

# South India Private Journey

ENCHANTING TEMPLES, RICH CULTURES, AND  
UNDISCOVERED TREASURES OF INDIA'S VIBRANT SOUTH



## WHEN TO GO

Mid-November to February

For our Private Journey trips, you choose your own group and your preferred dates—there are no set departure dates. Private Journeys are available to groups as few as two people or as large as you like. While many guests choose to book this tour exactly as is, our Area Specialists can work with you to customize it to your wishes. Contact us for availability, questions, or to book your adventure!



# South India Private Journey

ENCHANTING TEMPLES, RICH CULTURES, AND  
UNDISCOVERED TREASURES OF INDIA'S VIBRANT SOUTH

A kaleidoscope of adventures await in South India, where ancient temples are alive with the attentions of devout worshipers, colorful festivals abound, and a teeming melange of distinct cuisines and vibrant cultural heritages are evident everywhere you go. On this Private Journey, discover the distinctive flavors of the south as you explore the rock-cut caves of Ellora and Ajanta, the exquisite temples of Madurai, one of India's oldest cities, and seek out wildlife in Periyar, a wildlife reserve set near tea plantations and spice gardens. In enchanting tropical Kerala, travel quiet waterways aboard a beautiful private houseboat to watch the pageant of traditional riverside life and roam the narrow lanes of Kochi (formerly Cochin), ancient port of entry for spice traders on the Malabar Coast. Your grand finale is a visit to the exquisite rock-cut temples and bas-reliefs of Mamallapuram, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

# Itinerary

## DAY 1

### MUMBAI, INDIA

Late evening arrival in Mumbai, on the west coast of India in the state of Maharashtra, where you are met for a transfer to your hotel. Overnight at hotel...Meals on your own

Classic Accommodation: The Fariyas Hotel

Optional Upgrade: The Taj Mahal Palace and Tower

(See Lodging section for photos and descriptions)

## DAY 2

### MUMBAI EXPLORATION

After breakfast, meet your private Mumbai guide for a full-day excursion, including lunch at a local restaurant with your guide. Begin with a visit of the Elephanta Caves, located six miles across the harbor on the small island of Elephanta (or Gharpure). Here lies a fine cluster of rock-cut caves carved in the 6th to 8th centuries during the Golden Age of the Guptas and inspired by the worship of Shiva. Of particular note among the beautifully executed sculptures is the figure of Maheshmurthy or Trimurthi, which represents the three aspects of Shiva: the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. The 15-foot-high, three-headed bust was hewn from a single rock. In the afternoon, enjoy a tour of the city including the historic synagogues, the Gateway of India, the city's iconic landmark overlooking the sea that was built to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary in 1911, the Manj Bhawan, where Mahatma Gandhi stayed during his visits here from 1917 to 1934, and the Crawford Market, one of the most famous in Mumbai. Dinner and overnight at hotel... BLD

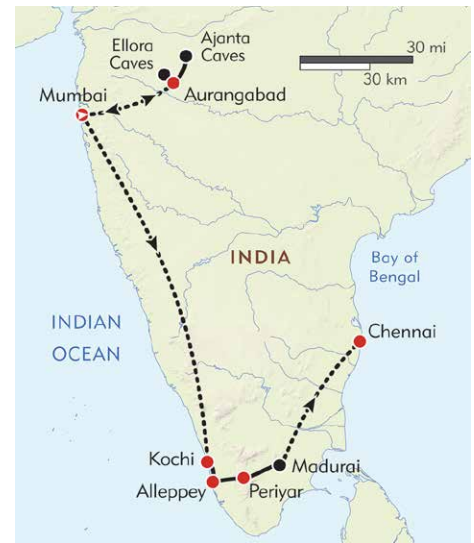
Please note: The Elephanta Caves are closed on Mondays, so please consider this when scheduling your trip.

Mumbai: Located on seven islands now joined by an artificial isthmus, Mumbai (formerly Bombay) was the first part of India to be colonized by the British. Because of its natural safe harbor, it held a strategic position for trade, and the East India Company leased the land from the Crown in 1668. The city thrived and grew quickly, and by the 20th century was the most prosperous city in the nation. Mahatma Gandhi used Mumbai as his base in the struggle for independence, and it was the scene of the farewell to the Raj, when British troops passed through the Gateway of India in 1948. Today Mumbai is a dynamic powerhouse of business, trade, and industry, including its film industry ("Bollywood"), the largest in the world.

