

Travel
EXPLORE THE WORLD


Santos King
www.santos.travel



Incredible India


kerala
God's Own Country



INDIA

INCREDIBLE INDIA

Situated in South Asia, the seventh largest country in the world, India is an ethnic kaleidoscope with rich heritage, myriad attractions & multicultural experiences making it one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. The diverse landscape from the snow-capped mountain ranges in the north to the Great Indian desert to the Indo-Gangetic Plains to the Hills & Plateaus to the sun splashed beaches & tropical rainforests in the south gives the country a distinct geographical entity.

India has been a land of architectural marvels, having been the center of the world in the ancient past with significant Buddhist Monasteries & Stupas, mesmerizing temples built by various dynasties, magnificent hill forts, awesome Mughal architecture and the beautiful churches & European monuments, part of the footprints left by the Portuguese, French, Dutch and British who invaded India. There are 573 wildlife sanctuaries in India with 54 tiger reserves dedicated for the conservation of the Royal Bengal Tiger, the national animal of India. Other popular wildlife include the Elephant, Rhino, Lion, Bison, Deer & numerous species of birds. There are 42 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India showcasing the natural treasures of the country.

India has a total of 28 states and 8 union territories. As you travel the wide expanse of the country you are greeted by diverse nuances of cuisines, faiths, arts, crafts, music, nature, lands, tribes, history and adventures.

The quintessential traveler can experience the best of both worlds from the bustling old bazaars rubbing shoulders with swanky shopping malls and majestic monuments accompanying luxurious heritage hotels.

Indian classical music has historically adapted and evolved with many regional styles, known as the Carnatic Music in South India and Hindustani music in North India. India is home to several classical dance forms such as Bharatnatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, Manipuri, Kuchipudi and Odissi.

The delicious Indian cuisine consists of regionally distinct recipes highly influenced by religion and traditions, ranging from the masterful marinated meats and thalis (plate meals) to the wide array of vegetarian cuisines and deep sea delights. Spices are an essential part of Indian cuisine. India is also renowned for its tempting variety of street food.

India has options galore for all. The incredible experiences of visiting India will leave you with wonderful memories to be cherished all your life.

SANTOS KING

Santos King is a Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India recognized Inbound & Adventure Tour operator with offices in Kochi, Kerala, India specializing in all India Holiday Packages, Houseboat cruises and Adventure tour activities. Founded in 2009 by a group of professionals with rich experience in the tourism industry, Santos King aims to provide excellent service to its clients and hassle-free operations for the tour operators.

We have provided our service to a lot of international groups in the last 15 years with most of the FIT and GIT from Germany, United Kingdom, USA, Middle East, Bulgaria, Italy and France. We have an experienced and dedicated team to manage the guests as per their requirements and as per the guidelines of international tour agents. We have a strong presence all over India which helps us with easy accessibility across all destinations at all times. We have a good collection of Houseboats, Geared Bikes, Kayaks, Support Vehicles and well experienced Tour Leaders and Guides. Also, we use brand new cabs and coaches for every trip driven by English speaking professional chauffeurs. Team Santos sails by the motto of providing 100% customer satisfaction to it's clients.

This brochure covers some of our tailor-made itineraries of India. Please start exploring.

CONTENTS

Explore The Kerala	▶	Page 3
Life in a Kerala Houseboat	▶	Page 4
The Kerala Backwaters and Beaches	▶	Page 5
Temples of South India	▶	Page 6
Footprints of Saint Thomas	▶	Page 7
Exotic Culture and Food of Kerala	▶	Page 8
Exotic Culture and Food of Kerala	▶	Page 9
Enchanting Kerala by Cycle	▶	Page 10
Essence of South by Cycle	▶	Page 11
Mountains and Valleys, Munnar Trek	▶	Page 12
Heritage Rajasthan	▶	Page 13
Explore North East	▶	Page 14
Tropical Paradise Goa	▶	Page 15
Ayurveda	▶	Page 16
Exuberant South India	▶	Page 17
Kerala Fairs and Festivals	▶	Page 18
Kerala Fairs and Festivals	▶	Page 19

EXPLORE THE KERALA



A canal view in Alappuzha



Day 4: MUNNAR

Full day sightseeing tour of Munnar.

Places to see: 🚗

Eravikulam National Park, Tea Factory & Museum, Mattupetty Lake & Dam, Echo Point, Kundala Lake
 Overnight: Munnar.

“Ascend to the tea plantations of Munnar. Recently featured to great affect in Life of Pi, the lush hill station of Munnar is a centre of the coffee, tea and spice gardens of Kerala. A great place to find cooler weather and to commune with the natural beauty of the region.”
 - Mariellen Ward, Breathedreamgo



Kerala Backwaters

remarkable feature of long stretch of red laterite cliffs fringing the beach. Overnight: Varkala.

Day 5: MUNNAR -THEKKADY

Morning drive through the scenic Western Ghats, jungles and spice trails to Thekkady. Enroute, we will stop by a Spice Garden and you will be shown cardamoms, peppers, coffee, ginger, cocoa, nutmeg growing. Transfer to your resort in Thekkady. Rest of the day is free to relax in resort.

Optional Activities: 🚶

Elephant Ride, Spice Market, Kathakali and Kalaripayattu show, Jeep Safari, Jungle Trek
 Overnight: Thekkady.

“South India’s most popular wildlife sanctuary, Periyar encompasses 777 sq km and a 26-sq-km artificial lake created by the British in 1895. The vast region is home to bison, sambar, wild boar, langur, 900 to 1000 elephants and 35 to 40 hard-to-spot tigers. Firmly established on both the Indian and foreigner tourist trails, the place can sometimes feel a bit like Disneyland-in-the-Ghats, but its mountain scenery and jungle walks make for an enjoyable visit.”
 - Lonely Planet

Day 6: THEKKADY - KUMARAKOM

Early morning boating in Periyar Lake to see wild animals. Later you will be transferred to your backwater resort in Kumarakom, a popular backwater destination set in the backdrop of the picturesque Vembanad lake. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Kumarakom.

Day 7: HOUSEBOAT

Afternoon, transfer to Houseboat at Alappuzha. Check-in to your floating houseboat (Kettuvallam), boat with bedroom and en-suite rest room for your comfort. Afternoon and Evening cruise through Vembanad lake. Overnight: Houseboat.

Day 8: ALAPPUZHA -VARKALA

Early morning check-out from the houseboat and transfer to your resort in Varkala through the coastal road. Varkala is known for its stunning beach with a

Day 9: VARKALA - KANYAKUMARI

Transfer to hotel at Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip of the peninsular India where the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal & the Indian Ocean meet.

Places to see: 🚶 🚲 🚗

Vivekananda Rock, Gandhi Memorial
 Overnight: Kanyakumari.

Day 10: KANYAKUMARI - KOVALAM

Morning transfer to Kovalam with enroute visits to Suchindram Temple and Padmanabhapuram palace. Kovalam meaning grove of coconut trees is an internationally renowned beach with lot of leisure options including sunbathing, swimming, herbal massages, cultural programmes and adventure activities. Check-in to resort. Overnight: Kovalam.

Day 11: THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Morning, after breakfast, half day city sightseeing tour of Trivandrum, the capital city of Kerala.

Places to see: 🚗

Napier Museum, Kuthiramalika Museum and Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple
 Overnight: Kovalam.

Day 12: DEPARTURE

Transfer to Thiruvananthapuram Airport.



Day 1: KOCHI

Arrival in Kochi airport. Meet and greet with Santos King representative and transfer to hotel. In the evening, we will go for a sunset cruise around the Kochi harbour area with views of the Marine Drive, Cochin shipyard, Vallarpadam container terminal, Vypin and the spectacular Chinese fishing nets in the pink haze of the sunset. Overnight: Kochi.

Day 2: KOCHI

Today we will go for a half day sightseeing tour of Fort Kochi and Mattancherry.

Places to see:

Dutch Palace, Jewish Synagogue, Jew Town, St. Francis Church, Chinese Fishing Nets, Indo-Portuguese museum, Kathakali show at theatre.
 Overnight: Kochi.

Day 3: KOCHI - MUNNAR

Transfer to resort at Munnar. Munnar, a hill station situated at the confluence of three mountain streams - Mudrapuzha, Nallathanni and Kundala. Munnar, at 1600 metres above sea level is filled with sprawling tea plantations and picture book towns and was once the summer resort of the British Government in South India. Overnight: Munnar.

