Treasures of South India

EXQUISITE TEMPLES AND TROPICAL LANDSCAPES

TRIP DATES

January 6-19, 2027
January 8-21, 2027
January 6-19, 2028
January 8-21, 2028

Wilderness Travel

Treasures of South India

EXQUISITE TEMPLES AND TROPICAL LANDSCAPES

South India is simply dazzling, with its spice ports, colonial towns, and magnificent temples nestled in a lush tropical landscape. Our hand-crafted journey delves deeply into this colorful realm as we watch an ancient dance-drama performance, explore by houseboat on tranquil Kerala waterways, and discover Tamil Nadu's sacred architecture, where carved temples soar high above palm forests. Along the way, we savor legendary cuisine, from coconut-infused fish curries to tangy rasam.

Itinerary

Pongal Festival: During each departure, we may be lucky enough to come across a celebration of Pongal, a festival of thanksgiving during the year's harvest. Women decorate the ground entrance of their homes, and/or their central courtyards, with beautiful "kolams," artistic designs drawn with brightly-colored rice flour, while people dress up in their best and gather in the villages for festivities like bull running, bike racing, and "uriyadi" (using a pole when blindfolded to smash a hanging pot).

DAY 1
KOCHI, INDIA

Arrive in Kochi (formerly Cochin) and transfer to the hotel. This intriguing old city in the green and tropical state of Kerala 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. Our accommodation in Kochi is the Brunton Boatyard, a boutique hotel with harbor-view rooms. We gather for a Welcome Dinner this evening...D

DAY 2
KOCHI

In our explorations today, we wander the old lanes of Fort Kochi and Mattancherry Palace, where we come upon such incongruous sites as traditional Dutch architecture, the Pardesi Synagogue, and other oddities that reflect the European influence on Kochi. Tonight we attend a performance of Kathakali, the elaborate and ancient dance-drama native to Kerala. Overnight at hotel… BLD

Kochi: 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 early 15th century, the Europeans arrived, and the Rajas of Kochi were keen to expand the spice trade and welcomed them. The British arrived thereafter and eventually took control of the lucrative spice trade. By 1800, Kochi was part of the British Madras Presidency. One of Kochi's old districts, Fort Kochi, is a quiet European enclave that still contains some fine old British mansions and a few Dutch cottages. Kochi's historic Mattancherry district bustles with traders in tea, jute, rubber, and spices, and is the area called Jewtown, where 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. Also in Mattancherry is the Mattancherry Palace, locally known as the Dutch Palace, built by the Portuguese and given as a gift to the Rajas of Kochi.

DAY 3
KERALA BACKWATERS CRUISE

A morning drive bring us 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, we board our houseboat for a relaxing cruise

TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

Length: 14 days
Arrive: Kochi, India
Depart: Chennai (Madras), India
Lodging: 12 nights first-class hotels, 1 night aboard private houseboat
Meals: All meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity: Archaeology, Cultural Adventures
Trip Level: 1+ 2 3 4 5 6
Overland travel with walking tours, cultural explorations

HIGHLIGHTS

- Ancient trading port of Kochi on the Arabian Sea
- Private houseboat with an on-board chef
- Madurai's colossal temple, French colonial Pondicherry by the sea
- South India's savory cuisine, from curries to dosas

