

UNTOLD  
STORIES  
&  
OFF BEATEN  
TRACKS

# SOUTH INDIA







## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Kerala Experience -14 N/15 D	05 - 07
South India Lifescapes (Tamilnadu - Kerala - Karnataka) -18 N/19 D	08 - 10
Dravidian Routes (Exclusive Tamilnadu) -13 N/14 D	11 - 12
Brief South (Tamilnadu & Kerala) - 13 N/14 D	12 - 14
Deccan Circuit (Karnataka - Goa - Mumbai) -13 N/14 D	14 - 16
Tiger Trail (Western Ghats) - 13 N/14 D	16 - 18
Active Extension (Trekking Tour) - 04 N/05 D	18 - 19
River Nila Experience (North Kerala) -14 N/15 D	20 - 24
Short Stories - Short Experience Programs	25
School Stories - Cochin, Kerala	25
Village Life Stories - Poothotta, Kerala	25
Cochin Royal Heritage Trail - Thripunithura, Kerala	26
Cultural Immersion (Kathakali) - Cochin, Kerala	26
Mattancherry Chronicles - Cochin, Kerala	26 - 27
Pepper Trails - Cochin, Kerala	27
Village Life Stories - Manakkodam, Kerala	27
Breakfast Trail - Manakkodam, Kerala	27
Rani's Kitchen - Alleppey, Kerala	28
Tribal Stories - Marayoor, Kerala	28
Tea Trail - Munnar, Kerala	28
Meet The Nairs - Trichur, Kerala	28 - 29
Royal Family Experience - Nilambur, Kerala	29
Royal cuisine stories at Turmerica - Wayanad, Kerala	29
Tribal Cooking stories - Wayanad, Kerala	29 - 30
Madras Chronicles - Chennai, Tamilnadu	30
Meet The Franco - Tamils - Pondicherry	30
Along the River Kaveri - Tanjore Village Stories - Tanjore, Tamilnadu	30 - 31
Arts & Crafts of Tanjore - Tanjore, Tamilnadu	31



# SOUTH INDIA

*A different world of Life Stories, Culture & Cuisine*

## Travel a Dream

Travel is about listening to stories - stories of the making up of a country, a region, culture and its people. At **Keralavoyages**, we help you to listen to the local stories and the life around. Due to its huge geographical size, India has a varied culture, lifestyle and cuisine along with distinctive geographical features. Our role is to help you to explore the real lifescapes of our country by taking you through living stories. While going with our Guide Peter, you will really live with the ordinary people in a backwater island village. With our Naturalist Benny and his team, you will live in the Nature by exploring the Wildlife, Bird Life, Flora, Fauna, Archeological Sites and tribal lifescapes. You may also like to live a real Indian home while you experience a cookery show followed by a meal with our Simi & Kishore. One of our Directors can take you through some interesting farm stories as he is hailing from a village farmer family. You can also visit one of our Special schools for differently abled citizens to learn how these underprivileged members of our society are trained to come to front end life in the society.

Many more living stories like spending a day in a Tea plantation or a temple town etc. are in treasure for you to

experience the beautiful part of our Country - South & Western India. Our showcased programs are only pilot ones or travelled by one of our travelers but if you have a different idea, please feel to write to us so that we can tell you how best we can design another story for you. You can customize your accommodations according to your choice at a boutique, luxury or heritage hotel, a plantation resort or a homestay.

Our consistent efforts are to turn your travel dreams to lifelong cherishing memories. Our expertise and experience taught us to dream ahead of our travelers to customize each and every private tour. We have created a well knit network through off beaten tracks with a local expertise. Our expertise and passion for our region made us the favorite partners for many for South India. If you are looking for a custom made tour on South India, we have the right and updated knowledge on the region with a total involvement of the local community and eco conservation. Our quality standards are stamped by the Accreditation from **Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India and Department of Tourism, Govt of Kerala.**





# Listen to the Stories

## Kerala Experience

### DAY 01 Cochin

On arrival at Cochin Airport, you will be met & transferred to your hotel. Day to relax after long flight. Evening visit a traditional Kathakali centre to watch the exclusive dance drama of Kerala. Cochin, the queen of the Arabian Sea, is one of the most interesting cities of India and has one of the finest natural harbors in the world. A root-conscious people of Kerala have preserved their past not only in the form of history books but also in the form of monuments and palaces. Places, palaces and institutions of historic value are being preserved conscientiously. Overnight at Hotel.

### DAY 02 Cochin

Morning, after breakfast, proceed for a guided village backwater canoe Cruise at Poothotta followed by lunch at the farm house. Afternoon back to Cochin for a guided sightseeing to visit St Francis Church, Jewish Synagogue, Dutch Palace, Chinese Fishing Nets etc. Cochin still keeps its colonial profile left over by many of the foreign influences by British, Dutch & Portuguese. Evening to walk around Fort Cochin to see the life around. Overnight at the Hotel.

**Village backwater Cruise** - A journey in a country boat into the pristine purity of a typical village backwater of Kerala..... goes through the zigzagging narrow canals and paddy fields fringed with coconut palms..... watch rare birds.... a demonstration on coir making or a village kitchen etc. Your lunch will be prepared by the village woman with fresh catch from the river. Our guide Peter can tell you many stories about the Nature and life around.

### DAY 03 Cochin - The Royal story

Today you will be taken for an interactive tour through the Royal remnants of Cochin. We provide an alternate narrative to visitors through the Cochin Royal Heritage Trail which tells the story of Cochin through that of the Cochin Royal Family, while still covering Cochin's relations with the Europeans as well as other communities, thereby sharing a lesser known but very fascinating and important element of Cochin's history. The Cochin Royal Heritage Trail takes visitors to the erstwhile royal town of Tripunithura and relates stories connected to the Royal Family of Cochin. The trail ends with high-tea with present day members of the Royal Family. Evening visit Pepper Trails Kitchen to witness a cookery show followed by dinner with the host family. Your Hosts Simi & Kishore will receive you at their home to become a part of their home. Simi will be demonstrating few Kerala dishes and you are also supposed to be a part of cooking your dinner. Overnight at Hotel.

### DAY 04 Cochin - Oonukal - Munnar (4 Hour Drive)

Morning, after breakfast, proceed to Munnar, known as nature lover's paradise. Enroute you will be stopped at Oonukal at a Rubber Plantation to have an interaction with the planter family. The farm has many other crops like Pineapple, fruit trees, Spice etc. Later lunch from a local restaurant. On arrival in Munnar, check into your resort for overnight stay.

Munnar is set at an altitude starting from 1500 MSL which reaches 2695 MSL at Anamudi, the highest peak in South India. The vast expanse of tea gardens, exquisite flora and fauna are additional attractions to this green beauty. There are many wildlife sanctuaries



around Munnar. So the activities in Munnar can be varied from a tea plantation walk, tea making experience, medium or hard treks, Wildlife exploration, birding, camping etc.



Travelling with Kerala Voyages has been one of the most memorable tours of my life. The personalized service is beyond from what I know from any other tour operator. The company offers the best value for money. Thanks to Director George Scaria who passionately takes care of the quality of his tours and the well-being of every customer.

**Ms Jana Tschitschke**

Repeated Single Woman traveler Germany-February 2017

### DAY 05 Tea Story: From Plant to Packet

Full day guided Tea Trail experience. You will be driven to a Tea Plantation to go with the workers to pluck the tea leaves and you will go through the whole process of making tea. In between our Naturalist will give you short Nature walks through the tea plantation. Lunch will be served at the Estate Bungalow. Finally you will taste your own tea and will take home half kilo of Tea as memory of your day experience. Overnight at the Hotel.



## DAY 06 Marayoor Tribal Village & Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary

Full day guided village experience tour. After breakfast you will be driven to Marayoor Village where you will walk through the side of sandalwood forest followed by visiting a tribal village where you will see a different way of life. Because of the present literacy and education, the life of tribal people is changed a lot, though. Visit to a rock cut temple, ancient inscriptions etc. Walk to the Mount of the Dead, a world famous Megalithic site with dolmens, dolmenoid and dolmenoid cists. Visit to a traditional sugarcane farm and Jaggery (black sugar) manufacturing. You will visit a village home for a traditional lunch on banana leaf. Later you will be taken to Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary for a guided trek through the wet evergreen forest to watch wildlife. Overnight at the Hotel.

As you go on the nature trail in Chinnar, you are bound to come across a fascinating plethora of bird and animal life. Chinnar Sanctuary is located in the eastern slope of Western ghats sharing its flora and fauna with Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and Eravikulam National Park. Elephant, gaur, leopard, spotted deer, sambar, grizzled giant squirrel, hanuman langur, long eared fish owl etc. inhabit the Chinnar forests. The grizzled Giant squirrel is an endangered species.

## DAY 07 Munnar - Kailasappara Plantations - Spice Story (2 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to a spice plantation with Cardamom, Pepper, Coffee etc. Afternoon to explore the plantations, cardamom processing etc. Overnight stay at the Plantation Bungalow.

Kailasapara is a hamlet in the picturesque upper reaches of the Western Ghat mountains. The mountains here slope down into picturesque valleys where numerous rivulets wind through vast stretches of thick forests and plantations. Set on a hillock amidst tea bushes, Chalet Jacaranda is an exquisitely designed and furnished home. Surrounded by an enormous plantation of cardamom, pepper, tea and coffee, the setting is serene and secluded with the persistent chatter of cicadas, the conversations of birds and throughout the day a gentle breeze for company.



George Scaria, Awesome meeting you. You have done so much for us. This journey is the best trip we had ever. All guides were good. Our driver did a superb job in helping us at any time, we felt safe, trusted him too-also great conversations. Appreciate your awesome service mentality and readiness for customizing individual voyages.

**Carolyn & Rene Huber - Switzerland**  
(Honeymoon) Dec 2016

## DAY 08 Kailasappara - Periyar (1.5 Hour Drive)

Today, you will be transferred to Periyar, the famous wildlife destination of Kerala. Afternoon visit a Spice Farm and later shopping for spices. Kerala produces most of the costly Spices available in India. This includes Pepper, Cardamom, Clove, Cinnamon, Vanilla, Ginger, Turmeric, Nutmeg etc. Overnight at Hotel.

## DAY 09 Periyar - Cumbum Valley Organic Farm

Early morning go for a short trekking or boating through the Sanctuary to watch wildlife. After breakfast, drive to Harvest Farms for a guided tour through an Organic fruit and veg farm along with a hatchery. Enjoy a traditional lunch prepared with homegrown products or locally sourced. You will be taken for a bullock cart ride



through the farm village for a local experience. Return to your hotel for overnight stay.