## DAY 3

### AURANGABAD / ELLORA

After an early breakfast, transfer to the airport and fly to Aurangabad, gateway to the magnificent rock-cut chapels, temples, and monasteries at Ellora and Ajanta. With your private guide, visit the Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain caves at Ellora, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built between the 5th and 10th



## TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

<b>Length:</b>	14 days
<b>Arrive:</b>	Mumbai, India
<b>Depart:</b>	Chennai, India
<b>Lodging:</b>	12 nights in comfortable hotels (first class or deluxe option), 1 night well-appointed houseboat
<b>Meals:</b>	All meals included except 1 dinner (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
<b>Activity:</b>	Cultural Adventures, Walking
<b>Trip Level:</b>	① 2 3 4 5 6 Overland travel with walking tours

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The rock-cut caves of Ellora and Ajanta, the exquisite Meenakshi temple of Madurai, the temples of Mamallapuram
- Spice gardens and tea plantations, Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary
- Travel the quiet waterways of Kerala aboard a beautiful houseboat
- Roam the narrow lanes of Kochi, ancient port of entry for spice traders on the Malabar Coast

# Itinerary

centuries, the 34 multi-level cave temples are carved into the volcanic rock and display an elaborate abundance of intricate bas-reliefs and sculptures depicting images of the Buddha, other deities, and garden scenes, as well as cathedral-like halls and courtyards. The Kailasanatha, a Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva, is undoubtedly the centerpiece of the Ellora complex and an outstanding example of Dravidian art. Designed to represent Mount Kailas, the abode of Shiva, the gigantic, multi-level freestanding temple was carved from a single rock and contains countless galleries with sculpted panels. It is estimated it took at least 100 years to complete construction of this dazzling monument. Lunch at a local restaurant. Dinner and overnight at Gateway Aurangabad...BLD



## DAY 4 AJANTA

Today, visit the Ajanta caves, stunningly situated in a wooded ravine in the Waghora Valley. These Buddhist cave temples and monasteries, also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are older than those at Ellora and date from 200 BC to 650 AD. They lay unnoticed under thick vegetation for centuries until 1819, when British army officers discovered them while on a tiger hunt. The caves, hollowed out of granite cliffs, contain richly ornamented sculptures and are noted for the colorful fresco-like murals and paintings depicting Buddhist legends and deities. Lunch is at a local restaurant with your guide. Return to Aurangabad for dinner and overnight at hotel...BLD

## DAY 5 KOCHI

An early morning flight (typically via Mumbai) brings

you to Kochi (formerly Cochin), in the green and tropical state of Kerala, which is isolated on the Southern tip of India. This intriguing old city has a stunning location on a series of islands along the Arabian Sea as well as a long and colorful history as a trading city. The harbors of the Malabar coast were a favorite port of call in the spice trade for two thousand years, attracting a mix of Arab, Christian, and Jewish settlers and traders from the Middle East. In the 14th century, a flood created Kochi's safe harbor and soon made it the busiest port on the Malabar Coast. In the early 15th century, the Europeans arrived, and the Rajas of Kochi who were keen to expand the spice trade welcomed them. First came the Portuguese, and later the Dutch. The British arrived thereafter and eventually took control of the lucrative spice trade. By 1800, Kochi was part of the British Madras Presidency.

The afternoon is at leisure. You may wish to relax from the day's travels or prefer to head out on your own for an afternoon walk through the Broadway market at Emakulam, in the new part of the city, where shops offering beautiful textiles and jewelry lie alongside vegetable markets and wholesale provision stores. Dinner and overnight at hotel...BL (at airport) D