Itinerary

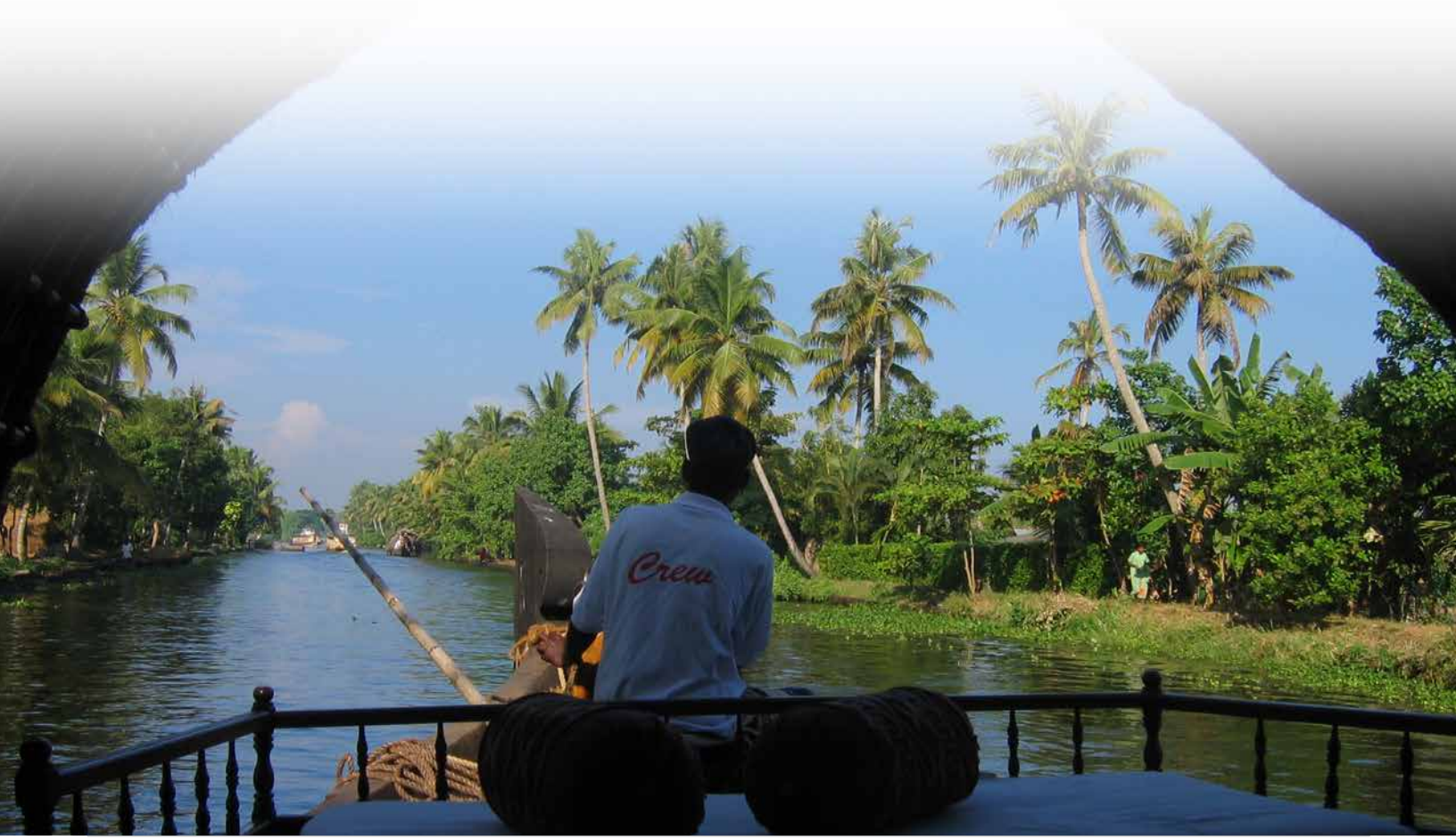
"An extremely well thought out and well executed itinerary and the best Trip Leader I've ever had."

William N., Long Beach, CA

and overnight in the tranquil "backwaters" of Kerala, a beautiful region nestled between the sea and the hills of Kochi where we see people working their fields with water buffaloes, fishing with nets from traditional longboats, and washing clothes at the water's edge. We 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. We can glimpse through the trees at small farms, homes, churches, and mosques that dot the canals and lakes. We take our meals on board, served by our on-board chef. Overnight aboard a traditional kettuvallam, our own private, air-conditioned 80-foot houseboat with comfortable double cabins and private bathrooms…BLD
Driving Time: About 2 hours

DAY 4
CARDAMOM HILLS / PERIYAR

Disembarking from our houseboats, we drive across rugged country roads through tea, spice, and rubber plantations to Periyar in the Cardamom Hills of the Western Ghat Mountains. At Periyar, set at a refreshingly cool altitude of around 3,500 feet, we stop in at a spice plantation and attend a performance of Kalairaputtu (a local martial art). Overnight at Spice Village, a collection of bungalows in a forested setting in Periyar…BLD
Driving Time: About 5 hours



Itinerary

DAY 5
PERIYAR

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

"One of the best trips we've ever been on."

