












# GLIMPSES OF SOUTH INDIA






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2025










## Itinerary Overview

Day	Activities
Day 1	<p> Transfer departs Chennai Airport Transfer arrives Mahabalipuram</p> <p>Duration: Approx. 1 hr</p> <p>Upon your arrival at Chennai Airport, a representative will greet you and escort to your transfer vehicle. You will be transferred to Mahabalipuram, where you will begin your experiences.</p> <hr/> <p> Welcome to Mahabalipuram</p> <hr/> <p> Check In at Radisson Blu Resort, Temple Bay Mamallapuram</p> <p>Room Type: Seaside Chalet Basis of Stay: Breakfast Included</p>
Day 2	<p> Check Out from Radisson Blu Resort, Temple Bay Mamallapuram</p> <hr/> <p> Shore Temple And Five Rathas</p> <hr/> <p> Transfer departs Mahabalipuram Transfer arrives Pondicherry</p> <p>Duration: Approx. 2-3 hrs</p> <p>After visiting the Shore Temples and Five Rather, proceed to Pondicherry. En route stop at Auroville to register for our visit in a couple of days. Pre-registration and approval is required for any non-Aurovillean to visit.</p> <hr/> <p> Welcome to Matrimandir Auroville</p> <hr/> <p> Welcome to Pondicherry</p> <hr/> <p> The Ashram &amp; The French Quarter Walk</p>











## Itinerary Overview

Day	Activities
Day 2	 Check In at Palais De Mahe  Room Type: Palais Chambre Deluxe (Deluxe Room) Basis of Stay: Breakfast Included
Day 3	 Auroville Visit <hr/>  Overnight at Palais De Mahe
Day 4	 Check Out from Palais De Mahe <hr/>  Transfer departs Pondicherry Transfer arrives Tanjore  Duration: Approx. 4 hrs  After breakfast, transfer to Tanjore. <hr/>  Welcome to Tanjore (Thanjavur) <hr/>  Check In at Svatma  Room Type: Millenim Suite Basis of Stay: Breakfast Included <hr/>  Svatma Culinary Experience
Day 5	 Exploring Tanjore <hr/>  Vedic Chanting Experience <hr/>  Overnight at Svatma
Day 6	 Check Out from Svatma












## Itinerary Overview

Day	Activities
Day 6	<p> 8:00 AM - Transfer departs Tanjore Transfer arrives Tricky</p> <p>Duration: Approx. 1 hr and 30 mins</p> <p>After an early breakfast, transfer to Madurai stopping at Trichy to visit Srirangamnathaswamy Temple.</p> <hr/> <p> Srirangamnathaswamy Temple</p> <hr/> <p> Transfer departs Trichy Transfer arrives Madurai</p> <p>Duration: Approx. 2 hrs and 30 mins</p> <p>After visiting the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, continue on to Madurai.</p> <hr/> <p> Welcome to Madurai</p> <hr/> <p> Check In at The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai, Madurai</p> <p>Room Type: Colonial Garden View Room Basis of Stay: Breakfast Included</p>
Day 7	<p> Check Out from The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai, Madurai</p> <hr/> <p> Meenakshi Temple</p> <hr/> <p> Transfer departs Madurai Transfer arrives Periyar</p> <p>Duration: Approx. 4 hrs</p> <p>After visiting the Meenakshi Temple, transfer to Periyar.</p> <hr/> <p> Welcome to Periyar National Park</p>

## Itinerary Overview

Day	Activities
Day 7	 Check In at Spice Village  Room Type: Spice Garden Cottage Basis of Stay: Breakfast Included
Day 8	 Periyar Nature Reserve Boat Ride  <hr/>  Naturalist Led Walk  <hr/>  Overnight at Spice Village
Day 9	 Check Out from Spice Village  <hr/>  Transfer departs Periyar Transfer arrives Alleppey  Duration: Approx. 4n hrs  After breakfast, transfer to Alleppey, here you will board your overnight Houseboat.  <hr/>  Houseboat Cruise  <hr/>  Check In at Kumarakom Houseboat  Room Type: Houseboat Basis of Stay: Full Board
Day 10	 Check Out from Kumarakom Houseboat  <hr/>  Check In at Kumarakom Lake Resort  Room Type: Meandering Pool Villa Basis of Stay: Breakfast Included  <hr/>  Rest of the Day At Your Leisure

## Itinerary Overview

Day	Activities
Day 11	<p> Day at leisure</p> <p>Spend the day enjoying and exploring in and around the Property on your own.</p> <hr/> <p> Overnight at Kumarakom Lake Resort</p>
Day 12	<p> Check Out from Kumarakom Lake Resort</p> <hr/> <p> Transfer departs Kumarakom Transfer arrives Kochi</p> <p>Duration: Approx. 1 hr</p> <p>After breakfast, transfer to Kochi.</p> <hr/> <p> Welcome to Kochi</p> <hr/> <p> Check In at Brunton Boatyard</p> <p>Room Type: Sea-Facing Room Basis of Stay: Breakfast Included</p> <hr/> <p> Kathakali Dance</p>
Day 13	<p> Cultural Tour Of Kochi</p> <hr/> <p> Overnight at Brunton Boatyard</p>
Day 14	<p> Check Out from Brunton Boatyard</p> <hr/> <p> Transfer departs Hotel Transfer arrives Kochi Airport</p> <p>After breakfast, transfer to Kochi Airport for your flight onwards.</p>

