

All glory to Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga

# SRI GOVINDA MELA VISITOR'S GUIDE



Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Seva Ashram  
Soquel, California

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## Registration

Everyone interested in participating in Sri Govinda Mela is requested to register and confirm their participation at their earliest possible convenience.

To register, please visit our [registration page](#) and complete the process as explained there.

The suggested donation for participation in the retreat is \$100 per person or \$200 per family. A deposit of \$20 is requested at the time of registration to confirm participation, and this will be credited to the full donation collected upon arrival at the retreat. If at any time prior to the retreat you wish to cancel your registration, your deposit will be refunded. You may also optionally provide the full suggested donation while registering to help with organisational expenses of the festival.

Our facilities are limited, and the sooner we know you are coming, the better we will be able to accommodate you, so please register to reserve your space as soon as you are able.

# Transportation

## Directions

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Seva Ashram in Soquel, California is located at:

2900 N. Rodeo Gulch Road  
Soquel, CA 95073 USA

You can view the address online [here](#).

## By car

The ashram is about 10 minutes from the town of Soquel. Driving directions to the ashram from the nearest cities are available [here](#):

- [Santa Cruz, San Jose, San Francisco, Sacramento](#)
- [Los Angeles, Portland, Salt Lake City](#)

## By bus

If you plan to come by bus, book your ticket to the [Santa Cruz Bus Station](#). We will be happy to pick you up there and bring you to the ashram if you request this on your registration form. Alternately, from the [Santa Cruz Metro Center](#), located adjacent to the Bus Station, you can ride the local [#71 bus](#) for about 15 minutes to the Ashram's nearest bus stop at [Soquel Drive and Research Park Drive](#). It is about a one hour walk to the ashram from there, so again we will be happy to pick you up and bring you by car from the bus stop to the ashram.

## By plane

If you plan to arrive by air, the closest airports to the ashram are San Jose Airport (SJC), San Francisco Airport (SFO), and Oakland Airport (OAK). Driving directions from the airports to the ashram are available [here](#):

- [SJC, SFO, OAK](#)

Bus routes from the airports to Santa Cruz are available here:

- [SJC, SFO, OAK](#)

If you inform us of your flight details, we will arrange for your transportation by car from the airport directly to the ashram.

## The facilities

### Parking

If you come by car to the ashram, there will be space to park your car on site.

### Camping

All the camp sites at the Ashram are within 150 meters walk of the parking area and the main ashram buildings. Sites to camp beside your car are limited and will be available on a first come, first serve basis.

### Bathrooms

The bathroom facilities at the ashram are rustic, so please come prepared for this, but hot showers will be available for everyone.

### Communication

Cell tower reception with most carriers is limited on the majority of the ashram property. Should you need to be contacted, you can be reached while at the ashram on the Ashram landline at 831-462-4712.

Limited bandwidth wifi access will be available.

### Things to watch out for

Mosquitoes, ticks, stinging nettles, poison ivy, and poison oak are found at the Ashram.

Whenever you go for a walk, please stay on the cleared trails and afterwards, please check to be sure that you are free from any ticks.

## What to bring

For everyone:

### Clothing

- Devotional clothes are encouraged

  - White dhotis and kurtas for men, sarees for women

- Clothing suitable for cool mornings and evenings (often in the 50s) and warmer times at mid-day (70s–90s)

- Bathing attire if desired to swim at the beach

### Hats

- For the sun and for warmth at night

### Light

- Flash light/headlamp

### Alarm

- A clock or a device that has an alarm function

### Personal hygiene items

- Soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.

- Towel/gumcha

### Reusable water bottle

Plate, bowl, cup, and spoon

For those who are camping:

### Tent

- Be sure to have a rain fly and stakes for your tent in case of inclement weather

### Sleeping gear

- Sleeping bag

- Sleeping mat (air mattress, futon, etc.)

