

Ananda Ashram

ICYER

16a Mettu Street
Chinnamudaliarchavady
Kottukuppam (Via Pondicherry)
Tamil Nadu - 605 104
INDIA



ICYER, The International Centre for Yoga Education and Research, which is also known as **ANANDA ASHRAM**, was founded in 1967 by Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri in Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu, South India. Ananda Ashram functioned from 1975 at Sri Kambaliswamy Madam (Samadhi) and then ICYER was founded in 1989 in its current setting in a small fishing village.

The Ashram is located in a beautiful garden site, on the Bay of Bengal with a wide expanse of sandy beach and warm waters suitable for swimming. The atmosphere is rural and simple, peaceful and unpolluted. The Ashram is eight kilometers north of Pondicherry, a small but modern and cosmopolitan city on the southern coast of India.

Pondicherry is 170 kilometers south of Chennai (Madras) which is a large metropolis with an international airport. ICYER is a three hour bus or taxi ride from the airport.

CLASSICAL RISHICULTURE ASHTANGA YOGA (GITANANDA YOGA) as expounded by the world famous Guru, Yoga Maharishi Dr. SWAMI GITANANDA GIRI Guru Maharaj is taught in carefully graded steps. This is based on the teachings of Yogamaharishi Swami Kakananda Brighu that combine classical teachings of traditions of Patanjala Yoga, Hatha Yoga and Dakshina Marga Tantra in a modern scientific format. Siddha Siddhantha tradition of Srila Sri Kambali Jnana Desika Swamigal is followed in line with the South Indian traditions. Emphasis is placed on developing an understanding of the Indian culture and its arts, rituals and lifestyle observances.

Gitananda Yoga: The Living Tradition



Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj began offering Six Month Intensive Yoga teaching programmes within the traditional setting of a Guru Kula from 1968. Guru Kula translates to '*womb of the guru*' and is where the student lives with the guru in his home. Following Swamaji's Samadhi in 1993, when he left his body, this classical Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga (Gitananda Yoga) has continued under the guidance of his wife and Senior most disciple Ammaji, **Yogacharini Meenakshi Bhavanani Devi**, one of the great Yogini's of Modern Times.

Their son, **Yogacharya Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani**, is the lineage holder of the Gitananda tradition and current Madathipathy of the Sri Kambaliswamy Madam. He continues the illustrious tradition under the watchful guidance of his mother and Guru, our beloved Ammaji.

Welcome to Ananda Ashram

When you reach the ashram the first thing that will greet you, unless an ashram dog has escaped, is the infamous front door with the sign '*Enter Here Only if You are Happy*'. This certainly makes students pause and think before stepping in.'





Traveling Information

You will need a **Visa** to enter India. Please ask your teacher which one you should get. It is not expensive and it is easy to apply online.. <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in>

You will need to arrange your own **travel insurance**.

You will be flying into **Chennai (Maa)** which is the closest international airport to the ashram. From here you can either go to a hotel first or go straight to the ashram. We recommend getting to the ashram by taxi which the ashram will arrange for you with a local taxi company. This will cost you approx 4500rs and you should give the driver a tip. This can be around 200rs.

Please check the **travel money** rate before you go to India as it is not usually very good so it is best not to change too much. There are 'money changers' at the airport providing you come in at the international arrivals area and haven't changed planes in India. Pondicherry has lots of places where you can change cash, travellers cheques or use your card in an atm. You can also use your card to pay for things in most shops.



Swamiji always said that when you arrive in a new place you should enter a body of water to acclimatise yourself so don't forget your bathers!

Health Information

VACCINATIONS: at present, there are no vaccinations required to come to the Ashram, except for the COVID 19 protocols. Please regularly check the Indian government website and the government website of your country of origin for specific regulations and requirements.

There is no Malaria in Pondicherry but there are lots of mosquitos. If you start taking a **Vitamin B1** supplement before you travel as well as while you are there you should find that the mosquitos are not interested in biting you. There are also plenty of mosquito repellants like **mosiguard** or **citronella** that work well. If you are prone to being bitten or react to bites then an **antihistamine** cream or the homeopathic remedy **Apis** work really well. Should anyone need any more help they can be referred to Dr Ananda..