## Your Accommodations

Day	Accommodation	Details	Nights
Day 1 - 2	Radisson Blu Resort, Temple Bay Mamallapuram	Seaside Chalet <i>Breakfast Included</i>	1
Day 2 - 4	Palais De Mahe	Palais Chambre Deluxe (Deluxe Room) <i>Breakfast Included</i>	2
Day 4 - 6	Svatma	Millenim Suite <i>Breakfast Included</i>	2
Day 6 - 7	The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai, Madurai	Colonial Garden View Room <i>Breakfast Included</i>	1
Day 7 - 9	Spice Village	Spice Garden Cottage <i>Breakfast Included</i>	2
Day 9 - 10	Kumarakom Houseboat	Houseboat <i>Full Board</i>	1
Day 10 - 12	Kumarakom Lake Resort	Meandering Pool Villa <i>Breakfast Included</i>	2
Day 12 - 14	Brunton Boatyard	Sea-Facing Room <i>Breakfast Included</i>	2

## Map



## Summary

- 1) Day 1 - 2: Radisson Blu Resort, Temple Bay Mamallapuram, Mamallapuram
- 2) Day 2 - 4: Palais De Mahe, Pondicherry
- 3) Day 4 - 6: Svatma, Thanjavur
- 4) Day 6 - 7: The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai, Madurai, Madurai
- 5) Day 7 - 9: Spice Village, Thekkady
- 6) Day 9 - 10: Kumarakom Houseboat, Kochi
- 7) Day 10 - 12: Kumarakom Lake Resort, Kochi
- 8) Day 12 - 14: Brunton Boatyard, Kochi





## DAY 1

### Transfer to Mahabalipuram

- Depart Chennai Airport
- Transfer Duration: Approx. 1 hr
- Arrive Mahabalipuram

Upon your arrival at Chennai Airport, a representative will greet you and escort to your transfer vehicle. You will be transferred to Mahabalipuram, where you will begin your experiences.

### Welcome to Mahabalipuram

#### Area Overview

**Mahabalipuram** or the place of the great wrestler - Narasimhavarmam I, located around 60km from Chennai, a small seaside village that was once the main port of the Pallava Dynasty from the 5th – 9th centuries, is a historic coastal town in Tamil Nadu. It is renowned for its ancient rock-cut temples and stone carvings. A UNESCO World Heritage site, it is famous for the Shore Temple, Pancha Rathas, and the intricately carved Descent of the Ganges. These stunning monuments, dating back to the 7th and 8th centuries, showcase the architectural brilliance of the Pallava dynasty. Set along the Bay of Bengal, Mahabalipuram is not only a significant cultural and historical site but also a popular destination for its scenic beaches and vibrant local art scene.

### Check in at Radisson Blu Resort, Temple Bay Mamallapuram

Seaside Chalet (Breakfast Included)

1 Night



## DAY 1

### **Property Overview**

The Radisson Blu Resort, Temple Bay Mamallapuram, is a luxury resort situated on the shore of the Bay of Bengal. The property spans 44 acres of lush landscaped gardens and features 157 chalets and villas, a swimming pool, a fitness center, and a spa.

The resort boasts two exceptional dining venues, offering serene views of the pool and the Bay of Bengal. Waters Edge Café provides a selection of traditional dishes. Wharf 2.0 boasts an international menu and an extensive wine list, ideal for special occasions and all-day dining.

### **Experience & Activities**

Mamallapuram, also known as Mahabalipuram, is a coastal town in Tamil Nadu, India, with a centuries-old colonial past. The town's colonial history is entwined with its intriguing archaeological discoveries, giving it a destination that highlights both its colonial past and its ancient legacy.

### **Accommodations**

#### **Seaside Chalet**

Perfect for families, this 495 ft<sup>2</sup> Seaside Chalet provides breathtaking sea views. Guests have a choice between a king bed or two twin beds. The room also offers a bathroom with a rainfall shower, a work desk, and a balcony or patio. Amenities include air conditioning, an in-room safe, a snack bar, a TV with mirror casting, an iron and ironing board, a coffee and tea station, a hair dryer, and free wireless internet.



## DAY 2

Check out from Radisson Blu Resort, Temple Bay Mamallapuram

Shore Temple And Five Rathas

### Activity overview

We begin our day with visiting the UNESCO World Heritage sites before traveling to Pondicherry.

**The Shore Temple**, located in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, is a magnificent 8th-century granite structure overlooking the Bay of Bengal. This UNESCO World Heritage site is one of the oldest stone temples in South India and is renowned for its intricate carvings and elegant Dravidian architecture. Built during the reign of the Pallava king Narasimhavarman II, the temple consists of two shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva and one to Lord Vishnu, symbolizing the fusion of Shaivism and Vaishnavism. Its unique seaside location, along with its artistic and architectural significance, makes the Shore Temple a timeless monument and a key highlight of Mahabalipuram's cultural heritage.

A short drive away, 1.5 km, we visit the Five Rathas.

**The Five Rathas**, also known as Pancha Rathas, are a remarkable set of monolithic rock-cut temples located in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu. Dating back to the 7th century and carved during the reign of the Pallava dynasty, each ratha (chariot) is dedicated to a figure from the Mahabharata, though none were ever used for worship. These five distinct structures—Dharmaraja Ratha, Bhima Ratha, Arjuna Ratha, Nakula-Sahadeva Ratha, and Draupadi Ratha—are carved from single granite blocks and exhibit different architectural styles, representing the early stages of South Indian temple design. Surrounded by detailed sculptures of animals and deities, the Five Rathas stand as a testament to the craftsmanship of ancient Indian artisans and are a UNESCO World Heritage site.



## DAY 2

### Transfer to Pondicherry

- Depart Mahabalipuram
- Transfer Duration: Approx. 2-3 hrs
- Arrive Pondicherry

After visiting the Shore Temples and Five Rathes, proceed to Pondicherry. En route stop at Auroville to register for our visit in a couple of days. Pre-registration and approval is required for any non-Aurovillean to visit.

