

Best Yoga Studio

YogaKula

What makes YogaKula (formerly Yoga Sangha) so dang great, considering the surfeit of studios in the area whose sun salutations could vie with the best of 'em? Pure, utter unpretentiousness is what. Maybe it's the gritty brand of Mission Street down-hominess — flyer-posting anarchopunks alongside grandmothers picking up goodies at the local panaderia — that sets the place apart from the more bougie asana peddlers. Or perhaps it's the gorgeous yoga studio itself, with its sun-dappled hardwood and floor-to-ceiling windows looking over a lovely city vista. Whatever the case, founder Katchie Ananda is something of a godsend in the yoga community. She and friends are grounded in Anusara, a heart-oriented style of hatha yoga that blends tantric principles and alignment postures, with a focus on celebrating the diverse expressions we may all have of the same pose. (That means no snippy, hypercritical teachers singling you out in front of your classmates.) YogaKula itself is the brainchild of teachers who believe in tying yoga and community service together, so teacher trainings tend to have a service component, and there are plenty of community events and kirtan sing-alongs focused on fostering awareness of world and local issues. Of course, if you're just there to chill and strengthen your hamstrings, you'll love this place; YogaKula's efficient blend of backbends, standing poses, and inversions achieves that fine balance between restorative and rigorous that so few studios do.

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