LIFE IN A KERALA HOUSEBOAT



Santos Luxury One Bedroom Houseboat

Duration: 4 nights / 5 days

Kochi - Alappuzha - Marthandam Kayal - Pullangady - Karuvatta - Kayamkulam - Alappuzha - Kochi

Day 1: KOCHI - ALAPPUZHA

Arrival in Kochi airport. Meet and greet with Santos King representative and transfer to your houseboat in Alappuzha. Our trip begins with cruise through the Vembanad lake, Rani kayal, Chithira kayal, Kumarakom backwaters and R-Block. Overnight: Houseboat at Marthandam kayal.

Day 2: MARTHANDAM KAYAL - PULLANGADI

Cruise continues to the backwaters of Kainakary, Chennamkary, Nedumudy and Champakulam. Visit to St. Mary's Syro-Malabar Catholic Forane Church in Champakulam, one of the oldest churches in India constructed in 427 AD and was an associate parish of the Niranam church which was believed to have been founded by Saint Thomas. Overnight: Houseboat at Pullangadi.



A village man in a country boat

KERALA BACKWATERS

The Kerala backwaters are a chain of brackish lagoons and lakes lying parallel to the Arabian Sea coast (known as the Malabar Coast). The backwaters were formed by the action of waves and shore currents creating low barrier islands across the mouths of the many rivers flowing down from the Western Ghats range. The network of interconnected canals, rivers, lakes and inlets is a labyrinthine system formed by more than 900 km of waterways extending virtually half the length of Kerala state. In the midst of this landscape there are a number of towns and cities, which serve as the starting and end points of backwater cruises.

Vembanad Kayal, India's largest lake covering an area of 2033 km² is bordered by Alappuzha (Alleppey), Kottayam, and Ernakulam districts. to the Arabian Sea.

Day 3: PULLANGADY - KARUVATTA

Cruise through the backwaters of Thayamkary, Mannar, Thakazhy, Karichal and Veyapuram. Overnight: Houseboat near Karuvatta.

Day 4: KARUVATTA - KAYAMKULAM

Cruise continues to Thottappally backwaters. Visit to the Thottappally beach and Thrikkunnapuzha where we can see the coir retting process. Later proceed to Mannarasala Sree Nagaraja temple, very ancient center of pilgrimage for the devotees of serpent gods (Nagaraja). In the evening, we will

KAYAL RAJA MURICKEN

Kayal Raja or the 'King of Lake' is the title lovingly bestowed on 'Murikkummoottil Thommen Joseph' for his herculean contribution in transforming Kerala's marshy Kuttanad Vembanad Lake region into the prolific 'rice bowl' while concurrently offering employment opportunities to numerous natives.

During the food crisis of 1930's in Travancore, Muricken responded to the desperate calls of then Travancore Raja, Sree Chithira Thirunal to enhance food production. The food scarcity pained him and he set out to reclaim the marshy area for rice cultivation in a mammoth scale. Muricken asked for freedom of operation and Raja granted it readily following which he employed around 3000 people and identified the shallow fertile region at the confluence of rivers and constructed a rounded bund of around 15 feet width, using coconut logs, bamboo poles and river silt. Then, from inside the rounded bund the water was drained (initially manually and in later years using motors) and on the clear fertile lake bed farming was done. The bund was further strengthened using rocks and coconut trees and tillers lived in the small huts built on the bunds. Thus he created around 2152 acres of cultivable lake bed divided into three - Chithira, Rani and Marthandom, each one named after the royal member of the Travancore Palace who inaugurated it. Kuttanad has not known famine since the time of Muricken.

He achieved impressive success in his endeavour and his economic vision was appreciated by the then Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru who conferred upon him as 'Krishi Rajan' title which he is also known as.

Muricken was a devout Catholic who built seven churches in his home state of Kerala. On 6th June 1960, Muricken was one of the few who had the rare opportunity to have an audience with the Pope in his private chambers. Muricken breathed his last on 9th December 1972 and was laid to rest at Trivandrum's St. Mary's Church Cemetery.

anchor at the picturesque Kayamkulam lake. Overnight: Houseboat at Kayamkulam.

Day 5: KAYAMKULAM - ALAPPUZHA - KOCHI

Cruise to Alappuzha and check-out from houseboat. Transfer to Kochi airport.

SANTOS HOUSEBOAT CUISINE

The traditional food is served in Banana Leaf in the Houseboat. The Banana Leaf experience has been redefined by the traditional 'Sadya' or banquet in Kerala. All the food items are part of the local cuisine of Kuttanad region and carry a lot of significance.

The rice is grown in Kuttanad, popularly known as the 'Rice bowl of Kerala', noted for its farming below sea level. Pure coconut oil is used for cooking which enhances the taste of Kerala cuisine. A number of large water bodies and vast stretches of paddy growing in wet lands make it ideal for rearing fish and ducks other than the paddy. The Kuttanad ducks are released on paddy fields after harvest and they feed on paddy grains, wild rice, snails and small fishes and in the process enhance soil fertility through their droppings. The land owners receive duck eggs in remuneration. Similarly, the culture of fish in paddy fields which remains flooded after paddy harvest also serves as an off-season occupation and additional income to the farmers. Kuttanad region is also considered the 'tharavad' (family home) of 'Karimeen' or Pearl spot, named as the official state fish of Kerala in 2010. The natural dwelling place of Karimeen is ponds, rivers, backwaters, lagoons, reservoirs, paddy fields and low lying wet lands of Kerala.

Other food items served in houseboat - Varal fish (Banded snakehead), Kaari (Stinging Catfish), Vala fish (Belt or Ribbon fish), 'Chakka Varuthathu' (Jackfruit chips), 'Ethakka Upperi' (Banana chips), Cashew nuts, 'Manga Achar' (Mango pickle), 'Naranga Achar' (Sweet and sour Lime pickle) all come from the local cuisine of Kuttanad region.

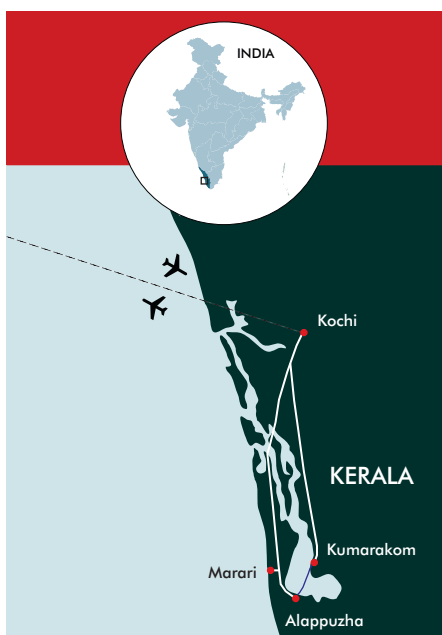


Kuttanad Rice Paddy Fields

THE KERALA BACKWATERS AND BEACHES



A village woman in a country boat



Duration: 6 nights / 7 days

Kochi - Kumarakom - Houseboat - Alappuzha - Marari - Kochi

Day 1: KOCHI - KUMARAKOM

Arrival in Kochi airport. Meet and greet with Santos King representative and transfer to your backwater resort facing the vast and picturesque Vembanad lake at Kumarakom. Rest of the day at leisure to relax in your resort after a long flight journey. Overnight: Kumarakom.

Day 2: KUMARAKOM

Day at leisure in your backwater resort.

Optional Bird Watching Tour

Walking Tour in Kumarakom Bird sanctuary, a favourite haunt of many migratory birds and an ornithologist's paradise. Egrets, darters, herons, teals, waterfowls, cuckoo, wild duck and migratory birds like the Siberian Stork visit here in flocks.

Overnight: Kumarakom.

Day 3: HOUSEBOAT

Transfer to your floating houseboat (Kettuvalam), a boat with bedroom and en-suite rest room for your comfort. Enjoy unlimited surfing on backwaters, sip a coconut, get disturbed by only the chirping of birds, occasional ripples in water and savor mouthwatering delicacies prepared in front of you by your kitchen crew. Overnight: Houseboat.



Houseboat in Kerala Backwaters

"Every now and then we'd float passed a small village where people were busy going about their daily activities, and often a small canoe would float by transporting some crops or people. Occasionally we'd come across a fisherman, but other than that it was a time for reflection and relaxation. The very best thing about the houseboat? Hands down the incredible food that was delivered to our plates every meal from the tiniest of kitchens in the back of the boat."

- Barry, Worldly Nomads

Day 4: HOUSEBOAT

Cruise continues to Kuttanad backwaters.