Joe K., Mission Hills, CA

DAY 6
PERIYAR / MADURAI

We head to Madurai, one of the oldest cities in India, set on the River Vaigai. After lunch at our hotel, we explore this lively metropolis, with its bustling bazaars and history dating back over two thousand years. We stroll through a labyrinthine market full of produce, flowers, incense, and aromatic herbs, and enjoy a sunset view of the 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. Overnight at the Gateway Hotel Pasumalai, an elegantly refurbished colonial home overlooking the city…BLD
Driving Time: About 4 hours

DAY 7
MADURAI

Madurai's Meenakshi temple is one of the largest in India, enclosed by 15-foot-high walls and almost a city within a city. We take ample time to explore it, listen to the traditional temple music, and appreciate the beauty of its Shiva shrines. It is said that each day more than 15,000 faithful visit this temple, and there are about 50 bare-chested Shaivite priests in attendance. The principal shrines are closed to non-Hindus, but there's plenty to see, including ongoing weddings, religious instruction, and the prostrations of devotees at innumerable shrines. Time permitting, we may also visit the Nayak Palace, built in 1636 by King Thirumalai Nayak, or watch the sleeping ceremony at Shri Meenakshi. Overnight at hotel...BLD

DAY 8
KARAIKUDI

A scenic drive brings us through the "rice bowl" of Tamil Nadu, a lush, green landscape of paddy fields, coconut palms, and tiny, ancient villages. This region we pass through is known as Chettinad, cultural home of the Chettiars, a community that dates back to the Cholas and made its fortune as merchants and jewelry dealers. Not many Chettiars reside in Chettinad now. Most migrated in the 19th and 20th centuries to Sri Lanka, Singapore, Burma, and elsewhere, but they sent back lavish furnishings for their magnificent

Itinerary

ancestral mansions. We will visit intriguing off-the-beaten-path sites along the way, including a few Chettinad mansions and the ancient wayside Ayyanar temple, decorated with huge pottery figures of animals. We continue to the bustling town of Karaikudi, the district headquarters. Overnight at the Bangala Hotel in the heart of Chettinad country...BLD
Driving Time: About 2-3 hours

DAY 9
THANJAVUR / CHOLA TEMPLES / KUMBAKONAM

Beginning around the 9th century, the Chola kings constructed huge, elaborate Shiva and Vishnu temples all over Tamil Nadu—no other state of India is so dominated by temples and so famed for its temple architecture (more than 90 temples still exist!). Chola bronze sculptures are an art form known throughout the world, especially the variations on the famous "dancing Shiva," posed standing on one leg and surrounded by flames. The Cholas cast these images in bronze using the "lost wax" process known to have been used in India for thousands of years. The Tanjore (Thanjavur) school of painting, with its painted images decorated by semi-precious stones and gold leaf, originated in this town in the 18th century. We begin today with a two-hour drive to visit these stunning temples of Thanjavur, including the Brihdishwara temple, built by King Rajaraja I as a site of Shiva worship, which dominates the city's skyline. Local specialty shops have an amazing array of antique brass pots, old coins, copper plates, Tanjore paintings, and Thanjavur crafts. After lunch, we visit the bronze gallery at the museum and continue our drive to Kumbakonam, a former center of the Chola kings and the main commercial area for the Thanjavur region. Overnight at the Mantra Koodam, a peaceful retreat with a garden setting...BLD
Driving Time: About 4-5 hours, with stops

DAY 10
KUMBAKONAM

We visit fascinating sites including the spectacular Airavateshwara Temple at Darasuram. This superb and little visited monument, a wonderful introduction to the Chola period sculpture, has fine black basalt images adorning its wall niches and inner shrines, including images of Nagaraja, the snake king, with his cobra hood, and Dakshinamurti, an image of Shiva as a teacher expounding under a banyan tree. We also visit the 17th century Kubareshwara Temple, which towers over the town. Overnight at hotel...BLD

Itinerary

DAY 11
PONDICHERRY

In the tiny village of Gangaikonda Cholapuram (its long name means "the town of the Chola who took the Ganges"), we explore a magnificent temple built by the Chola king Rajendra I in the 11th century. We then head to Pondicherry, the former capital of French India. The French relinquished their control of "Pondy" some 50 years ago, but reminders of the colonial days remain and the Tricolor flies over the grand French consulate. We'll enjoy a stroll through the beachside French Quarter, where we see richly ornamented Catholic churches and hear French spoken. Overnight at hotel...BLD
Driving Time: About 5 hours