Harvest Fresh Fam is a certified Organic farm located in the heart of beautiful Cumbum Valley in Tamilnadu State amidst cloud kissed mountains, bubbling streams and lush farmlands. You will stroll among pomegranate, papaya and mango orchards, watch the bees and its saplings, composting methods, livestock and herbal gardens. Climb the watch tower for a commanding view of the valley and to sum up with a sumptuous meal of local cuisine made from home grown or locally sourced ingredients.

## DAY 10 Periyar - Kumarakom Backwater Village (4.5 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Kumarakom, which is famous for its backwater & scenic beauty, sprinkled with traditional houseboats, country crafts, rural lifestyles and Tranquility. Enjoy the backwater life. Overnight at the Resort.

Backwaters is the unique attraction for Kerala. With its vibrant and genuine lifestyle, one would find it a serene abode to have a peaceful life experience. For a traveler, there can be exciting life scenes around like the women washing clothes at the river side or housewives rowing private canoes to reach home, a coconut climber or a toddy tapper.

## DAY 11 Backwaters

Full day to rewind on the backwaters. You may opt to go for a village walk or even visit to Aymanam Village nearby which attributes a lot to the renowned book "God of Small Things". You may also enjoy a relaxing Ayurvedic rejuvenating massage. Overnight at the Resort.





I have nothing but accolades and praises for all that you have done for our group. Thank you again for service and hospitality par excellence! You guys are amazing!!

**Slomo George**

Tour Leader from Travel & Learn, Norway Feb 2017

## DAY 12 Alleppey Houseboat

Enjoy your breakfast at the resort. Later drive to Alleppey to board your exclusive Houseboat for a cruise through the backwater villages followed by overnight stay on board. Your meals are freshly cooked and served on board. Explore the amazing backwater life of Kerala! Overnight on Houseboat.

The uniqueness about a houseboat cruise is the breathtaking view of the untouched and otherwise inaccessible rural Kerala. The houseboats have all the creature comforts of a good hotel including furnished bedrooms, modern toilets, cozy living rooms, a kitchen where your meals are cooked on board. The food from the local cuisine is served by the Kuttanad locals, on board and the crew are men. Enjoying a cruise in these backwaters is not to be missed, as it leaves you feeling fully rejuvenated. You get to experience the native way of living. The experience on the Houseboat is not the one to be explained by words. Its to be lived and evolved by yourself.

## DAY 13 Alleppey - Marari Fishermen Village

Enjoy your breakfast on board. Later, checkout & drive to Marari, a relatively quiet beach paradise of Kerala. Rest of the day at leisure at your resort on the beach. You may opt to go for an Ayurvedic Massage or a village walk through the nearby fishermen village. Overnight at the Resort.

## DAY 14 Marari Fishermen Village - Story of life harmony

Full day at the resort. An authentic experience of Kerala's traditional fishing villages, and a re-creation of an ancient, harmonious way of life. By evening it may interesting to visit the local temple to watch the local crowd coming for worship and socialisation. Overnight at Resort.

## DAY 15 Cochin Departure (2.5 Hour Drive)

Today, you will be assisted and transferred to Cochin International airport for your flight home!!



We had a wonderful time in Kerala - we all enjoyed it very much and experienced a lot. Rajeev & Anoop supported us in a very friendly way wherever we needed a help. We were very happy with our German escort, his knowledge on German language and his ability to adapt to changing situations.

**Ms Beate**

Tour Leader Majesta Group - Germany, Nov 2016





# South India Lifescapes

## Tamilnadu - Kerala - Karnataka

### DAY 01 Chennai

On arrival in Chennai, you will be transferred to your Hotel. Afternoon go for an orientation tour of Chennai. Overnight stay at Hotel.

### DAY 02 Chennai - Kanchipuram (1.5 Hour Drive) - Mahabalipuram (1.5 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Kanchipuram, the city of thousand temples. Visit Kailasanatha Temple, Ekambareswara Temple and Varadaraja or Devaraja Temple. You may also visit a Silk weaving unit as Kanchipuram Silk is renowned for its unique design and quality. Later, drive to Mahabalipuram to check into your hotel. Overnight at Hotel.

Mahabalipuram has a significant role in the history and architecture of India which gives a major role for the archaeological enthusiasts. This is the only place in India where we have Cave Architecture, Monolithic Architecture and Structural Architecture still existing simultaneously. Also the long stretch of clean beach will give one a peaceful relaxation in Mahabalipuram.

### DAY 03 Mahabalipuram

After breakfast, sightseeing of Mahabalipuram to explore the heritage of Mahabalipuram temples, built in 7th & 8th century AD which are today the sight of several antique sculptural marvels. The main attractions are Arjuna's Penance, Rock cut temples, Five Rathas etc. Afternoon at leisure for free walks. Overnight at hotel.

### DAY 04 Mahabalipuram - Pondicherry (2 Hour Drive)

After breakfast at the hotel, proceed to Pondicherry which still carries a strong flavour of the French presence in India. Visit Auroville enroute. Auroville can be of special interest for those who seek for the universal humanitarian initiatives. One can see the entire idea behind the universal love and harmony being the

principle behind Auroville life. On arrival, check in at your hotel. Afternoon a familiarisation of the City. The traditional French architecture is still maintained even in the latest renovations and the Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is the authorized agency for any such renovations in Pondicherry. Evening you may walk around the beach side to experience the local life around. Overnight stay at Pondicherry.

### DAY 05 Gangaikondacholapuram - Darasuram - Kumbakonam (4 Hour Drive + Sightseeing time)

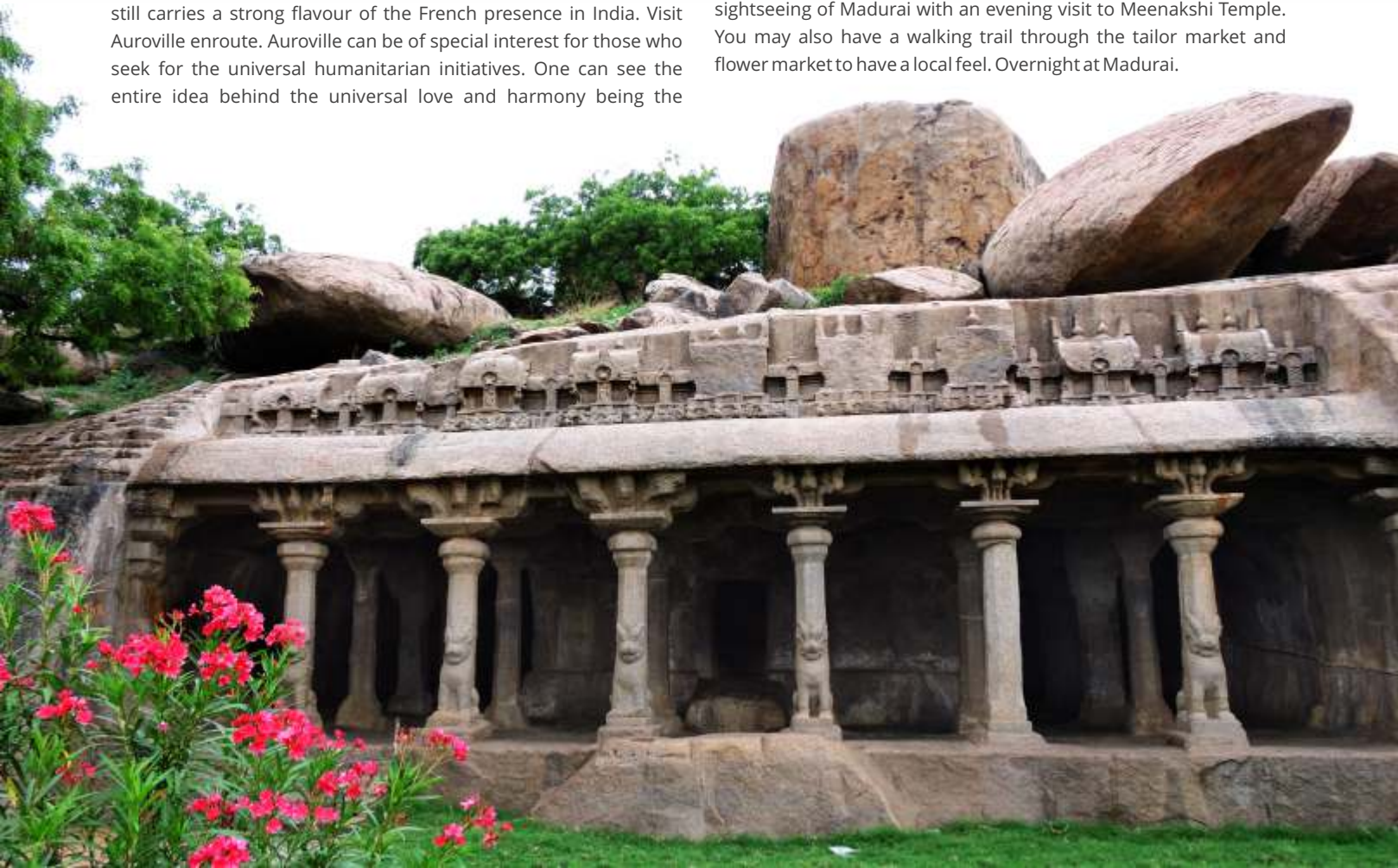
After an early breakfast at the hotel, drive to Gangaikondacholapuram (UNESCO temple) to visit the amazing architectural Marvel. Later visit Darasuram Irvadeeswarar Temple (UNESCO Monument). On arrival at Kumbakonam, check in to your hotel. Evening experience a cookery demonstration on traditional snack & Sweet for your evening tea/coffee. Overnight stay at Kumbakonam.

### DAY 06 Tanjore - Kumbakonam

Early morning, you shall visit the Wholesale Vegetable market at Darasuram which is said to be the second largest in Asia. After breakfast, drive to Tanjore to visit the Big Temple (Brihadeeswara Temple) and Art Gallery. Thanjavur is also famous for its distinctive art style, which is usually a combination of raised and painted surfaces. Tanjore paintings are deeply rooted in tradition and still innovative within limits. This art is sacred and dedicated. Afternoon return to Kumbakonam. Evening enjoy a bullock cart ride for half an hour to the nearby village. Overnight stay at Kumbakonam.

### DAY 07 Sreerangam - Madurai (5 Hour Drive)

After breakfast drive to Sreerangam to visit the Temple with the tallest Temple Tower (Entrance Tower) in India. Continue drive to Madurai, an ancient city, more than 2,500 years old, known as the Athens of the east, for overnight stay. Afternoon for sightseeing of Madurai with an evening visit to Meenakshi Temple. You may also have a walking trail through the tailor market and flower market to have a local feel. Overnight at Madurai.