Driving Time (Kochi airport to your hotel): Approximately 1.5-2 hours

Classic Accommodation: Eighth Bastion  
Optional Upgrade: The Brunton Boatyard

## DAY 6 KOCHI

Set out for a full day of sightseeing with your private guide, beginning with Kochi's old Fort Kochi district, a quiet European enclave that still contains some fine old British mansions and a few Dutch cottages. This area includes India's first Christian church, the St. Francis, which may have been built by Franciscan friars from Portugal. The original wooden structure burned and was rebuilt in stone in the 16th century. In Kochi's historic Mattancherry district, you will visit the Mattancherry Palace, locally known as the Dutch Palace, built by the Portuguese and given as a gift to the Rajas of Kochi. Its exterior is not notable but its interior is adorned with fantastic and richly detailed 16th century murals that illustrate stories from the Ramayana, one of Hinduism's epic stories. The Mattancherry district bustles with traders in tea, jute, rubber, and spices, and is the area called Jewtown, where

# Itinerary

the Pardesi Synagogue, founded in 1568, still exists. Jews were a respected part of Keralan life until the arrival of the Portuguese, who brought the persecution of Jews with them. Many Jewish names are seen on houses and businesses in this district, but most of Kochi's Jews immigrated to Israel in the 1950s. You will also view Kochi's dramatic traditional Chinese nets. Locally, these nets are known as cheenavala, and they are considered the trademark of Kochi. Outside of China, the nets are found only in Kochi, and legend has it that they were brought here by merchants of Kublai Khan.

For lunch, enjoy a traditional Parimaral meal with your guide at an outdoor restaurant. Parimaral is the traditional arrangement of a meal—rice, four to five vegetarian dishes, condiments, curries—all beautifully presented on a large banana leaf (vazhaillai). The Parimaral is typical of the diversity of South Indian cuisine, and the actual choice and placement of the foods on the leaf are highly ritualistic and indicate the origin of the chef's family, as well as its status and wealth.

In the early evening, enjoy a performance of traditional arts and dance forms of Kerala, including the Kathakali, the most well known and celebrated of the dances featured in the performance. Kathakali is a classical art form, a highly stylized Indian dance-drama that originated in Kerala in the late 1500s and is known for its rhythmic drumming, elaborate costumes and fantastical makeup of characters, detailed hand and facial gestures, and synchronous body movements to the music. The Kathakali presents classical Hindu stories and plays that are religious in nature, including the Mahabarat, Ramayana, and the ancient scriptures known as the Puranas. After the performance, return to your hotel for dinner and overnight...BLD

## DAY 7

### KERALA BACKWATERS CRUISE

A morning drive of approximately 1.5-2 hours brings you to the romantic port town of Alleppey (known now as Alappuzha), once one of the best known seaports of the Malabar Coast. Much of the colorful traffic on Alleppey's waterways is from the thriving coconut fiber industry. On arrival, board your private houseboat for a relaxing cruise through the tranquil backwaters of Kerala, a beautiful

region nestled between the sea and the hills of Kochi. A journey through this quiet region reveals the picturesque rural life of Kerala people working their fields



with water buffaloes, fishing with nets from traditional longboats, and washing their clothes at the water's edge. You may even see some school boats (no school buses here) transporting uniformed children. The natural setting ranges from brilliant green paddy fields to tropical canopies dense with banana trees and coconut palms. Through the trees, you can glimpse small farms, homes, churches, and mosques that dot the canals and lakes. You will take your meals on board, enjoying savory cuisine served by your on-board chef. In addition to the chef, your houseboat crew includes the captain, assistant captain, and engine driver, one of whom will also act as a guide for village walks and spotting aquatic birds. Overnight in a tranquil lake setting on board your air-conditioned boat equipped with comfortable double sleeping cabins that have private bathrooms and showers... BLD

## DAY 8

### CARDAMOM HILLS / PERIYAR

Disembark and begin a 5-hour drive across country roads through beautiful tea, spice, and rubber plantations to Periyar, set in the Cardamom Hills of the Western Ghat Mountains at a refreshingly cool altitude of around 3,500



# Itinerary



feet. You'll stop in at a spice plantation and attend a performance of Kalairaputtu (a local martial art). Dinner and overnight at your hotel in Periyar...BLD

