

# Traveling to Aikido in Fredericksburg and beyond

This document provides guidance on training at Aikido in Fredericksburg and includes travel suggestions, things to know, and etiquette. Whether you are visiting for a seminar, an uchideshi stay or just driving by, the information in this document will help you prepare for a great visit and can be used as a template for traveling to any dojo.

## About Aikido in Fredericksburg:

Aikido in Fredericksburg is a world-class dojo that is owned and run by Aviv Goldsmith Sensei, 6<sup>th</sup> Dan. His dojo has attracted students and teachers from all over the world. The dojo can support 6 live in students and has room for over 100 students on the mat. The dojo offers over 20 classes a week and includes Yoga, Kyudo and other options.

Aviv Sensei is the President of the Takemusu Aikido Association, of which we are members. We are also affiliated with Aikido in Fredericksburg, where Aviv Sensei is our supervising instructor and mentor. If given the opportunity, each student should try visiting Aikido in Fredericksburg. For more information, please visit the Aikido in Fredericksburg website. The dojo address is 6155 Hickory Ridge Rd, Spotsylvania, Va.

## Getting there:

There are several options for getting to Fredericksburg, Virginia. Driving, Flying or the Train. Each mode of transportation has pros and cons, the sections below will help you navigate, pun intended, the best path for you.

### **Driving:**

From our area to Fredericksburg is generally an 8–10-hour drive depending on traffic. Account for both NYC and DC commuter traffic. And in the summer, driving south on the weekends can extend driving time due to beach traffic from New Jersey south. To save some time and money on tolls around NYC, set your GPS to avoid NYC by crossing the Mario Cuomo bridge (formerly the Tapenzee.) You can do this by setting your GPS to Nyack, NY. Having been stuck trying to cross the George Washinton bridge and with a \$15.00 toll, the Cuomo, is a great alternative.

This mode is best if you plan to explore the local area between training sessions and is probably the most cost effective.

### **Train:**

If taking a train sounds like fun, you can take Amtrak all the way to Fredericksburg, Va. The best option is to take the train from Providence where there is secure parking near the station. There are several trains you can take to get there. The Acela, or speed train, will get you from Providence (PVD) to DC in six hours. From DC you will need to switch trains to get to Fredericksburg (FBG) station. This trip is roughly 7 hours total. Alternatively, you can take the regional trains which typically do not require a train switch and will get you to Fredericksburg in nine hours.

Once in Fredericksburg you can Uber to the dojo or arrange a pick-up with Aviv Sensei who may be able to accommodate you. When taking the train, the best choice for lodging is to stay at the dojo. Alternatively, there are car rental places in Fredericksburg, but they are not always reliable.

This is the best mode if you are simply interested in focusing on training or if you are attending a seminar.

### **Flying:**

If flying, the best routes are from Providence to Regan National (DCA). You want to avoid BWI and if possible, Dulles. Flights to Baltimore are generally cheaper but it is a two-hour drive to the dojo. Dulles is usually more expensive and depending on traffic can be a nail-biting two-hour drive. Flying into DCA is a direct flight on American and can be as little as \$150 if you plan accordingly. The flight is roughly an hour. With an hour's drive, depending on time of day, to the dojo. Car rental is easy, or you can also catch the train from the airport via the Metro or a short Uber to Alexandria Va, train station. If you choose this option, please refer to taking the train.

When flying, it is not recommended that you bring your weapons. The dojo has plenty for use. However, if you opt to bring them, store them in a durable bag as these must be a checked-in item. **DO NOT CALL THEM WEAPONS.** They are **training sticks**. If traveling as a group, collecting everyone's weapons and placing them in a ski or snowboard bag is an excellent choice.

Flying and renting a car is the best choice for getting there fast and providing you with the freedom to get around. It can, however, be expensive if you don't plan ahead.

## **Where to stay:**

The best choice is to do an Uchideshi stay to really experience the dojo. Sensei Benson, Scott Fennell, and others have all been Uchideshi and can provide a lot of details and would be happy to share their experience. More information on the Uchideshi program can be found [here](#).

If Uchideshi is not an option, then there are several hotels nearby. A quick search on Orbitz or similar will yield reliable results, however the cleanest, nicest and closest of the hotels is Home2Suites by Hilton. There are other hotels in the area that are nice and reside in more commercial areas but require a short drive.

## **I'm here...now what?**

Since we are affiliated to Aikido in Fredericksburg, the etiquette we show is a little different than if we were to visit other dojo's, however, is good guidance for whenever you are traveling to another dojo as an ambassador to SouthCoast Aikido.

Upon arrival, it's nice to come with a small gift for the dojo. Flowers for the Shomen are always a nice touch. A nice bottle of wine to share with Sensei and the other students or some candy or other edible food that is representative of our area. I would avoid Lobster Rolls.

### **10 Tips for a Successful Uchideshi Stay:**

1. Be respectful. Not just to Sensei but also to fellow students, the dojo, and the local area. The dojo and the surrounding area are Green and sustainable.
2. Be humble. When in doubt, be gracious and let others train first and never correct on the mat
3. Have a learner's mind. Do as the instructors teach, and if you have questions, discuss with Sensei Benson on your return.
4. Be a good example. Remember you represent SouthCoast Aikido. Bring great energy and train joyfully

5. Do not provide instruction to anyone without direction or guidance from Sensei
6. Be aware. Safety is paramount in Fredericksburg, knowing your surroundings and paying attention to what is happening around you will serve you well. Train SAFE. Stay Away from Edge.
7. When asked to uke by an instructor, run up to the teacher, bow in and train with gusto. Grab firmly, receive graciously, and fall gracefully
8. When assigned tasks or chores by Sensei, do them at once. If you are unsure of what to do, be sure to ask Sensei for guidance. Do not assume you know how to do something. There are guidelines for every task or chore.
9. Don't overextend yourself. There are two points to this, pace yourself as you are going to be doing a lot of training. Drink lots of fluids and be sure to eat. When it comes to tasks or chores, under promise and over deliver. If you are asked to prepare a meal or make a snack for happy hour, simple is best.
10. Sensei and his wife Donna love a good bottle of wine and fun conversation. If given the opportunity, get to know them. They are wonderful people and have delightful stories of training around the world.

Bonus Tip: If you are at a seminar, you may be asked to ensure a visiting Sensei is taken care of. If so, it is your responsibility to ensure that their glass and plates are full. It is an honor to be asked. However, you are not allowed to sit at the Sensei table, unless invited.