“Very professional, understanding and helpful team who did a good selection of hotels and services. The attraction was the partners themselves were the first contact for tour planning and any kind of assistance. Good guides throughout the long tour. Vehicle was very comfortable and clean. Driver was a very safe driver even under difficult driving circumstances-very agreeable person, very helpful”

Mr/s Walter Wirsig  
Switzerland, December 2015

## DAY 08 Madurai - Periyar (3.5 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Periyar. Enroute visit Harvest Fresh Farms for a guided tour through an Organic fruit and veg farm along with a hatchery. Enjoy a traditional lunch prepared with homegrown products or locally sourced. Later on arrival at Periyar, check in at your hotel. Overnight stay at Periyar.

Harvest Fresh Fam is a certified Organic farm located in the heart of beautiful Cumbum Valley in Tamilnadu State amidst cloud kissed mountains, bubbling streams and lush farmlands. You will stroll among pomegranade, papaya and mango orchards, watch the bees and its saplings, composting methods, livestock and herbal gardens.

## DAY 09 Periyar

Early morning go for a short trekking or boating through the Sanctuary to watch wildlife. Enjoy a leisurely breakfast at your hotel. Later visit a Spice farm to familiarize with Indian Spices like Pepper, Cardamom, Clove, Cinnamon, Ginger, Turmeric, Nutmeg etc. Also visit a tea factory to see the tea making process. The factory is located inside a big tea plantation with a sales outlet for buying garden fresh tea. Evening for free walks and shopping fresh spices. Overnight at your hotel for overnight stay.

## DAY 10 Periyar - Kumarakom Backwater Village (4.5 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Kumarakom, which is famous for its backwater & scenic beauty, sprinkled with traditional houseboats, country crafts, rural lifestyles and Tranquility. Enjoy the backwater life. You may opt to have a rejuvenating Ayurvedic Massage. Overnight at the Resort.

Backwaters is the unique attraction for Kerala. With its vibrant and genuine lifestyle, one would find it a serene abode to have a peaceful life experience. For a traveler, there can be exciting life scenes around like the women washing clothes at the river side or housewives rowing private canoes to reach home, a coconut climber or a toddy tapper.

## DAY 11 Alleppey Houseboat

Enjoy your breakfast at the resort. Later drive to Alleppey to board your exclusive Houseboat for a cruise through the backwater villages followed by overnight stay on board. Your meals are freshly cooked and served on board. Explore the amazing backwater life of Kerala! Overnight at the Houseboat.

## DAY 12 Alleppey Cookery show - Cochin (1.5 Hour Drive)

After breakfast on board, check out and drive to a Heritage home nearby to participate in an interactive cookery show followed by lunch with the family. Afternoon drive to Cochin, known as Queen of Arabian Sea. On arrival, check into your hotel. Evening visit a traditional Kathakali centre to watch the exclusive dance drama of Kerala.



Cochin the queen of the Arabian Sea is one of the most interesting cities of India and has one of the finest natural harbors in the world. A root-conscious people of Kerala have preserved their past not only in the form of history books but also in the form of monuments and palaces. Overnight at Hotel



“A well organized, totally customized tour by George. Nothing changed -all as scheduled. We had a professional driver who was ready to help us always. All our guides were well trained and knowledgeable who could share the local experiences of the places visited”

Mr/s Daniel Bernini  
Italy, Dec 2016



## DAY 13 Cochin

Morning, after breakfast, proceed for a guided village backwater canoe Cruise at Poothotta followed by lunch at the farm house. Afternoon back to Cochin for a guided sightseeing to visit St Francis Church, Jewish Synagogue, Dutch Palace, Chinese Fishing Nets etc. Cochin still keeps its colonial profile left over by many of the foreign influences by British, Dutch & Portuguese. Evening to walk around Fort Cochin to see the life around. Overnight at the Hotel.

**Village backwater Cruise** - A journey in a country boat into the pristine purity of a typical village backwater of Kerala..... goes through the zigzagging narrow canals and paddy fields fringed with coconut palms..... watch rare birds..... a demonstration on coir making or a village kitchen etc. Your lunch will be prepared by the wife of our boatman with fresh catch from the river. Our guide Peter can tell you many stories about the Nature and life around.

## DAY 14 Cochin - Calicut (By Train 4.5 Hour) - Wayanad (2 Hour Drive)

Today you will be dropped at Ernakulam Railway Station to board your train to Calicut. This journey will give you some real life inputs of local people. On arrival at Calicut, you will be picked up to drive to Vythiri, Wayanad - a North Kerala Hill Station. You may opt to stay at a Homestay, Plantation bungalows, Tree Houses or Luxury Resorts. Overnight stay at Wayanad.

## DAY 15 Wayanad Village - Nilgiri Wildlife

After breakfast, you will go for a guided village walk followed by a traditional lunch served on banana leaf. Afternoon you will be taken to a wildlife sanctuary in the Nilgiri Biosphere for a wildlife vehicle safari through the National park. By evening return to your resort for overnight stay. (Any wildlife activities are fully under the control of the respective Forest & Wildlife wardens and the safaris may be changed in case of an unexpected wildfire or similar natural incidents.)

## DAY 16 Wayanad - Mysore (4 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Mysore. You will be driving through Wildlife Sanctuaries which will enable you to watch a lot of wildlife on both sides of road. On arrival in Mysore, check into your hotel. Afternoon visit Maharaja's Palace and later vegetable market and flower market. Mysore, the capital city of the Wodeyars has always enchanted its admirers with its quaint charm, rich heritage, magnificent palaces, beautifully laid-out gardens, imposing buildings, broad shady avenues and sacred temples. Evening you may visit the Palace again for a light & sound show followed by lighting up. Overnight at the Hotel.



"You have a very good team. The cookery show was very nice. All guides were very good. Car was comfortable and clean always. Manu was a perfect driver, always helpful and friendly. The two weeks were wonderfully organized. All people from your team or the hotels are super friendly and helpful. We thank you so much and will never forget this great journey and recommend you"

**Michael & Petra**  
Germany, March 2017



## DAY 17 Mysore

Full day to explore Mysore. After breakfast, drive to Somnathpur famous for its Hoysala Architecture. Enroute visit Chamundi hills from the foothills. Later visit Fort Srirangapatnam, Tipu's summer Palace. Return to your hotel for overnight stay. You may opt to go walking for local shopping etc.

## DAY 18 Mysore - Hassan (3 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Hassan. Check into your hotel on arrival. Afternoon visit Belur Channakeshava & Halebid Hoysalewswara temples famous for its Hoysala Architecture using the soft stone with amazing hand craft during 12th century. Overnight at the Hotel.

## DAY 19 Hassan - Bangalore Departure (5 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Bangalore. Enroute visit the Jain temple at Sravanabelagola which has one of the tallest stupas. On arrival at Bangalore, check into an airport hotel for wash & change. Later after an early dinner, you will be transferred to Bangalore International Airport to connect your flight home.



# Dravidian Routes

## Exclusive Tamilnadu

### DAY 01 Chennai

On arrival in Chennai, you will be transferred to your Hotel. Afternoon go for an orientation tour of Chennai visiting Santhome Cathedral, Kapaleeshwar Temple, Adayar Banyan Tree and Marina Beach. Overnight stay at Hotel.

### DAY 02 Chennai - Kanchipuram (1.5 Hour Drive) - Mahabalipuram (1.5 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Kanchipuram, the city of thousand temples. Visit Kailasanatha Temple, Ekambareswara Temple and Varadaraja or Devaraja Temple. You may also visit a Silk weaving unit as Kanchipuram Silk is renowned for its unique design and quality. Later, drive to Mahabalipuram to check into your hotel. Overnight at Hotel.

Mahabalipuram has a significant role in the history and architecture of India which gives a major role for the archaeological enthusiasts. This is the only place in India where we have Cave Architecture, Monolithic Architecture and Structural Architecture still existing simultaneously. Also the long stretch of clean beach will give one a peaceful relaxation in Mahabalipuram.

### DAY 03 Mahabalipuram

After breakfast, sightseeing of Mahabalipuram to explore the heritage of Mahabalipuram temples, built in 7th & 8th century AD which are today the sight of several antique sculptural marvels. The main attractions are Arjuna's Penance, Rock cut temples, Five Rathas etc. Afternoon at leisure for free walks. Overnight at hotel.

### DAY 04 Mahabalipuram - Pondicherry (2 Hour Drive)

After breakfast at the hotel, proceed to Pondicherry which still carries a strong flavour of the French presence in India. Visit Auroville enroute. Auroville can be of special interest for those who seek for the universal humanitarian initiatives. One can see the

entire idea behind the universal love and harmony being the principle behind Auroville life. On arrival, check in at your hotel. Afternoon a familiarisation of the City. The traditional French architecture is still maintained even in the latest renovations and the Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is the authorized agency for any such renovations in Pondicherry. Evening you may walk around the beach side to experience the local life around. Overnight stay at Pondicherry.

### DAY 05 Pondicherry - Gingee Fort (2 Hour Drive) - Thiruvannamalai (1 Hour Drive)

After an early breakfast, drive to Gingee Fort also known as Senchi Fort. You will visit the monuments located at the foot of the hill. Later drive to Tiruvannamalai known as Varanasi of South, to visit Arunachaleswarar Temple, Ramana Maharshi Ashram and Girivalam Road where you will find a number of Sadhoos just like in Varanasi. Evening return to Pondicherry for overnight stay.

### DAY 06 Gangaikondacholapuram - Darasuram - Kumbakonam (4 Hour Drive + Sightseeing time)

After an early breakfast at the hotel, drive to Gangaikondacholapuram (UNESCO temple) to visit the amazing architectural Marvel. Later visit Darasuram Irvadeeswarar Temple (UNESCO Monument). On arrival at Kumbakonam, check in to your hotel. Evening experience a cookery demonstration on traditional snack & Sweet for your evening tea/coffee. Overnight stay at Kumbakonam.

### DAY 07 Tanjore - Kumbakonam

Early morning, you shall visit the Wholesale Vegetable market at Darasuram which is said to be the second largest in Asia. After breakfast, check out and drive to Tanjore to visit the Big Temple (Brihadeeswara Temple) and Art Gallery. Thanjavur is also famous for its distinctive art style, which is usually a combination of raised and painted surfaces. Tanjore paintings are deeply rooted in tradition and still innovative within limits. This art is sacred and dedicated. Afternoon return to Kumbakonam. Evening enjoy a bullock cart ride for half an hour to the nearby village. Overnight stay at Kumbakonam.







**DAY 08**

### Day Trip to Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary (3 Hour Drive One Way)

After an early breakfast, drive to Point Calimere Wildlife & Bird Sanctuary with a packed lunch. You will have a ride through the Sanctuary to watch many migratory birds and wild animals. The sanctuary was created in 1967 for conservation of the near threatened blackbuck antelope, an endemic mammal species of India. Afternoon return to Kumbakonam. Enroute visit the popular salt swamps where the villagers make raw salt. Overnight stay at Kumbakonam.