### Welcome to Matrimandir Auroville

#### Area Overview

The Matrimandir, located in Auroville near Puducherry, India, is a spiritual and architectural marvel that serves as the central meditation space for the Auroville community. Designed by the founder of Auroville, Mirra Alfassa (The Mother), the Matrimandir symbolizes the soul of the city and represents the pursuit of inner harmony and consciousness. The structure is a large golden sphere set amidst sprawling gardens, its reflective discs shining in the sunlight.

Inside the Matrimandir, a quiet, pristine meditation chamber known as the Inner Chamber features a central crystal globe that reflects sunlight, creating a serene and focused environment for introspection. Surrounding the structure are twelve gardens, symbolizing different qualities of consciousness. The Matrimandir is not associated with any religion but is a place for personal contemplation and spiritual growth, embodying the ideals of universal peace and human unity that Auroville stands for.

As advised, prior booking is required to access the Matrimandir for concentration at least a day or two in advance. All bookings are accepted on an individual basis only; therefore along with our clients, your guide will go along to help complete the booking formalities **(any day except Tuesday)**.





## DAY 2

An introduction to Matrimandir is provided for all first-time visitors who book for concentration. An explanation is given on the Matrimandir and its significance, followed by a concentration in the Inner Chamber for about 15 minutes.

**This will be an optional activity.**

After your stop at Auroville, continue to Pondicherry and visit The Ashram & Pondicherry French Quarter Walk.

### Welcome to Pondicherry

#### Area Overview

Pondicherry, once the largest French colony in India, is a charming blend of history, culture, and architecture. The city's past, shaped by trade and conflict, comes alive in its picturesque streets, where French influence is still palpable, especially in the old quarters. Here, Mediterranean-style houses and quaint bakeries line the Rues and Boulevards, offering a taste of France, yet Pondicherry remains unmistakably Indian at its core. Known as the French Riviera of the East (La Côte d'Azur de l'Est), the city presents a delightful fusion of East and West. For those arriving from Tamil Nadu by land, the sudden encounter with French architecture, cozy cafes, and restaurants serving steak and fine wine can be a surprising culture shock. Pondicherry is a city of contrasts, where crossing the central canal takes you between two distinct worlds, each with its own unique character

### The Ashram & The French Quarter Walk



## DAY 2

### Activity overview

Close to a century of French occupation has left a distinct stamp in the cultural inheritance of Pondicherry. Sri Aurobindo Ashram is an integral part of the town. Tucked away within the streets of Pondicherry's French Quarter, the ashram's tranquil courtyards, shaded by lush greenery, offer a quiet escape from the rush of everyday life. Far from being just a spiritual hub. Its associated organizations & buildings as also several cultural organizations & private residences make up what is remaining of the White Town or Pondicherry's French Quarter.

The unique blend of French and Indian influences is the characteristics of Pondicherry. The neighborhood is dotted with cafes, bakeries, and boutiques. A walk through the French Quarter offers a pleasant mix of history and culture, with a slower pace.

### Check in at Palais De Mahe

Palais Chambre Deluxe (Deluxe Room) (Breakfast Included)

2 Nights

### Property Overview

Palais de Mahe is a boutique hotel in a French style harkening back to Pondicherry's colonial past. The property includes a restaurant, a bar, a coffee shop, an Ayurvedic spa, and a swimming pool.

Located in a charming seaside city in southern India, the hotel is surrounded by historic buildings, charming sidewalk cafes, trendy boutiques and sari shops.



## DAY 2

Palais de Mahe makes an effort to work closely within the community by sourcing materials from small-scale businesses within 50 miles of the property.

### **Experience & Activities**

For an additional fee, the front office at the hotel can help arrange boat trips to explore the Bay of Bengal, "heritage walks" through the French Quarter, or a rickshaw tour of the Tamil Quarter.

Another popular destination includes the Aurobindo Ashram and City of Auroville, a religious township designed by French architect Roger Anger.

### **Accommodations**

#### **Palais Chambre Deluxe (Deluxe Room)**

The Deluxe Rooms reflect period style marked by its high ceilings, roof beams, and arched doorways. The large beds have cozy bed linen. The contemporary bathrooms have running hot and cold water and all the necessary toiletries, including dental and shaving kits. Other amenities include air conditioning, glass-bottled packaged drinking water, bathrobes and slippers, a hairdryer, a safe, a TV, a tea and coffee station, a sewing kit, and free wireless internet.



### DAY 3

#### Auroville Visit

#### Activity overview

Visit of Auroville with Gopi (subject to availability)

A half hour's drive from Pondicherry is the experimental township of Auroville. This fascinating society is based on the concepts of sustainable and holistic living. Auroville is located in a forest that was planted and nurtured from barren land, by the Aurovilleans themselves. Auroville (City of Dawn) is an experimental commune made up of people from over 50 countries. It aims to be an ideal society, a place of human unity where people can live and work, irrespective of creed and nationality. Auroville is a utopian and compelling idea, where collective ownership and sustainable living are central concepts. Your guide is a local Aurovillean, who will give you an insider's view of its history, economy, decision-making processes, ecology, and technology.

Your Expert was raised in Auroville amongst both visiting and local communities. With a master's in media and history in documenting traditional livelihoods in rural Tamil Nadu and an enthusiasm for storytelling and 7 years in tourism, he has formed relations with valuable networks that inspired the concept behind sustainable tourism. Creating meaningful connections between people, places, and products is what allows Gopi to serve as a neighbourhood concierge.





