

A Heritage Story Telling Trail Through North Kerala

This programme is an attempt to bring the best local stories of North Kerala to a discerning traveller. This is a part of our Responsible Tourism Initiative to support local community to support the sustainability of the destinations and its local community. Our guides and story tellers are all from the local area where you visit and hence the authentic local rustic touch.

All attractions in this tour are touching the real life around and the people you meet are your story tellers-The Real story of life. We have tried to bring the off beaten track of a region with real people to showcase an authentic lifestyle. This tour is recommended for individual travelling or small families because we wish to accommodate you in real homestays and small places, where you will be a part of the family.

Day 01 – Cochin

On arrival at Cochin Airport, you will be met & transferred to your hotel. Day to relax after long flight. Evening visit Greenix Theatre for a kaleidoscope of various art forms. Overnight at Hotel .

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.



Day 02 – Cochin

Morning, after breakfast, proceed for a village backwater Cruise with lunch. Afternoon back to Cochin for sightseeing. Evening free to walk around Fort Cochin. 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....country boat making....a natural fish farm where you can go fishing.... You will witness coir making,toddy tapping before you end up your exclusive experience in our Farm House for lunch -a delicious traditional Kerala dish under a tree.....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,a toddy tapper who does his job as a routine,men climbing the coconut trees to pluck the coconuts,later peeling the same to prepare to dry and make oil extraction possible.Its all about a life experience which you will cherish throughout your life.

Cochin Sightseeing - *St Francis Church*, built in 1510 by friars brought to India by Vasco da Gama, is the first European church built in India and is the site where *Vasco da Gama* was buried. The *Jewish Synagogue* was built in 1568, Chinese hand-painted tiles are one of the attraction. This, the only Synagogue in India has a nostalgic past of a Jewish Diaspora. The "*Dutch Palace*" was built in the 1550s; the palace contains excellent mythological murals and a rare example of traditional Keralite flooring - a subtle mix of burnt coconut shells, lime, plant juices and egg whites - which gives the effect of polished marble.



Fort Cochin & Mattancherry are twin cities carry a flavor of the colonial era.Jewish,Arabs,Portuguese British all came to Cochin for trading and Mattancherry was the spice trade head quarters due to the proximity of Cochin Port.While Fort Cochin became the administrative head quarters,Mattancherry maintained its trading status.The colonial stature and buildings still make Fort Cochin a favourite destination for tourists.Its getting an upgrade once its declared as the first heritage city in India.Fort

Cochin was also a part of Muziris route.It will be interesting to know that around 13 religious communities are harmoniously living in Fort Cochin and Mattancherry.Christians,Muslims,Hindus,Jews,Jains,Sikhs etc are few among them.

Day 03-Cochin-Shoranur- Nilambur (200 kms-5 Hours)

After an early breakfast, drive to Shoranur Railway Station to board a local passenger train to Nilambur.The travel is through one of the best scenic route in North Kerala.On arrival at Nilambure,your driver will pick you from the station to bring you to a a 220 year old Palace converted Homestay which belongs to the Nilambur Royal Family.Experience the royal hospitality.Rest of the day free for walking around the village. Overnight at Nilambur Puthiya Kovilakom.



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.

The generous rulers of Nilambur who eventually emerged as one of the richest and most prosperous royal families of Kerala always gave impetus to the welfare of the society and played a significant role in shaping and evolving the Ernad Taluk into a modern township. Nilambur Kovilakam was one of the richest families in Kerala with over 125000 acres land as asset. But unlike many other royal families Nilambur kovilakam gave away a major chunk of its assets for the well being of the society without taking anything in return. More than 48 thousand acres of land was given to Muthumala wildlife sanctuary on lease which later came under the Government.



Day 04 - Nilambur

Full day for exploring the village. Your host will take you around to explore and experience the attractions. This may start with milking a cow, visiting a pot making unit, Teak Museum, local market, a handloom unit and much more. The Nilambur Kovilakom is situated in a vast area and the Palace houses are now owned and inhabited by the present generation of the Royal family. The Palace temple also worth visiting though they don't allow to enter inside. Overnight at Puthiya Kovilakam

Day 05: Nilambur- Calicut (2 Hours Drive)

Today, you will be transferred to Calicut. On arrival, check into a hotel. Afternoon you will be guided to CVN Kalari to know about the Martial arts of Kerala, Kalaripayattu. Later you will be

taken to SM Street in Calicut for a local shopping. Evening visit Calicut Beach to watch sunset. Overnight at hotel.