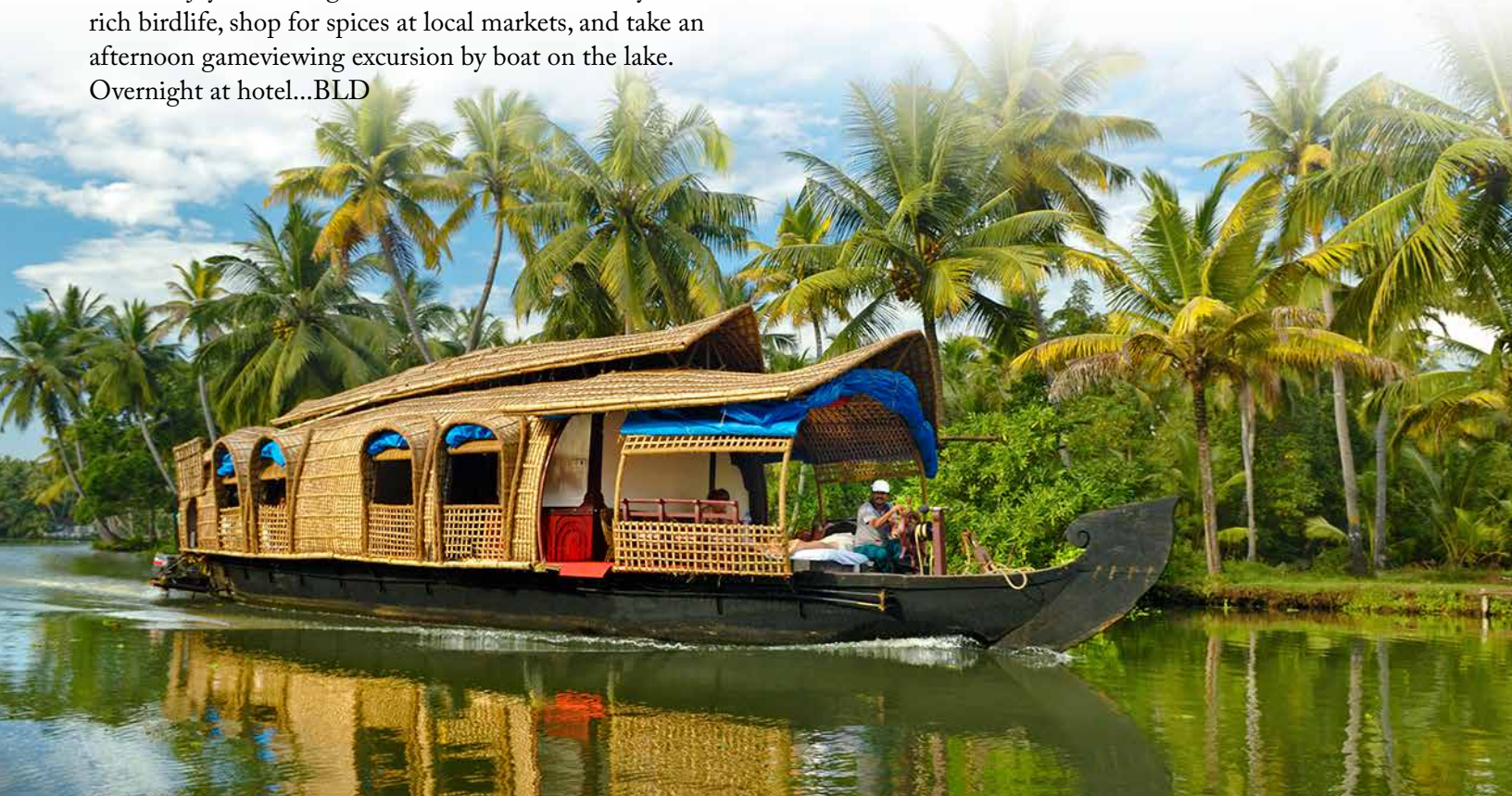
Classic Accommodation: The Elephant Court Hotel  
Optional Upgrade: The Spice Village Hotel

## DAY 9 PERIYAR

Periyar, centered on an artificial lake created by the British in 1895, was formerly the private hunting ground of the royal family of Travancore and became a reserve in 1933. Enjoy a morning forest walk to look for Periyar's rich birdlife, shop for spices at local markets, and take an afternoon gameviewing excursion by boat on the lake. Overnight at hotel...BLD