### DAY 3

We will begin with a **morning meditation** session at the Matrimandir (subject to permission from the previous day)

After the meditation session, we will begin sampling delicious goodies at the Auroville bakery, and then head on to the visitors Centre. Here you'll get a visual tour of Auroville through several exhibits and a short video. You'll see how the community turned hundreds of hectares of barren land into lush forests; and the various methods being developed for waste management, women's empowerment and organic farming. The Visitors Centre also has a large shopping complex for Auroville's high quality products, such as food, clothes, crafts, books and home accessories. We will visit several workshops and projects at Auroville, depending on your interests and the time available. The Wellpaper unit is a women's empowerment initiative which produces baskets, accessories and other handmade items out of old newspaper. Other units in Auroville include a wonderfully creative musical instrument workshop, an indigo dyeing workshop, a bamboo experiment centre, organic farming, food processing, just to name a few. For lunch, we will go to Auroville's Solar Kitchen, where you can see the huge solar panels and learn about how Auroville meets its energy needs. During the tour, you will be able to see the grand Matrumandir (Mother's Temple), an architectural marvel.

*Entry into the Matrumandir will be based on your previous day's registration.*

#### Overnight at Palais De Mahe

Palais Chambre Deluxe (Deluxe Room) (Breakfast Included)



## DAY 4

### Check out from Palais De Mahe

#### Transfer to Tanjore

- Depart Pondicherry
- Transfer Duration: Approx. 4 hrs
- Arrive Tanjore

After breakfast, transfer to Tanjore.

### Welcome to Tanjore (Thanjavur)

#### Area Overview

Tanjore, also known as Thanjavur, is a historic city in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, renowned for its rich cultural heritage, architecture, and art. Once the capital of the powerful Chola dynasty, Tanjore is famous for the magnificent Brihadeeswarar Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site, which is an architectural masterpiece dedicated to Lord Shiva. The temple, built in the 11th century by King Rajaraja Chola, showcases the grandeur of Dravidian architecture with its massive stone structure, towering vimana, and intricate carvings.

Tanjore is also a hub for classical South Indian arts, particularly the traditional Tanjore painting style and Carnatic music. The city houses the Tanjore Palace, which includes a museum showcasing Chola bronzes, ancient manuscripts, and artifacts. Tanjore is a cultural center that reflects the glory of its historical past while continuing to be a vibrant center for art, music, and spirituality in modern times.



## DAY 4

### Check in at Svatma

Millenim Suite (Breakfast Included)

2 Nights

### Property Overview

Svatma Thanjavur offers a comprehensive luxury experience with facilities that include 34 luxury rooms, a spa, a sound spa, a pool, a yoga deck, and a restaurant serving wholesome, organic, vegetarian food. Guests can also enjoy laundry and concierge services. Designed as a voyage of discovery, Svatma indulges the mind and body in leisure and the arts within a beautiful home-like environment. The ambiance exudes richness and wholesomeness, providing comfort and a deep connection to the abundant charms of ancient Tamil Nadu, including its arts, architecture, culinary heritage, and culture.

At Svatma, staying is a journey of self-discovery, with spaces that feel like private rooms in an elegant family home. Guests can enjoy sociable areas such as verandas, hallways, and lounges or retreat to secluded nooks and bowers that cater to every mood. The on-site restaurant, Aaharam, offers pure vegetarian cuisine, showcasing traditional Tamil flavors with organic ingredients prepared by specialist chefs. For wellness, the Arogyam Gym and Yoga Center offers fitness and meditative practices, while Soukyam Spa provides luxurious treatments with expert therapists offering customized plans. Svatma Thanjavur epitomizes a harmonious blend of culture, relaxation, and culinary excellence.





## DAY 4

### **Experience & Activities**

Svatma Thanjavur offers an immersive experience in the rich art, architecture, and culture of Thanjavur, an ancient city in Tamil Nadu. Known for its historical significance and prosperous agrarian roots, Thanjavur was ruled by several dynasties, including the Cholas, Pandyas, Vijayanagaras, Nayaks, Marathas, and the British. This city is renowned for its UNESCO World Heritage Monuments, particularly the Living Chola temples, with the majestic Brihadeeswarar temple standing as a fine example of Chola architecture.

Visitors to Svatma Thanjavur can explore historical landmarks such as the Saraswati Mahal Library, which houses over 30,000 Indian and European manuscripts, and the Thanjavur Palace. The city is also a gateway to the culturally rich regions of Thiruvaiyaru, Srirangam, and Kumbakonam. Thanjavur is the birthplace of the famous Bharatanatyam dance form and played a significant role in the codification of Carnatic music. It is also known for evolving the lost wax sculpture technique, Chola Bronzes. Svatma Thanjavur provides guests with a profound connection to India's heritage and fine arts.

### **Accommodations**

#### **Millenim Suite**

Millennium Suite, with an area of 450 square feet, you can relax in your spacious room King size master bedroom and a living room.

#### **Svatma Culinary Experience**



## DAY 4

### **Activity overview**

In the early evening, embark on a culinary journey that introduces you to the rich flavors of TAMILIAN cuisine, designed to expand your palate. At Svatma, you are welcomed into the exclusive guest experience kitchen, where you can learn authentic cooking techniques and traditional recipes. Under the guidance of skilled chefs, you'll discover how to prepare these sublime dishes, with their intricate flavors and textures, in a simplified and engaging way. This immersive experience not only celebrates Tamil cuisine but also allows guests to take home a deeper appreciation of its culinary heritage.



## DAY 5

### Exploring Tanjore

#### Activity overview

##### **Brihadeeswara Temple**

Brihadeeswara Temple is one of the largest and most magnificent temples dedicated to Lord Shiva. Built by the Chola king Rajaraja I, it is known for its grand architecture, including a towering 66-meter vimana (temple tower) and a large stone Nandi. The temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a symbol of Chola architectural brilliance and Tamil cultural heritage.

