

# MEET YOUR INSULA

*neuroscience*



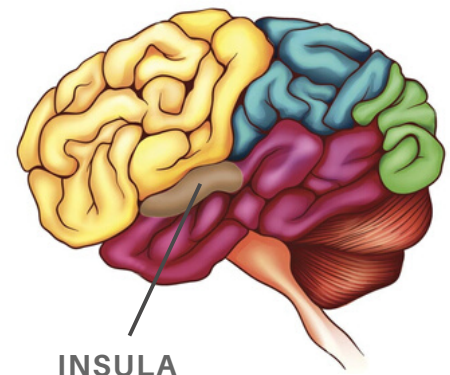
## WHAT IS THE INSULA?

The insula is located deep within the folds of the cerebral cortex (the wrinkly, outermost layer that surrounds the brain).

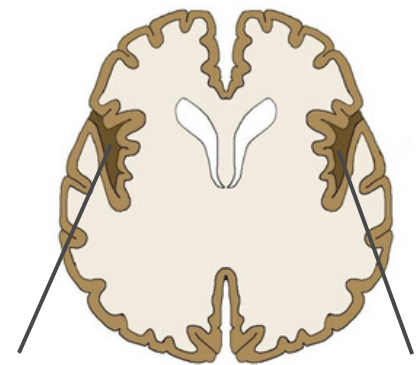
In tandem with many other brain regions, the insula contributes to multiple functions critical for human cognition and behavior, ranging from sensorimotor, pain, and socio-emotional processes to high-level attention and decision making.

### Some of these functions include:

- Interoception (feeling and understanding sensations in the body, including pain)
- Basic emotions, including joy, happiness, anger, and disgust.
- Reading emotions and social cues
- Body movement
- Self-recognition
- Vocalization and music
- Time perception
- Attention
- Perceptual decision making
- Cognitive control and performance monitoring



INSULA



INSULA  
(LEFT HEMISPHERE)

INSULA  
(RIGHT HEMISPHERE)



Studies show that meditators have increased thickness of the cerebral cortex in the insula, which leads to greater attunement to ongoing physical and emotional states. **Practices like the body scan meditation can enhance interoception** and your understanding of sensations in the body. This allows you to better **self-regulate**, recognize your needs and meet them appropriately, and be more aware of stress, anxiety, and emotional buildup in the body.