For women menstruating it is recommended to use a **moon cup** since there is nowhere to discard of used sanitary products other than taking them out to the fire pit in the back garden and burning them.

Places Within The Ashram



Satsangha Hall



Hatha Yoga Deck



Patanjali Kutir



Pranayama Hut



Accommodation around a Courtyard Garden



Nataraj Lounge



Dining Hall



Accommodation

Accommodation at the ashram is **clean and simple**. Your room will have the basics of what is needed: a bed, a wardrobe, a ceiling fan and a desk with a chair.

The ashram provides a mattress sheet and a bed cover. You will need to bring a thin sheet, a pillow and a pillowcase with you.

Your room will have a padlock and key which you must lock whenever you leave your room.

Bathrooms

There are no ensuite bedrooms so all bathroom facilities are shared. There are male and female bathrooms. Toilets are both western with a seat and Indian where you can squat. Due to the tiny pipework It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you do not use any toilet paper in the ashram toilets as the pipes will immediately block. There are water jugs in each toilet so that you can wash yourself which is much cleaner than using paper.



Ammaji would often tell us whilst we lay in Shava Asana at the end of the Hatha Yoga session that if we felt out of sorts we should tidy up our room so that we would feel better about ourselves.

Food



All of the food at the ashram is freshly prepared and **vegetarian**. Ammaji always took pride in the carefully thought out yogic diet and would locally source all of the fresh produce herself. She would even on occasion take over the kitchen and cook lunch for us all. A **yogic diet** is always what is called in India, '**Pure Veg**' which does not include eggs and is focused on combining certain foods and spices to promote good digestion with high levels of prana. Raw fruits and salads are always included alongside the cooked specialities. You can expect to see dosa and idli for breakfast with lots of lovely local freshly picked fruit. Lunch would usually be made up of rice, curries, chapatti and salad.

It is not possible to cater for all sorts of food preferences but if you have any food allergies we will do our best to accommodate them. **Please inform us of this in advance.**



Idli and Dosa



Curries, Rice and Chapatti

Sri Kambaliswami Madam



Sri Kambaliswamy Madam is an ancient Samadhi Site named after the first Guru, **Srila Sri Kambaliswamy Swamigal** who was placed into his Samadhi in 1873. He was often referred to as the Master of Ashtanga Yoga. Since then there have been seven more Gurus placed into their Samadhis including **Srila Sri Gitananda Giri Swamigal**. This is the South Indian Saiva Siddhanta Yoga lineage, Swami Gitananda was part of this tradition as well as the North Indian Brighu lineage. The land at the Madam Samadhi site is private property passed by means of a notarized will from Swamiji to Swamiji from that time to present date.

The present Guru of the tradition is **Yogacharya Dr. Ananda Balayogi Giri** and his son, Young **Anandraj Bhavanani**, is being trained in his role as the Junior Madathipathy of the tradition. He assists his father in the performance of all rituals. The Guru Pujas and simple duties have been performed continuously for more than 148 years without any break by the Gurus of the Parampara and their disciples.

Every Sunday a puja is held here guided by Dr Anandaji. If you attend you should come with a flower mala to offer to the Guru. Dress code is a Sari for the women and Kurta Pyjama for the men. Your teacher will help you with these.



Ashram Clothing



Morning Yoga class clothing can be t-shirts and loose trousers as you would wear normally. After breakfast you can change into the Indian clothing for the rest of the day. They are much cooler as they are loose and light weight cotton. It is recommend that you a couple of outfits with you which you can easily pick up online. For Men the Indian clothing is called **Kurta Pyjamas** which are Indian grandad style shirts of different lengths over loose cotton trousers. For women they are called **Salwar Kameez** (the Indian dress over loose trousers). Women also get the opportunity to wear a sari on Sundays at the madam.

Everything can be bought in Pondicherry but it is much easier to turn up with something that you can wash and wear. Washing is done by hand but it dries very quickly in the Indian heat. Shoulders and legs must be covered in the ashram and on all trips as we will go to temples.