**DAY 09**

### Sreerangam - Chettinad (Karaikudi) (3 Hour Drive)

After breakfast drive to Sreerangam to visit the Temple with the tallest Temple Tower (Entrance Tower) in India. Continue drive to Chettinadu Village. Rest of the day free to relax. Overnight stay at the hotel.

**DAY 10**

### Chettinad

Full day to explore the heritage and life of Chettinad. Also visit Chettinad Palace from outside. You may visit the Athangudi tile manufacturing units which is exclusive to this region. Overnight stay at the hotel.

**DAY 11**

### Chettinad - Madurai (2 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Madurai, an ancient city, more than 2,500 years old, known as the Athens of the east for overnight stay. Afternoon for sightseeing of Madurai with an evening visit to Meenakshi Temple. You may also have a walking trail through the tailor market and flower market to have a local feel. Overnight at Madurai.

"All arrangements made to us including backwater boat trip have been totally satisfactory. We have enjoyed it all. We found our driver quite exceptional- always cheerful, always good humored, absolutely reliable and extremely knowledgeable. We will miss him"

**Ms Felicity & Mr Michael Cambridge**  
United Kingdom Feb 2016

**DAY 12**

### Madurai - Cape - Anantya (5 Hour Drive)

After an early breakfast, proceed to Kanyakumari (Cape Comerin), the southern most tip of Indian peninsula to visit the Sucheendram Temple from outside. Later drive to Padmanabhapuram Palace (Closed on Mondays) before checking into Anantya Resorts on the banks of Chittar Lake. Evening at leisure at the resort. Overnight at the resort.

**DAY 13**

### Anantya

Full day at leisure at the Resort. You may opt to have an Ayurvedic Massage or some local tours offered from the Resort. Overnight at the resort.

**DAY 14**

### Trivandrum Departure (1.5 Hour Drive)

Today you will be transferred to Trivandrum International Airport to connect your departure flight.

## Brief South

## Tamilnadu & Kerala

**DAY 01**

### Chennai - Mahabalipuram (1 Hour Drive)

On arrival at Chennai, you will be received to drive to Mahabalipuram. If your arrival is during early morning hours, you may opt to check into an airport hotel for breakfast and freshen up. On arrival at Mahabalipuram, check into your hotel. Rest of the day free. Overnight at Hotel.

**DAY 02**

### Mahabalipuram

After breakfast, sightseeing of Mahabalipuram to explore the heritage of Mahabalipuram temples, built in 7th & 8th century AD which are today the sight of several antique sculptural marvels. The main attractions are Arjuna's Penance, Rock cut temples, Five Rathas etc. Afternoon at leisure for free walks. Overnight at hotel.

**DAY 03**

### Mahabalipuram - Pondicherry (2 Hour Drive)

After breakfast at the hotel, proceed to Pondicherry which still carries a strong flavour of the French presence in India. Visit Auroville enroute. Auroville can be of special interest for those who seek for the universal humanitarian initiatives. One can see the entire idea behind the universal love and harmony being the principle behind Auroville life. On arrival, check in at your hotel. Afternoon a familiarisation of the City. Overnight stay at Pondicherry.

**DAY 04**

### Gangaikondacholapuram - Darasuram - Tanjore (4.5 Hour Drive + Sightseeing time)

After an early breakfast at the hotel, drive to Gangaikondacholapuram (UNESCO temple) to visit the amazing architectural Marvel. Later visit Darasuram Irvadeeswarar Temple (UNESCO Monument). On arrival at Tanjore, check into your hotel for overnight stay.



## DAY 05 Tanjore

Today to explore Tanjore. Visit the Big Temple (Brihadeeswara Temple) and Art Gallery. Thanjavur is also famous for its distinctive art style, which is usually a combination of raised and painted surfaces. Tanjore paintings are deeply rooted in tradition and still innovative within limits. This art is sacred and dedicated. Overnight stay at Tanjore.

## DAY 06 Sreerangam - Madurai (4.5 Hour Drive)

After breakfast drive to Sreerangam to visit the Temple with the tallest Temple Tower (Entrance Tower) in India. Continue drive to Madurai, an ancient city, more than 2,500 years old, known as the Athens of the east for overnight stay. Afternoon for sightseeing of Madurai with an evening visit to Meenakshi Temple. You may also have a walking trail through the tailor market and flower market to have a local feel. Overnight at Madurai.

## DAY 07 Madurai - Munnar (5 Hour Drive)

Morning, after breakfast, proceed to Munnar, known as nature lover's paradise. You will be driving through the tiny Tamilian villages before entering the Western Ghats hills. On arrival in Munnar, check into your resort for overnight stay.

Munnar is set at an altitude starting from 1500 MSL which reaches 2695 MSL at Anamudi, the highest peak in South India. The vast expanse of tea gardens, exquisite flora and fauna are additional attractions to this green beauty. There are many wildlife sanctuaries around Munnar. So the activities in Munnar can be varied from a tea plantation walk, tea making experience, medium or hard treks, Wildlife exploration, birding, camping etc.

## DAY 08 Marayoor Tribal Village & Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary

Full day guided village experience tour. After breakfast you will be driven to Marayoor Village where you will walk through the side of sandalwood forest followed by visiting a tribal village where

you will see a different way of life. Because of the present literacy and education, the life of tribal people is changed a lot, though. Visit to a rock cut temple, ancient inscriptions etc. Walk to the Mount of the Dead, a world famous Megalithic site with dolmens, dolmenoid and dolmenoid cists. Visit to a traditional sugarcane farm and Jaggery (black sugar) manufacturing. You will visit a village home for a traditional lunch on banana leaf. Later you will be taken to Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary for a guided trek through the wet evergreen forest to watch wildlife. Overnight at the Hotel.

As you go on the nature trail in Chinnar, you are bound to come across a fascinating plethora of bird and animal life. Chinnar Sanctuary is located in the eastern slope of Western ghats sharing its flora and fauna with Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and Eravikulam National Park. Elephant, gaur, leopard, spotted deer, sambar, grizzled giant squirrel, hanuman languor, long eared fish owl etc. inhabit the Chinnar forests. The grizzled Giant squirrel is an endangered species.

## DAY 09 Munnar - Cochin (4 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, check out and drive to Cochin, known as Queen of Arabian Sea. On arrival, check into your hotel. Evening visit a traditional Kathakali centre to watch the exclusive dance drama of Kerala. Overnight at Hotel.

## DAY 10 Cochin

Morning, after breakfast, proceed for a guided village backwater canoe Cruise at Poothotta followed by lunch at the farm house. Afternoon back to Cochin for a guided sightseeing to visit St Francis Church, Jewish Synagogue, Dutch Palace, Chinese Fishing Nets etc. Cochin still keeps its colonial profile left over by many of the foreign influences by British, Dutch & Portuguese. Evening to walk around Fort Cochin to see the life around. Overnight at the Hotel.

## DAY 11 Alleppey Houseboat (1.5 Hour Drive)

After a leisurely breakfast, drive to Alleppey to board your





exclusive Houseboat for a cruise through the backwater villages followed by overnight stay on board. Your meals are freshly cooked and served on board. Explore the amazing backwater life of Kerala! Overnight at the Houseboat.

#### **DAY 12** Alleppey - Heritage Home Cookery Show - Marari Fishermen Village (1 Hour drive)

After breakfast on board, check out and drive to a Heritage home nearby to participate in an interactive cookery show followed by lunch with the family. Later drive to Marari, a relatively quiet beach paradise of Kerala. You may opt to visit Rest of the day at leisure at your resort on the beach. You may opt to go for an Ayurvedic Massage or a village walk through the nearby fishermen village. Overnight at the Resort.

#### **DAY 13** Marari Fishermen Village - Story of life harmony

Full day at the resort. An authentic experience of Kerala's traditional fishing villages, and a re-creation of an ancient, harmonious way of life. By evening it may be interesting to visit the local temple to watch the local crowd coming for worship and socialisation. Overnight at Resort.

#### **DAY 14** Cochin Departure (2.5 Hour Drive)

Today, you will be assisted and transferred to Cochin International airport for your flight home!!

Option for Beach Extension at **Marari Beach**

## Deccan Circuit

### The Royal Story

### - Karnataka - Goa - Mumbai

#### **DAY 01** Bangalore - Mysore (3.5 Hour Drive)

On arrival at early morning, you will be transferred to an Airport hotel for taking rest. Later after a leisurely breakfast, drive to

Mysore, the Palace city of South India. On arrival in Mysore, check into your hotel. Afternoon visit Maharaja's Palace and later vegetable market and flower market. Mysore, the capital city of the Wodeyars has always enchanted its admirers with its quaint charm, rich heritage, magnificent palaces, beautifully laid-out gardens, imposing buildings, broad shady avenues and sacred temples. There's an old world charm about the city that reaches out and leaves no one untouched. Evening you may visit the Palace again for a light & sound show followed by lighting up. Overnight at the Hotel.

#### **DAY 02** Mysore

Full day to explore Mysore. After breakfast, drive to Somnathpur famous for its Hoysala Architecture. Enroute visit Chamundi hills from the foothills. Later visit Fort Srirangapatnam, Tipu's summer Palace. Return to your hotel for overnight stay. You may opt to go walking for local shopping etc.

#### **DAY 03** Mysore - Hassan (3 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Hassan. Check into your hotel on arrival. Afternoon visit Belur Channakeshava & Halebid Hoysaleswara temples famous for its Hoysala Architecture using the soft stone with amazing hand craft during 12th century. Overnight at the Hotel.

#### **DAY 04** Hassan - Hampi (6 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Hampi, the historic headquarters of Vijayanagar Empire. Enroute visit Chitradurga Fort from the foothills. Arrive early evening in Hospet/Hampi, check in your hotel. Overnight at Hotel.

#### **DAY 05** Hampi

After breakfast, go for a full day guided sightseeing of Hampi, otherwise renowned as the largest open museum. The entire city is an open museum which is praised as one of the most important Heritage Sites of India. The destruction of the Vijayanagara capital, Hampi took almost six months for the Muslim consortium of Kings. If you finish your sightseeing by 4 PM, you may opt to visit Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary to watch Sloth Bears. The Sanctuary is open from 1 PM to 5.30 PM only. Overnight stay at hotel.







#### DAY 06 Hampi - Badami (3 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Badami. Afternoon visit Banasankari Temple and Badami Caves. These cave temples date back to 6th Century and await UNESCO accreditation as World Heritage Site. Overnight at Badami.

#### DAY 07 Aihole - Pattadakal

After breakfast, visit Aihole & Pattadakal, famous as the 'Cradle of Hindu Temple Architecture'. Overnight at Badami.