Optional Kuttanad Cycle Tour

Morning ride through the lush paddy fields of Kuttanad overlooking villages, canals, toddy tapping, boat construction, country boats, old temples, churches and migratory birds in this trip.



Kuttanad Cycling Tour

Optional Evening Kayak Tour

Paddle through narrow canals and backwaters where you will get a chance to see the local village life along these canals from close corners. Pass by country boats, toddy shops, migratory birds, water lilies and paddy fields. Take a break at typical tea shop with delicious Kerala snacks.

Overnight: Houseboat.

Day 5: MARARI

Check-out from houseboat at Alappuzha and transfer to your beach resort in Marari.

Optional Cycle Tour - Alappuzha to Marari

After check-out, ride through the coastal road along the Arabian sea crossing town markets, villages, beaches, churches and temples.

Marari Beach, rated as one of the world's top five hammock beach by National Geographic survey, is a pristine palm-fringed white sand beach lined with fisherman boats.



Marari Beach

"Marari isn't a tourist beach but rather a peaceful place to relax and unwind. Those who visit Marari look forward to the slow pace of life, and soaking up the serenity and tranquility on the deserted sandy beaches."

- Sharell Cook, AboutTravel

Optional Village Walking and Cooking Tour

The tour will give you a chance to experience the Kerala village life from close quarters. You will learn about the traditional values and patterns of life followed and the best part of the tour is that you will get a chance to prepare authentic Kerala cuisine with the local people.

Overnight: Marari.

Day 6: MARARI

Day at leisure in your beach resort.

Optional Day with a Fisherman Tour

The tour will give you a real-time experience of life of a fisherman and the challenges they face to bring us our seafood. You must have experience in sea swimming and should be ready for a real adventure.

Optional Cycle Tour

Visit to the old churches, temples, traditional coir making, cloth weaving and pottery making units.

Overnight: Marari.

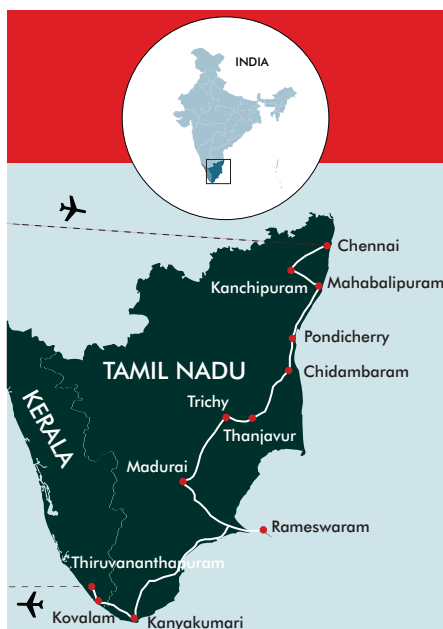
Day 7: DEPARTURE

Transfer to Kochi Airport.

TEMPLES OF SOUTH INDIA



Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Thiruvananthapuram



Duration: 11 nights / 12 days

Chennai - Kanchipuram - Mahabalipuram - Pondicherry - Chidambaram - Thanjavur - Trichy - Madurai - Rameswaram - Kanyakumari - Kovalam - Thiruvananthapuram

Day 1: CHENNAI

Arrival in Chennai ("Madras") airport. Meet and greet with Santos King representative and transfer to hotel. Overnight: Chennai.

Day 2: CHENNAI

Full day sightseeing tour of Chennai, the capital city of Tamil Nadu. Chennai, also known as the "Gateway to the South India" was established in 1639 and represents a distinctive culture in sharp contrast with North India.

Places to see: Kapaleeshwarar Temple, San Thome Basilica, Marina Beach, St. Thomas Mount, Kalakshetra.

Overnight: Chennai.

Day 3: CHENNAI - KANCHIPURAM - MAHABALIPURAM

Morning drive to Kanchipuram, the ancient capital of the Pallavas popularly known as the 'City of Thousand Temples' and still has 126 shrines. The city is also well known for its hand woven silk sarees.

Places to see: Ekambarnathar Temple, Kailasanathar Temple.

Later we will drive to Mahabalipuram, a port city of Pallava dynasty built in 7th century.

Places to see: Shore Temple, Five Rathas, Arjuna's Penance

Overnight: Mahabalipuram.

Day 4: MAHABALIPURAM - PONDICHERRY

Morning drive to the union territory of Pondicherry which became part of the Indian union in 1954. The city carries a strong whiff of the French presence in India. Enroute visit Auroville, the City of Dawn.

Places to see: 🚲

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Our Lady of Angels Church, Promenade Beach.

Overnight: Pondicherry.

Day 5: PONDICHERRY - THANJAVUR

Morning drive to Chidambaram, famous for the Nataraja Temple with the roof of the sanctum sanctorum covered with golden plates located in the centre of the town. In this temple, postures from the Bharatanatyam form of dance are depicted in the sculpture. Nataraja is Lord Shiva as the cosmic dancer. Later we will proceed to Thanjavur, an important centre of South Indian religion, art and architecture. Many temples of Thanjavur termed as "Great Living Chola Temples" have been classified as the World Heritage Monuments by the UNESCO.

Places to see: Brihadeeswarar Temple, Thanjavur Palace, Bronze Workshop

Overnight: Thanjavur.

Day 6: THANJAVUR - TRICHY

Morning drive to Trichy, situated on the banks of river Cauvery and ruled by the Cholas, Pandyas, Nayaks, Marathas, Carnatic Nawabs, French and British. The city around rock fort is a fine blend of tradition, heritage and modern environment.

Places to see: Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple at Srirangam, Rock Fort Temple.

Overnight: Trichy.

Day 7: TRICHY - MADURAI

Morning drive to Madurai, an ancient city around 2600 years old situated in the banks or River Vaigai where ancient Tamil classics recorded the Meenakshi temple as the centre of the city and the surrounding streets appearing like lotus and its petals. Historically, Madurai is also called as the "Athens of the East".

Places to see: Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple, Thirumalai Nayakkar Mahal.

Overnight: Madurai.

Day 8: MADURAI - RAMESWARAM

Morning drive to Rameswaram, the most sacred temple town of India, an island hallowed by the epic Ramayana.

Places to see: Ramanathaswamy Temple.

Overnight: Rameswaram.

"North India, with its famous Moghul era palaces and forts, might be the country's most popular tourist destination, but Tamil Nadu in the south has an equally rich and undiscovered history. The state is where India's major temple cultural complexes are, and some are so large that they're considered minicities. There's Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, a sprawling complex dedicated to a powerful female deity, Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur, built by the ancient Cholas, one of India's greatest dynasties, and several hundred other temples dotting the countryside and brimming with art carvings dating back as far as the 9th century.

- Shivani Vora, The New York Times

Day 9: RAMESWARAM - KANYAKUMARI

Morning drive to Kanyakumari, an important pilgrim centre and southernmost tip of the peninsular India where the waters of the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean meet. To its South-East lies the famous Vivekananda Rock memorial, dedicated to Indian saint Vivekananda, who meditated on this rock before he proceeded to west to propagate Hinduism.

Places to see: 🚶 🚲

Vivekananda Rock, Devikanya temple.

Overnight: Kanyakumari.

Day 10: KANYAKUMARI - KOVALAM

After viewing the the beautiful sunrise, drive to Kovalam with enroute visits to Suchindram and Padmanabhapuram Palace. Overnight: Kovalam.

Day 11: THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Morning visit to Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala.

Places to see: Napier Museum, Kuthiramalika Museum and Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple.

Overnight: Kovalam.

Day 12: DEPARTURE

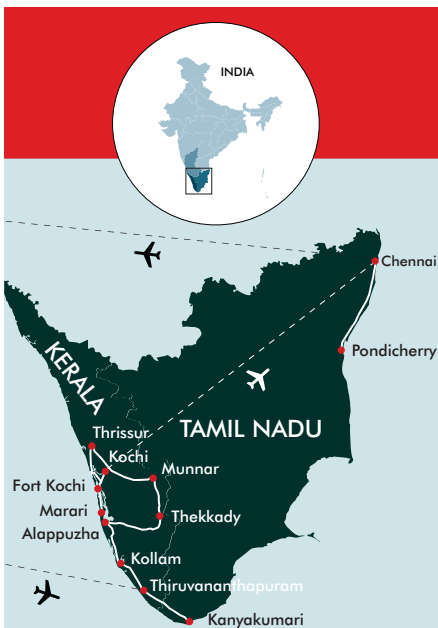
Transfer to Thiruvananthapuram airport.