## DAY 10 MADURAI

After an early breakfast, set out for a 4-hour drive to Madurai, one of the oldest cities in India, set on the River Vaigai, with stops at points of interest along the way. After lunch at your hotel in Madurai, join your guide for a visit to the 45-acre, fortress-like Shri Meenakshi-Sundareshwarar temple, breathtakingly baroque with its profusion of gods, goddesses, rearing horses, and mythical figures. Its 12 towering gopuras (gateways) are visible for miles around. The Meenakshi temple is one of the largest in India, enclosed by 15-foot-high walls, and the cultural heart of this holy city. It is a true "living" temple, and it is said that more than 15,000 faithful visit here each day, with about 50 bare-chested Shaivite priests in attendance. Visiting the temple is a truly intense and fascinating experience, with a constant flow of devout worshipers milling around and a profusion of colorful flowers and puja offerings (ritual worship or devotional offerings), as well as ongoing weddings, religious instruction, and the prostrations of devotees at innumerable shrines. North of the temple, you can stroll through a labyrinthine market full of produce, flowers, incense, and aromatic herbs. Dinner and overnight at The Gateway Hotel Pasmalai...BLD



# Itinerary

## DAY 11 MADURAI

Spend the morning exploring the lively metropolis of Madurai, with its bustling bazaars and history dating back over two thousand years. With your guide, visit the 17th century Thirumalai Nayak Palace, with its interesting blend of Dravidian, Islamic, and European styles, and the Teppakulam (Mariamman), a large excavated area with an island shrine that is filled with water during the Teppam floating festival that takes place in January/February. Dinner and overnight at hotel...BLD



## DAY 12 CHENNAI / MAMALLAPURAM

After breakfast, transfer to the airport and fly to Chennai, then hop in a car bound for the small seaside town of Mamallapuram, known for its extraordinary rock-cut art, a legacy of the maritime Pallava Kingdom, for which Mamallapuram was a major port between the fifth and ninth centuries. Stone carving is still a thriving tradition here. This afternoon, head out to visit the temple and cave complexes at Mamallapuram, with their open-air bas-reliefs and rathas (chariots) carved from single boulders. Your visits include the beautiful Shore Temple towering above the sea and the famous low-relief carving known as Arjuna's Penance. All of these creations, made between the 5th and 9th centuries when the Pallava Kingdom was at its zenith, are beautifully detailed and depict gods, animals, and scenes of everyday life in a natural and engaging style. The temples are now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You will also visit the outdoor museum of Dakshinachitra, a center for South India's living traditions of art, architecture, crafts, and performing arts. Overnight at Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay or Taj Fisherman's Cove Resort & Spa...BLD  
Driving Time: About 2.5 hours

Please note: The Dakshinachitra is closed on Tuesdays, so please consider this when scheduling your trip.



## DAY 13 MAMALLAPURAM

Spend the day exploring more temples in Mamallapuram before gathering in the evening for a festive Farewell Dinner. Overnight at hotel...BLD

## DAY 14 DEPART

Transfer to the airport (approximately 1.5 hours) for departure on homeward-bound flight (or join one of our post-trip extensions). We are happy to arrange hotel day rooms, extra overnights, or guided excursions of Chennai at extra cost...B

# Pricing

## TRIP COST

Prices are per person, valid through Spring 2026

\$7,395 (5-10 members)

\$8,195 (3-4 members)

\$8,695 (2 members)

Single supplement: \$2,995

Internal airfare: \$850 (subject to change)

*Prices are based on double occupancy and not guaranteed until services are confirmed.*

## Make it Your Trip!

The prices above are for the ready-to-book adventure outlined in this Detailed Itinerary, a popular option that has been handcrafted by our Area Specialists to include the best of every destination. While many travelers choose to book this tour as is, our Area Specialists are also happy to work with you to customize this Private Journey to suit your specific interests and style of travel. We can arrange for longer or shorter stays, or add an extension to additional places of interest. We can even add special activities or customize excursions depending on your interests. We invite you to contact us to discuss your options!