Day 06: Calicut by a Local Story teller

After breakfast, full day to explore the heritage and culture of Calicut. The Calicut Heritage Walk by Tyndis is an attempt to take you back along the passage of history – an experience that culminates the ancient maritime history and ranging through the colonial reign in Calicut. An expert storyteller shall accompany the guests, explaining them the stories and importance of each point along the walk. Your story teller will take you through the Mananchira, Tali Temple, Copra Bazaar etc. Lunch at a good restaurant like Paragon or Rahmath Hotel. (These restaurants serve the landmark dishes like the Calicut Biryani. Guests can also opt for other available dishes for lunch. After lunch, visit the Beypore Uru Making yard in Beypore. Beypore is 12 k.m. from Calicut. It takes 30 minutes' drive. Guests are also taken to the Beypore port and Harbour, Feroke Tile Factory etc. Overnight at hotel



Day 07:Calicut -Thalassery

After breakfast,checkout and head to the Kadalundi Mangrove Trails in the Kadalundi Community Reserve. 1.5 hours Mangrove Trails at Kadalundi. (The Mangrove Canoeing is subjected to the high tides and low tides in the backwater).Later drive to Sargalaya Crafts Village Iringal to have an interactive experience with the craftsmen.Engage with the craftsmen and artisans at the crafts village. (Sargaalaya is closed on Mondays).Traditional Kerala Lunch at Sargaalaya Kudumbashree(Women entrepreneur community) Canteen or any other restaurant.

After lunch, head to Thalassery.Enroute visit Mahe. Mahe Sightseeing includes the St. Teresa's Shrine, Mahe Walkway, and Mahe Harbour etc.Overnight stay at Thalasserry/Muzhuppilangad.



Day 08:Thalassery/Muzhuppilangad

After breakfast,we will go for Thalassery Hermann Trails. This trail begins from the Thalassery town. The guests can walk on foot around 2 k.m. radius to explore the key heritage points of Thalassery like the Thalassery Pier, Overbury's Folly Park etc. The trail will also take the guests along the Odathil Mosque, Jagannatha Temple, Andalur Kavu, Gundert Bungalow, Pre-Independence Memoirs, and Old Moid Bridge etc.Have lunch at the ancestral Muslim house in Thalassery with a Biryani Making session which is located at 7 k.m. distance from the Thalassery town and takes 15 minutes' drive.Tyndis Biryani Making session is any activity with a fixed rate. The activity is organized in Thalassery by a lady from a traditional Muslim family at their ancestral home which is 110+ years old. She is an expert cook when it comes to traditional Malabar cuisine.Alternatively, guests can have lunch at any other good restaurant in Thalassery like the Ra Raviz or Paris Restaurant.

Early evening visit Muzhappilangadu is the longest drive-in beach in Asia. It is also a birdwatching hotspot. Overnight at Thalassery or Muzhuppilangad.



Day 09: Experience Kannur

After breakfast, drive to Kannur. Enroute visit Thottada beach. In the evening, guests can go for Tuk-Tuk Tour to explore the village and nearby places. During the Theyyam Season, the tour takes the tourists to experience the Theyyam Festivals in the locality. Overnight in



Kannur

Day 10: Kannur Angelo Trails-Parassinikkadavu

After breakfast from the hotel, head to explore the major sightseeing points of Kannur in the Tyndis Angelo Trails. Visit the Kannur Fort – the St. Angelo Fort that has the characteristics of the Colonial Construction. The trail also takes the guest along the Arakkal Museum, Mappila Bay, Harbour, and Payyambalam Beach etc. Afternoon, visit the Parassinikkadavu Temple – Theyyam only available during the Theyyam timings. Anyhow guests can experience the backwaters and hear the local lore about the temple. In the time of the Theyyam season, guests can also visit the temples or sacred groves in the regions to experience the spellbinding Theyyam performance. Overnight in Kannur

Day 11: Kannur – Angelo Trails to Nileshtar

After breakfast from the hotel, check out and head to Nileshtar. Rest of the day at leisure to explore the backwater and beach at Nileshtar. Overnight stay.

Day 12: Nileshtar

Early morning walk can be organized along the beach in the fishermen village. Relaxing breakfast at the hotel. Later, check-in to the houseboat in Nileshtar for Lunch Cruise. Guests can enjoy the Houseboat Cruise along the backwaters of Nileshtar and have a delicious Kerala Meals with fish curry. By 2 PM, you will check out from the houseboat to drive to Bekal Fort. Go for a nice walk through the Fort. Overnight at Nileshtar.



