

SPRING 2025

WELCOME TO NURTURE

A GUIDEBOOK FOR YOUR NURTURE JOURNEY



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NURTURERETREATS.COM

WELCOME

The soul should always stand ajar, ready to
welcome the ecstatic experience.

– *Emily Dickinson*





HELLO MY DEAR!

We are beyond thrilled that we get to spend the weekend connecting and being creative with you.

To get you in the mood, we've prepared this virtual welcome package for you so you can arrive feeling ready and excited. We've also tucked in some nourishing virtual Nurture 'appetizers' like our itinerary, an FAQ section, and self care prompts sprinkled throughout on how to mindfully unplug and prepare. Start your retreat as early as...now!

HOW TO PREPARE

I have learned, as a rule of thumb, never to ask whether you can do something. Say, instead, that you are doing it. Then fasten your seat belt. The most remarkable things follow.

– *Julia Cameron*





CONNECT WITH OTHERS

If you haven't already, come check out our private virtual Nurture Hub. Here's where you can:

- Meet and discover more about your fellow retreaters! Learn about their hobbies and the work they're up to in the world, or click the buttons to follow them on Instagram!
- View this e-book at any time
- Get sneak peeks of menu items and more!

[VISIT OUR NURTURE HUB](#)



CONSIDER CONSCIOUSLY UNPLUGGING

Something magical happens when we turn away from our devices and towards ourselves for longer than we're used to.

While sharing photos and stories from the retreat is always welcomed and lovely, we'd rather you experience the retreat through your eyes instead of through a screen. It's one of the reasons we have Steph with us to capture the weekend with her beautiful photographic eye.

Here are a few methods that work well to strike a balance:

- Airplane mode is your friend for you to still take photos and post them after the retreat.
- You can turn off your phone entirely.
- Feel free to give my cell phone number (**647-268-0765**) to those significants you are leaving behind. They can reach me if there's an emergency and the rest of the time is your own uninterrupted sacred space.
- Remove distracting apps from your phone for the weekend (oh, hello Instagram and TikTok!) and re-install them when you get home.





OPEN YOUR HEART TO THE MYSTERY

We each respond in our own ways to the creative process. Sometimes we are swept up in the flow state; sometimes we are bursting with inspiration and other times we feel stuck or butt up against an old wound out of nowhere.

Especially in fertile spaces like you'll find at Nurture, you may find yourself meeting pockets of tenderness that surprise you with their potency.

Nurture is less about ‘fixing’ the tenderness with acts of self care than it is being gentle and creative with the entirety of what reveals itself AS an act of self care.

You are no longer alone in this journey. We want to remind you that there is healing in solidarity and that we’re here to support you in the full spectrum of whatever emerges for you.

A note from personal experience that sometimes these pockets happen at the retreat, and sometimes they spring upon you when you get back to your ‘normal’ life.



WHAT TO BRING

The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.

– *Maya Angelou*





WHAT TO BRING

A JOURNAL THAT SPEAKS TO YOU

You know the kind. It stands out to you in a bookstore lineup and you are like: YOU. I want to share my secrets with YOU. It has the right kind of pages - the ones that, when you put your pen to it, feel equivalent to when you are the ‘first to use’ a pristine expanse of peanut butter in a jar.

A PEN YOU LOVE WRITING WITH

Not the kind that stains your fingers; or the one you have in a colour you dislike; or that lives amongst the crumbs at the bottom of your purse. You want the kind that basically writes itself. The kind that loves doodling, or writing your name over and over again like you did in public school next to “loves Gilbert Blythe”, or was that just me?

YOUR SLEEPING PILLOW

Your sleeping comfort matters, especially in a new-to-you bed! While there are pillows at Lehlewa for our use, it can feel like an added luxury to have your neck nuzzle like it's used to nuzzling.

TOILETRIES

Exactly zero people at Nurture will judge you if you skip a shower day, don't shave your legs, or wish to forego your makeup routine for a change. Bring what feels good and nourishing to you.





CLOTHES YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE IN TO WEAR THROUGHOUT THE DAY

At our previous retreats, items with a bit of stretch and a lot of cozy have been popular. House sweaters and leggings and oversized Ts have also made an appearance. A previous attendee once remarked: “Come prepared with loose fitting pants. Sonja will bewitch you with her magical food and you won't ever want to stop eating!!” She’s not wrong.

YOUR FAVE TAROT DECK

If you’re witchy and you know it, bring your deck! We’ll be setting up a Nurture ‘altar’ spot where an assortment of fun decks and books and other divination tools will be laid out for you to interact with as you wish.

A REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE

Feel free to haul out the one you got for free from your car dealership or your partner's conference, but *prompt alert* here's an opportunity to take your self care one small step deeper, and a fun outing: find a reusable water bottle that lights you up as much as your pen and journal do.

A SWEATER, BLANKET OR SHAWL WRAP FOR WHEN YOU WANT TO BE COZY

We've had attendees come down for breakfast wrapped so thoroughly in blankets that they appeared to be merely a floating head. It feels incredible to be wrapped and warm for when we're sitting and chatting, so this item is a key one!





