

## Kerala & Southern Tamil Nadu Tour – 10 Nights & 11 Days

KOCHI | KUMARAKOM | MUNNAR | THEKKADY | MADURAI | RAMESWARAM | KANYAKUMARI | KOVALAM

### DAY 01 ARRIVE IN KOCHI

Our uniformed chauffeur will meet you at the airport and take you to the hotel in Kochi. Kochi (colonial name Cochin) is a vibrant city situated on the south-west coast of the Indian peninsula in the lush green state of Kerala. If time permits, proceed for a tour of Kochi.

Kochi city tour includes a visit to

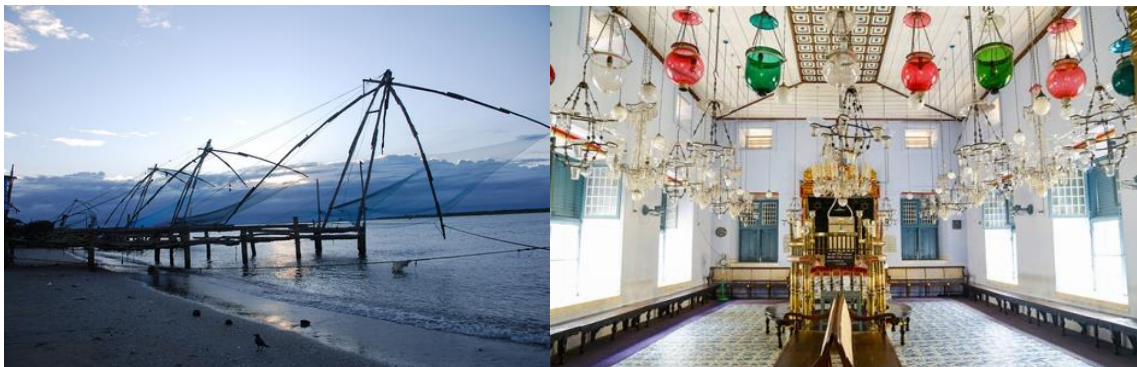
**Fort Kochi** Even a casual stroll through Fort Kochi is enough to make you feel transported to another world and time. The architectural style of the buildings and the town layout easily make it distinct from other cities and towns of Kerala. Since Fort Kochi was under the possession of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British at different points of time, the region still bears the influence of European architecture.

**Jewish Synagogue** Built in 1568 the oldest synagogue in the Commonwealth stands adorned by hundreds of exquisite hand-painted Chinese tiles in blue and white.

**St. Francis Church** Originally built out of wood in 1503 and thus earning fame as the oldest European church in India. Vasco de Gama was buried there.

**Dutch Palace** As you climb its stone steps, you enter a different world of Palanquins and heraldry, jewels and rich murals.

**Chinese Fishing Nets** A very popular tourist attraction. They are fixed land installations, which are used for a very unique and unusual method of fishing.



After sightseeing return to the hotel in Kochi for overnight stay.

## DAY 02 KOCHI – KUMARAKOM

After breakfast, travel to Kumarakom, a village on Vembanad Lake in the backwaters of Kerala. Explore the village life in Kumarakom which is laced with canals, where houseboats ply the waters. Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary is home to many species including cuckoos and Siberian storks. Check into the lake side resort.

In the afternoon, proceed for a day cruise on a houseboat on the Vembanad lake, an experience of a lifetime. Enjoy the mystic sights and sounds of the backwaters aboard your floating villa.

The boat has tastefully furnished bedrooms, a large sitting area, fully equipped kitchen and dining hall where you are served the choicest traditional Kerala cuisine. Emergency and safety provisions, bathrooms with luxury fittings and 24-hour hot/cold water, mobile connectivity, trained and hospitable staff are other features. Ideally catering to the discerning stay and needs of the tourists, the luxury cruises are a beautiful home away from home. Return to the lake resort after the day cruise.



## DAY 03 KUMARAKOM – MUNNAR

After breakfast, travel to the beautiful hill station of Munnar. The word 'Munnar' means three rivers and the town is located at the confluence of three mountain streams - Muthirapuzha, Nallathanni and Kundala. Sprawling tea plantations, verdant green valleys, winding lanes filled with the heady fragrance of fresh tea, all 1800m above the sea level. Munnar is covered with tea estates and looks like a green carpet on earth. Check into the resort on arrival in Munnar.