A light cloth is useful to cover yourself in Shava Asana which can also be used in the evenings of to sit on when you are on your mat. **Yoga mats will be provided.**

Other Information

Swimming. Swimming costumes **not bikinis** for ladies please, and wear clothes to and from the beach. The current can be strong so be careful. If you get caught out and can't get to the shore swim sideways to get out of the current.

Water. Make sure you drink at least 2 litres of water every day. Water is available at the ashram. It is wise to have some rehydration salts with you .

Mobile Phones. You will want to keep in touch with home but please be minimal with your usage as to not disrupt others. We prefer you to make calls from outside the ashram where possible.

Torch. India is prone to power cuts so take a torch just in case.

Feel at Home. The ashram will be your home whilst you are there. Feel free to wander and explore. There is a lovely garden out the back. Please do not go up into the family's living area. If you do see Ammaji, or Dr Ananda and his wife Devasena it is customary and polite to greet with your palms together at your chest. You should also come to your feet if you are sitting down.

Bells. They are used to keep people together and to make sure people are where they should be at the right time. That way everyone is ready for the teacher to turn up. There is always a bell 10 minutes before class – this one means get going to class. Then there is a bell at the start of the class which says everyone is here so you should be there before that one! There are also wakeup bells which makes sure no-one sleeps in .

Travel plug. You will have plug sockets in your room which take a European plug – don't forget your adapter.

Karma Yoga. In the ashram after breakfast we set aside time for Karma Yoga. This is where you will have a job to help keep the ashram running. We also will have a rota for serving and clearing away the food at mealtimes. This makes everything run more smoothly.

Leaving the Ashram. There is a good length break after lunch where you could go for a wander to the local shops or down on the beach.

Dogs. The ashram has little dogs. They will bark but are very friendly.

Problems. Any problem at all please let your teacher know. You will be in a strange place, it will be hot and you may turn up with Jet lag and be out of sorts so please don't let anything fester. It is also possible to have a culture shock if you have not been anywhere like this before so please don't suffer in silence.

Ashram Rules

ENTER THE ASHRAM HAPPY.

RESPECT EACH OTHER. We all have different views and opinions and differences can always be worked out Please don't gossip..

BE FOCUSED in all classes.

STAND UP WITH NAMASKARA MUDRA when a teacher enters the room. This is done out of respect. This is also used as a greeting to others and when you say goodbye.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT with your teacher to discuss any problems.

NO INTERNET use in the ashram. Please respect this as we are trying to switch off. from technology.

DO NOT SKIP CLASS. If you don't feel well you can lie on your mat and listen if you can't manage to join in.

DO NOT BE LATE for class, appointments or meal times. It affects everyone else.

DO NOT POINT YOUR FEET TOWARDS YOUR TEACHER OR PICTURES OF SWAMIJI OR MURTHIS. It is considered rude. If you see someone doing it please remind them.

EAT AT THE ASHRAM and not outside unless on a trip.

PRACTICE MAUNA (silence) after the last class of the day and before the first class in the morning. You can use Namaskara Mudra to acknowledge people.

DO NOT ENTER SOMEONE ELSE'S ROOM. Please wait outside the door or use communal spaces for conversation.

KARMA YOGA s another teaching so please stay focused and perform the duties, as Ammaji would say, with good cheer!

DO NOT LEAVE THE ASHRAM AFTER SUPPER. Ammaji has a strong sense of responsibility for everyone and you do not know the area..

NO SHOES should be worn once inside the Ashram door. You can carry them to your room.

STRICTLY NO DRUGS, SMOKING OR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION in the ashram and whilst enrolled on the ashram course.

Registration Form

Please print, complete, scan and return to your host Teacher.

Course Tutor

Course Name Course Date

Name DOB

Home Address

..... Phone no

Health conditions

Medication

If any of the above please confirm you have discussed with your Doctor and they are happy for you to enrol in this course? YES/NO

Travel Information

Airline Flight number

Arrival date Arrival time

Departure date Departure time

Would you like ICYER to organise a Taxi for you? YES/NO

Two emergency contact names and numbers (include country dialing code):

Name Relationship

Number

Name Relationship

Number

NOTE: you will need to bring along **2 passport photos** so that ICYER can register you as staying with them with the local government office for the course duration.