



weekend getaways

spirit

Find Some Peace

**A spiritual retreat
can let you not only
achieve some calm
but also contemplate
the important things
in life**

“Rush hour begins at 5” in DC, said the Reverend Drema McAllister-Wilson while we chatted recently. “Where is everybody going so early? People hurry to the next appointment, the next soccer game, the next whatever. If we are not intentional about shaping our lives, we can fall into a permanent rush-hour pace and lose far more than we ever gain.”

We were at Priest Field Pastoral Center in West Virginia. I’d previously attended retreats at this lovely, rustic place before, to wander its trails and sit on a deck mindfully listening to birds while appreciating each leaf on a tree. The only thing that rushes here is the creek.

Over the years, I’ve been to church-organized retreats at Priest Field and at Sandy Cove Ministries in Maryland, and I’ve gone on my own to Bon Secours

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PRIEST FIELD PASTORAL CENTER

Priest Field Pastoral Center



Salamander Resort & Spa

Retreat and Conference Center, also in Maryland. Each has its charms—a Stations of the Cross walk at Priest Field, benches facing the river at Sandy Cove, a labyrinth and a pond at Bon Secours.

The very act of driving away from home begins my slowdown. What also helps: deep-breathing and meditation, which I do more of while on retreat. Although most retreats I've attended have had a religious bent, many centers simply provide space for individual reflection. Others offer sessions on, say, journaling or tai chi.

Being on a retreat never fails to help me achieve serenity. The challenge is to incorporate the calm into my core and recall it later at will. It's not easy. But I've discovered another benefit of carving out quiet time: Important things float to the top of my consciousness. Am I living the way I want to live? Does how I spend my time and money reflect my values? It seems impossible to get into that state at home. On a retreat, the spirit takes center stage.

Priest Field Pastoral Center, 4030 Middleway Pike, Kearneysville, W. Va.; 304-725-1435. Rates start at \$62 for single occupancy.

—ANN COCHRAN



Zen Masters

Three other places where you can find serenity and the space to think

The Hermitages

No need to travel far in search of contemplation. On the wooded grounds of Northeast DC's Franciscan Monastery are two one-person "hermitages" that have no TV or wi-fi—and are open to all faiths. 1400 Quincy St., NE; hermitage@myfranciscan.com. \$90 a night.

Salamander Resort & Spa

On 340 acres of rolling hills, Salamander exudes tranquility. Tap into inner peace with a spa treatment, sunrise yoga, or a Zen-like equine communication experience. 500 N. Pendleton St., Middleburg; 844-303-2723. Rooms from \$355 a night.

Savage River Lodge

Washington Irving said angling produces "a pure serenity of mind." Seek your own peace on a guided fly-fishing trip at this lodge, near four excellent trout streams. Full-day trips start at \$300, half-day at \$175. 1600 Mt. Aetna Rd., Frostburg, Md.; 301-689-3200. Rooms from \$240 a night.

An App for That

Meditation has become popular for achieving calm. New to it or need to renew a practice? Here are three apps we like.



While most meditation apps offer just a few free guided sessions—to unlock the rest, you pay a subscription fee—Insight Timer has more than 5,500 free meditations.



A great choice for beginners, Stop, Breathe & Think explains the fundamentals, offers a fair number of free sessions to get you started, and has a lively, easy-to-follow design.



Probably the most well-known meditation app, Headspace also gives a great intro to the basics, and it featured our favorite voice—that of founder Andy Puddicombe.