Day 13: Nileshtar

Early morning walk can be organized along the beach in the fishermen village. After breakfast, head to the beautiful fishermen village of Nileshtar to experience Toddy Tapping and the daily life course of the villagers like Coconut Husking, Fishing etc. You will also be taken Nileshtar town for a Beedi Making and Handloom Experiences. Overnight at Nileswaram.

**Day 14: Nileshtar to Kannur or Mangalore Airport**

Today you will be transferred to either Mangalore or Kannur Airport to connect your flight for onward journey or departure. You may extend your Beach stay either at Nileswaram or Bekal to go for a relaxing Ayurveda rejuvenation etc.



Extension Tour

Day 14 – Nileswar-Coorg (4 Hour Drive)

After breakfast, you will be driven to Coorg (Madikeri), a serene hill station known for the best coffee plantations. Coorgi culture and lifestyle is unique and interesting to experience their traditional hospitality. Afternoon to walk around coffee plantations. Overnight at Hotel.

Day 15 – Coorg

Full day for sightseeing of Madikeri. Morning you will visit one of the biggest Tibetan Settlements and afternoon you may visit Madikeri Fort etc. Or full day relax at the resort. Overnight at Hotel.



Tibetan Monastery: His Holiness, Pema Norbu Rinpoche, established Namdroling Monastery shortly after he came to India from Tibet. His Holiness the Dalai Lama consecrated the spot and bequeathed the name "Namdroling Monastery." Today the monastery is home to nearly 5000 monks and nuns, renowned as a center for the pure upholding of the teachings of the Buddha. Now, the Namdroling Nyingmapa Monastery is the largest teaching center of Nyingmapa; a lineage of Tibetan Buddhism in the world. The monastery is home to a sangha community of over five thousand monks and nuns, a religious college (or shedra) and hospital. The huge investment of time and energy made by Penor Rinpoche to build his monastery has borne abundant fruit. Among those who have studied, or are studying, at the monastery, are all the major lineage holding tulkus and lamas of the Palyul tradition, including the fifth Karma Kuchen Rinpoche, the third Choktrul Rinpoche and the third Rago Choktrul. Their spiritual training is directed and guided by Penor Rinpoche himself. Namdroling Monastery in Bylakuppe also has a retreat centre, opened in 1985, where thirty monks undergo an intensive three-year retreat. Penor Rinpoche personally instructs them in the Dzogchen Longchen Nyingtik cycle. Every autumn, according to the tradition of the Palyul Monastery, he gives instructions on Ngondro, Tsunglung and Dzogchen from the Namcho cycle of Tertön Mingyur Dorje. Students attend this one month retreat from



the Institute, monks from the monastery and lay people. It was Penor Rinpoche's dream, and something he continues to emphasize, that students would be able to combine in-depth, intensive study with practice, and now the monastery offers the perfect setting in which to do this. It is a must visit for those interested in Buddhism and its philosophy or just in general to see the hub of the burgeoning of Buddhism in India.



Madikeri Fort was first built as a mud fort by Mudduraja in the last quarter of the 17th century. He also built a palace inside the fort. It was eventually rebuilt in granite by Tipu Sultan who named the site as Jaffarabad. Madikeri Fort, built of brick and mortar, had witnessed several fierce battles. In 1790, Doddavira Rajendra took control of the fort. The palace was renovated by Lingarajendra Wodeyar II in 1812-1814. In the north-east corner at the entrance are two life size masonry elephants and a church is present in the south-east corner. The fort offers panoramic views of the city from its walls. This is a fort with archaeological value and a marvel of architecture. The centuries old Madikeri Fort with its stone ramparts houses the prison, a temple, a chapel, a small museum, and assorted government offices. Raja's Seat is a small pavilion with a garden surrounding it; offering a view of the green valley below. According to legend, the kings of Coorg spent their evenings here. The spectacular sunset and the far stretching blue mountains will take one's breath away.



Day 16 – Coorg-Kabini (Nagarhole) 3 Hour Drive

Morning, proceed to Kabini. On arrival, check in at the Hotel. Evening go for a guided safari. Nagarhole Sanctuary is known for its density of Tiger population in India. Conservation practices of Karnataka Forest Department is also one of the best in India. Overnight at the Hotel in Kabani.



Nestled amidst the Karapur Forest lays a pristine piece of land that abounds with nature. Beckoning you to explore it for a wild exciting holiday. The steep valleys with rich forests, spectacular pools and rapids provide an ideal opportunity to revive your adventurous spirits.