FOOTPRINTS OF SAINT THOMAS



Thiruvithamcode Arappally



Duration: 13 nights / 14 days

Thiruvananthapuram - Kanyakumari - Kollam - Houseboat - Gavi - Thekkady - Munnar - Thrissur - Muziris - Fort Kochi - Marari - Kochi - Chennai - Pondicherry - Chennai

Day 1: TRIVANDRUM - KANYAKUMARI

Arrival in Thiruvananthapuram airport. Meet and greet with Santos King representative and transfer to hotel in Kanyakumari. Rest of the day at leisure to relax in your hotel after a long flight journey. Overnight: Kanyakumari.

Day 2: KANYAKUMARI - KOLLAM

We will start our day early morning to view the beautiful sunrise in Kanyakumari and then proceed to Kollam. Enroute visit to the Padmanabhapuram Palace, a fine specimen of Kerala's indigenous style of architecture. Later, we will visit one of the "Seven and a half churches" established by St. Thomas in Thiruvithamcode. Transfer to resort in Kollam. Kollam, also known as Quilon, was one of the oldest ports in the Arabian sea. Evening visit to the church in Kollam. Overnight: Kollam.

Day 3: KOLLAM - ALAPPUZHA (HOUSEBOAT)

Morning visit to the church in Niranam. Later you will be transferred to your houseboat in Alappuzha. Cruise through the picturesque backwaters passing by rustic villages, coconut groves, paddy fields and exotic birds. Visit to the church in Champakulam. Overnight: Houseboat.

Day 4: ALAPPUZHA - THEKKADY

Check-out from houseboat and visit to the church in Nilackal. Later we will pass by Gavi in an open jeep or van. Gavi, part of Periyar Tiger Reserve is rich in flora and fauna. The place is surrounded by hills, valleys, tropical forests, sprawling grasslands, sholas, cascading waterfalls and cardamom plantations. Transfer to resort in Thekkady, one of the finest wildlife reserves in Kerala. Overnight: Thekkady.

Day 5: THEKKADY - MUNNAR

Early morning boating in Periyar Lake to see wild animals. Later, you will be transferred to resort in Munnar. Munnar, situated at a height of 1600 metres above sea level was once the summer resort of the British Government in South India. The beauty of the place lies in the endless stretch of manicured tea gardens spread all across the region. Overnight: Munnar.

Day 6: MUNNAR

Today we will go for a sightseeing tour of Munnar. **Places to see:** Eravikulam National Park, Tea Factory & Museum, Mattupetty Lake & Dam, Echo Point, Kundala Lake. Overnight: Munnar.

Day 7: MUNNAR - THRISSUR

Morning transfer to hotel in Thrissur, the "Cultural Capital of Kerala". Afternoon visit to the church in Palayoor and the elephant camps in Anakotta and Punnathurkotta. Overnight: Thrissur.

Day 8: THRISSUR - MUZIRIS - FORT KOCHI

Visit to the church in Paravur. Later you will be transferred in an air-conditioned boat which will take you across the Muziris region, an ancient seaport and urban centre on the Malabar Coast of Tamilakam (modern-day Indian state of Kerala) that dates from 1st century BC. According to tradition, St. Thomas reached Muziris in AD 52. Visit to the historic sites in Muziris region and the church in Kodungallur. Transfer to hotel in Fort Kochi. Overnight: Fort Kochi.

Day 9: FORT KOCHI

We will go on a sightseeing tour of Fort Kochi and Mattancherry.

Places to see: St. Francis Church, Chinese Fishing nets, Indo-Portuguese Museum, Dutch Palace, Paradesi Synagogue and Jew Town.

In the evening, we will watch Kathakali show in theatre. Kathakali, a 300 year old classical art form of Kerala is a spectacular blend of dance, drama, mime and song. Overnight: Fort Kochi.

Day 10: FORT KOCHI - MARARI

Transfer to Marari, one of the finest beaches in Kerala. With its vast coastal line fringed with coconut trees, white sand and the clean water, this beach is the perfect place to unwind and relax. Overnight: Marari.

Day 11: MARARI

Morning visit to the churches in Kokkamangalam and Arthunkal. Optional visit to St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara Church. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Marari.



St. Mary's Syro-Malabar Catholic Forane Church, Champakulam

Day 12: CHENNAI

Transfer to Kochi airport to catch the flight to Chennai. Meet and greet service by Santos King representative at the airport. Visit to San Thome Basilica, built in the 16th century by Portuguese explorers over the tomb of St. Thomas. Later we will proceed to St. Thomas Mount, where St. Thomas was believed to have been martyred. Transfer to resort in Pondicherry. Overnight: Pondicherry.

Day 13: PONDICHERRY

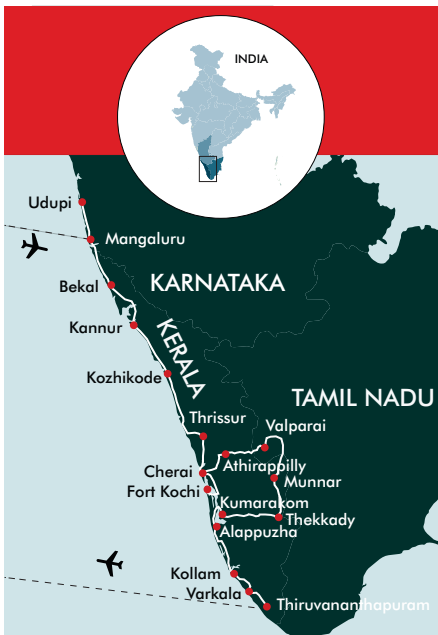
Today we will go for a sightseeing tour of Pondicherry, a French colony until 1954, which has retained a number of colonial buildings from the old era.

Places to see: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Our Lady of Angels Church, Promenade beach. Overnight: Pondicherry.

Day 14: DEPARTURE

Transfer to Chennai airport.

EXOTIC CULTURE & FOOD OF KERALA



Duration: 18 nights / 19 days

Mangaluru - Udupi - Bekal - Kannur - Kozhikode - Thrissur - Cherai - Athirappilly - Valparai - Munnar - Thekkady - Kumarakom - Alappuzha (Houseboat) - Kollam - Varkala - Thiruvananthapuram

Day 1: MANGALURU - UDUPI

Arrival in Mangaluru airport. Meet and greet with Santos King representative and transfer to resort in Udupi, an ancient temple city in the Karnataka state notable for its age-old Krishna Mutt and serene beaches. Day at leisure. Overnight: Udupi.

UDUPI CUISINE

Udupi cuisine forms an important part of the cuisine of Karnataka which adheres strictly to the Satvik tradition of Indian vegetarian cuisine, using no onions or garlic.

The ubiquitous Indian dish masala dosa has its origins in Udupi. Saaru, a spicy pepper water, is another essential part of the menu, and so are jackfruit, colocasia leaves, raw green bananas, mango pickle, red chillies, and salt.

Day 2: UDUPI - BEKAL

Morning transfer to beach resort at Bekal, part of the Kasargod district, renowned as the land of Gods, forts, rivers, hills and beautiful beaches. Evening visit to the historical Bekal fort, the largest fort in Kerala. Overnight: Bekal.

Day 3: BEKAL - KANNUR

Today we will drive down to Kannur, formerly known as Cannanore and popularly known as the land of Loom and Lore, because of the loom industries functioning in the district and ritualistic folk arts held in temples. Check-in to resort. In the evening we will watch 'Theyyam'. Overnight: Kannur.

THEYYAM

Theyyam also known as Kaliyattam, is a ritual dance popular in North Kerala. Theyyam incorporates dance, mime and music and enshrines the rudiments of ancient tribal cultures which attached great importance to the worship of heroes and the spirits of ancestors. Theyyam is performed in front of shrines, sans stage or curtains, by persons belonging to the Vannan, Malayan and other related castes. The headgear and other ornamental decorations are spectacular in sheer size and appearance.

Day 4: KANNUR - KOZHIKODE

Morning drive to resort in Kozhikode (Calicut), earlier known as the "City of Spices". Vasco da Gama landed on its shores in 1498, catapulting the region to global fame. Later we will go for a sightseeing tour of Kozhikode covering the beaches and the popular snacks of the Mappila cuisine. Overnight: Kozhikode.



Ghee Roast

Day 5: KOZHIKODE - THRISSUR

Morning drive to Cheruthuruthy to visit the Kerala Kalamandalam, a major centre for Kathakali training and other performing art forms like Mohiniyattam, Koodiyattam, Ottamthullal and Nangiarkoothu. Then we will proceed to the temple town of Guruvayur and visit the Elephant Camps at Anakotta or Punathurkotta. Later you will be transferred to resort at Thrissur, the 'Cultural capital of Kerala'. Overnight: Thrissur.

