

Kerala and Southern Delights



Houseboat, Alleppey

From \$4,280 – 17 days. Fully inclusive from Australia

This South Indian adventure takes us to God's own country, Kerala, known for its backwaters and relaxed, peaceful lifestyle. We also visit the neighboring states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to appreciate the music, literature, dance and festivals of these southern states.

Day 1: Australia to Bangalore

Fly to Bangalore with Singapore Airlines. Upon arrival we will be welcomed and escorted to our hotel for overnight stay.

Day 2: Bangalore to Mysore

After breakfast we commence our touring of the sights of Bangalore, known as the 'Golden City' because its countless parks and avenues of Jacaranda, Gulmohur and Cassia. Enjoy a city tour of Bangalore including Lal Bagh Gardens, the palace of Tipu Sultan who ruled much of southern India during the 18th Century and Vidhan Soudha, one of Bangalore's most imposing buildings built in 1954 by convicts. Drive to Mysore visiting Srirangapatnam Fort en route.

Day 3: Mysore

Today visit the Maharaja's Palace, part of which is still in use, and St Philomena's Church and Sri Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery. Venture into the 1062m high Chamundi Hills to see the Nandi Bull (a 4.8 metre monolith) and the 2000-year-old Chamundeswri Temple with a panoramic view of Mysore.

Day 4: Mysore to Ooty

This morning drive to Ooty, known as the 'Queen of the Blue Mountains'. It is famous

for its hills which are covered in pine and eucalyptus forests as well as its coffee and tea plantation. The town was developed as a hill station by the British in the early 19th Century. This afternoon we explore a tea factory and learn the secrets to a perfect brew.

Day 5: Ooty to Coimbatore/Kochi (Cochin)

Drive downhill to Coimbatore and connect our day train to Kochi, a major harbour during British and Portuguese reign with a rich heritage of forts, churches and temples. In the evening walk around the Fort area and backstreets to admire the Jewish and Dutch architecture.



Day 6: Kochi

Enjoy a full day tour of Kochi, visiting the Vaikom village, a khadi weaving unit, Jewish Quarter of Fort Cochin and the Dutch Palace, witness the unique cantilevered Chinese fishing nets nearby and visit St. Francis Church where Vasco da Gama was originally buried. Also visit the Jewish Synagogue in the heart of Jew Town and stroll through the nearby markets. Later in the evening we will enjoy a Kathakali Dance Show.

Day 7: Kochi to Kumarakom / Alleppey (Houseboat)

Drive from Kochi to Kumarakom, a coastal town in the backwaters of Kerala, where we will board our houseboat for an overnight stay and to explore the village life around the backwaters of Kerala. Popularly known as 'Kettuvallam' the houseboats are converted from a traditional rice barge. Relish authentic Kerala cuisine with seafood specialties and fresh vegetables prepared by our personal chef.

Day 8: Alleppey to Kovalam

Awaken to the sound of chirping of birds and enjoy a sumptuous breakfast cooked by our expert boat crew. Drive to our Kovalam beach resort and indulge in numerous spa treatments or just laze about in this tranquil atmosphere.



Day 9: Day excursion to Kanyakumari

Experience the unique beauty of Kanyakumari. Visit 'The Sangam', the confluence of The Bay of Bengal, The Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, where we can see 3 distinct colours of sand and water flowing in from 3 different directions.

Day 10: Kovalam to Periyar

Today we leave our resort in Kumarakom for Periyar. Periyar is South India's most popular wildlife sanctuary, encompassing an area of 777 sq km and set on the attractive man-made Periyar Lake. Though the sanctuary was made a part of Project Tiger in 1973, it is better known for its elephants. This afternoon enjoy a spice plantation tour and learn about the mystery and history of Indian spices.

Day 11: Periyar to Madurai

Enjoy a morning boat ride on Lake Periyar, keep a look out for wildlife such as elephants, bison, sambar, wild boar, langur, otter and flying squirrel, around the lake as we cruise along. There are also 246 species of birds and 112 species of butterflies to find. Later we drive to the temple city of Madurai. Visit Gandhi museum, Meenakshi temple and Triumalai Nayak Palace which is famous for its rectangular dance courtyard. In the evening enjoy an 'Aarti' (prayer ceremony) in the Meenakshi temple and see the rituals.

Day 12: Madurai to Trichy (Tiruchirappalli)

This morning drive to Trichy, situated on the banks of the river Cauvery and famous for its rich cultural and splendid architectural heritage. This afternoon visit Rock Fort and the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, which is considered as the largest temple complex in India.

Day 13: Trichy to Pondicherry

Today embark on a drive to Pondicherry. Ruled by the French for 300 years, today Pondicherry stands as a living epitome of French culture in India. Later walk around the small town at leisure and explore the mix of French and Tamil architecture and culture.

Day 14: Pondicherry to Mahabalipuram

This morning we visit the community of Auroville, a unique experiment in human unity and international living. Later we drive to Mahabalipuram, a town famous for rock carving and monolithic sculptures. Enjoy a sightseeing tour of the Shore temple dated back to the early 8th Century AD, carved relief rocks depicting Arjuna's Penance and Five Rathas.

Day 15: Mahabalipuram to Kancheepuram / Chennai

Drive from Mahabalipuram to Chennai. En route visit Kancheepuram, the ancient capital of the Pallavas. It is one of the seven scared cities of India and attracts a large number of visitors, especially during the temple car festivals (January to May). A short stop over at Kancheepuram also includes a visit to witness the silk weaving process. Chennai was developed as a British trading post and as such, most of its attractions have a distinct colonial influence. This afternoon enjoy a visit to the fishermen's village and Marina Beach

which stretches for over 13 km, making it the second longest beach in the world.

Day 16: Departure Chennai

This morning visit Fort St George, built by the British around 1653 and see St Mary's Church, India's oldest surviving British church built in 1680. Later transfer to the airport and board our flight back home.

Day 17: Australia

Arrival home in Australia

Tour Facts

- Medium Paced Tour – Ideal for those who want to see focus on southern India and the state of Kerala.
- Tour uses all forms of transport including air, rail, road, houseboats in Kumarakom/ Alleppey, and boat rides in Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary
- Order of events, sightseeing may vary according to local conditions
- All tours are guaranteed at the listed price with a National Escort subject to a minimum of 10 people traveling together

Inclusions

- International airfares, all transportation in India, all meals, entrance fees, guides, daily tours, visa fee for Australian passport holders.

Tour Code	Depart Australia (Fri)	Arrive Australia (Sun)	Twin Share Price
2009			
I9601	06 February	22 February	\$4,280
I9602	27 February	15 March	\$4,280
I9603	09 October	25 October	\$4,680
I9604	13 November	29 November	\$4,680
2010			
I0601	05 February	21 February	\$4,680
I0602	26 February	14 March	\$4,680



Price Guide:

17 Days, Fully inclusive Twin Share. Fly with Singapore Airlines or Thai Airways. From \$ 4,280 per person – Departing Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Perth
Single Supplement – From \$1,300. Land Only from \$ 3,380
Airline Depart taxes and fuel surcharge are not included
Option: Price start from \$380 per person twin share for a 3 Day/2 Night stopover in Singapore or Bangkok