DAY 12
AUROVILLE

We visit Auroville this morning, the center of an international community connected to the Aurobindo Ashram just outside of Pondicherry. This experimental township founded in 1968 is designed to offer alternative ways of living and working, with folks of all different nationalities living together in harmony. We then drive on to our hotel near Mamallapuram. After checking into our hotel we 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 3 hours

DAY 13
MAMALLAPURAM

We spend the day exploring 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. We head out to visit the temple and cave complexes at Mamallapuram, with their open-air bas-reliefs and rathas (chariots) carved from single boulders. Our 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 fifth and ninth 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. This evening, we enjoy a gathering for a festive Farewell Dinner. Overnight at hotel...BLD

DAY 14
CHENNAI / DEPART

Transfer to the airport in Chennai (1-1.5 hour-drive) and depart on homeward-bound flights...B

"One of the best trips my husband and I have taken—a feast for the senses and the intellect. Fabulous temples, beautiful countryside. I especially appreciated our many glimpses into village life, religious practices, and traditions."

Joanne C., Pittsboro, NC

Pricing

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, based on double occupancy
2026-27
$9,195 (13-15 members)
$9,495 (10-12 members)
$9,895 (6-9 members)
Single supplement: $2,695

Please contact us for future years' pricing

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a Wilderness Travel Trip Leader and local guides
- Accommodations
- All meals included
- Sightseeing as noted
- Land and boat transportation
- Entrance fees
- Arrival and departure airport transfers
- Baggage handling

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare to and from India or flights within India, airport departure taxes, any meals not specified after each itinerary day, soft drinks, optional gratuities to leaders and staff, additional hotel nights made necessary by airline schedule changes or other factors, expenses such as immunizations (if any), travel insurance, and other items of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, mineral water, etc.).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: $600
90 days prior to departure: Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE*

Up to 91 days prior to departure: No charge!
76-90 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost
75 days or less: 100% of trip cost
**Please note that this differs from our standard policy.*

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: www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance

Extend Your Adventure!

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 webpage and click on "Extend Your Trip": www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/south-india-kerala-tour/

TAJ MAHAL AND JAIPUR EXTENSION

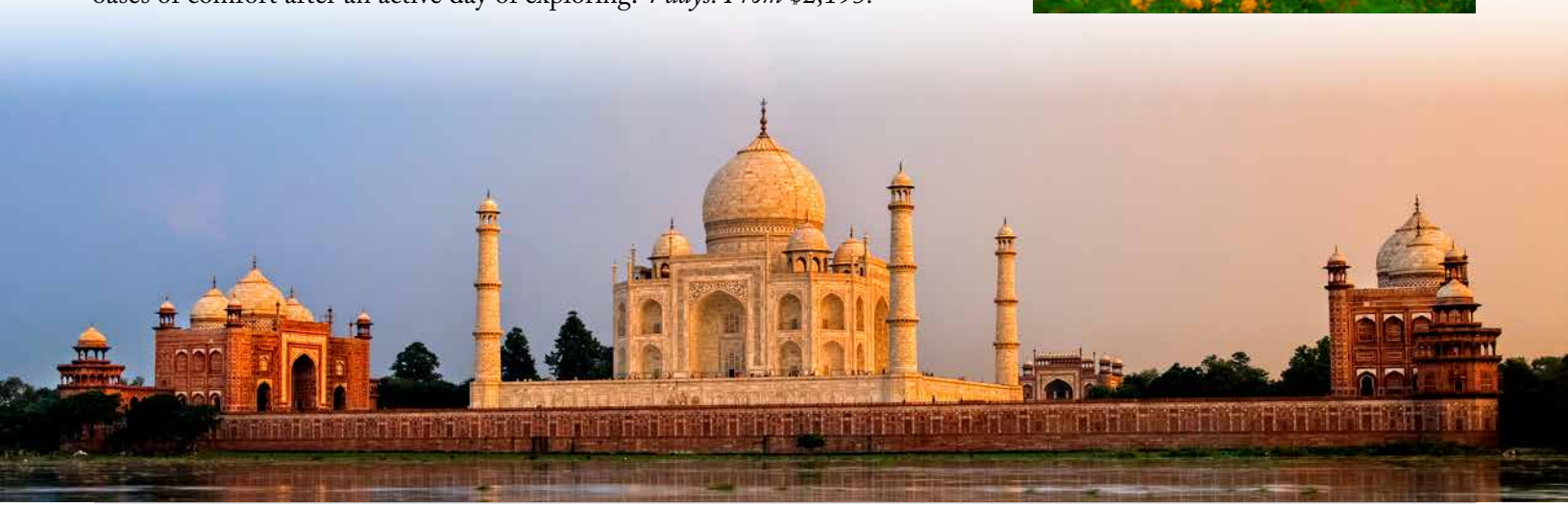
Legendary Rajasthan is full of spectacular color and wondrous reminders of its glorious past. On guided excursions, explore Jaipur, a walled city of pink stone and a treasure-trove of exuberant 18th and 19th century palaces; visit the haunting red sandstone ruins of the remote Mughal capital at Fatehpur 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.*