MALABAR CUISINE

Malabar Cuisine or Mappila cuisine is a reminder of the Mughal-Arab cultural influence in North Kerala and is an ample insignia of the Islamic cultural influence in the region. The popular dish "Thalassery Biryani", a rice-based dish blended with spices and chicken, "Kozhikode Halwa", a famous Kerala style wheat halwa and the traditional evening snacks are all part of the Mappila cuisine. The snacks include Chatti Pathiri, Irachi Pathiri, Unnakkaya, Kallummakkay, Samosa, Poricha pathiri, Cutlet, Mutta mala and Pinjanathappam, Mutta surka and Pazham nirachathu.

Day 6: THRISSUR - CHERAI

Today we will drive down to the resort in Cherai, a picturesque beach located on the north end of Vypeen island. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Cherai.

Day 7: FORT KOCHI

Half day sightseeing tour of the island of Fort Kochi and Mattancherry covering the historic sites and the exquisite cuisines. In the evening we will watch Kathakali performance in the theatre. Overnight: Cherai.

KATHAKALI

Kathakali, the classical art form of Kerala is a spectacular blend of dance, drama, mime and song and is over 300 year old. One of the most exotic of the India's performing arts, Kathakali demands years of rigorous training and lays great emphasis on complex body movements and facial expressions. Therefore oil massages and a separate folio of exercises for the eyes, lips, cheeks, neck and the body form an integral part of the training, aiming at making the body supple.

In addition to postures, movements and facial expressions the Kathakali artiste narrates his story through hand gestures or mudras. There are twenty four basic mudras in Kathakali, some of them having upto thirty or forty interpretations. The Kerala Kalamandalam is the most renowned centre for Kathakali training besides others like Margi.

EXOTIC CULTURE & FOOD OF KERALA



Day 8: CHERAI -ATHIRAPPILLY

Today we will go for a drive to Athirappilly, the largest waterfall in Kerala and nicknamed "the Niagara of India". The scenic beauty of the Athirappilly falls has been used as a location for several films. Transfer to resort. Day at leisure. Evening visit to Athirappilly and Vazhachal falls. Overnight: Athirappilly.

Day 9: ATHIRAPPILLY - VALPARAI

Drive to Valparai in the Annamalai hills of the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu where you can enjoy the presence of many streams, tea gardens, valleys, waterfalls, high mountains, grass lands, flora and fauna. There is a high chance of spotting wild animals crossing the road in this scenic route. Transfer to resort. Overnight: Valparai.



Thali meal

Day 10: VALPARAI - MUNNAR

Today, we will re-enter Kerala crossing the wildlife sanctuary of Chinnar and the sandalwood forests of Marayoor which is also known for its vast sugarcane farms. We will arrive at our resort in Munnar, a popular hill station of Kerala filled with manicured tea plantations. Overnight: Munnar.

Day 11: MUNNAR

Full day sightseeing tour of Munnar covering Eravikulam National Park known for the endangered species Nilgiri Tahr, Tea Factory & Museum, Mattupetty Lake & Dam, Echo Point and Kundala Lake. Overnight: Munnar.

SYRIAN CHRISTIAN CUISINE

Kerala Chicken stew or Nadan Kozhi curry is a traditional and popular dish of Syrian Christian community of Kerala. Other main dishes include Piralen (chicken stir-fries), Beef thoran (dry dish with shredded coconut), Sardine fish fry (Netholi), Duck roast, and Fish Molee (spicy stewed fish). This is eaten with Appam. Appams, 'Kallappams', or 'Vellayappams' are rice flour pancakes which have soft, thick white spongy centres and crisp, lace-like edges. "Meen Mulakittathu" or "Meen vevichathu" (fish in fiery red chilly sauce) is another favourite item. Njandu roast (crab roast) is also popular with the Nazrani Christians.

Day 12: MUNNAR -THEKKADY

Morning drive to the wildlife reserve of Thekkady through the scenic spice trails in the Western Ghats. Enroute we will visit Spice Garden where you can see various spices and herbs growing. Day at leisure. Overnight: Thekkady.

Day 13: THEKKADY

Early morning boating at the Periyar Lake to see the wild animals. Rest of the day at leisure. In the evening we will watch Kalaripayattu in the theatre. Overnight: Thekkady.

KALARIPAYATTU

Kalaripayattu, the martial art form of Kerala is regarded as the oldest and most scientific of its kind in the world. The word kalari first appears in Sangam literature to describe both a battlefield and combat arena. The word kalari tatt denoted a martial feat, while kalari kozhai meant a coward in war. Training in combat is given at the Kalari (training school) which aims at the ultimate co-ordination of the mind and body.

Day 14: THEKKADY - KUMARAKOM

Morning drive to the picturesque Kumarakom, set in the backdrop of the serene Vembanad lake. Kumarakom is also known for the traditional toddy shops. Overnight: Kumarakom.

SHAP FOOD

Shap food is the authentic tasty food served in the toddy shops in Kerala. Toddy or palm wine is a mild alcoholic beverage made from the sap of palm and coconut trees. Toddy is served in clay pots and the well-flavoured curries served are known for their tanginess and spiciness. Appams, mashed Tapioca, Fish curry, Crab curry, Mussels fry, Pearl Spot baked in banana leaf, Frog leg curry, Duck roast, spicy pickles and various delicious meat preparations are available in most of the toddy shops. The Shap food served in toddy shop is distinct from the food served in restaurants.



Appam and Chicken curry

Day 15: HOUSEBOAT

Transfer to Houseboat at Alappuzha where you can enjoy the scenic backwaters and Kerala rural life from close corners, while relishing on the most delightful cuisine from the Kuttanad region. The specialities are Kuttanadu duck roast and Karimeen. Overnight: Houseboat.



Day 16: ALAPPUZHA - KOLLAM

Check-out from houseboat at Alappuzha and drive down to Kollam (earlier name "Quilon") through the coastal road. Kollam, one of the leading trade capitals of the old world, is also the centre of India's cashew trading and processing industry. If you love seafood, Kollam is just the right place for you. Transfer to resort. Evening food tour at Kollam. Overnight: Kollam.

ARANMULA VALLASADYA

The Aranmula Vallasadya is a ritual offering to the deity Lord Parthasarathy in which the oarsmen of the snake boats are offered a feast. With over 70 dishes it is probably one of the largest vegetarian feasts in India. An event that combines ritual offerings, sports and music, the elaborate feast lasts for more than two hours. The oarsmen perform special songs for the feast beginning by praising Lord Parthasarathy of Aranmula. Their songs then become more playful and include demands of particular dishes that they wish to be served.

Day 17: KOLLAM -VARKALA

Today we will drive down to your beach resort at Varkala, a popular destination in Kerala with a beautiful beach surrounded by red laterite cliffs, mineral water springs and the 2000 year old Janardanaswamy temple. Day at leisure to relax at the resort. Overnight: Varkala.

Day 18: VARKALA

Day at leisure. Overnight: Varkala.

Day 19: DEPARTURE

Time to say goodbye after a wonderful experience with the exotic culture and food of Kerala. Transfer to Trivandrum airport.

ENCHANTING KERALA BY CYCLE



Duration: 13 nights / 14 days

Fort Kochi - Paravur - Malayattoor - Munnar - Top Station - Ellapatti - Thekkady - Kuttikanam - Kumarakom (Houseboat) - Alappuzha - Mararikulam - Kochi

Average Distance: 40 to 50 kms per cycling day

Day 1: KOCHI 🚗

Arrival in Kochi airport. Meet and greet with Santos King representative and transfer to hotel in Fort Kochi where you will receive the bike and final tune up will be done. Overnight: Fort Kochi.

"Serene Kochi has been drawing traders and explorers to its shores for over 600 years. Nowhere else in India could you find such an intriguing mix: giant fishing nets from China, a 400-year old synagogue, ancient mosques, Portuguese houses and the crumbling remains of the British Raj. The result is an unlikely blend of medieval Portugal, Holland and an English Village grafted onto the tropical Malabar coast"

- Lonely Planet

Day 2: FORT KOCHI 🚲

Today, we will go for a sightseeing ride in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry.

Places to see: Santa Cruz Basilica, Indo-Portuguese Museum, Dutch Cemetery, St. Francis Church, Dhobi

Ghat, traditional Chinese Fishing nets, Church of our Lady of Life, Dutch Palace, Paradesi Synagogue, Jew Town and Spice Market. In the evening, we will watch Kathakali show in the theatre. Overnight: Fort Kochi.