WALKING SHOES AND FLIP FLOPS

There are trails nearby and you may wish to venture out for a walk and some fresh air. It's the Canadian Shield, so there are rocks and roots, sand and muck. Come prepared for some sturdy footing! Flip flops will be useful for the sauna or if you decide to kayak or paddleboard.

A DRESSIER OUTFIT THAT YOU FEEL BEAUTIFUL IN FOR SATURDAY EVENING'S FORMAL DINNER

We'll be celebrating beauty in many of its manifestations throughout the weekend. One of those manifestations is YOU. We go all out for a formal dinner Saturday evening, so this is a fun opportunity to dress up in something that makes you feel lovely. You can be as fancy or understated as you like - you do you! - but we all have that one outfit that maybe doesn't get a lot of airtime that usually solicits compliments and that 'hot damn!' response to your own reflection. Wear that.



A GOOD BOOK

Our itinerary is such that there are lots of cozy nooks of time to yourself. The house and grounds also feature actual cozy nooks to snuggle up and read. Or stare at the lake intermittently reading the same sentence 7 times. All is good.

A BATHING SUIT AND SWIM TOWEL

Our venue features a 12 person sauna, stand up paddleboards, canoes and kayaks for your personal use (at your own risk). There is also a spot off the dock that's perfect for swimming.



YOUR CAMERA

While we've got the lovely Steph on site to document our weekend, you may feel compelled to bring your camera on a walk with you, or as a creative tool.

INSERT YOUR FAVOURITE THING HERE

Anything else you need to feel comfortable.

HOUSEKEEPING

Dream on it. Let your mind take you to places you would like to go, and then think about it and plan it and celebrate the possibilities. And don't listen to anyone who doesn't know how to dream.

– *Liza Minnelli*





HOW TO GET THERE

Nurture takes place at Lehlewa Lakeside Retreat:

14030 Rd. 38,
Sharbot Lake, ON
K0H 2P0

Please find Google Maps directions using the
button below.

[DIRECTIONS](#)

ITINERARY

FRIDAY MAY 29TH

12:00pm-1:00pm: Arrive, check in and settle into your room, get oriented

1:00pm-2:30pm: Welcome Lunch & Opening Circle

2:30pm-3:00pm: Free time

3:00pm-5:00pm: Workshop #1 - "Botanical Dyeing" with Shannon Ruzgys

7:00pm-8:00pm: Grazing Dinner

8:00pm & beyond: Free time: chill, relax, bedtime





SATURDAY MAY 30TH

7:00am-8:00am: Free time (stretch, read, sleep in, journal, pull tarot, etc.)

8:00am-9:00am: Buffet-style breakfast

9:00am-10:00am: Free time

10:00am-12:00pm: "Fermenting Spring's Bounty" with Ekta Maheshwari

12:00pm-12:30pm: Free time

12:30pm-1:30pm: Buffet-style lunch

1:30pm-3:30pm: Free time

3:30pm-5:30pm: "Crafting Personal Perfumes" with Cassandra Bradshaw

5:30pm-8:00pm: Free time

8:00pm-10:00pm: Nurture Harvest Table Dinner (wear your "I am feeling myself" outfit!)

10:00pm & beyond: Chill, relax, bedtime

SUNDAY JUNE 1ST

7:00am-9:00am: Free time (stretch, read, sleep in, journal, pull tarot, etc.)

9:00am-10:30am: Nurture Harvest Table
Brunch & Closing Ceremony

10:30am-11:00am: Packing and Goodbyes



A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white dress with a colorful floral pattern and a matching flower crown, is running barefoot on a lush green lawn. She is holding a light pink shawl or cardigan that is flowing behind her. The background features a line of trees with green foliage under a bright, slightly overcast sky.

FAQ

Everyone has inside of them a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!

– *Anne Frank*

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE WE ARRIVE?

Please arrive promptly for Friday at **12:00pm**. We will welcome you with open arms, help you with your bags, and get you settled into your room.

Next, we'll help you gently land and get grounded by enjoying a welcome lunch, followed by our opening circle.

As the weekend unfolds, we've got some incredible programming lined up for us as well as plenty more free time sprinkled throughout our time together!



WHAT IS THERE TO DO IN MY FREE TIME?

So many things! Snuggle up on the cozy couch or chair with a book, your journal, or your daydreams. Take a nap. A hot, uninterrupted shower. A swim. Pull some tarot. Walk down to spend some time lakeside with your thoughts or your camera or your sketchbook. Make a collage or do some watercolours. Join me and Kirsti in the kitchen where it is warm and there are snacks, opportunities for spoon licking and good chats. Continue working on your workshop creations if you feel inspired. Find a friend and talk something out (we love helping you find solutions to things you've been mulling over). Cozy up by the fire. Take a kayak or paddleboard out on the lake. Follow your intuition and see where it leads!



I'M NOT AN ARTIST. IS THIS AN ISSUE FOR THE CREATIVE WORKSHOPS?