Off the beaten track of modern civilisations, situated on the banks of Malaprabha river, is a little village known as Aihole. which has over 100 temples scattered around the village. Visit the oldest temple here is, perhaps, the **Lad Khan temple** dating back to the 5th century. The Durga Temple in Aihole is decidedly one of the finest specimens belonging to the late 7th century.

The group of monuments at Pattadakal is a splendid contribution of Chalukyas of Badami, lies on the left bank of river Malaprabha amidst a rugged yet picturesque landscape. According to historians and scholars, the architecture skill of Badami Chalukya was evolved in Aihole and developed in Badami and further reached its pinnacle in terms of growth and perfection at Pattadakal.

#### DAY 08 Badami - Belgaum ( 3.5 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, check out and drive to Belgaum, a nice township with life. Check into a hotel. Later visit Belgaum Fort and the Jain temple inside the Fort. Overnight at Hotel.

#### DAY 09 Belgaum - Goa (4 Hour Drive)

Breakfast at the hotel. Later drive to Goa, the world renowned beach destination of India. Goa still keeps its colonial influences with a visibly unique people and life. More matured a destination with tourist friendly beaches and people around. It is also one of India's smallest and most charming state capitals. On arrival, check into your hotel. Overnight at Hotel.





## DAY 10 Goa

After breakfast go for a guided sightseeing of Old Goa to visit the historic churches like the chapel of St Catherine, Basilica of Bom Jesus and other old churches around etc. You will be driving over River Mandovi. Overnight at Hotel.

## DAY 11 Goa

Full day at leisure on beach. Overnight at Hotel.

## DAY 12 Goa - Mumbai

After breakfast, you will be transferred to Goa Airport to board your flight to Mumbai. On arrival in Mumbai, you will be transferred to your hotel. Evening for free walks or shopping. Overnight at hotel.

## DAY 13 Mumbai

Full day guided sightseeing of Mumbai. You will be covering Gateway Of India, Taj Mahal Palace, Cathedral of Holy Name, State Police Head Quarters, Prince Wales Museum, Dhobi Ghat, Mumbai University from outside, Mumbai High Court Building and Western Railway Head Quarters. Overnight at Hotel.

## DAY 14 Mumbai Departure

Today, you will be transferred to Mumbai International Airport to connect your flight home or extension towards Aurangabad.

Option for **Ajantha & Ellora** Extension

# Tiger Trail

## Western Ghats

Our Nature & Wildlife Tours are specially designed for the Nature enthusiasts who wish to explore a bit of extra than ordinary. All our Nature & Wildlife related programs are well crafted by our Naturalist Mr Benny Kurien with proper guidance from our operational team. Mr Benny is a Naturalist and Wildlife expert on Western Ghats of India with an in depth knowledge on the flora and fauna, wildlife and bird life. He is associated with our Responsible Tourism initiatives through many Eco Tourism Societies in different Wildlife spots in the Western Ghats. This is mainly to support the tribal communities in our region.

## DAY 01 Cochin

On arrival at Cochin Airport, you will be met & transferred to your hotel. Day to relax after long flight. Evening visit a traditional Kathakali centre to watch the exclusive dance drama of Kerala. Overnight at Hotel.

## DAY 02 Cochin

Morning, after breakfast, proceed for a guided village backwater canoe Cruise at Poothotta followed by lunch at the farm house. Afternoon back to Cochin for a guided sightseeing to visit St Francis Church, Jewish Synagogue, Dutch Palace, Chinese Fishing Nets etc. Cochin still keeps its colonial profile left over by many of the foreign influences by British, Dutch & Portuguese. Evening to walk around Fort Cochin to see the life around. Overnight at the Hotel.



## DAY 03 Cochin - Athirappally - Sholayar - Valparai - Sethumadai (5.5 Hour Drive)

After an early breakfast, drive to Athirappally forest to watch the amazing waterfalls inside the forest. You will be taken for a guided soft trek through the banks of Athirappally River for bird watching. Later continue drive to Sethumadai through Sholayar Forest Range and Valparai, the beautiful tea garden route. If you are lucky, you may encounter with many elephants on your wayside. Overnight stay at a farmstay set on a private estate growing vanilla, banana & coconuts, in the edge of Anamalai Tiger Reserve.

Athirappally region is an ideal habitat of Malabar Pied hornbill (*Anthracoceros coronatus*). Your drive today will give ample scope for spotting Malabar Grey horn bill (endemic), ruby throated bulbul (endemic), Great Hornbill, Emerald pigeon, Indian Dollar bird, Grey



Headed fish eagle, and many other species of forest birds. This drive will also give us chances of spotting elephants and two endemic species of primates of Western Ghats, wild gaur and giant squirrel.

#### **DAY 04** Anamalai & Parambikulam Tiger Reserve

This day is for a visit to Anamalai Tiger Reserve, sharing flora and fauna with Parambikulam Tiger Reserve. Walking safari through Maruthum Koodam moist deciduous forest and Kariyanchola Rainforest for wildlife and birds. Early morning go for a safari at Anamalai Tiger Reserve and later a walking tour at Parambikulam Tiger Sanctuary. Today we will go with packed lunch. Early evening return to your farmstay to go for a Nature trail through the estate to try sighting butterflies, Paradise flycatchers and blue-winged parakeets. Later in a dusk walk we can try owling for mottled wood owl. Overnight at Farmstay.

#### **DAY 05** Sethumadai - Masinagudi (6 Hour Drive)

After an early breakfast, drive to Masinagudi, a nice climb through the Nilgiris. Overnight at a Jungle Lodge. You will go for a night safari in the jungle to watch wildlife. Overnight at the Lodge.

#### **DAY 06** Masinagudi - Bandipur (3 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Bandipur Forest. You will be driving through Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary. On arrival check into your resort set on the borders of the Sanctuary. Evening go for a guided safari through the Sanctuary. Overnight at Hotel.

Extremely picturesque drive through the plateau towards South east section of Nilgiri bio reserve, where Bandipur National Park and Mudumalai Tiger Reserves are located. The Flora and Fauna are of deciduous and evergreen forests and scrubland vegetation. Mammals include the tiger, leopard, elephant, gaur, sloth bear, Dhole, sambar, spotted deer, barking deer, mouse deer and the slender loris. Reptiles found are rat snake, Russell's viper, common krait, Indian python, flying snake and the cobra. Over 200 species of birds have been identified making it a bird watchers' paradise. Some of the most notable ones are the heron, stork, egret, grey jungle fowl, partridge, quail, green pigeon, hornbill, lapwing and peafowl.

#### **DAY 07** Bandipur

Early morning and evening guided safaris inside the sanctuary. During daytime, go for short walks around the resort to spot birds and other wildlife. Overnight at Hotel.





## **DAY 08** Bandipur - Kabini (Nagarhole) (2 Hour Drive)

Morning, proceed to Nagarhole National Park, where former Maharajahs of Mysore used to go for hunting. On arrival, check in at the resort located on the forest borders. Evening go for a safari. Overnight at the Hotel in Kabani.

Nagarhole National Park inhabits Tigers, sloth bears, leopards, elephants, different monkeys, Malabar trogon and Indian pitta. Presently Karnataka Sanctuaries boast to have a population of nearly 500 plus Tigers which is the largest share in India's total Tiger population...

## **DAY 09** Kabini

Early morning go for a guided Jeep Safari through the National Park. Evening go for a boat safari through Kabani river. Day time for visiting local tribal village and birding spots. Overnight at the Hotel in Kabani.

## **DAY 10** Kabini - Mysore (2 Hour Drive)

Early morning go for another guided safari to try your luck for another Big Cat. Later after breakfast, drive to Mysore. On arrival in Mysore, check into your hotel. Afternoon visit Maharaja's Palace and later vegetable market and flower market. Evening you may visit the Palace again for a light & sound show followed by lighting up. Overnight at the Hotel.

## **DAY 11** Mysore

Full day to explore Mysore. After breakfast, drive to Somnathpur famous for its Hoysala Architecture. Enroute visit Chamundi hills from the foothills. Later visit Fort Srirangapatnam, Tipu's summer Palace. Return to your hotel for overnight stay. You may opt to go walking for local shopping etc.

## **DAY 12** Mysore - Kokkerbellur - Bangalore (4 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Kokkerbellur Pelicanery which has a different story to tell - A village loves and cares the bird life. Later drive to Bangalore for overnight stay.

Kokkerbellur is famous for its Spot Billed Pelicans and the Painted Storks that can be sighted here in large numbers during season time. This scenic village has paddy fields, cattle, water, and lots of exotic birds. Other than Pelicans, Storks and other water birds are richly seen in the fields around. The village itself is a nice haven for a relaxed lifestyle. Its a great job done by the villagers to protect it as a silent haven for their favourite birds. Every child in the village has a



story to tell about the migratory birds in the village. They keep an open orphanage for the birds with handicap etc. Its amazing to see a full village where the birds are at full freedom living in harmony with other domestic birds and animals.

## **DAY 13** Bangalore

Morning go for a short orientation tour of Bangalore. Afternoon at leisure. You may opt for shopping on your own. Overnight stay at Hotel.

## **DAY 14** Bangalore Departure

Today you will be transferred to Bangalore International Airport to connect your flight home.

# Active Extension -Western Ghats (Customisation on Request)

**4 Nights / 5 Days Trekking & Stay at Jungle Lodges  
at Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, Munnar - Medium Trek**

## **DAY 01** Munnar

Reach Munnar, known as nature lover's paradise. Check into a hotel. Afternoon a guided short trek to the Lechmi Hills. Overnight at the Hotel.





## DAY 02 Munnar - Eravikulam - Chinnar

Early morning visit Eravikulam National park to spot Nilgiri Tahr and later drive to Marayoor village for a tribal village visit and a soft walk through the sandalwood forest. You will also walk through the Tea Plantations. By early evening arrive into your jungle lodge. Overnight at a jungle lodge in Chinnar.

## DAY 03 Chinnar

After breakfast go for a full day trekking through Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary with a Packed Mini lunch. Evening return to your jungle lodge for overnight stay.

## DAY 04 Chinnar - Munnar

Morning, after breakfast, proceed to Munnar. Enroute go for a short Shola trek in Pampadumchola National park. By early evening you will reach Munnar to check into a hotel for overnight stay.

Considering the ecological, faunal, floral, geographical and zoological significance of Pampadum Shola, the Government of Kerala declared it as a National Park in December 2003. The fauna includes several threatened, rare or endemic species. There are about 14 species of birds, 9 species of mammals, 100 species of butterflies and 93 species of moths recorded from the Shola. The important animals found in the Park are elephant, gaur, leopard, wild boar, sambar and common langur. Some notable birds found here include the Nilgiri wood-pigeon, white-bellied shortwing, vernal hanging parrot, blue rock-thrush, blue-capped rock-thrush and Nilgiri flycatcher, and black-and-orange flycatchers.

