

It's Bhandara time again and I couldn't be more excited as I look forward to celebrating with Ishwar the abundance showered upon us as the Master carries us on his shoulders through every experience in this life. For those of you who are new to Bhandara, Bhandara means abundance and this is a celebration on the day that Ishwar's spiritual master, Huzur Maharaj Baba Sawan Singh (Great Master) left the physical plane. Ishwar shares with us the many stories, messages and blessings that were bestowed on him from his master. We certainly feel the generosity of that grace with Ishwar and are greatly blessed with many spiritual gifts on Bhandara weekend.

Ishwar was speaking recently about the benefits of seva (service with love and devotion). The benefit that most stood out in my mind was how seva helps to cultivate love in our hearts. It makes a home conducive to the experience of being abundantly filled with the Sat Guru. On April 2 we will celebrate and give thanks for the abundance of the Master in our hearts. When one is filled with this love and devotion, there is nothing else. It is the answer, no matter what the question.

Traditionally, Satsangis come together and prepare a feast to celebrate the abundance that the Master bestows upon us. The foods whether simple or elaborate is prepared with such love and joy that it celebrates the abundance of the Master in our hearts. What a gift it is to serve! Whatever you choose to bring, it should be affordable to you and within your time and energy abilities, allowing you to experience joy in contributing it.

Vegetarian meals are prepared which are free of eggs, lard, gelatin, meat, fish, and poultry. To help out people with allergies we ask that you label items with gluten, nuts, dairy, vinegar, and MSG. Rice will be offered at each meal to make meals more all inclusive to those with allergies. Items that can be prepared in advance and warmed on the day that they are served helps to make things go smoothly in the kitchen and keep our focus on the Master and not the food.

Lunch and dinner meals will be served on Saturday, March 31st, Sunday, April 1st, and Monday, April 2nd. Food prep for the day will start at 9 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday, with the programs starting 2 hours later. The time between lunch and the afternoon program is used for clean up and prepping for the dinner meal.

Because our group is growing in size, Ishwar asks that we keep the food simple to make it manageable to feed everyone who is attending. The exception is the Bhandara lunch which can include desserts and side dishes. In addition to salad bar and rice at each meal we will be making soups, stews, or casseroles at home that can be warmed in electric roasters that we will have available at the Masonic Hall. If you would like to help fill out the quantity of those items, please let me know. If you are traveling by car, soups and stews can be packaged in freezer Ziplock bags and frozen ahead of time. They will thaw gradually in the car in a padded bag or cooler. My guess is that we will be feeding 150 people so I will make sure we have extra electric roasters to handle the quantities needed.

I will send out more information in another week regarding the soups that you can contribute to or other items and seva that can be done.

Mary Hoyer

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