead in Castle Valley, Utah; Sieben Linden Ecovillage in central Germany; and Auroville in southern India. He lives in Yosemite with his wife Liesa and son Kosma.

Odds and Ends

Check your gear list to make sure you have what you need, don't be shy about calling and asking gear questions.

Please empty your car of any scented items such as food, drinks, sunscreen, deodorant, etc., when we leave vehicles in El Portal, Yosemite or at the campground. Bears will break into cars with food (or items with odor) in them or items that remind them of food, like empty ice chests or grocery bags.

Weather in Yosemite in late May can be quite varied. Be prepared for warm days and cool nights, especially if camping. For more park information and updated weather forecasts call (209) 372-0209 or visit the website at http://www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/conditions.htm (this includes road condition information as well).

Also, feel free to contact us at arin@balancedrock.org or to call with any questions: Balanced Rock Foundation 209.379.9453.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Peace and Learning,

Arin Trook, Program Director

Balanced Rock Foundation