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.*



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.

If you have booked extra services before or after the trip, an Extra Services Confirmation will be sent with your Final Documents.

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Kochi, India

Suggested Airport: Cochin International Airport (COK)
Suggested Date & Time: Day 1, in the afternoon

Meeting Place: A complimentary transfer is provided from the Cochin International Airport to our group hotel, no matter when you arrive. Our WT representative will meet you outside the customs area and will be holding a Wilderness Travel sign. In the evening we gather for a Welcome Dinner.

The transfer from Cochin International Airport to the group hotel can take up to 1.5 hours, depending on traffic.

DEPARTURE

Chennai, India

Suggested Airport: Chennai International Airport (MAA)
Suggested Date & Time: Day 14, anytime

A complimentary transfer is provided from the group hotel to the Chennai International Airport, no matter when you depart.

The transfer from the group hotel to the Chennai International Airport can take up to 1.5 hours, depending on traffic.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from Cochin/Chennai.

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 970-818-8459 in the US or Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at www.exitotravel.com.

Depending on your routing, it is necessary to depart from the US one or possibly two days prior to Day 1. The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip. Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so we can reserve your airport transfers. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

Lodging

BRUNTON BOATYARD

Kochi, India
Days 1 to 2 (2 nights)

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.

TRADITIONAL HOUSEBOAT

Alleppey, India
Day 3 (1 night)

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.

SPICE VILLAGE HOTEL

Periyar, India
Days 4 to 5 (2 nights)

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 Keralan dishes as well as other options. There's a lovely swimming pool.

Lodging

GATEWAY HOTEL PASUMALAI

Madurai, India
Days 6 to 7 (2 nights)

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.

BANGALA HOTEL

Karaikudi, India
Day 8 (1 night)

The Bangala is a family-run heritage hotel in Karaikudi, the main town in Chettinad country. It has been in the same family for 100 years and was transformed into a 34-room hotel about 12 years ago, centered around the original colonial garden. It has a relaxed ambience and a traditional kitchen that serves authentic Chettinad cuisine.

MANTRA KOODAM

Kumbakonam, India
Days 9 to 10 (2 nights)

This eco-friendly hotel is spread over landscaped acres along the banks of the Veera Chozha River. It has comfortable air-conditioned guest cottages, a pool, and a restaurant that serves classic South Indian vegetarian cuisine prepared the traditional way. Ayurvedic spa treatments and yoga sessions are available.

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 *Treasures of South India* webpage and click on the "Accommodations" tab.

Lodging

HOTELS IN PONDICHERRY

Pondicherry, India
Day 11 (1 night)

In Pondicherry, we stay at one of the following properties:

PALAIS DE MAHE

The boutique Palais de Mahe is set in the colonial area of Pondicherry near the seaside promenade. Guest rooms are spacious, with high ceilings, and the hotel's verandas, courtyard, and period furniture give it a French Colonial atmosphere. The poolside café is good place to relax and there a lovely rooftop bar and restaurant. All the attractions of the French Quarter are within walking distance.

GRAND HOTEL D'EUROPE

Set in the heart of Pondicherry, this heritage property dates to 1891 and exudes a welcoming touch of French ambiance. Clean and spacious guestrooms feature high ceilings and large windows, while amenities include a swimming pool and spa.

