

Why Walk with a Certified Forest Therapy Guide?

Walking with a Certified Forest Therapy Guide can take your nature experience to another level. Guides design their walks to facilitate slowing down, offer sensory invitations that improve mindfulness, and deepen one's connection to themselves, and the natural world. We also bring scientifically supported benefits to your experience.

Core Benefits of a Guided Forest Therapy Walk

Reciprocity



During a session, participants often feel supported, restored, and nourished by nature—and in turn, they feel inspired to care for the land and give back. This might mean planting a tree or a garden, picking up litter, or simply holding a deeper respect for the natural world.

Connectedness



Many people report feeling more connected—to nature, to others, and to themselves. This can include a sense of awe and being part of something greater, such as “I am a part of this natural web of life.” Participants may also notice subtle changes in mood or energy (e.g., “I feel lighter and happier”).



Relaxation & Well-Being

The pace and structure of guided forest therapy walks support a state of calm, ease, and overall well-being—often in a way that can be hard to access in daily life. Participants often share that they feel permission to slow down, unplug, and relax.

Evidence-Based Health Benefits

Physiological Benefits:



Cardiovascular Health

Guided forest therapy has been linked to lower blood pressure and reduced heart rate—benefits observed across ages, genders, and backgrounds. This is an important finding in a time where heart disease is the leading cause of death and disability worldwide.



Stress Reduction (Cortisol Levels)

Studies show forest therapy can lower cortisol (the body's stress hormone) levels—both compared to urban environments and to participants' own pre-walk levels. Lower cortisol means reduced stress and greater resilience to daily life challenges.

Psychological Benefits:



Improved Sleep Quality

Forest therapy can help increase sleep time and improve sleep quality.



Mental Health Support

Forest Therapy supports mental health by reducing anxiety, stress, and negative mood states, while increasing positive emotions, calmness, and overall life satisfaction.

Why Walk with a Certified Guide?

While spending any time in nature is valuable, certified forest therapy guides are trained to:

- Create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment.
- Offer invitations that deepen sensory awareness and connection.
- Pace the walk to maximize relaxation and reduce mental “noise.”
- Support reciprocity—the balance of receiving from and giving to nature.

In summary: Walking with a certified forest therapy guide is more than a pleasant stroll in the woods. It’s a structured, research-backed practice that can reduce stress, support heart health, improve sleep, boost mood, and help people feel more deeply connected to themselves, others, and the natural world.

References/Sources

Antonelli et al. (2019). Effects of forest bathing (shinrin-yoku) on levels of cortisol as a stress biomarker: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Biometeorology*, 63,1117–1134. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00484-019-01717-x>

Garibay-Chávez, M. G., Curiel-Ballesteros, A., García de Alba-García, J., Borja-Arreola, M., Moreno-Ramírez, D., & Santos-Zamora, E. (2024). Effects of forest bathing on blood pressure and heart rate in older adults in Mexico. *Forests*, 15(7), 1254. <https://doi.org/10.3390/f15071254>

Hansen et al. (2017). Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing) and nature therapy: A state-of-the-art review. *Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14(8), 1-48. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14080851>

Rajoo, K. S., Karam, D. S., & Abdullah, M. Z. (2020). The physiological and psychosocial effects of forest therapy: A systematic review. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2020.126744>

Timko Olson E. R., Hansen M. M., & Vermeesch A. (2020). Mindfulness and Shinrin-yoku: Potential for physiological and psychological interventions during uncertain times. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(24), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17249340>

Tsunetsugu et al. (2010). Trends in research related to “Shinrin yoku” (taking in the forest atmosphere or forest bathing) in Japan. *Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine*, 15, 27-37. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12199-009-0091-z>

Twohig-Bennett & Jones (2018). The health benefits of the great outdoors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of greenspace exposure and health outcomes. *Environmental Research*, 166, 628-637. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2018.06.030>

Wen, Y., Yan, Q., Pan, Y. et al. (2019). Medical empirical research on forest bathing (Shinrin-yoku): A systematic review. *Environmental Health and Preventative Medicine*, 24(70), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12199-019-0822-8>