

# Kerala and the Southern Highlights

From \$6,085 - 18 Days - Fully Inclusive From New Zealand

From the moment you set foot in India you will be transported to another time and place. It is a land steeped in history and whilst it is chaotic at times, you will see sights that will make you whisper 'wow' and you will encounter children with the biggest smiles. South India is very different from the north both culturally and geographically. Commencing this amazing tour in the colonial city of Chennai, you will visit Fort St. George which was built by the British East India Company around 1653, and is now considered a military marvel. A drive south will take you to one of the seven sacred cities of India, Kanchipuram, where you can view its fascinating temples.

In Mamallapuram see incredible rock carvings and monolithic temples that are truly unique. A journey on the Shatabdi Express train to Bangalore will delight any train enthusiast. Bangalore, also known as the 'Garden City', is quite stunning with beautiful tree lined avenues. Here you will see the majestic, rather imposing looking Vidhana Soudha that houses the State Legislature. Heading west to Sravanabelagola, an important centre for Jain pilgrims, you will climb the 650 finely chiseled steps to reach the summit. Here the great statue of Sri Gomatheswar stands tall and proud. In Mysore you visit the Maharaja's palace, part of which is still in use, a beautiful 3 storied stone building of fine gray granite and rich pink marble domes. Another train ride takes you to Ooty. This delightful journey takes you through pine forests, offering the most breathtaking views. Your tour takes you to the Botanical Gardens and a tea plantation where you will learn about the timeless cultivation of this fine drink. At Thekkady and Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary look out for Indian elephants, wild boar, lion tailed monkeys as well as abundant bird life.

Cruising around the backwaters of Kerala will come as a serene diversion. The only sounds will be the hum of the houseboat as it makes its way along the water or the swishing of the odd kingfisher that darts by. The silence is quite sublime! This fascinating tour is set to beguile even the most widely travelled individual. Your journey will take you on a colourful kaleidoscope, to one of the world's most desirable destinations, to a land that will most definitely leave an impression.

## Day 1: New Zealand to Chennai

Fly with Singapore Airlines to Chennai for 3 nights.

## Day 2: Chennai

Today we visit Marina Beach, the 2nd longest beach in the world, Fort St. George and see St. Mary's Church.

## Day 3: Chennai - Kanchipuram and Mamallapuram

Drive south to Kanchipuram, here we visit the Shreenivas Silk House before we drive to the Rock Carvings of Mamallapuram.

## Day 4: Chennai to Bangalore

Rise early this morning to catch the Shatabdi Express train to Bangalore. Enjoy a tour of the city including a visit to the Bull Temple and Vidhana Soudha.

## Day 5: Bangalore to Hassan

Today we head west to Hassan and visit Sravanabelagola, where we climb to the top of the temple. Outside of Hassan visit the famous temples of Belur and Halebid.

## Day 6: Hassan to Mysore

Drive south to Mysore visiting Srirangapatnam Fort en route. Inside the fortress walls visit a mosque and the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple. Upon arrival in Mysore visit the Maharaja's Palace, part of which is still in use. We then drive up to Chamundi Hill to see the Sri Chamundeshwari Temple with a panoramic view of Mysore.

## Day 7: Mysore to Coonoor

Today we head to the hills and drive to Coonoor. Enjoy the evening at leisure.

## Day 8: Coonoor - Ooty

This morning take the 'Toy Train' to Ooty. The town was developed as a hill station by the British in the early 19th Century and is famous for its tea and coffee plantations. We visit the Botanical Gardens and take an optional 15min walk uphill to the local village, where we gain an insight into the lives of the local people and enjoy the amazing view over Ooty and the surrounding mountains. Later this afternoon we return to Coonoor by coach.

## Day 9: Coonoor to Munnar

Continuing our descent from the highlands we have a full day of driving to Munnar.

## Day 10: Munnar to Thekkady (Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary)

Visit a local tea plantation and the Tata Tea Museum. Drive to Thekkady and Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, South India's most popular wildlife sanctuary.

## Day 11: Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary

Rise early for a morning boat ride on Lake Periyar, keep a look out for wildlife such as elephants, bison and wild boar around the lake as we cruise along. This afternoon enjoy an optional 12km walk through the park searching for the local wildlife.

## Day 12: Thekkady to Nedumudy/ Houseboat

This morning we leave Thekkady and drive to Nedumudy, near Kumarakom, to board our houseboat. Popularly known as 'kettuvallam', the houseboats are converted



from traditional rice barges. While cruising to Alleppey, witness the lives of the people living in villages around the backwater areas of Kerala. Enjoy dinner as we spend a relaxing night on the houseboat.

### Day 13: Alleppey to Kochi

Disembarking from our boat this morning we drive to Kochi. En route visit a local market in Alleppey, a coir factory and the Kokothamangalam Church. Later this evening enjoy a Kathakali Dance Show.

### Day 14: Kochi

Enjoy a full day tour of Kochi, including a visit to St. Francis Church where Vasco da Gama was originally buried and the Santa Cruz Cathedral with its pastel coloured interior and carved wooden panels. We also visit the Jewish Synagogue, in the heart of the Jewish Quarter, stroll through the nearby markets and witness the unique cantilevered Chinese fishing nets nearby.

### Day 15: Kochi to Kovalam

Drive to Kovalam Beach this morning. The afternoon is free to relax, go for a walk on the beach and watch the local fishermen haul in their catch.

### Day 16: Kovalam - Trivandrum

Enjoy a full day tour around Trivandrum. Visit the Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple, the Zoological Gardens and Museums where we visit the Napier Museum with its bronze collection and the Sri Chitra Art Gallery. Also visit the Observatory, the Kanakakunnu Palace and Sree Moolamthirunal Shastri Purthi Memorial (State Handicraft Institute).

### Day 17: Depart Kovalam

Today is at leisure to relax at the resort or walk along the beach. After a late check out transfer to Trivandrum Airport and board our flight back home.

### Day 18: Arrive New Zealand

Arrive home in New Zealand.

## Inclusions

International airfares, all transportation in India, accommodation, all meals, entrance fees, guides and daily tours, New Zealand and India departure taxes (where included in air tickets)

## Price Guide

18 Days, Fully Inclusive Twin Share

✈ From \$6,085 per person - Departing Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch with Singapore Airlines

🛏 Single Supplement - From \$1,715

🚗 Land Only - From \$3,902

💰 Compulsory Tipping, approximately US\$90 per person (see page 26)

★ ★ Medium Paced Tour (see page 2)

Due to flight schedules, Christchurch passengers arrive home one day later. This will extend the itinerary to 19 days

## Departures

Tour Code	Depart New Zealand	Arrive New Zealand	Twin Share Price
<b>2010</b>			
I3051	04 Feb	21 Feb	\$6,085
I3052	25 Feb	14 Mar	\$6,085
I3053	07 Oct	24 Oct	\$6,275
I3054	11 Nov	28 Nov	\$6,275
<b>2011</b>			
I3061	03 Feb	20 Feb	\$6,085
I3062	24 Feb	13 Mar	\$6,085



Nandi bull statue - Mysore



Local - Ooty