Day 3: FORT KOCHI - CHERAI 🚲 🚣

Morning ride through the connecting islands overlooking picturesque backwaters, traditional Chinese fishing nets, rustic villages and busy town markets. You will also have a wonderful experience of crossing some of the islands by ferry. Afternoon we will go for a Kayak trip in the backwaters of Paravur where you will experience the life of people living along these narrow canals. Overnight: Chera.



Day 4: MUZIRIS 🚲 🚗

Sightseeing ride in Muziris covering old temples, churches, mosques, synagogues, museums, forts and historic markets.

Places to see: Paravur and Chendamangalam synagogues, Paliyam Palace Museum, Kottapuram Fort and Market, Cheraman Juma Masjid, Kodungallur Bhagavathy Temple, Pallippuram Fort, The Manjunatha Church, Sahodaran Ayyappan Museum.

Transfer to hotel near Kochi Airport. Overnight: Kochi.

Day 5: KOCHI - MALAYATTOOR 🚲 🚣

Morning ride to Thattakkad to visit the famous 'Salim Ali bird sanctuary', home to over 322 species of birds. Later ride to Kodanad to visit one of the largest elephant training centres in Kerala. Evening go for Kayaking in River Periyar, Fishing and Ayurvedic massage. Overnight: Malayattoor.

Day 6: MALAYATTOOR - MUNNAR 🚲 🚗

Early morning ride to Adimali via Kothamangalam town. Later go for a challenging uphill ride to Munnar, the popular hill station in Kerala. Evening check-in to resort. Overnight: Munnar.

Day 7: TOPSTATION 🚲 🚗

Ride uphill to Top Station, offering panoramic views of the majestic Western Ghats and the valley of Theni district of Tamil Nadu.

Places to see: Mattupetty Dam and Lake, Elephant Camp, Echo Point, Kundala Lake.

Later you will be transferred to your camp at Ellapatti. Overnight: Camp at Ellapatti.

Day 8: ELLAPATTI - THEKKADY 🚲

Morning ride through the scenic Western Ghats covered with tea and spice plantations to Periyar wildlife reserve. Enroute we will stop by a Spice Garden to see various spices growing. Evening check-in to hotel. Later watch Kerala's martial arts - Kalaripayattu in theatre. Overnight: Thekkady.

Day 9: THEKKADY - KUMARAKOM 🚲 🚗

Early morning boating at Periyar lake. Later ride to Kuttikanam, a picturesque plantation town and an up-market resort under British Raj. Enroute visits to Vandiperiyar market, Tea factory to see tea processing and Parunthumpara (Eagle Rock) to see a bird's eye view of an endless stretch of green forest land and low-lying areas. Transfer to Kumarakom, a popular backwater destination set in the backdrop of the vast picturesque Vembanad lake. Overnight: Kumarakom.

Day 10: KUMARAKOM (HOUSEBOAT) 🚗

Afternoon check-in to your floating houseboat (Kettuvallam). Cruise through the backwaters of Vembanad lake. Overnight: Houseboat.

Day 11: HOUSEBOAT 🚗 🚲

Morning ride through the paddy fields of Kuttanad. Rest of the day is free to relax in the houseboat. Overnight: Houseboat.

Day 12: ALAPPUZHA - MARARIKULAM 🚲

Check-out from houseboat at Alappuzha and ride through rustic villages past markets, old lighthouse, beaches, temples and churches to Mararikulam, a fishing village with the pristine palm-fringed white sand Marari beach lined with fisherman boats. Rest of the day is free to relax in beach resort. Overnight: Marari.

Day 13: MARARIKULAM

Day at leisure. Overnight: Mararikulam.

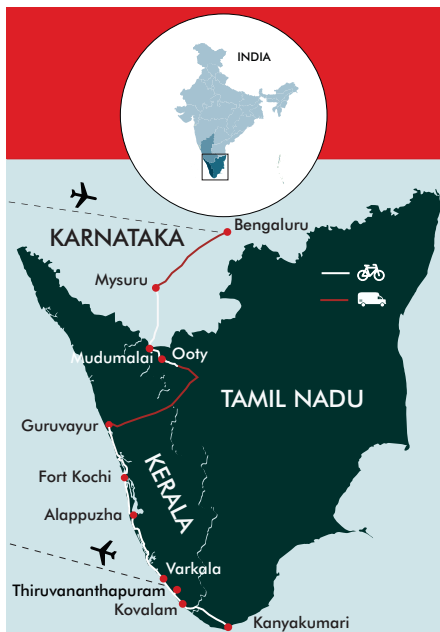
Day 14: DEPARTURE 🚗

Time to say good bye from Kerala after a long Cycle tour. Transfer to Kochi airport.

ESSENCE OF SOUTH BY CYCLE



Axis Deers at Bandipur National Park



Duration: 16 nights / 17 days

Bengaluru - Mysuru - Mudumalai - Ooty - Mettupalayam - Guruvayur - Fort Kochi - Alappuzha (Houseboat) - Varkala - Kanyakumari - Kovalam - Thiruvananthapuram

Average Distance: 40 to 50 kms per cycling day

Day 1: BENGALURU 🚗

Arrival in Bengaluru airport. Meet and greet with Santos King representative in the airport and transfer to hotel in Mysuru. Day at leisure. Overnight: Mysuru.

Day 2: MYSURU 🚲 🚗

Sightseeing ride in Mysuru. Mysuru, situated on the base of Chamundi Hills, also known as the "The City of Palaces" is a city with rich architectural history and is one of the most prominent tourist areas of India.

Places to see: Mysore Palace, Jayachamrajendra Art Gallery, Sri Chamundeshwari Temple. Overnight: Mysuru.

Day 3: MYSURU - MUDUMALAI 🚲

Early morning ride to Mudumalai, a declared tiger reserve on the northwestern side of the Nilgiri hills and a protected area to several endangered and vulnerable species including Indian elephant, Bengal Tiger, Gaur and Leopard. Rest of the day is free for Jeep safari ride to see wild animals. Overnight: Mudumalai.

Day 4: MUDUMALAI - OOTY 🚲

Uphill challenging ride to Ooty, a popular hill station in the Nilgiri hills. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Ooty.

Day 5: OOTY 🚶 🚲

Day is free to explore Ooty with the main attraction Ooty Botanical Gardens, established in 1847 with thousand species of exotic and indigenous plants. Overnight: Ooty.

Day 6: OOTY - GURUVAYUR 🚲 🚗

Today we will go for an amazing downhill ride to Mettupalayam along the scenic tea plantations. Later, you will be transferred to Guruvayur, one of the most sacred and important pilgrim centres of Kerala with its main attraction - the Shree Krishna Temple. Overnight: Guruvayur.

Day 7: GURUVAYUR 🚲

Morning ride to Anakotta and Punnathurkotta, elephant camps belonging to Guruvayur temple where elephants are taken care of and trained to serve and participate in many festivals that occur throughout the year. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Guruvayur.

Day 8: GURUVAYUR - FORT KOCHI 🚲

Ride through the coastal roads, villages and connecting islands to Fort Kochi. Check-in to hotel. Overnight: Fort Kochi.

Day 9: FORT KOCHI 🚲

Sightseeing ride in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry covering the historic sites.

Places to see: Santa Cruz Basilica, Indo-Portuguese Museum, Dutch Cemetery, St. Francis Church, Dhobi Ghat, Chinese Fishing Nets, Church of our Lady of Life, Dutch Palace, Paradesi Synagogue, Jew Town and Spice Market. In the evening, we will watch Kathakali show in the theatre. Overnight: Fort Kochi.

Day 10: FORT KOCHI - ALAPPUZHA 🚲 🚤

Early morning ride to Alappuzha passing by sandy beaches, old churches, temples, villages, markets and the picturesque backwaters. Afternoon, check-in to your floating houseboat (Kettuvallam). Afternoon and evening cruise through the picturesque Vembanad lake passing by paddy fields and rustic villages. Overnight: Houseboat.

Day 11: HOUSEBOAT 🚤 🚲

Morning ride in Kuttanad through paddy fields. Kuttanad, popularly referred to as "The Rice bowl of Kerala" is one of the few places in the world where farming is carried below sea level. Rest of the day is at leisure to relax in the houseboat. Overnight: Houseboat.

Day 12: ALAPPUZHA - VARKALA 🚲 🚗

Early morning check-out from Houseboat and ride to Varkala through coastal road of Kerala. Evening check-in to resort at Varkala. Overnight: Varkala.