## DAY 05 Munnar Departure

Morning, after breakfast, you may continue your travel as per plan.





# Community Oriented Story Telling Sessions

## Blue Yonder Story on River Nila (Bharathapuzha)

This is an exclusive journey with some of the finest story tellers, musicians and photographers along the banks of River Nila during the invigorating Monsoon. It's an opportunity to see the monsoon through a local perspective, documenting the history, legends, folklore and lifestyle of this civilisation. Observe and experience how the land and river transform as the monsoon take over. This program could be done during other seasons also. As this is a program closely connected to the environment, society and its people, please ask us for special instructions for this tour before you decide.

The trip begins at the lush rain forest of Athirappilly and traverses through lands where Nila is more a culture than a river. Meet people whose livelihood is connected to Nila. Experience the cultures the river has nurtured. Encounter rare art forms and craftsmanship. Spend time with the artists and their families and friends. Listen to magical myths. Be entertained by stories of the river and from the river. This program could be customized to shorten the duration according to your choice of interests.

All the activity partners and experience providers and associates that you will be meeting during these trips have been working with Blue Yonder in the last 12 years to "create better place for people to live and visit". Most artists /artisans you will be interacting with are The Blue Yonder Life Time Award winners, or fellows or scholars whom we financially support to enable them to pursue their passion. Keralavoyages is associated with The Blue Yonder to promote this program as a part of our passion for community based Responsible Tourism Initiatives throughout South India.

## What is in This Story Trail

**The Villages in Malappuram, Thrissur and Palakkad Districts (North Kerala):** The trip begins from villages at the valley of Western Ghats in Thrissur and Palakkad. Stay in traditional "boutique heritage" properties, eat local cuisines, explore the farmlands and ethnic toddy shops including in Malappuram District.

**The Mountains & Hills:** Explore photography vantage points of Nelliampathy hills and Nilambur and many hillocks dotting the river. Take out your wide lenses. Create panoramas.

**The River:** Travel along the banks of Chalakudy river, River Nila and Chaliyar. Meet people, click portraits. Visit local teashops. Document Nila amidst monsoons. Central theme of this trip would be the river and it's influences and vice versa on local culture, nature and heritage.

**Temples, Mosques, Myths & Rituals:** Visit temples and mosques



and listen to the legends and myths from the people of the region. Experience rituals like Kalamezhuthu paattu and Pulluvan pattu and explore the still remaining sufi traditions which are exclusive cultural symbols of Kerala's rich tradition. Where else would you hear stories of 600 year old Muslim mosque that was built by a Hindu carpenter who's tomb is still taken care inside the mosque?

**Art, Artists, Craft, Craftsmen:** Meet various artists and craftsmen while they perform. The man who creates Kathakali koppu, the only family who creates Adakkaputhur Kannadi, magical shadow puppetry and Glove puppetry performances are just some of them.

**Music:** Experience the music of the river from the mountain to the sea that nurtured this civilisation. Follow us on a musical trail.

**Nature, Landscapes:** Follow the river, explore natural ponds, farmlands, mangroves. Join our local friends in their conservation



efforts.

**Train that takes you to forests:** Experience a train journey through villages to reach Nilambur forests. Visit Railway stations canopied by trees and shrubs.

**The Architecture:** Stay in some of the largest remaining traditional households in Kerala, study the intricate designs of sustainable architecture. Understand the future plans of handing over this knowledge to the next generation.

**The Sea:** Nila ends at Ponnani, where it flows in to the Arabian sea. Visit villages in Ponnani, that predominantly houses muslim communities in contrast to the other villages of Nila.

The trip will conclude with a musical evening in Tirur, Thunjan Parambu where Sonam Karla of Coke Studio and Sufi Gospel Project will perform with local musicians and percussionists from Bharatapuzha/River Nila basin creating a new musical fusion dedicated to River Nila.

#### DAY 01 Transfer from Fort Kochi to Athirappilly

Enroute visit Pokkali farms – Kerala's answer to food security through the climate change resistant food. Interact with farmers and see the farming and organic cultivation in stunning locales by the backwater sand estuary. Transfer to Athirappilly Waterfalls, one of the most stunning waterfalls in South India. Post visits, drive through the rainforests to interact with local tribal leaders working on river conservation. Hear local stories through them to understand the struggles to sustain their land and water. This is subject to favourable weather conditions. Evening transfer to Chalakudy and check into Rasa Gurukul for overnight stay.

#### DAY 02 Chalakudy River walk

Though small, Chalakudy river is one of the bio-diversity rich rivers of Kerala. Walk by the river banks to capture the beauty of

the river during monsoon while learning about the environmental challenges of the region through local interpretations. Interactive session of monsoon related food preparation. Owner of Rasa Gurukul is the owner of the famous Rasa restaurants in London. Evening at the school of "Mudiyettu" performers, (one of the four remaining families practicing this unique art form). This harvest related ritualistic performance which was a "male-only" practice until recently is now being taught to girls and women to ensure the sustainability of the art form. Dinner and overnight stay at Rasa Gurukul.

#### DAY 03 Transfer from Chalakudy to Thenkurrissi in Palakkad

Visit to Tasarak & Kinassery for a story telling session and drive through paddy fields. Legends of Khasak – Khasakinte Ithihasam in Malayalam is a classic by O. V. Vijayan which was developed based on his childhood experiences of living in Tasarak in Palghat district. This interactive visit to some of the remnants of the place brings back the memories of those who have read the book. Otherwise, we introduce you to some of the characters and story plots during this visit. Lunch at Kandath Tharavadu. Later trek through the vast paddy fields along the irrigation canal which is part of Malampuzha dam, and observe the farming & rural lifestyle in stunning backdrop of nature and Western Ghats in a distance. This stretch in the Western Ghats is known to be one of the widest gaps in any mountain region in the world. Join us for planting saplings to support local efforts to nurture forestry initiative. Early dinner and over night stay at Kandath Tharavadu.

#### DAY 04 Day trip to Nelliampathy in the Western Ghats

Interaction with the forest department officials and conservationists in the region followed by a soft trek to the mountain top to get a 360 degree view of the forests and valley around you. Picnic lunch. Later afternoon in Kakayur Village near Koduvayur. Visit







Palliyil Tharavadu. Interactive sessions on traditions folk art forms like Kaniyarkali & Porattukali which is being revived by village elders and youth. Dinner at Kandathu Tharavadu with hosts and overnight stay.

#### **DAY 05** Transfer to Vellinezhi

Interactive session with the Glove Puppeteer in a traditional house hold or school. The only remaining practising glove puppeteer is an important part of River Nila civilisation. The younger generation is keen to pursue this as it has started to provide livelihood with dignity. Traditional lunch at one of the households. Late afternoon interaction with one of the doyens of Mizhaavu, a percussion of Kerala, which is a thousand years old accompaniment to Koodiyattom. Evening dedicated to Koodiyaattom performance in the village of Kunchan Nambiar, the most famous satirist in Malayalam who devised the performing art of Ottan Thullal. Overnight stay at Olappamanna Mana.

#### **DAY 06** Vellinezhi

Interactive session with the only remaining Kathakali Koppu Maker and a bell metal crafts man who makes Adakkaputhoor Kannadi (Aranmula Mirror is known to many but not many are aware of the unique Adakaputhoor mirror). Late afternoon visit to Tootha River, one of the tributaries of River Nila, followed by a Kalam Varayal. (intricate pictorial drawings with organic colours from nature followed by a ritualistic singing and drumming). Late evening performance of Kathakali, performed entirely by a troupe from the same village. Dinner with the host family. Overnight stay at Olappamanna Mana.

#### **DAY 07** Transfer to Cheruthuruthy

Visit Varikkassery Mana, one of the architectural marvel of

the region. An interactive Ottan Thullal performance inside the courtyard (depending on the rain) or else in the local school. Traditional lunch at the premise or near by restaurant. Transfer to Cheruthuruthy for a relaxed afternoon by the river and ancient but renovated pond. Post dinner Shadow Puppetry Show in a local temple. There are 85 temples in Kerala, where shadow puppetry is offered as a ritualist prayer and incidentally all these are on the banks of River Nila. Unfortunately, the dwindling numbers of audience has taken away the charms of puppetry.

#### **DAY 08** Day with the Masters at Kalamandalam

Visit classes along with teachers and interpreters to understand how lessons are imparted in this residential campus. Post independence from the British, efforts were taken by Poet Vallathol to set up an autonomous school to support and promote many classical dances forms and percussions. Lunch. Introduction to local crafts centres, ranging from textile weaving, mat weaving and pottery. These once struggling units have started to show a revival of fortunes. Find for yourself how locals are still engaged in these traditional skills. Evening on the banks of Bharatapuzha / River Nila, followed by an evening of Folk Expressions. Valluvanad region of the river civilisation has it's own unique folk art forms and this evening is dedicated to playfulness with local youth. The typical rural night out! Stay at Kunnathu house or similar.

#### **DAY 09** Train journey through a teak forest to Wandur

Authorickshaw / Tuk Tuk ride to visit Maranat Mana. The only remaining 16 quarter house ( Pathinaaru Kettu) in Kerala. This is also the largest household functional Brahmin house hold of Kerala. Lunch with the host family. Property visit and interaction with the family about lifestyle, traditions and challenges of maintaining their lifestyle. Evening visit to erstwhile royal families of Nilambur. Dinner



with the host family. Overnight stay at Maranat Mana, Nilambur.

## DAY 10 Nilambur

Visiting scenic beauties of Nilambur and surrounding including forests, abandoned Bungalows and rest houses from the British times. Dinner with the host family. Overnight stay at Maranat Mana.

## DAY 11 Transfer to Tirunavaya

The land known for mamaankam festival as well as for the requiem paid by thousands for the departed souls. Get an insight into sustainable living surrounding small village of Naduvattom. Walk through the house hold and village. Join the locals to plant in the Travellers Forest. On behalf of every traveller, we have been planting and taking care of the saplings till it grow healthy and can stand on it's own. Many acres have been dedicated towards this. Afternoon – legend trail. Learn the legends, folklore and history of Bharatapuzha. From the origin of Malayalam language on the banks of this river to the once in twelve year festival of Mamankam to the Buddhist traditions of yesteryears. Visit to Kerala's foremost literature park where father of Malayalam literature was born and spent most of his adult life.

Dinner and accommodation with the family of Kodeeri Mana.

## DAY 12 Sopanam School of Music

Join one of the 20 schools where traditional percussions like Panchavadyam are taught irrespective of caste, religion and gender barriers. A village empowerment program through music and it's associated arts, crafts & skills, this initiative run by Sopanam School of Music is currently supporting more than 850 students from under privileged background. Find yourself and your rhythm through this unique experience. Lunch with the musicians family.







