

2026 Cooking Retreat Planning Guide



- 1 **What are the retreat accommodations?** Guests will stay in lodges nestled in the nature sanctuary. There are several rooms in each lodge, all with shared bathrooms. Accommodations are clean, comfortable, and rustic, with an old-school charm that feels familiar rather than fancy. This isn't a resort: activities and lodging are spread across nearby locations, and there's no staff on hand to wait on guests. Rooms will be assigned on a first come, first serve basis. CNS will contact attendees after registration to determine their lodge.
- 2 **When does the retreat officially start and end?** Check-in starts at 12 p.m. (ET) on Wednesday with dinner and a welcome reception in the evening. The retreat concludes at 11 a.m. (ET) on Sunday.
- 3 **What's included in the program fee?** Registration includes four nights, three full days, six hands-on cooking classes, and all meals.
- 4 **Will we have access to Wi-Fi or phone service?** Because of the retreat's remote location, there are no televisions or Wi-Fi services available at the lodges. Cell phone service is spotty at best. However, cell service and Wi-Fi are available at the Appalachian Forest Museum, the main building for all classes, activities, and meals.
- 5 **What kind of meals will we be served?** Everyone will be cooking and enjoying each meal together. All the meals will be whole food, plant-based, with no added oil. Minimal amounts of sweeteners and salts will be used. If you have dietary questions, please reach out to us at cnskitchen@nutritionstudies.org
- 6 **What kind of activities will be offered?** Outside of our cooking classes and various group activities, attendees will have access to over 3,000 acres of wilderness and hiking trails to explore during their free time.
- 7 **How should I travel to the retreat?** *Guests will need to arrange their own transportation to and from the retreat. At the retreat, attendees must be able to drive from their lodges to the Appalachian Forest Museum, where all planned programming will take place. Please note that lodges may be as far as 10 miles from the museum.*

If you plan to fly, John Glenn Columbus International Airport (CMH) is approximately 80 miles southwest of the retreat location; the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG) is approximately 85 miles east. Both routes offer scenic drives through Ohio's countryside, taking around 1.5 to 2 hours depending on traffic and road conditions.

- 8 **What is the refund policy?** Cancellations received in writing on or before the dates listed below will be refunded the full registration fee, less a 10% administrative fee. No refunds will be issued thereafter. Substitute participants will be accepted up to the start date of the event.

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Cancellation deadline for the April 2026 retreat: Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Cancellation deadline for the October 2026 retreat: Wednesday, September 30, 2026

- 9 **What will the weather be like?** Since the weather in Ohio can fluctuate greatly, it is best to check the forecast closer to the date of the event and be prepared for a range of cooler to warmer weather. The average daily temperature is about 56 degrees Fahrenheit and ranges from 40 to 66. However, it can be warmer or colder, so plan on packing extra layers, especially if you plan to spend time in Mother Nature.
- 10 **What clothing and footwear should I pack?** The retreat is a casual affair, so wear what's comfortable to cook in and spend time with friends. Walking shoes or hiking boots, a jacket, a hat, gloves, and a raincoat are a good idea if you plan to take advantage of the countless trails in your free time. It is never a bad idea to throw in a pair of house shoes or slippers to wear in the lodge, especially if your feet are more sensitive to the cold.
- 11 **Besides clothing, what other items should I pack?** Notetakers, be sure to include a notebook and writing utensil or an electronic device. You are encouraged to bring an apron, but it is not required. A book if you are a reader and a walking pole/stick if you are a hiker are good ideas. A reusable water bottle cuts down on the number of glasses we need to wash and is handy if you plan to hike.
- 12 **How much walking is involved?** There are no scheduled walks or hikes. You can choose to take short or long hikes right from the Appalachian Forest Museum or from your lodge. Please note that trails are not paved. Some lodges require guests to carry luggage and supplies a distance from designated parking, and some paths are at an incline.
- 13 **Accessibility** If you have concerns or questions related to accessibility, please reach out to cnskitchen@nutritionstudies.org.