Day 17 – Kabini

Early morning go for a guided Jeep Safari through the National Park. Rest of the day free for boating in the Kabini River or free walks. Evening go for another Safari. Overnight at the Hotel in Kabani.



Nagarhole ,a Kannada name has meaning of Snake River. The name derives from the winding course of the river that flows through the forests. Nagarhole has an astonishing abundance of wildlife, especially the Asiatic elephant. The backdrop of the distant misty blue Brahmagiri Mountains, the natural sounds of the jungle, the gurgling of streams and rivers and the twittering of the birds, make a

trip



to Nagarhole a memorable experience. It has an area of 643.39 Sq.km. Covered mainly by moist and dry deciduous forests, and dominated by teak, rosewood and dry deciduous forests in the eastern limits of the peak. Mammals include elephant, tiger, leopard, wild dog, sambar, barking deer, sloth bear, wild boar, Indian bison, mouse deer, spotted deer, slender loris, black –naped hare, jackal, langur, wild pig, porcupine, Malabar squirrel, striped hyena and four-horned antelope. Birds in this Park consists mainly of Herons, storks, egrets, ducks, kites, eagles, falcons, partridges, peafowl, lapwings, sandpipers, woodpeckers, sunbirds, wagtails, warblers, babblers, shrikes and owls. Reptiles commonly found are marsh crocodile, star tortoise, common indian monitor, chameleon, rat snake, Russell's viper, common krait and Indian python.



Day 18 – Kabini-Mysore (2 Hours drive)

After breakfast, drive to Mysore. On arrival in Mysore, check into your hotel. Afternoon visit Maharaja's Palace and later vegetable market. Evening again visit the Palace premises to watch a magnificent light & sound show. Overnight at the Hotel.



Maharaja's Palace is a synonym for Mysore in the Tourist Map. Its built in Indo-Saracenic style with domes, turrets, arches and colonnades. The Palace is a treasure house of exquisite carvings and works of art from all over the world. The walled Palace complex houses the Residential Museum, temples and shrines including Shwetha Varahaswamy Temple. The jewel studded golden throne, the pride of the Wodeyars and the symbol of their sovereignty, displayed here during Dussehra festival in October. The Palace will be lit with One Hundred Thousand electric bulbs on Sundays and Public Holidays.



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. Visit the palace of the Maharaja built in 1911-12. The palace is of harmonious syntheses of the Hindu and Saracenic styles of architecture with archways, domes, turrets, colonnades and sculptures which are magnificent. Visit the Art Gallery; drive up to Chamundi hill to see Chamundeshwari Temple & a panoramic view of Mysore. On the way back, see the Nandi Bull. Mysore is known the world over for its exotic sandalwood and rich silks. Mysore, an undulating tableland, covered in parts by granite outcrops and fringed by verdant forests, offering several attractions ranging from the royal splendor of Mysore City and its fabulous Dasara Festival to exquisite temples, pilgrimage centres and scenic spots.



Day 19 – Mysore

Full day to explore Mysore. After breakfast, drive to Somnathpur. 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.



Somnathpur, a tiny village on the banks of the Kaveri, 140 kms, south-west of Bangalore. This place boasts of one of the last and the grandest of Hoysala monuments - the Kesava Temple. The riches and splendour of the Hoysala court were already evident in their grand temples at Belur and Dvarasamudra (present day, Halebid). The temple, however, was built by this celebrated army commander, Somnath. Some year ago he had founded a village on the left bank of the Kaveri River, which he named Somnathpur, after himself. All the facts are duly mentioned on the slab in old Kannada script and appear as though to have happened yesterday! Somnathpur is more representative of the age, since it did not suffer destruction as much as Belur and Halebid did and hence offers a more unbroken view of period's architecture. Often it is referred to as the poor cousin of Belur and Halebid. Its unique design and perfect symmetry are ignored amidst the farms and agricultural lands of surrounding villages.



The island fortress of the legendary warrior king Tipu Sultan, Srirangapatna is just 16km from Mysore city. Inside the fortress is Tipu's mosque with its twin minarets, the celebrated Ranganatha Swamy Temple, Tipu's Summer Palace, the Wellesley Bridge, and the dungeons where British officers were once imprisoned. Equally impressive is the ornate white-domed Gumbaz, an imposing structure with doors of ebony inlaid with ivory and lacquered with Tipu's tiger-striped emblem. About 1km to the east of the fort is Tipu's Summer Palace (known as the Daria Daulat Bagh) set amidst a lovely garden.

Day 20 –Mysore-Bangalore Departure (4 Hours Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Bangalore. You will be dropped at Bangalore Airport to connect your flight home or next destination.

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