"Varkala is a wonderful place to relax and rejuvenate. It's well known for its dramatic sunsets. Settle into one of the beach shacks with a drink, and you'll have an uninterrupted view of the sun as it slowly sinks down the horizon. The mineral spring that flows from the cliff at the southern end of the beach is believed to have medicinal properties. You'll also find plenty of places specializing in yoga and Ayurvedic therapies"

- Sharell Cook, About Travel

Day 13: VARKALA - KANYAKUMARI 🚲 🚗

Ride through the coastal road passing by fishing villages and beaches. Later you will be transferred to your hotel in Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip of peninsular India and the confluence of the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. **Places to see:** Vivekananda Rock, Devikanya temple, Gandhi Memorial. Overnight: Kanyakumari.

Day 14: KANYAKUMARI - KOVALAM 🚲 🚗

After watching sunrise, ride to Kovalam, an internationally renowned beach. Enroute visit to Padmanabhapuram palace. Overnight: Kovalam.

Day 15: THIRUVANANTHAPURAM 🚲

Morning ride to Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala.

Places to see: Napier Museum, Kuthiramalika Museum, Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Kovalam.

Day 16: KOVALAM

Day at leisure. Overnight: Kovalam.

Day 17: DEPARTURE 🚗

Transfer to Thiruvananthapuram airport.



MOUNTAINS & VALLEYS, MUNNAR TREK

Duration: 10 nights / 11 days

Kochi - Cumbammettu - Pushpakandam - Mathikettan Shola - Chokramudi - Suryanelli - Kolukkumalai - Kurangani - Top Station - Ellapatti - Pampadum Shola - Vattavada - Meesapulimala - Silent Valley - Kochi

Day 1: KOCHI

Arrival in Kochi airport. Meet and greet with Santos King representative and transfer to hotel in Kochi. Day at leisure. Overnight: Kochi.

Day 2: KOCHI - CUMBAMMETTU

Transfer to your camp at Cumbammettu from where the eight day long trek will begin. Overnight: Cumbammettu.



Day 3: CUMBAMMETTU - PUSHPAKANDAM

Trek through jeep trail to Ramakkalmedu, a hamlet in Idukki district at a height of 3500 ft, popular for the large statue of Kuruvan and Kurathi offering panoramic views of Tamil Nadu. Later we will trek through rustic villages, farmlands and spice hamlets to our camp in Pushpakandam. Overnight: Pushpakandam.

Day 4: PUSHPAKANDAM - MATHIKETTAN

Trek in and around Mathikettan Shola National Park. The name Mathikettan derives from the Tamil word meaning "mind confuser", as the local people say that one forgets the path once he enters the park. A part of the Cardamom Hill Reserve, this park is an excellent habitat for wild variety of flora and fauna including endangered species like spotted deer, Sambar, Sloth bear and Hanuman langur. Overnight: Mathikettan.

Day 5: MATHIKETTAN - CHOKRAMUDI

Today we will go for a challenging trek to Chokramudi peak from the Gap road through the misty clouds, dense shola forests and lush green grasslands. Overnight: Chokramudi.

Day 6: CHOKRAMUDI - SURYANELLI - KOLUKKUMALAI - KURANGINI

Trek to Suryanelli through the tea plantations. We will come across the picturesque Anaerangal lake. Anaerangal means "The place where the elephants climb down". Later we will proceed to Kolukkumalai, home to the highest tea plantations in the world. Trek to our camp in Kurangani. Overnight: Kurangani.



Day 7: KURANGINI - TOP STATION - ELLAPATTI

Challenging trek to Top Station through dense woods and plain grasslands of Kurangani hills with panoramic views of deep valley and mountains covered with low and slow moving clouds. Top Station was a transshipment point for delivery of tea from Munnar to Bodinayakanur and the name is derived from its being the upper terminus of the Kottagudi Aerial Ropeway. Later we will proceed to our camp in Ellapatti. Overnight: Ellapatti.

Day 8: ELAPPETTY - PAMPADUM - VATTAVADA

Trek through the evergreen wild forests of Pampadum Shola National Park, the smallest national park of Kerala, rich in variety of flora and fauna including elephants, Nilgiri Langurs, Leopard, Indian Wild Dogs, Nilgiri wood pigeon and Nilgiri marten. Later we will proceed to the hilly tract of Vattavada, filled with slopes of vegetable fields. Overnight: Vattavada.



Day 9: VATTAVADA - MEESAPULIMALA

Today, we will proceed for an enchanting trek to our Meesapulimala base camp area. Overnight: Meesapulimala base camp.

Day 10: MEESAPULIMALA TREK

Trek through sholas, mountain streams, high altitude grasslands and rich wildlife popular for elephants, sambars, sloth bears and the Nilgiri Tahr to Meesapulimala, the second highest peak in the Western Ghats at 2640 metres. Enroute enjoy the panoramic views of the vast plains of Tamil Nadu to your east and never ending Sahyadri to your west. Later trek back from where you will be transferred to Silent Valley. Overnight: Silent Valley.

Day 11: DEPARTURE

Morning transfer to Kochi Airport.



HERITAGE RAJASTHAN



Duration: 15 nights / 16 days

Delhi - Agra - Fatehpur Sikri - Ranthambore - Bundi - Udaipur - Ranakpur - Jodhpur - Jaisalmer - Bikaner - Mandawa - Jaipur - Delhi

Day 1: DELHI

Arrival in Delhi airport. Meet and greet with Santos King representative and transfer to hotel. Rest of the day at leisure to relax after a long flight journey. Overnight: Delhi.

Day 2: DELHI - AGRA

Transfer to Agra (4 hrs drive). Check-in to hotel. Afternoon visit to Agra Fort, the powerful fortress of red sandstone, the imperial city of the Mughal rulers. Overnight: Agra.

Day 3: AGRA - RANTHAMBORE 🏰

Early Morning visit for the stunning views of the majestic Taj Mahal at sunrise, popularly known as the "Monument of Love" built by Moghul Emperor Shah Jahan in the memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. Transfer to Ranthambore (6 hrs drive). Enroute visit Fatehpur Sikri, once the capital of Mughal Emperor Akbar. Overnight: Ranthambore.

Day 4: RANTHAMBORE 🚐 🦁

Morning & Evening jeep safari in Ranthambore National Park, one of the biggest & most renowned national parks in Northern India, home to the great Indian Tiger. It was the former hunting grounds of the Maharajas of Jaipur. Overnight: Ranthambore.

Day 5: RANTHAMBORE - BUNDI

Transfer to Bundi (3 hrs drive), known as the blue city of Eastern Rajasthan. Afternoon visit to the magnificent Bundi Fort, set high on a hill. Overnight: Bundi.

Day 6: BUNDI - UDAIPUR

Morning drive to Udaipur (4.5 hrs drive), the most romantic spot on the continent of India, popularly known as the "City of Lakes". Transfer to hotel. Evening take a breathtaking sunset boat ride over the picturesque Lake Pichola. Overnight: Udaipur.

Day 7: UDAIPUR

Full day sightseeing tour of Udaipur.

Places to see: 🚗 🚲

City Palace, Jagdish Temple, Fateh Sagar Lake, Maharana Pratap Memorial, Nehru Garden, Saheliyon-ki-Bari, Sukhadia Circle (Drive Pass), Bhartiya Lok kala Museum
Overnight: Udaipur.

Day 7: UDAIPUR - JODHPUR

Morning transfer to Jodhpur (5 hrs drive). Enroute visit to the 15th century beautiful Jain Temple at Ranakpur. Jodhpur, popularly known as the "Blue City" in India, was historically the capital of the Kingdom of Marwar which is now part of Rajasthan. Overnight: Jodhpur.

Day 8: JODHPUR - JAISALMER

Morning sightseeing tour of Jodhpur.

Places to see: 🚗 🚲

Mehrangarh Fort, Jaswant Thada.
Later drive to Jaisalmer (5 hrs), the Golden City, known for its Fort rajwada, ravishing havelis, splendid temples & vibrant bazaars. Overnight: Jaisalmer.

Day 9: JAISALMER

Morning sightseeing tour of Jaisalmer.

Places to see: 🚶 🚲 🐪

Jaisalmer Fort, Patwon ki haveli, Salim Singh ki haveli, Gadisar Lake.
Evening, proceed for camel ride on sand dunes where you can experience the spectacular view of sunset in Thar Desert. Later enjoy a live Rajasthani Folk dance show.
Overnight: Desert Camp, Jaisalmer.