- Pillow

## What not to bring

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco

Meat products

Weapons

Pets

Anything illegal

## What's provided

### Water

The Soquel Seva Ashram has an abundant water supply coming from an artesian well on site.

### Nourishment

All attendees will be provided with three meals a day of delicious prasadam plus additional refreshments throughout the day.

## Respecting the Ashram

The Ashram is a sacred place, and the sanctity of this place needs to be consciously maintained by everyone who visits. So that you can honour this sacred place according to the customs that have been established by our spiritual teachers and better connect with the spirit of devotion being cultivated at the Ashram, please observe the following.

### Cleanliness

Please bathe at least once a day while at the Ashram.

Please keep your personal belongings organised within your personal space (room, tent, car, etc.).

### Dress

Please wear clean and modest clothes which are not visibly tight and which fully cover the upper body and the legs up to the ankles.

Devotional clothes are encouraged for all attendees and will be available for purchase at the festival for anyone who wishes to acquire them.

### The Temple

Please remove your shoes before entering the Temple.

Please have clean hands, feet, and clothes when entering the Temple.

Please knock lightly on the door as you enter the Temple and bow before the Deities after entering.

Please sit on a mat in the Temple in sukhasana or siddhasana, preferably without leaning against a wall.

If you are not accustomed to sitting cross-legged on the floor for an extended period, you may lean against a wall or sit in a chair.



While seated in the Temple, please avoid pointing your back or feet towards the altar.

Please do not engage in casual conversation or speak loudly or harshly in the Temple.

Tulasi Devi's greenhouse

Please feel free offer respect to Tulasi Devi from outside her greenhouse but please do not enter the greenhouse unless invited to do so.

Classes

Please feel welcome to ask questions during the classes.

Please avoid leaving in the middle of a class as far as possible.

Phones

Phones should be switched off or kept in flight mode during all group activities.

Conversation

Please engage in discussion that is uplifting and devotional while at the Ashram.

Please do not engage in criticism or quarrel.

Prasadam (sanctified food)

Please be on-time for all meals.

Please wash your hands, plate, and utensils before the meal at the sink in the prasadam hall.

Please receive prasadam from someone who is serving rather than serving yourself.

Please wait to start honouring prasadam until the meal-time prayers have been recited.

Please lift and touch prasadam only with the right hand or with a utensil in the right hand.

Please refrain from talking during meals, or focus conversation on the prasadam or a related spiritual topic.

Please wash your hands, mouth, and dishes after honouring prasadam at the sink in the prasadam hall.

Please clean the area where you honoured prasadam if anything was spilled during the meal.

Kitchen

Please do not enter the kitchen unless you have bathed, are wearing clean clothes, and have some specific service to do there.

Not allowed at the Ashram

Use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco

Consumption of meat products

Sexual activity

Gambling

Physical or verbal abuse

Foul language

## Upon arrival and after the mela

When you arrive, please first check-in with the reception coordinators before proceeding to your accommodation.

At the conclusion of the mela, please check-out with one of the coordinators as you leave.

Anyone interested in staying longer at the Ashram after the mela should consult with the coordinators at that time and should not remain at the Ashram without having received permission for an extended stay.

# A Quick Look at the Facilities



Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Seva Ashram  
Soquel, California, USA



Located 5 miles inland from the Monterey Bay  
in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains



The Ashram's 28 acres  
spans across Rodeo Gulch



The Ashram's hillside meadows are reminiscent of Govardhan Hill in Vrindavan.



Nature trails crisscross the Ashram





Apples, pears, plums, and avocados  
ornament the Ashram's hillside



Sri Puspa Samadhi Mandir  
of  
Sri Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj  
The Founder-Acharya of the Ashram



The Pushpa Samadhi Mandir  
of Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj  
beneath his favourite oak tree



Kirtan instruments in the Temple



A midday offering at the Asrham



Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Gandharvika Giridhari  
The Presiding Deities of the Ashram

We look forward to welcoming you  
at Sri Govinda Mela.

Visit our [registration page](#)  
to reserve your spot.