## Optional Hotel Upgrades

*All upgrade pricing is per person, per night, based on double occupancy. Please call for single occupancy pricing.*

Mumbai: Taj Mahal Palace and Tower, from \$240

Kochi: Brunton Boatyard, from \$165

Periyar: Spice Village Hotel, from \$65

## TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Accommodations
- All meals included except 1 dinner as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Tours and sightseeing as described with private English-speaking guides
- Land transportation as noted
- All airport transfers

## TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, flights within India (see separate cost above), any meals not specified after each itinerary day, any activities described as optional, airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to staff, additional hotel nights made necessary by airline schedule changes or other factors, pre-trip expenses such as medical immunizations

(if any), travel insurance, or passports and visas; and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

## SIGNING UP FOR A TRIP

Early reservations are recommended since accommodations often sell out far in advance. Please call 1-800-368-2794 and ask for our Asia Manager or email us at [asia@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:asia@wildernesstravel.com) with any questions that you may have about this trip. To reserve your Private Journey, we will need to know your preferred dates of travel. We will then check availability and send you a proposed itinerary with exact pricing for your adventure. We can typically hold a provisional booking for one week. At that time, we must collect your initial deposit or accommodations will be released. We accept Visa, Mastercard, or American Express card. Upon receipt of your deposit, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a letter of confirmation, Detailed Itinerary, Trip Application, Medical Form, and Pre-Departure Information Booklet with information to help you prepare for your adventure. Please see our Cancellations and Transfer Fee Schedule for specific payment information.

## PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation	\$1,000
90 days prior to departure	Balance

## CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum fee: \$1,000 per person  
61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost  
46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost  
45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

\*Please note that this differs from our regular catalog departures.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details:

<http://www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan/travel-insurance>

# Extensions



To help you make the most of your adventure, we've created several exciting trip extensions. For detailed information, including full itineraries and complete pricing, please visit our *South India Private Journey* webpage and click on "Extend Your Trip": [www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/south-india-kerala-private-guided-tour/](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/south-india-kerala-private-guided-tour/)

## KANHA NATIONAL PARK EXTENSION

Kanha is one of the Indian subcontinent's greatest wildlife reserves and a great place in India to see the Royal Bengal tiger. Besides tigers, there are more than 200 species of birds and some 22 species of mammals in residence here. On guided excursions, explore by jeep through the park's bamboo thickets, dadar (plateau grasslands) and sal forests, which gave birth to Rudyard Kipling's classic *The Jungle Book*. Overnights are at The Baagh Resort, a comfortable jungle-surrounded retreat adjacent to the edge of the park, or the Taj Banjaar Tola (deluxe option), an elegant tented camp on the banks of the Banjaar River overlooking Kanha. *5 days. From \$2,595.*



## VARANASI AND KHAJURAHO EXTENSION

As one of the seven sacred cities of Hinduism, the holy city of Varanasi is a magnet for more than a million pilgrims from around the world who come annually to worship, meditate, and bathe in the sacred waters of the Ganges River. With your private guide, stroll through ancient alleys and past golden temples and ashrams, and watch the slanting sun rise over haunting riverside ghats. At the World Heritage Site of Khajuraho, discover some of India's most famous temples, a showcase of sculpture reflecting the celebration of human activity in everyday life. Accommodations throughout are in garden-set hotels, oases of comfort after an active day of exploring. *4 days. From \$2,195.*



## TAJ MAHAL AND JAIPUR EXTENSION

Legendary Rajasthan is full of spectacular color and wondrous reminders of its glorious past. On guided excursions, explore Jaipur, a walled city of pink stone and a treasure-trove of exuberant 18th and 19th century palaces; visit the haunting red sandstone ruins of the remote Mughal capital at Fatehpur Sikri; and watch a golden sunset and sunrise illuminate the legendary Taj Mahal, an exquisite white marble palace set on the banks of the Yamuna River in Agra. *4 days. From \$2,595.*

# Arrival & Departure

## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

Mumbai, India, is the meeting point for this program. An airport transfer will be provided upon your arrival on Day 1 and for your departing flight home from Chennai on Day 14. Our Arrival & Departure Logistics memo, included in your confirmation packet, has details.

## FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

Trip members are responsible for making their own arrangements for air transportation. Please do not purchase your airline tickets until you are confirmed on the trip and have reviewed your proposed air schedule with our office. Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so that we can send it on to the local guide (make sure to include your Trip Name and Trip Dates on it). Note: The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly; otherwise you may be denied boarding. Please remember this when reserving your flights. In addition, your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US (in most cases).