#### **DAY 04      MUNNAR SIGHTSEEING**

Sightseeing of Munnar includes a visit to the Tea Museum, Echo Point and Mattupetty dam. Overnight at the resort in Munnar



#### **DAY 05      MUNNAR – THEKKADY**

After breakfast, travel to Thekkady which is located in Kumily in the Idukki district of Kerala. The national park surrounds the picturesque Periyar Lake. The reservoir and Periyar River meandering around the wooded hills, is a splendid sight to see. More than 60 different kinds of animals, 300 different kinds of birds and 50 different kinds of reptiles have been documented apart from amphibians, fish and remarkable variety of butterflies and insects. Periyar is also one of the 27 tiger reserves in India.

Activities in Thekkady include Spice plantation tour, elephant ride, etc. The town has plenty of shops where you can buy fresh spices of all varieties.



In the evening, watch a performance of Kathakali & Kalari Payattu

**Kathakali**, classical dance form of Kerala renowned for its harmonious blending of poetry, music, costumes and gestures to narrates stories from Indian epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana.

**'Kalari Payattu'** is one of the oldest martial arts of the world that originated in Kerala. The word *Kalari* means both a battlefield and combat arena. This fighting style is closely connected to yoga, dance and performing arts. Some of the choreographed sparring in Kalari Payattu can be applied to dance.

Return to the resort in Thekkady for overnight stay

## DAY 06 THEKKADY – MADURAI

After breakfast, travel to Madurai. Check into the hotel on arrival. An ancient city more than 2500 years old, situated on the banks of the river Vaigai, **Madurai** is believed to have been built by the Pandyan King Kulasekara. Legend has it that drops of Maduram (nectar) fell from Lord Shiva's locks when he came to bless its people for constructing a temple for him. **Meenakshi Temple** is the city's main

attraction. It is nearly 2000 years old and located in the heart of the old town - a splendid example of Dravidian architecture. The present temple was designed in 1560 by Vishwanatha Nayak and subsequently built during the reign of Tirumalai Nayak. There are four entrances to the temple with an area of six hectares. Each of its 12 towers has the height of 45 to 50 meters. The 1000 pillar Mandapam (hall) is an excellent example of the craftsmanship of the old days. Overnight at the Hotel



**Tirumalai Nayak Mahal:** This Indo-Saracenic building was constructed in 1523 and was originally four times larger than it is today. **Vaniyur Mariamman Teppakulam** This enormous temple tank is fed by water from the Vaigai River. The tank has a Mandapam at the center enshrining Lord Vigneshwara. A colorful float festival is held in this tank every year.



Overnight at the hotel in Madurai

## DAY 07 MADURAI – RAMESWARAM

After breakfast, travel to Rameswaram which is a major pilgrim centre. It is connected to the mainland by road and railway bridges. It is located on Pamban Island separated from mainland India by the Pamban channel and is about 50 kilometres from Mannar Island, Sri Lanka. Rameswaram is a holy place because Sri Rama, on his return from Sri Lanka, offered his thanks to Lord Shiva and performed Pooja to wash away his sin in killing the Demon King, Ravana. Rameswaram is known for its 22 'theerthas' or wells in and around the main temple. This place is equally sacred to both Vaishnavites and Shaivites. According to Hindu Mythology, if one visits Rameswaram and prays to Lord Shiva one will be relieved of one's sins. The Ramanathaswamy temple is renowned for its magnificent corridors and massive sculptured pillars. The third corridor of Ramanathaswamy temple is the longest one in the world. Evening Darshan at the temple and Overnight stay at Rameswaram



**DAY 08 RAMESWARAM – KANYAKUMARI**

After breakfast proceed to the southernmost tip of India – Kanyakumari. Attractions in Kanyakumari include the famous Vivekananda Rock Memorial on the ocean, Mahatma Gandhi memorial and Devi Kanyakumari Temple.



**DAY 09 KANYAKUMARI – KOVALAM**

After breakfast, travel to Kovalam which is one of India's most spectacular beaches located in the southern tip of Kerala. En route visit the Suchindrum Temple and Padmanabhapuram Palace built by the erstwhile kings of Travancore.



Check into the beach resort on arrival in Kovalam.

#### **DAY 10 KOVALAM – TRIVANDRUM – KOVALAM**

Enjoy your morning at the beach resort in Kovalam. In the afternoon, proceed for a half day tour of Trivandrum (colonial name), the capital city of Kerala. 'Thiru Anantha Puram' means "Abode of Lord Anantha" in Malayalam, the language of Kerala.



Main attractions of Trivandrum city are the Napier Museum, Sri Chitra Art Gallery, Padmanabha Swamy Temple and Kuthiramalika Palace. Later take time out for shopping and return to Kovalam. Overnight stay at the beach resort in Kovalam

#### **DAY 11 KOVALAM – TRIVANDRUM AIRPORT**

Transfer to Trivandrum Airport to board the return flight



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