HOTELS IN MAMALLAPURAM

Mamallapuram, India,
Day 12 and 13 (2 nights)

In Mamallapuram, we stay at one of the following properties:

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

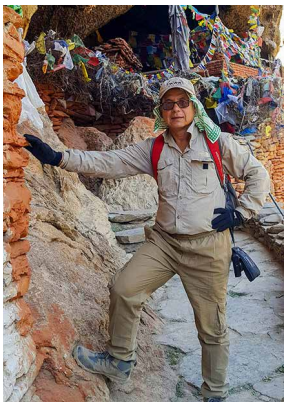
Set on the site of an Old Dutch fort, these contemporary cottages are spread across 48 acres along the coastline facing the waters of the Bay of Bengal. The hotel has a variety of restaurants from Seagull, one of Chennai's most popular for Indian and Continental cuisine, to Bay View, an outdoor coastal 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.

Trip Leader

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. For more information, including client comments about them and which specific trips they will be leading, please visit our webpage and click on "Trip Leaders": www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/south-india-kerala-tour/

HASHMAT SINGH

A WT leader since 1990, Hashmat has helped shape many of our company's signature journeys across Asia. His passion for exploration began in childhood as he traveled India's remote corners as an army brat—his love for the mountains was sparked at just 12 years old on his first major Himalayan trek. A Delhi University history graduate, he combines his interests in travel, photography, politics, and culture into a guiding style known for thoughtful insights and engaging storytelling—time with him on the trail is as rewarding as the destinations themselves. He's the author of *Trekking in the Himalayas* (Roli Books), a photographic collection capturing the region's grandeur and spirit, from Ladakh to Bhutan. Hashmat lives in Delhi with his family, and he's a favorite of WT travelers—as one put it, "Hashmat is a longstanding member of the guiding hall of fame."



DEVENDRA BASNET

Devendra Basnet makes his home in Kathmandu, Nepal. A WT Trip Leader since 1987, "DB" leads our cultural and hiking journeys into the Himalayas, across India, and along the ancient Silk Roads of Central Asia. His university studies in Zoology launched him in an early career as a naturalist guide, tracking tigers and spotting rare birds in Nepal's renowned Royal Chitwan National Park, and collecting elusive Himalayan butterflies for the British Natural History Museum. "I love working with people and working in beautiful surroundings, so guiding is a natural for me. I especially love being in the high Himalayas, from Tibet to Bhutan to India, and in areas rich in nature and wildlife. I want my trip members to appreciate how fast everything is changing, and help them take back wonderful memories of the wild places and rich cultures we visit."

What to Expect

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is **Level 1+, Easy**, according to our trip grading system. It is a vehicle-based cultural and natural history adventure. Accommodations are in hotels and lodges.

Although this is not a difficult trip, please remember that travel in India is an intense experience. The essential requirements are flexibility, a sense of humor, curiosity, enthusiasm about new peoples and places, and an openness to the unexpected.

WEATHER

We expect temperatures to be warm to hot, ranging through the mid-70Fs to 80Fs. During this season, the average high temperature on the coast at Kochi is recorded as 86F. At higher elevations, such as at Periyar, it is much cooler. The south of India has two distinct monsoon seasons: one in summer and another from October to mid-November. We don't expect heavy rain to be a problem on our trip, but there can be occasional showers at any time between November and February.

BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

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.

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.

TOUCAN CLUB

We're proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business! The Wilderness Travel Toucan Club was established to reward our travelers for their loyalty. For details, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At 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. 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.

AVERAGE DAILY MAX/MIN °F												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Chennai	78/62	84/64	89/69	91/73	89/71	82/69	80/68	78/68	80/68	80/68	78/64	77/62
Kochi	88/73	89/75	90/77	91/78	90/78	86/75	84/74	85/75	86/75	86/75	88/75	88/73
RAINFALL - INCHES												
Chennai	0.2	0.2	0.52	1.5	4.5	3.1	4.2	5.4	6.9	6.2	2.5	0.7
Kochi	0.1	0.9	1.3	3.5	8.7	20.5	16.6	10.7	9.5	13.6	4.5	1.3

WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 2026, 13-time winner
Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2026, 6-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.

Revised: September 2, 2026 4:40 PM

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