##### **Royal Palace**

The Royal Palace of Thanjavur, built in the 16th century by the Nayaks and later expanded by the Marathas, is a historic site in Tamil Nadu. It features a mix of architectural styles and houses notable sections like the Durbar Hall, Saraswathi Mahal Library, and the Royal Museum. The palace is known for its rich collection of artifacts, manuscripts, and artwork, showcasing the grandeur of Thanjavur's royal heritage.

##### **Art Gallery**

Located in the Royal Palace, showcases a stunning collection of bronze sculptures, especially from the Chola period, and traditional Tanjore paintings. Renowned for its intricate craftsmanship, the gallery highlights the artistic and cultural heritage of the region.

##### **Vedic Chanting Experience**



## DAY 5

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### **Activity overview**

In the evening, immerse yourself in the serene experience of Vedic Chanting at Svatma, where the timeless recitation of ancient scriptures calms the mind and purifies the soul. The rhythmic chants create a divine vibration that echoes through every corner of the space, enveloping you in a sense of tranquility. The Priest leads the session, not only chanting but also engaging guests by explaining the meaning and spiritual significance of the Vedas. This enriching experience offers a profound connection to India's ancient wisdom and a deep sense of peace.

### **Overnight at Svatma**

Millenim Suite (Breakfast Included)





## DAY 6

### Check out from Svatma

#### Transfer to Tricky

- 8:00 AM · Depart Tanjore
- Transfer Duration: Approx. 1 hr and 30 mins
- Arrive Tricky

After an early breakfast, transfer to Madurai stopping at Trichy to visit Srirangamnathaswamy Temple.

### Srirangamnathaswamy Temple

#### Activity overview

The Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, located in Srirangam near Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, is one of the largest and most significant temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu in India. Spread over 156 acres, it is not only the largest functioning Hindu temple in the world but also an important pilgrimage site, especially for devotees of the Vaishnavite tradition. The temple is dedicated to Ranganatha, a reclining form of Lord Vishnu, and is known for its immense religious, architectural, and cultural importance.

The temple's complex is a magnificent example of Dravidian architecture, with its towering gopurams (gateway towers), intricately carved pillars, and expansive courtyards. The tallest of these gopurams, the Rajagopuram, stands at 236 feet, making it one of the tallest in Asia. Inside the temple, there are numerous shrines, halls, and sanctuaries, including the central sanctum that houses the idol of Lord Ranganatha reclining on the serpent Adishesha.





## DAY 6

The temple's rich history, dating back over a thousand years, and its blend of religious and architectural grandeur make it one of the most revered and iconic temples in South India.

### Transfer to Madurai

- Depart Trichy
- Transfer Duration: Approx. 2 hrs and 30 mins
- Arrive Madurai

After visiting the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, continue on to Madurai.

### Welcome to Madurai

### Area Overview

**Madurai** (formerly Madura) is the third largest city in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. It served as the capital city of the Pandyan Kingdom. It is the administrative headquarters of Madurai District and is famous for its temples built by Pandyan and Madurai Nayak kings in the Dravidian style of architecture. It is also one of India's prominent Hindu pilgrimage centers.

### Check in at The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai, Madurai

Colonial Garden View Room (Breakfast Included)

1 Night



## DAY 6

### **Property Overview**

Chennai may be the capital of Tamil Nadu but Madurai claims its soul and The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai, Madurai is located right at the heart of it. A short distance from Madurai's IT corridor, The Gateway Hotel, Madurai sits at the top of the Pasumalai hill, surrounded by 62 acres of scenic gardens. The hotel serves a perfect vantage point to take in the picturesque views of the temple town and the Kodai hills.

Conveniently located within touching distance to prominent tourist attractions in and around Madurai, the 5-star hotel is also the perfect destination for a blissful getaway from Bangalore, Chennai, and Kochi. Enjoy warm hospitality and service that make you feel at home.

### **Experience & Activities**

Warm hospitality, benevolent people, incredible food, and unbelievably beautiful heritage temples abound in Madurai. A true jewel in Southern India's crown and one of India's oldest cities, Madurai embraces modernity, with a booming IT industry, yet continues to preserve its rich cultural past.

### **Accommodations**

#### **Colonial Garden View Room**

Enjoy 60 m2 of space equipped with the best amenities in Madurai. These rooms feature a king bed or twin beds, an ensuite bathroom, and bay windows, which offer panoramic views of the city, Meenakshi temple towers, and the Kodai hills.



## DAY 7

Check out from The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai, Madurai

### Meenakshi Temple

#### Activity overview

Synonymous with Madurai, is Meenakshi Sundareswarar twin Temples, pivot around which the city has evolved. The temple complex is literally a city, one of the largest of its kind in India and undoubtedly one of the oldest too. The temple grew with the contribution of each dynasty and victorious monarchs, into an enormous complex extending over an area of 65000 Sq m.

The temple first came into being 2000 years ago and was substantially expanded during regime of Thirumalai Nayak (1623-55 AD). Lord Siva in his incarnation as Sundareswarar and his fish-eyed spouse, Meenakshi, are enshrined in this twin temple. There are four massive gateways enclosing these two shrines. Even a casual visitor is fascinated by the many paintings and sculptures.

#### Transfer to Periyar

- Depart Madurai
- Transfer Duration: Approx. 4 hrs
- Arrive Periyar





## DAY 7

After visiting the Meenakshi Temple, transfer to Periyar.