**Thoni (Canoe) Cruise:** Travel through streams, river and the backwater region before it pours down into the estuary at Ponnani where River Nila (Bharatapuzha) joins the Arabian Sea. The journey that started in the mountains following the river concludes at Tirur river.

### DAY 13 Ponnani

River Nila that originates in the Aanamalai hills in Tamilnadu joins the Arabian Sea at Ponnani. Once known as the mecca of Kerala for its Islamic studies, Ponnani was also one of the oldest ports trading with Arabs and Chinese. Today we will be travelling with KR Sunil, the stunning photographer, who has documented Ponnani like no one else. Walking through the bylanes of this port city, we understand the beautiful co-existence of different cultural heritage.

### DAY 14 Ponnani

The concluding day will see the performance of some of the finest sufi singers in the country and will be playing along with the local musicians of various genres creating divine fusion of music. Find yourself through the river journey and through our music. Accommodation at Kodeeri Mana or similar in the region.

### DAY 15 Cochin Drop

After Breakfast, you will be brought back to Cochin for your return journey or forward travel or a beach extension.

Above program is offered to small groups and subject to periodical changes according to your travel period. Maximum group size is 10.





# Short Stories

India is a collection of many fascinating stories and experiences, all of which comes together to give it its inspiring Natural and Cultural Heritage. Some of these stories and experiences are well known, some others are not. With the guidance and help of our story tellers we bring few exclusive story telling sessions at various destinations across South India. These sessions could be incorporated in your custom made tours. Due to space limitation, we have included only a few selected story telling programs but there are many other stories which could be a part of your itinerary subject to customization. All our story telling sessions are handled by our passionate story tellers like Gopi, Peter, Rajith, Ranjini, Benny, Simi, Rani, Susan, Ravi Varma, Sonu Gomez etc.



## Schools stories - Half day at a Special School for Differently Abled Children (Kochi, Kerala)

Snehanilayam Special School for differently abled children is a prestigious institution since 1977 focused on the multi faceted personality development and rehabilitation skills for the under privileged members of our society. Keralavoyages was fortunate enough to associate with them for many projects for the overall development of the organization. We can take our travelers to the School on working days to spend few hours with the children to understand how these children are trained to be a part of an active society. We welcome our guests to do feasible projects for this children too.

**Timings on School Working Days:** (10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon) and (2:00 PM – 3:30 PM)

**Add-ons:** Dance shows, Band Performances and traditional drum percussions, by the inmates.



## Village Life Stories Canoe Cruise at Poothotta Island Village (Kochi, Kerala)

A journey in a country boat into the pristine purity of a typical village backwater of Kerala. Your guide Peter will take you for a canoe ride with our boatman Babu through the zigzagging narrow canals fringed with coconut palms. Peter will tell you many village stories before you come to the farm house for a fresh traditional lunch or evening tea and snacks prepared by the village woman. While scrolling through this amazing village, you will watch the common life of the villagers for their livelihood. You will see them fishing in the river, the women do the coir making, men climbing the coconut trees to pluck the coconuts, later peeling the same to prepare to dry and make oil extraction possible.

**Timings:** (10:00 AM – 1:30 Noon) and (3. 30 PM – 6:00 PM)

**Add-ons:** Full day program with fishing in the river.





## Cochin Royal Heritage Trail -

### Tales of a Dynasty

(Kochi, Kerala)

For most visitors, their introduction to Cochin is through the history of Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, and the exploits of the Europeans and the many communities who settled there. We provide an alternate narrative to visitors through the **Cochin Royal Heritage Trail** which tells the story of Cochin through that of the Cochin Royal Family, while still covering Cochin's relations with the Europeans as well as other communities, thereby sharing a lesser known but very fascinating and important element of Cochin's history. The Cochin Royal Heritage Trail takes visitors to the erstwhile royal town of Tripunithura and relates stories connected to the Royal Family of Cochin. The trail ends with high-tea with present day members of the Royal Family.

**Timings:** (10:00 AM – 12:30 PM) and (2:00 PM – 4:30 PM)

**Add-ons:** Traditional vegetarian lunch in one of the family Mansions; Exclusive 45-60 mins Kathakali performance; Exclusive 30-45 mins temple percussion music performance.



## Cultural Immersion -

### Kathakali

(Kochi, Kerala)

Kathakali (literally translated as story-play) is a highly stylised classical drama which evolved to its present form sometime in the 16th-17th Century, around the same time that Shakespeare was writing his plays in London. The switch in storytelling from Sanskrit to Sanskritized Malayalam took Kathakali to the masses and it spread far and wide, and today it is synonymous with the cultural heritage of Kerala.

Kathakali has been an all-male art form, with even women characters being portrayed by men. In a State which is known for its high female to male ratio, matrilineal lineage and high literacy rates, entry barriers for women into the Arts were high. On this tour we meet a group of highly spirited women Kathakali artistes who broke through the male bastion, excelled in the art and have made a mark for themselves. They share with us their journey of starting an all women Kathakali troupe while alongside explaining the different elements of this fascinating art form-its stories, language, costumes, stage, music, instruments, training, festivals, mythology etc. The interaction ends with a brief lecture-demonstration.

The objective of the Artists is to preserve and popularize Kathakali as well as to encourage women to train in this traditionally male dance form. This tour has been designed to further their objectives by bringing them in contact with visitors while at the same time giving visitors an authentic and immersive experience.

**Timings:** (10:30 AM – 12:30 PM) and (2:30 PM – 4:30 PM)

**Add-ons:** Exclusive 45-60 mins Kathakali performance; Exclusive 30-45 mins temple percussion music performance; Traditional vegetarian lunch with the artists.



## Mattancherry Chronicles -

### Communities, Culture and Trade

(Kochi, Kerala)

Cochin and its prosperity, economic as well as military, as a result of its Spice trade with the West are well known. Fort Kochi, thanks to its European history and heritage structures, is a much visited tourist destination today. Mattancherry is mostly known for its Bazaar, the Jewish settlement and the Cochin Rajah's palace. But what about the other communities who settled in Old Cochin (Fort Kochi and Mattancherry)? At one point 32 different communities lived in Old Cochin ... 32!! Today around 15 remain.

So, we have the Mappilas (Arab Muslims) who were traders with a lineage going back at least 2,000 years. The Konkanis who came from





the Konkan region (Maharashtra-Karnataka) were money lenders and bankers who supported the trade. The Gujaratis (from the state of Gujarat in western India) and Cutchi Memons (from Kutch in Rajasthan) again were big and influential traders. The Hindu Malayalis from Kerala were the labour class, while the Latin Christians were fishermen. The Tamil Brahmins worked as Priests in the temples and some were also cooks for the Royal Families. And although Spices were an important commodity for trade other commodities like dry fruits, cloth, tea, opium, oil, herbs, perfume, etc. were also much in demand.

On this tour, we will look at some of the communities who came to Mattancherry and participated in Cochin's prosperity, and in doing so how they also helped give Old Cochin a truly cosmopolitan air, which survives to this day.

**Timings:** (7:30 AM – 9:00 AM) and (5:00 PM – 6:30 PM)

## Pepper Trails - Learn & Cook at a Living Home (Cochin, Kerala)

Kerala has a distinctive cuisine, very unusual and different from the rest of India. Cooking in Kerala is all about discoveries, aromas and colours. We take you to the home of Simi & Kishore where you will be received well to get an introduction to a traditional Christian home. Later Simi will bring you to her kitchen for a cookery show which is not just being in the kitchen, but will give you hands on experience, you'll learn to prepare few Kerala delicacies in a friendly, relaxed, informal environment. Each dish will be demonstrated, prepared and cooked. Later you will have your meal with the family before you leave a home with great memories.

**Timings:** (11:00 AM – 1:30 PM) and (6:00 PM – 8:30 PM)

**Add-ons:** Full day cooking experience starting with shopping at the local market.



## Village Life Stories - Manakkodam Village Experience (Kochi, Kerala)

This village is in the suburbs of cochin on the coastal region. You will be driven to Manakkodam Village where you will be welcomed by a Christian family in a traditional way. Enjoy the fresh tender coconut served as a welcome drink. After having a short description about the local area, you will be taken for the village walk to experience the real life style of Kerala's village people. Have a visit to the church, coir yarn & coir mat making cottage industry units, a local school (except holidays/exams), vegetable garden, local house, match stick making unit, local tea shop, fish market & paddy field/fish farm etc. You will be brought back to your host's house to enjoy the delicious and traditional Kerala lunch.

**Timings:** (10:00 AM – 1:30 PM)



## Breakfast Trail - Manakkodam Village Experience (Kochi, Kerala)

This village is in the suburbs of cochin on the coastal region. Early morning you will be driven to Manakkodam (Thuravoor) via coastal road. Enroute you can visit Chellanam & Azheekal fishing harbor to witness the fishermen with their fishing nets filled with fresh sea fishes. On arrival at Manakkodam Village, you will be welcomed in a traditional way by your host. After having welcome drink, breakfast will be served, made with local ingredients in traditional Kerala style. After breakfast and short description will move for the village walk followed by a tuk - tuk ride experience till the main road (2kms).

**Timings:** (6:30 AM – 10:30 AM)





## Rani's Kitchen -

### Syrian Christian Cookery show at a Heritage Home (Alleppey, South Kerala)

Rani at Neroth Wayside Inn is a pleasant homemaker who loves cooking, gardening and traveling. She will be happy to invite you to her kitchen in a traditional 50 year old house located at Alleppey-Venice of the East. Rani has a bunch of recipes handed down for generations in her Syrian Christian family. You have a unique opportunity to interact with a passionate host with a heritage background of Syrian Christian family and cook with her. Later enjoy your meal with the family.

**Timings:** (11:00 AM – 1:30 PM) and (5:30 PM – 8:00 PM)

**Add-ons:** Heritage walks through Alleppey, Visiting Coir making units etc.



## Tribal Stories -

### Tales of Muthuva & Malapulaya tribes (Marayoor, Kerala)

When normal travelers think of Munnar region as a tea plantation spot, we take our guests to listen to the interesting stories of our tribal communities. In marayoor area we have Muthuva & Malapulaya tribes settled in harmony with the local people. Its interesting to visit this small habitat with our Naturalist and Story Teller Benny or one of his team. You will be taken through the village farms, sugarcane farms and jaggery making unit etc.