# Accommodations

## DAYS 1 TO 2 (2 NIGHTS): MUMBAI, INDIA

In Mumbai, we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:



### FARIYAS HOTEL

The Fariyas has a great location within easy walking distance of Mumbai's famous Gateway to India as well as the shopping and restaurant district. It has a good restaurant with an extensive breakfast buffet.



### TAJ MAHAL PALACE AND TOWER (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

This is one of Asia's landmark hotels, built in 1903 in stately imperial grandeur, with an unbeatable waterfront location across from the Gateway to India and the ferries to Elephanta Island. Few hotels are as impressive as this one from an architectural point of view, and the grand lobby is an opulent reminder of a bygone era. The hotel also has a modern high-rise wing. The superb swimming pool area is a wonderful oasis for escaping the bustle of Mumbai.

## DAYS 3 TO 4 (2 NIGHTS): AURANGABAD, INDIA



### GATEWAY AURANGABAD

An ideal base for visiting the extraordinary Ajanta and Ellora caves, the green and serene Gateway Aurangabad is a modern hotel built with unique Mughal-era styling. It is nestled amid five acres of lush, well-tended gardens, and the guest rooms have balconies overlooking the gardens. Guests can enjoy dinner under the stars at the grill buffet. The swimming pool area is a great place to

# Accommodations

## DAYS 5 TO 6 (2 NIGHTS): KOCHI, INDIA

relax.

In Kochi, we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:



### EIGHTH BASTION

This modern eco-friendly hotel, a CGH property, has a quiet location just steps from all of Fort Kochi's important sites. The spacious guest rooms are comfortably appointed with large beds, views of the courtyard and swimming pool, and the restaurant provides tasty traditional Kerala cuisine with a modern twist. The staff is attentive and professional.



### BRUNTON BOATYARD (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Set by the water's edge in Fort Kochi, the Brunton Boatyard is a 19th century shipyard that was converted into a charming 22-room hotel that captures the ambience of a bygone era. All the guest rooms are beautifully furnished in colonial-style antiques and have balconies with stunning views of the bustling Kochi harbor.

## DAY 7 (1 NIGHT): ALLEPPEY, INDIA



### TRADITIONAL HOUSEBOAT

The beautiful houseboats of Kerala, called kettuvallams, were once used to transport rice, spices, and other goods to the port of Kochi. Today these delightful 80-foot barges make fantastic overnight accommodations for a journey along the lagoons of Kerala. The private, air-conditioned houseboats come in a variety of shapes and sizes but all are still constructed using the traditional method of tying boards together with rope (not a single nail is used!). Each houseboat has an open-air sitting area and deck, double sleeping cabins with private bathroom and showers, and a crew of four including a chef who prepares Keralan specialties. Floating along the scenic waterways aboard a beautiful private kettuvallam is the quintessential experience of tropical South India.

# Accommodations

## DAYS 8 TO 9 (2 NIGHTS): PERIYAR, INDIA

In Periyar, we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:



### ELEPHANT COURT

Set in a lush, hilly landscape near Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, Elephant Court is a peaceful retreat for nature lovers, with its grounds full of birds, fruit trees, and the occasional troops of monkeys. It offers understated elegance with traditional Kerala architecture of teak paneling and open-air buildings with thatched roofs. The large, comfortable cottage-style rooms have private baths and verandas. The in-house spa offers Ayurvedic massages, and the dinner buffet has plenty of choice, including Kerala's distinctive regional dishes.



### SPICE VILLAGE HOTEL (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

A marvelous eco-friendly hideaway, Spice Village has about 60 thatched bungalows scattered in a park-like setting. The bungalows aren't air-conditioned but the altitude, breezes, and forested surroundings make them very comfortable. The bar, once the park headquarters for Periyar, has a charming atmosphere and the feel of an old colonial club in the middle of a jungle. The grounds are full of fragrant spice plants and the garden supplies vegetables for the hotel's two restaurants, which offer authentic Kerala dishes as well as other options. There's a lovely swimming pool.