### Welcome to Periyar National Park

#### Area Overview

Periyar National Park, located in the Western Ghats of Kerala, is one of India's most famous wildlife sanctuaries, known for its rich biodiversity and scenic beauty. Spanning over 925 square kilometers, it is centered around the picturesque Periyar Lake, formed by the Mullaperiyar Dam, which attracts a variety of wildlife, including elephants, tigers, leopards, and a wide array of birds. The park is a haven for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts, offering opportunities for boat safaris, guided treks, and bamboo rafting to explore the dense forests, rolling hills, and tranquil waters. Periyar is also renowned for its commitment to eco-tourism, promoting sustainable practices that protect its pristine environment while allowing visitors to experience the region's natural wonders.

#### Check in at Spice Village

Spice Garden Cottage (Breakfast Included)

2 Nights

#### Property Overview

Spice Village is an eco resort in the hills of Thekkady, India near the Periyar wildlife sanctuary. A cluster of tribal style huts set in a beautiful spice garden is a great escape for most tourists from the heat of the plains, and also a great place for some adventure activities.



## DAY 7

There is a comfortable pool, an ayurvedic spa, and a restaurant serving local organic food daily. A walk through the property itself is a great way to explore many aspects of nature and the green initiatives undertaken at this eco resort.

### **Experience & Activities**

Some of the special experiences offered at Spice Village include workshops such as making your own paper, a chance to learn from professional chefs about the secrets of traditional Kerala cooking, a walk through nature with knowledgeable naturalist guides, a visit to a spice plantation, and a trek through Periyar Tiger Reserve on foot or on an electric bicycle.

### **Accommodations**

#### **Spice Garden Cottage**

The spacious 339 ft<sup>2</sup> Spice Garden Cottage is perfect for up to four guests (three adults and two children), offering a serene retreat surrounded by lush greenery. Step into your private sit-out and immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of the spice garden. The living cum bedroom features a double or twin bed, ensuring a comfortable night's sleep. The attached bathroom adds convenience to your accommodation. Stay connected with complimentary internet access and start your day with a delicious complimentary breakfast. Additional amenities include a tea and coffee maker, minibar, safe, wardrobe, and laundry service.



## DAY 8

### Periyar Nature Reserve Boat Ride

#### Activity overview

After breakfast, head out to Periyar Tiger Reserve for today's experience, a shared boat ride through the lush forest tracts of Periyar Tiger Reserve. This 2-3 hour ride offers stunning panoramic views of forest-clad hills reflected on the serene lake. The forests are teeming with birdlife and arboreal animals such as the giant squirrel and Nilgiri langur. As the boat glides along the water, guests may also spot wildlife like elephants, gaur, and sambar deer near the edges of the lake, providing an unforgettable glimpse into the natural beauty and biodiversity of the reserve.

### Naturalist Led Walk

#### Activity overview

In the late afternoon, join a Naturalist-led walk that offers an educational experience across the 12-acre property, rich in botanical diversity. Birdwatching and fishing enthusiasts can explore new opportunities during the walk. With guidance from the naturalists, you'll learn about the region's flora and fauna, followed by an in-house visit to the Spice Plantation. Depending on the season, you may also visit a nearby pepper plantation, walking amidst rows of vines climbing trellises. You'll have the chance to try plucking peppercorns just as they begin to redden, but be careful to wash up before touching your eyes or nose. As you pass by mats where the peppercorns are laid out to dry, the air fills with the rich aroma of pepper blending with the fresh mountain breeze. This area marks the historical starting point of the spice trade, offering an insight into the source of a spice that enhances flavors worldwide.



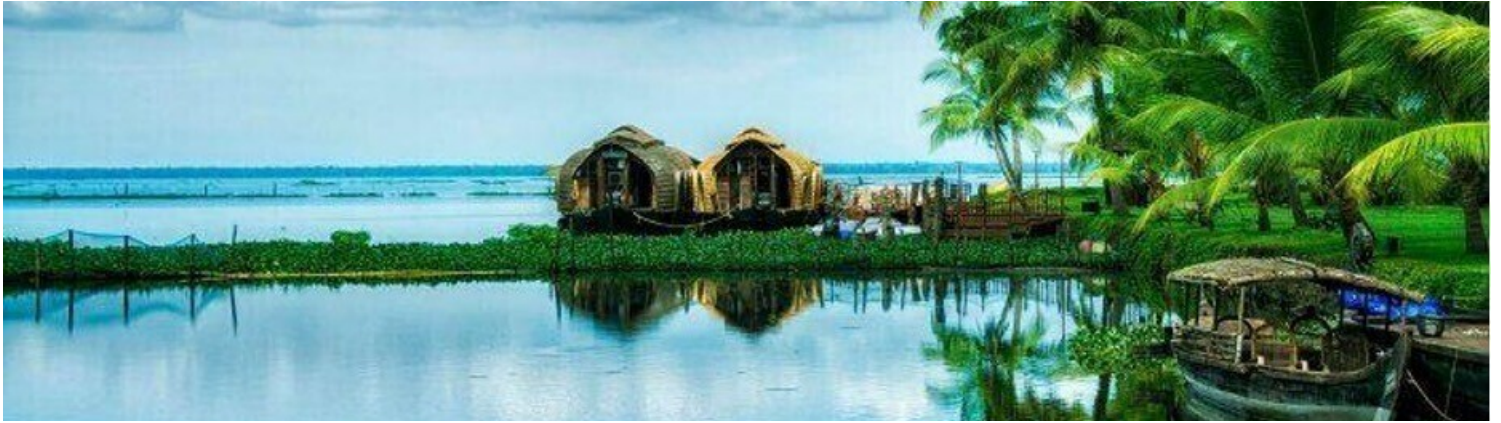


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**DAY 8**

**Overnight at Spice Village**

Spice Garden Cottage (Breakfast Included)



## DAY 9

### Check out from Spice Village

#### Transfer to Alleppey

- Depart Periyar
- Transfer Duration: Approx. 4n hrs
- Arrive Alleppey

After breakfast, transfer to Alleppey, here you will board your overnight Houseboat.