Firstly, we're pretty adamant that everyone is born an artist and that your artistic expression is a personal, evocative, and beautiful thing no matter what your skill level. Making and creation holds deep meaning and an opportunity to connect with what your soul wants to say - that's what we're encouraging for your creative time. No need to compare, or to think about what it might look like framed. Also, having 'beginner's mind' is actually a bonus! Some of you who are more practised artists might be greeted with a very natural form of Resistance that takes over where you think you 'already know'. If I have learned anything from life and creativity, I'm 100% sure that we are entirely capable of surprising and enjoying ourselves through a combination of humility, bravery, and a sense of adventure.



I OFTEN FEEL PRESSURE IN GROUP SITUATIONS TO REPRESENT MYSELF OR MY BRAND. AS YOU READ IN MY INTAKE FORM, MY LIFE IS A MESS RIGHT NOW AND THERE ARE SO MANY UNKNOWNNS. ANY ADVICE FOR HOW TO SHOW UP TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

This retreat was intentionally designed as an antidote to the kinds of dis-regulating and surface-level experiences many of us have been to where we feel a pressure to perform. We're glad **YOU'RE** here - *you*. Not the you you think you need to be; not the you you want to be someday; not the you you're used to you-ing as performance, but the you who is exactly where you are - mess, confusion, uncertainty, talents, thoughts, resistances, strengths - ALL of it. We think it's a beautiful and deeply fertile place to be.



I REALLY APPRECIATE THAT YOU GIVE SO MANY OPTIONS AND THAT ULTIMATELY WE HAVE PERSONAL AND CREATIVE AGENCY WHEN IT COMES TO THIS WEEKEND, BUT IF I'M HONEST THIS KINDA STRESSES ME OUT. I'M USED TO PEOPLE TELLING ME WHAT TO DO AND FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE THAT WAY.

No problem! Part of that agency can be telling me: “Hey Sonja - I work best when people tell me what to do and where to go and when, etc.” I’m happy to provide you both with the guidance and information you need to feel good, alongside smaller invitations to take your own initiative where appropriate. An invitation to meet ourselves mindfully outside of our status quo is part of the magic of Nurture.



FOR THE MEALS, WHAT DOES 'BUFFET STYLE' MEAN?

You know the heart eye emoji? I like to evoke that in a food spread. It's literally a table full of all kinds of delicious things that you can pair with one another; spread on top of one another; dip into; sprinkle over, and concoct. You are the master artist of your own meal, from my palate to your palette. Lol, sorry - had to. According to your itinerary, you'll know when a meal window is (say, 12:30-1:30pm for lunch on Saturday) and can come any time during that window to create your meal. Buffet meals will be served in the dining room, but you can eat anywhere on the property. We'll walk you through where to bring back your dishes, etc. If you are hungry between meals, we have a special **Nurture Snasket** - yes, that is a **basket full of snacks**.



TELL ME ABOUT THE NURTURE SNASKET!

Located in our common space, you'll find a basket full of everything from seasonal fruit and grounding nuts to your favourite dime store candy and potato chips. At Nurture, we believe there is no hierarchy in food, ie: indulging in a handful of chips can sometimes be as nourishing or necessary as the nutrients you'd find in an apple. Both have their moment. We love the nostalgia of snack food and the ways in which it can nourish your inner child and create the kind of vibe and bonding you might remember from your best teen slumber party. We invite you to mindfully take a breath each time you visit the Snasket and contemplate: what joy, delight, nourishment, or grounding do you need and snack accordingly; eliminating all notions of 'bad for you' or 'good for you' foods.



**YOU HAVE ANSWERED SO MANY
QUESTIONS I HAD HERE BUT I STILL
HAVE SOMETHING I WANT TO ASK THAT
YOU DIDN'T COVER.**

Amazing! Please feel free to email me your questions at connect@nurtureretreats.com and I will happily answer.



THANK YOU!

It is a true pleasure and a privilege to spend this weekend together.

With our whole hearts, we look forward to creating a space for you to connect with yourself, your creativity, and the incredible kindred spirits attending.

Oh, and to eat. Gosh, we cannot wait to feed you! See you soon, dear friend.

–Sonja & Steph



TO PACK:

YOUR NURTURE CHECK LIST

- ☐ A JOURNAL THAT SPEAKS TO YOU
- ☐ A PEN YOU LOVE WRITING WITH
- ☐ YOUR SLEEPING PILLOW/ANYTHING ELSE YOU NEED TO SLEEP
- ☐ TOILETRIES, VITAMINS, MEDICATION
- ☐ CLOTHES YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE IN FOR DAILY WEAR
- ☐ AN OUTFIT YOU FEEL BEAUTIFUL IN FOR OUR SATURDAY MEAL
- ☐ YOUR FAVOURITE TAROT OR ORACLE DECK
- ☐ A REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE
- ☐ A SHAWL FOR WHEN YOU WANT TO BE COZY
- ☐ WALKING SHOES SUITABLE TO THE SEASON & FLIP FLOPS
- ☐ A GOOD BOOK OR TWO
- ☐ YOUR BATHING SUIT AND A SWIM TOWEL
- ☐ YOUR CAMERA (OPTIONAL)
- ☐ YOUR YOGA MAT (OPTIONAL)
- ☐ ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D FIND NURTURING