



Incredible Indian Tours South Indian Odyssey

24 Days Goa to Chennai 5th - 28th January 2021



Maximum Group Size 10

Accommodation 17 nts hotel, 2 nts guesthouses, 2 nt homestay, 1 nt luxury houseboat, 1 nt overnight train

Transport Airport Transfers, Trains, Private vehicle (4WD/SUV or minibus), Auto Rickshaws

Meals 23 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 11 dinners

Starts in Goa on Tuesday 5th January 2021

Finishes in Mahabalipuram (60km south of Chennai) on Thursday 28th January 2021

Cost US\$ 4740 per person twin share (US\$ 5690 including optional single supplement)

Beginning our journey in fascinating Panjim, the quaint and charming capital of Goa, we travel east to explore the ruins of the Vijayanagar Empire in Hampi. Heading south, we spend time in Mysore the old capital of the Wodeyar Dynasty where we witness the spectacular Mysore Palace lights and the colourful Devaraja markets before heading into Kerala – God’s Own Country. This extraordinarily beautiful part of India offers extreme diversity. Enjoy the breathtakingly beautiful backwaters, beaches, tea, coffee and spice plantations and wildlife reserves. Watch fishermen in Cochin pull in the nets as they have done for centuries. Experience life along the tranquil islands of the backwaters. Trek through a wildlife park and maybe catch a glimpse of wild elephants, deer, giant squirrels or wild boar. Moving on to Tamil Nadu, considered to be the last bastion of traditional Hindu culture in India, we visit ancient monuments and temple towns before finishing our tour in Mahabalipuram resplendent with World Heritage rock cut temples and charming beach resorts.

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Day 1 Goa

Arrival Day. We have a group meeting at midday before an afternoon visit to Old Goa, home to the Basilica of Bom Jesus where the mortal remains of St Francis Xavier are housed between ‘viewings’ that take place every 10 years.

Day 2 Goa

Today we enjoy a Goan cuisine cooking class before a late afternoon walking tour of Panjim, the quaint and fascinating capital of Goa.

Days 3-5 Hampi

A morning train up into the Western Ghats through spectacular gorges and rainforest brings us to Hampi where we get to explore the myriad sights and temples that make up the ruins of the Vijayanagar Empire’s 15th century capital. On the evening of day 5, we take an overnight train to Bangalore.

Days 6-7 Mysore

A morning arrival into Mysore where we enjoy brunch at our hotel. We wander the vast halls of the splendid Mysore Palace and visit the amazing temples at Somnathpur, a short drive away through the countryside. We also visit Chaumundi temple, the colourful Devaraja Market and you have the opportunity to take an Ayurvedic cooking class before we witness the incredible evening illuminations at Mysore Palace which is lit up by around 97,000 light bulbs every Sunday night.

Days 8-9 Kannur (Cannanore)

We have a 5 hour drive west to the Kerala coast to Kannur via the coffee growing district of Coorg. After a plantation tour and lunch, we proceed on our way to our small guest house near beautiful, peaceful beaches south of Kannur. During our stay here we hope to enjoy the traditional theyyam ritual which is performed most nights of the winter season somewhere around Kannur and we will also check out Kannur Fort, the fishing village and a weaving factory.

Days 10-12 Cochin

We take a morning train 7 hours south to beautiful Cochin. We spend time visiting Jew Town and Mattancherry Palace, the St Francis Church and Chinese Fishing nets and soaking up the ambience in this wonderfully laid back town. Kerala is famous for Kathakali, an intricate and stylised form of dance. We watch a short performance as well as witness the intricate

makeup application beforehand. Whilst in Cochin we also have a Kerala food cooking class with a local family in their home.

Day 13 Alleppey

A short 2 hour journey brings us to Alleppey where our traditional Kettuvallam (rice barge) houseboat awaits us. We spend the day slowly drifting past idyllic tropical rural scenes in the lush palm fringed backwaters.

Days 14-15 Chennamkary

Our houseboat drops us off after breakfast at our Kerala Family Homestay. Our welcoming hosts will show us around the village which is situated on an vehicle-free island within the backwaters. We will find out all about life here in the backwaters and perhaps see some local industries such as coir-making, toddy-tapping and boat building. We have the opportunity to ride cycles to neighbouring villages, row canoes around the island or just chill in a hammock.

Days 16-17 Periyar Tiger Reserve

A stunning 5 hour drive today up into the Cardamom hills - lined with tea, cocoa, tapioca, bamboo, coconut, banana and spice plantations takes us to Thekkady, our destination for the next 2 nights. We visit a tea and a spice plantation in the afternoon followed by an early morning guided walk through the jungle on day 17 which is the best way to experience the park and hopefully see Elephants, Deer, Monkeys and more up close. A free afternoon to relax or shop or perhaps have an authentic ayurvedic massage.

Days 18-19 Madurai

We have a 4 hour journey this morning to Madurai. Home of the spectacular Sri Meenakshi Temple, with its sculpture festooned towers, Madurai is the quintessential Tamil Nadu temple town. There are opportunities to visit the temple at different times of the day and we also visit the Gandhi Ashram, the Thirumalai Nayakkal Palace and take a walking tour through the markets.

Days 20-21 Pondicherry

A 7 hour drive via Tiruchirappalli, another of Tamil Nadu’s famous Temple towns brings us to Pondicherry on India’s south east coast. A morning walking tour will help you experience the wonderful charms of this erstwhile French Colony. We’ll also visit Auroville - the experimental community where people from over 50 different countries have made their home. If shopping is your thing, you won’t be disappointed by the boutiques and Auroville outlets in Pondicherry town.

Days 22-23 Mahabalipuram

It’s a short 2 hour drive north to Mahabalipuram where we make an afternoon visit to the ‘5 Rathas’ and the ancient Shore Temple - both World Heritage sites before enjoying dinner at one of the beach restaurants overlooking the Bay of Bengal. We make a morning visit to the rock-cut temples, which are resplendent in the morning light, before visiting Nandri Trust - run by women for local women’s empowerment. We have a free afternoon of last minute shopping, enjoying the beach or relaxing at our luxurious resort hotel pool and spa.

Day 24 Departure Day

There are no organised activities for today. You may leave at any time.

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