### Houseboat Cruise

#### Activity overview

***After breakfast drive to Alleppey to board the Houseboat.***

Embark on the backwaters for a night, locally known as a Kettuvallam. The Kettuvallam, literally 'tied together boat,' is a comfortable and traditional way to get around the Backwaters. In times past this was Kerala's equivalent of a container ship, up to 100 feet long and able to carry 30 tons of cargo. Great planks of seasoned and oiled Jack wood were lashed together with coir rope and seams stuffed with coconut fibre before being slathered with a nice goop of boiled cashew shells to keep it watertight. Not a single nail used.





## DAY 9

Climb aboard and there's a bamboo and palm thatched canopy to provide shelter from the sun, comfy cane chairs from which to watch the world go by and a table to take your meals at. There are one or two simple bedrooms with en-suite loo and shower though the water pressure is often so low you're better off using the bucket and jug to wash. Your houseboat is run by a crew of two or three local men who keep the engine chugging, steer it along the lagoon and arrange a canoe ride along a canal.

A cook rustles up delicious meals in the impossibly small galley and there's nothing for you to do except sit back and enjoy the view, lie in the sun or catch up on that holiday reading you promised yourself

After Dinner, spend some time gazing at the fabulous stars up above, before heading in for bed. The air-conditioning is on for an hour or two before the generator is turned off and the peace of the Backwaters returns once more.

Fringing the coast of Kerala and winding far inlands is a vast network of lagoons, lakes, rivers and canals. These backwaters represent a unique geographical formation and are basis of a distinct lifestyle.

### Check in at Kumarakom Houseboat

Houseboat (Full Board)

1 Night



## DAY 9

### **Accommodations**

#### **Houseboat**

Float in sheer bliss as Kerala's traditional kettuvalloms or houseboats, styled as per the norms of tradition yet equipped with every luxury and every modern amenity, offer the opportunity to relax on the serene waters of the Lake Vembanad. Stay, dine and truly experience the timeless beauty of life along the banks of Kerala.



## DAY 10

**Check out from Kumarakom Houseboat**

**Check in at Kumarakom Lake Resort**

Meandering Pool Villa (Breakfast Included)

2 Nights

### **Property Overview**

Kumarakom Lake Resort, acclaimed as the finest luxury heritage resort in India, nestles on the serene banks of the Lake Vembanad, the vast stretch of tranquil, emerald green backwaters, in one of India's popular holiday spots, Kerala.

Sprawling across 25 acres of lush greenery and set in soul-stirring ambience, Kumarakom Lake Resort, the winner of the much acclaimed World Travel Award as India's Leading Resort for four years, exudes the charm of Kerala's true heritage while offering a complete range of New Age amenities for a luxuriously comfortable stay. Luxury-laden rooms, villas and suites; Ayurmana, the Ayurveda Spa; swimming pools galore; health club; multi-cuisine and specialty restaurants; traditional Kerala teashop and countless other attractions in and around the resort offer you the simple luxuries of life, in the grandeur of the royalty of yore.

Kumarakom, an enchanting village set on the banks of the Vembanad Lake is wrapped in a quaint charm all its own. With soothing backwaters, thick mangrove forests, green paddy fields and ripe coconut groves as its accessories.

A mere short boat ride away is the world famous Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary, home to the Cormorants, Egrets, Darters, Herons, Teals, etc. and migratory birds like the Siberian Storks.



## DAY 10

### **Experience & Activities**

#### **Ayurveda -**

Ayurveda, the wisdom of the sages, the treasure of the ages, finds new meaning and relevance as modernity constantly threatens to crumble the glories of the past. Advocating a way of life that is in complete harmony with nature's ways. Seeking to maintain the perfect balance of body, mind and soul. Approaching each ailment, and each person individually and independently. Reaching deep within. Healing the very being.

#### **Yoga and Meditation -**

Know your inner self at Kumarakom Lake Resort. Discover harmony with nature, with Yoga. Asanas or postures in Yoga, meant to isolate the ego from the body and mind are designed to sharpen your concentration, improve your health and assist you in attaining peace of mind.

#### **Village Walks -**

At Kumarakom Lake Resort we offer you several ways to explore God's Own Country. But how better to embrace the ambience of your surroundings than with a nice stroll, especially with a guide to help you discover tucked away secrets and stories? Offering village walks and guided tours of approximately 3 hours/5km

#### **Bird Sanctuary Visit**

In our 'Guided Tour', witness great sights, discover the rare species of birds that call Kumarakom home for most of the year and let nature weave her magic on you!





## DAY 10

### **Cycle Tours**

Peddling your way around the nearby village is a great way to explore your surroundings. Cycles are available at the resort and you can go for a ride though the village road. A map will also be provided to you to navigate your way through the trails of Kumarakom. The cycling tour in Kumarakom is a favourite and a sure must-do!

### **Sunset Cruise**

A sunset cruise is the perfect way to unwind and witness nature's breathtaking beauty as the sun dips below the horizon at Kumarakom. Every day at 5pm, step aboard a luxurious boat, sip on your favorite drink, and let the golden hues of the setting sun paint the sky with a palette of warm colors. Set sail and let the beauty of twilight envelop you.

### **Clay Pottery**

Pottery is the art of transforming clay into beautiful and functional creations. With your hands as your tools and clay as your canvas, you can sculpt, mold, and shape your ideas into pottery masterpieces. Unleash your creativity and let the magic of pottery take form in your hands.

### **Cultural Program**

Immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of Kerala's cultural heritage with our vibrant cultural and musical programs. At Kumarakom Lake Resort, we bring the essence of Kerala's art, music, and traditions to life every day at 7pm. Join us for mesmerizing classical dance performances, soul-stirring music concerts.