**Timings:** (09:30 AM – 12:30 PM) and (2:00 PM – 5:00 PM)

**Add-ons:** Tribal Dance performance at the tribal village



## Tea Trail -

### From Plant to Packet: Story of Tea making (Munnar, Kerala)

We all love drinking a fresh tea whenever possible. But how many of us know how the tea dust is made from tea leaves. If you are adventurous enough to be a part of the process to understand this, we have an interactive story to tell. You will be taken to a tea plantation to go with the local tea plucker women to pluck fresh tea leaves. Later the leaves will be brought to the factory to take you through the entire process of tea making. In between, our Naturalist will take you for a walk through the plantation to walk upto a plantation bungalow to serve a sumptuous lunch. By evening you will have a tea tasting session before you leave with a packet of tea from your day's harvest.

**Timings:** (10:30 AM – 4:00 PM)



## Communities of Kerala -

### Meet the Nairs (Thrissur, North Kerala)

Though the Nairs make up just about 12% of Kerala's population, they have captured popular imagination among both visitors and researchers. Their Matrilineal family traditions where inheritance and allegiance is traced through the mother's line, and their joint family systems, continue to intrigue anthropologists.

Join us as we pay a visit to an ancestral Nair household located right in the heart of Thrissur city, the cultural capital of Kerala. Our hostess takes us around the house sharing anecdotes from her formative years in Kerala and of her memories linked to the house. The highlight of the visit is a culinary interaction with the hostess as she cooks up a simple yet delicious meal with ingredients handpicked, mostly, from her own



garden. The interaction offers an insight into the Nair way of life, their role in society past and present, as also their rituals, customs and festivals. So, come along and meet the Nairs!

Our Hostess volunteers at an Old Age home which cares for the elderly citizens of Thrissur who are homeless. Along with the hostess we too support the caregivers through this tour.

**Timings:** (10:30 AM – 1:30 PM)

**Add-ons:** Exclusive 45-60 mins Kai-kotti-kali, an all women and traditionally Nair festive dance performance; Exclusive Classical and Folk Art performances can also be organised.



## Royal Family Experience - Nilambur Palace Home (Nilambur, North Kerala)

Nilambur Kovilakams or palaces situated at the foot of the Western Ghats along the banks of the river Chaliyar, are architectural marvels known for their beautiful frescoes and wood work. These residences of the local rajas were built according to traditional Kerala architecture and boasts of excellent skill and craftsmanship and have an age beyond 200 years. You will be brought to one of the royal homes in the Royal township to interact with the royal family members. Your Host family is the present generation members of the royal family of Nilambur Kings. Your story teller here is Mr. Ravi Varma who is the head of the family. Later you will be served a traditional Brahmin vegetarian lunch at the Palace Home. This Palace Home has two guest rooms for the travelers who want to stay in the village for a detailed experience.

**Timings:** (11:30 AM – 2:30 PM)

**Add-ons:** Exclusive 45-60 mins Kathakali or Classical Dance forms with local artists.



## Day at Turmerica - Zamorin Royal cuisine tales (Wayanad, North Kerala)

Turmerica is a premium plantation homestay in a sprawling organic coffee plantation at wayanad along with pepper, cardamom, turmeric, coconut & seasonal vegetables. The hosts have the lineage of one of the oldest Royal dynasties of india "the Zamorins". The lady of the house Ms Ranjini Menon will take you through a demonstration of cooking the Royal Zamorin style of cuisine with elaborate story telling. You will have the meal with the host family. This is a unique experience for someone wants to explore a royal cuisine at a living home related to the Royal Zamorin lineage. Ms Ranjini is a popular culinary expert, Classical dancer, T V Presenter and Cine Artist.

Your Host family is the lineage of Zamorin Royal family. Their home has few guest rooms equipped for accommodating travelers who want to stay in the village for a detailed experience.

**Timings:** (10:00 AM – 1:30 PM) & (4:30 PM – 8:00 PM)

**Add-ons:** Classical Dance Performance of local artists



## Tribal Trails - Tribal cooking (Wayanad, North Kerala)

Turmerica is a premium plantation homestay in a sprawling organic coffee plantation at wayanad along with pepper, cardamom,



turmeric, coconut & seasonal vegetables. The hosts have the lineage of one of the oldest Royal dynasties of India "the Zamorins". Thanks to the location, Wayanad, Ms Ranjini, the lady of the house is trained in tribal culinary also along with her expertise on Royal cuisine. Ms Ranjini Menon along with local tribal cooks will take you through a tribal cooking demonstration followed by a meal.

Your Host family is the lineage of Zamorin Royal family. Their home has few guest rooms equipped for accommodating travelers who want to stay in the village for a detailed experience.

**Timings:** (10:00 AM – 1:30 PM)

**Add-ons:** Tribal Dance Performance of local tribal people.



## Madras Chronicles - Communities, Culture and Trade (Chennai, Tamil Nadu)

'Madras', now Chennai, history is usually associated with that of the British, courtesy the British East India Company. However, in addition to the British, Madras has been home to the Portuguese, the French, the Scots, the Armenians, the Americans and the Jews. Most of them came to Madras for trade, a few, to try their luck building a global empire.

The French were the first to realise that Indians can be organised into a fighting unit, the idea eventually evolved into the Indian Army of today. Armenians were influential traders who contributed towards improving the city's infrastructure, but more interestingly the first draft of the Armenian Constitution was written right here, in Madras. They are remembered by Armenian Street in George Town. Matters of the heart between British traders and Portuguese women flourished in and around Fort St. George! There are many such stories.

**Timings:** (7:30 AM – 10:00 AM) OR (3:30 PM – 6:00 PM)



## Communities of Pondicherry - Meet the Franco - Tamils (Pondicherry)

Pondicherry had many European settlers-the British, Dutch, Portuguese and also the French. Perhaps the most vivid French influence is seen in the unique blend of French and local Tamil architectural styles-Franco-Tamil-seen in buildings across this little town.

Experience Pondicherry with our lovely hostess, a lady with a mixed Tamil and Creole heritage, at her beautiful Franco-Tamil home. She is an absolute pleasure to talk to and her calm and pleasant demeanour at once puts you to ease. She comes from a family of art lovers and collectors and the plain exterior of her mid 19th century home belies the magic within. The home combines a strong, authentic Tamil aesthetic with antique furniture, tapestries, art and artefacts-all reflecting Pondicherry's multi-cultural influence.

**Timings:** (10:00 AM – 12:30 PM) and (2:30 PM – 5:00 PM)



## Along the River Kaveri - Village Life Experience (Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu)

The river Kaveri is one among seven sacred rivers of India. On its long journey from the Western Ghats to the Bay of Bengal on the east coast, the Kaveri meets, nourishes and nurtures everyone and everything on its path. Along the Kaveri tells the story of the river and the many lives, arts, crafts and traditions that it has nourished over the centuries.



Tiruvaiyaru in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu is a small town along the Kaveri. Our hostess is a music teacher and scholar, who, like the Kaveri has been nurturing many lives and affecting a cultural revival in her village. She gives us an insight into the lives of the people, past and present, and their dependence on the river. She walks us through its artistic and cultural traditions with stories of Devadasis (Servants of Gods) and Poet Saints, the local arts and crafts, wedding rituals and much more. No visit to a Tamil household is complete without a cup of filter coffee and that is what will fortify us before we say our goodbyes.

Our Hostess is the founder-trustee of an organization that works for the revival of long forgotten cultural traditions of her village while also supporting less privileged children of the community. This tour is an effort to support her initiatives.

**Timings:** (7:00 AM – 9:30 AM) and (4:00 PM – 6:30 PM)



## Along the River Kaveri - Arts and Crafts of Tanjore (Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu)

The river Kaveri is one among seven sacred rivers of India. On its long journey from the Western Ghats to the Bay of Bengal on the east coast, the Kaveri meets, nourishes and nurtures everyone and everything on its path. Along the Kaveri tells the story of the river and the many lives, arts, crafts and traditions that it has nourished over the centuries.

The river Kaveri has played a key role in facilitating Thanjavur's numero uno position as the cultural capital of Tamil Nadu (before Chennai took after the British East India Company had firmly established itself). Temple building, sculptures, music, dance, paintings, folk arts, handicrafts, literature, all flourished in Thanjavur. On this Tour we learn about three iconic Arts and Crafts of Thanjavur- Tanjore Painting, Saraswati Veena and Thalaiyattai Bommai. We meet the Artisans who are keeping their traditions alive for generations now, learn about the history of their arts and crafts, the elaborate process followed and also the many challenges that they face. So, come along the Kaveri and experience its magic!

The main objective of this Tour is to give the Artisans an opportunity to interact directly with visitors, and to showcase the traditional processes they have been following for generations.

**Timings:** (10:00 AM – 1:00 PM) and (2:00 PM – 5:00 PM)

**Add-ons:** Veena instrumental music performance; Traditonal Tamil Brahmin lunch; Kol-attam folk dance performance.







## SOUTH INDIA TOURIST MAP



**Keralavoyages** is an experience Tour Operator closely connected to the local community we belong. All our experiential tours take a traveler through the normal life of the local people. Our special programs involve the people around us which brings back a means of living to them. As a part of Responsible Tourism initiative, we have associated with village homes, women groups, Special Schools, tribal groups etc to enable them to be a part of our programs and earn a livelihood. In association with like minded establishments, we try our best to make our region best place to live and suitable for people to visit.

Keralavoyages has partner office in Delhi for North, Central and Western India and in Guwahati & Kolkata for East and North East India to enable us to deliver similar experience tours across India with uniform standards and quality.



#### **Fact Sheet - South & Western India**

##### **Major International Airports**

Mumbai (Bombay) - Maharashtra  
Bangalore (Bengaluru) - Karnataka  
Mangalore (Mangaluru) - Karnataka  
Chennai (Madras) - Tamilnadu  
Hyderabad - Andhra Pradesh  
Kochi (Cochin) - Kerala  
Trivandrum (Thiruvananthapuram) - Kerala  
Calicut (Kozhikkode) - Kerala  
Kannur - Kerala  
Goa

**Climate:** Tropical

##### **First Monsoon (West Coast Monsoon) -**

June till Mid August  
(Kerala and parts of Karnataka & Goa)

##### **Second Monsoon (North East Monsoon) -**

November till Mid December  
(Tamilnadu & Parts of Karnataka)

##### **Regional Languages**

Mumbai - Marathi / Hindi  
Goa - Konkani / Hindi  
Karnataka - Kannada  
Andhra Pradesh - Telugu  
Kerala - Malayalam  
Tamilnadu - Tamil



Incredible!ndia



Keralavoyages (India) Pvt. Ltd.

APPROVED BY MINISTRY OF TOURISM, GOVT. OF INDIA

📍 Ergo Heights, Maradu P.O., Kochi, India 682304

☎ +91 484 2706563, +91 484 2706863

✉ mail@keralavoyages.com

🌐 [www.keralavoyages.travel](http://www.keralavoyages.travel) | [www.wishtree.wedding](http://www.wishtree.wedding) | [www.ergo.events](http://www.ergo.events)