## DAYS 10 TO 11 (2 NIGHTS): MADURAI, INDIA



### GATEWAY HOTEL PASUMALAI

This restored colonial home, with its unique hilltop location overlooking the temple city of Madurai, is full of character and charm. Built atop Pasumalai Hill amid 62 acres of tranquil gardens, it is a former governors' residence that feels more like a house than a hotel. The old-fashioned rooms blend colonial touches with modern amenities, and if you sit on the patio terrace to take in the views, you might be able to hear the chanting coming from the temples in the city below. You couldn't ask for a more peaceful refuge after a day of exploring Madurai's bustling bazaars and towering temples. The pool, spa, and attentive staff add to a pleasant stay.

# Accommodations

## DAYS 12 TO 13 (2 NIGHTS): MAMALLAPURAM

In Mamallapuram, we stay at one of the following properties based on availability and choice of accommodation:



### RADISSON BLU RESORT TEMPLE BAY

Spread across 46 acres along a stretch of private beach, this resort complex has spacious, well-kept rooms, either beachside or poolside, as well as a huge swimming pool, spa services, and multiple dining options. It's an easy walk to many of the shops and monuments at Mamallapuram.



### TAJ FISHERMAN'S COVE RESORT AND SPA

Set on the site of an Old Dutch fort, these contemporary cottages are spread across 48 acres along the coastline facing the waters of the Bay of Bengal. The hotel has a variety of restaurants from Seagull, one of Chennai's most popular for Indian and Continental cuisine, to Bay View, an outdoor coastal retreat with thatched-roof gazebos overlooking the sea. The Sun Burst Bar and Upper Deck are additional spots to lounge in the breeze with a glass of Sangria. Guest rooms feature modern furnishings, Egyptian cotton linens, and have ocean or garden views. Take a dip in the outdoor pool, relax with a massage, or work up a sweat in the fitness center.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *South India Private Journey* webpage and click on "Accommodations."

# What to Expect

## WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is Level 1+, Easy, according to the Wilderness Travel trip rating system. It is a comfortable, vehicle-based sightseeing trip. Please remember that travel in India can be an adventure. The essential requirements are flexibility, a sense of humor, curiosity, enthusiasm about new peoples and places, and an openness to the unexpected.

## WEATHER

South India's best travel season is late November to mid-February. During this period, temperatures are warm to hot, ranging through the mid-70s to 80s. The average high temperature on the coast at Kochi is recorded as 86F. Rain is not usually a problem in this season, but there can be occasional showers.

## PRIVATE JOURNEY GUIDED SERVICES

You will have agents in each city who handle your transfers, and private guides and drivers in each city who lead your sightseeing excursions.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Asia Manager or email us at [asia@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:asia@wildernesstravel.com).

## REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

## ABOUT PRIVATE JOURNEYS

Wilderness Travel Private Journeys are designed for people who want to travel with their own small private group, but who still want to experience the same superb itinerary design, great accommodations, and signature quality of Wilderness Travel's escorted group trips. These Private Journeys allow you to choose your own dates and your traveling companions—and enjoy the WT touch on all aspects of the journey.

## TOUCAN CLUB

Please note that Toucan Club discounts do not apply for our Private Journeys. However, your participation on these trips will count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular expeditions. For more information regarding our Toucan Club bonus program, please visit our website at [www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club/](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club/)

## VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At [www.wildernesstravel.com](http://www.wildernesstravel.com), you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.

## PROTECTING THE TIGER

Wilderness Travel is proud to be a member of Travel Operators for Tigers (TOFT), a voluntary initiative that supports and funds responsible wildlife tourism practices across the Indian and Nepali park networks. Responsible wildlife and nature tourism can provide an invaluable platform to support and sustain parks, wildlife conservancies, and buffer zones, and can play an important role in poverty eradication in nearby communities. At a time when the magnificent tiger is increasingly under threat, we believe that supporting organizations like TOFT and promoting responsible travel practices can help in efforts to save the tiger and provide sustainable employment for local populations.



**WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:**

**Best Travel Specialists in the World:** *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

**World's Best Tour Operators:** *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

**Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips:** *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *USA Today*

**Trip of the Year:** *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

**50 Tours of a Lifetime:** *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.