## DAY 10

### **Accommodations**

#### **Meandering Pool Villa**

Set on the twists and turns of a 250-m long meandering pool, each of the traditionally styled yet luxuriously modern Meandering Pool Villas at Kumarakom Lake Resort has access to the pool from individual and private bathing coves and cosy sit outs.

#### **Rest of the Day At Your Leisure**



## DAY 11

### Day at leisure

Spend the day enjoying and exploring in and around the Property on your own.

### Overnight at Kumarakom Lake Resort

Meandering Pool Villa (Breakfast Included)



## DAY 12

### Check out from Kumarakom Lake Resort

#### Transfer to Kochi

- Depart Kumarakom
- Transfer Duration: Approx. 1 hr
- Arrive Kochi

After breakfast, transfer to Kochi.

#### Welcome to Kochi

#### Area Overview

The vibrant city of Kochi (Colonial name Cochin), situated on the south-west coast of the Indian peninsula in the breathtakingly scenic and prosperous state of Kerala, is hailed as 'God's Own Country'. Its strategic importance over the centuries is underlined by the sobriquet Queen of the Arabian Sea. Informally, Cochin is also referred to as the Gateway to Kerala. Being an important part of the spice trade, various settlers occupied Kochi leaving behind their remnants throughout the city. From Synagogues, to churches to Portuguese and Dutch architecture, to Chinese fishing nets the city holds its history with pride.

#### Check in at Brunton Boatyard

Sea-Facing Room (Breakfast Included)

2 Nights





## DAY 12

### **Property Overview**

Brunton Boatyard is a five-star hotel whose interiors reflect an eclectic but tasteful blend of English, Portuguese, and Dutch influences as seen in its high ceilings, hanging fans, and a plethora of artifacts and curios from a great mercantile age known for its pomp and glamour. The scent of colonial history is all around you as you take a tour of the historic Fort Cochin area. There are three restaurants on the property as well.

### **Accommodations**

#### **Sea-Facing Room**

Indulge in the serene elegance of the 36 m2 Sea-Facing Room, crafted for up to four guests (maximum 3 adults and 2 children). Revel in the picturesque harbor views from the comfort of your room, which features a plush bedroom, a luxurious bathroom with a bathtub and shower cubicle, a welcoming foyer, and a charming patio. The room is adorned with either a sumptuous double or twin beds, and is equipped with modern amenities such as air conditioning, complimentary wifi, and a flat-screen TV for your entertainment.

### **Kathakali Dance**



## DAY 12

### Activity overview

Kathakali is a traditional dance form of Kerala and the impressive facial expressions, hand gestures and dance moves will leave one spellbound. Kathakali Dance is characterized by elaborate makeup, colorful costumes, hand gestures and facial gestures, dancers apply make-up, made from various natural pigments which are ground on a stone and mixed with coconut oil, before performance. Traditionally, all the colors used in the make-up are obtained from natural substances and locally available herbs mixed with a base of coconut oil.

For example, the red and yellow colors are made by powdering stones like Chaayilyam and Manayola respectively. White, used for accents and outlining is a combination of rice flour and lime. The green color is produced by mixing Manayola and Neelam (blue). Another stone, Chenchilyam is powdered and applied in order to protect the skin from burns. Kajal or kohl (the black substance) is prepared by burning gingerly oil and a new cloth. The ashes are made into the makeup. If you've ever used saffron in cooking, you know how effective this herb, used for orange, can be at staining.



## DAY 13

### Cultural Tour Of Kochi

#### Activity overview

After breakfast you will be introduced to the highlights of the city of Kochi.

The tour begins with a visit to the **Jewish Synagogue (closed on Friday & Saturday)**, built in 1568 by the prosperous Jewish trading community. The oldest synagogue in India, it was partially destroyed in the war of 1662 and was rebuilt by the Dutch. In the mid-18th century the clock tower was added and the floors paved with exquisite hand-painted blue willow tiles from China - no two tiles are alike.

Continue on to the **Dutch Palace (closed on Friday)**, originally built by the Portuguese in the middle of the 16th century. The structure was taken over in 1663 by the Dutch, who added some improvements before presenting it to the Rajas of Cochin, who made further improvements. This palace is notable for some of the best mythological murals in India.

Next stop will be **St. Francis Church**, the oldest European church in India, originally built in 1503. The Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, died in Kochi in 1524 on his third visit to India, and his body was originally buried in St Francis Church, before his remains were returned to Lisbon 14 years later. Close by is the Santa Cruz Basilica, considered to be one of the finest and most impressive churches in India.



### DAY 13

Driving back to hotel, you will also get to see the iconic **Chinese fishing nets** (Cheenavala) that are distinctly unique to this city. It is believed that traders from the court of the Chinese ruler Kublai Khan introduced these nets here. Oddly, these nets are found only in Kochi, not China! Many fishermen earn their livelihood by fishing using these massive nets, with a whole stretch of the coast along Fort Kochi and Vypeen dotted with them. Your tour concludes with a visit to Fort Cochin - a small community in itself.

Since it is a natural harbor and one of the most important trade centers in south of India, Kochi Fort of Kerala is one of the most important towns in the state. One can see a unique blend of Dutch and Portuguese influences in Fort Cochin, due to the rulers from these areas having occupied Cochin for many years.

#### Overnight at Brunton Boatyard

Sea-Facing Room (Breakfast Included)





## DAY 14

**Check out from Brunton Boatyard**

**Transfer to Kochi Airport**

- Depart Hotel
- Arrive Kochi Airport

After breakfast, transfer to Kochi Airport for your flight onwards.