Day 10: JAISALMER - BIKANER

Transfer to Bikaner (5 hrs drive), also known as the "Camel Country". Afternoon sightseeing tour of Bikaner.

Places to see:

Junagarh Fort (incl. Anup Mahal), Gaj Mandir, Sheesh Mahal and Prachina Museum, Lalgarh Palace.

Overnight: Bikaner.

Day 11: BIKANER - MANDAWA

Transfer to Mandawa (3 hrs drive). Enroute visit Asia's biggest camel breeding farm. Afternoon sightseeing tour of Mandawa, dominated by an imposing mirage like fort. This region is famous for its havelis and Shekhawati paintings. Overnight: Mandawa.

Day 12: MANDAWA - JAIPUR

Morning drive to the 'Pink City' of Jaipur (3 hrs drive), the largest city of Rajasthan, founded by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh, one of the most colorful cities in India.

Afternoon sightseeing tour of Jaipur.

Places to see: 🚗 🚲

Hawa Mahal, Jantar Mantar, City Palace & Museum, Bazaars
Overnight: Jaipur.

Day 14: JAIPUR - DELHI

Morning visit to the Amber fort & palace, an extensive palace complex situated on the top of a small hill. Later proceed to Delhi (5 hrs drive). Since the onset of Tomar's Kingdom in the 8th century, Delhi has been the centre of a succession of mighty empires and powerful kingdoms, making it one of the longest serving capitals & oldest inhabited cities in the world. The capital city today marries the quaint and unique elements of different historical eras with the pace of the bustling, growing economy. Overnight: Delhi.

Day 15: DELHI

Full day sightseeing tour of Delhi.

Places to see: 🚗 🚲

Red Fort, Jama Masjid*, Raj Ghat, Humayun's Tomb, Lotus Temple (Bahai), Qutub Minar, Rashtrapati Bhawan*, Parliament House*, Jantar Mantar, India Gate (* Drive Pass)
Overnight: Delhi.

Day 16: DEPARTURE

Transfer to Delhi Airport.



EXPLORE NORTH EAST



Duration: 19 nights / 20 days

Guwahati - Cherrapunjee - Shillong -
Bhalukpong - Dirang - Tawang - Bomdila -
Kaziranga - Kohima - Imphal - Agartala - Aizawl

Day 1: GUWAHATI

Arrival in Guwahati Airport. Meet and greet with Santos King representative and transfer to hotel. Guwahati, the largest city of Assam is also known as the "Gateway to North East India". Evening Sunset cruise in the majestic Brahmaputra River. Overnight: Guwahati.

Day 2: GUWAHATI - CHERRAPUNJEE

Today we will proceed for a scenic drive (4.5 hrs) to Cherrapunjee, the wettest place on earth in the picturesque state of Meghalaya which means "The Abode of Clouds". Overnight: Cherrapunjee.

Day 3: CHERRAPUNJEE

Morning drive to Tyra to begin our trek to the most popular Double Decker Living Root Bridge near Nongriat village. The inventive members of the Khasi tribe have trained them to grow from the roots of ancient rubber trees. Visit to Rainbow Falls & later head back for a challenging trek. Later, we will go for sightseeing tour of Cherrapunjee.

Places to see:

Mawsmai Cave, Nohkalikai Falls, Nohsngthiang Falls, Thangkharang Park, Dain-Thlen Falls
Transfer to Shillong (2 hrs drive), the capital city of Meghalaya, known as the "Scotland of the East". Overnight: Shillong.

Day 4: SHILLONG

Morning Sightseeing tour of Shillong.

Places to see:

Cathedral Church, Lady Hydari Park, Orchidarium, Elephant Falls, Golf Course, Shillong Peak.
Evening shopping at Police Bazar. Overnight: Shillong.

Day 5: SHILLONG - BHALUKPONG

Morning transfer to Bhalukpong (6 hrs drive), the entry point to Arunachal Pradesh, popularly known as the "Land of Dawn-lit-Mountains". The river Kameng enters Bhalukpong in a serene flow which provides opportunity of Angling & River Rafting adventure activities. Overnight: Bhalukpong.

Day 6: BHALUKPONG - DIRANG

Drive to Dirang (4 hrs), small picturesque town on the banks of River Kameng. Enroute visit to Nag temple. Overnight: Dirang.

Day 7: DIRANG - TAWANG

Today we will go for a scenic high altitude drive to Tawang (4 to 5 hrs), land of ancient monasteries, rugged landscapes, beautiful lakes, high mountain pass & waterfalls along the way. Enroute we will cross the snow-capped Sela Pass at a height of 13700 ft & later visit Nuranang Falls. Overnight: Tawang.

Day 8: TAWANG

Sightseeing tour in Tawang with visit to Tawang Monastery. Later drive to PTSO lake, Madhuri lake & the popular Bum La Pass, at a height of 15200 ft, border place of India & China. Overnight: Tawang.

Day 9: TAWANG - BOMDILA

Drive to Bomdila (5 hrs drive), a scenic town and district headquarters of West Kameng district with breathtaking views of the snow-clad mountains. Enroute visit to Jaswant Garh War Memorial. Visit to Bomdila Monastery, Craft & Ethnographic Museum and Bomdila Viewpoint. Overnight: Bomdila.

Day 10: BOMDILA - KAZIRANGA

Morning drive to Kaziranga National Park (5 hrs drive), one of the most popular national parks in India, well known for being home to the one-horned rhino. Covering an area of 430 sq. kms, Kaziranga was declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1985. The park is also a Tiger Reserve & known for Elephants, wild water Buffaloes & Swamp Deer. Day at leisure to relax in resort. Overnight: Kaziranga.

Day 11: KAZIRANGA

Early Morning Elephant Safari, followed by Jeep Safari in Kaziranga National Park after breakfast. Overnight: Kaziranga.

Day 12: KAZIRANGA - KOHIMA

Morning drive to Kohima (5 hrs drive), the capital 'city of the state of Nagaland, also known as the "Land of Festivals". Enroute visit the Kachari Ruins at Dimapur. Overnight: Kohima.

Day 13: KOHIMA

Kohima is famous for its decisive battle in World War II between British & India troops against Japanese forces. The battle is also known as the "Stalingrad of the East". Sightseeing tour of Kohima with visit to War Cemetery, Kohima Museum, Kohima Cathedral & Angami villages of Khonoma. Overnight: Kohima.

Day 14: KOHIMA - IMPHAL

Transfer from Kohima to Imphal, the capital of Manipur (4.5 hrs drive) on the significant route during World War II. Afternoon visit to Kangla Fort, Kangla Museum, State Museum, Imphal War Cemetery & local market. Overnight: Imphal.

Day 15: IMPHAL

Sightseeing tour outside Imphal with visit to the Japanese War Memorial, Laktak Lake & Sendra Island. Later drive to Moirang, once the headquarters of Indian National Army, where it is possible to visit the interesting INA Museum. Drive to Keibul Lamjao National Park, the only Floating Park in the world. Overnight: Imphal.

Day 16: IMPHAL - AGARTALA

Transfer to Imphal airport to catch the flight to Agartala, capital of the state of Tripura, where Culture meets Nature. Later we will go for sightseeing tour of Agartala with visit to the Ujjayanta palace, Tripura State Museum & Indo Bangla check point. Overnight: Tripura.

Day 17: AGARTALA

Morning sightseeing with visit to Neermahal ("Water Palace"). Later visit Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary & Kasba Kali Temple. Overnight: Agartala.

Day 18: AGARTALA - AIZAWL

Transfer to Agartala Airport to catch the flight to Aizawl, capital of Mizoram, a beautiful hill city flanked by lofty peaks. Afternoon visit to Bara Bazar, Luangmual Handicrafts Centre, Mizoram State Museum. Overnight: Aizawl.

Day 19: AIZAWL

Morning visit to Tamdil Lake, the largest natural lake in Mizoram surrounded by cool virgin forests Evening return to Aizawl. Overnight: Aizawl.

Day 20: DEPARTURE

Transfer to Aizawl Airport.

TROPICAL PARADISE GOA



GOA

India's smallest state, popular worldwide for its sandy beaches lined with coconut palm trees, laid back fishing villages, rich colonial history of over 450 years by the Portuguese, hippie trails of the 1970s, distinct music, colorful markets and bazaars, tempting local cuisine, active nightlife and peaceful, friendly & fun loving people makes Goa an ideal destination to relax, unwind & explore. The remains of the Old Goa city have been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Goa also has rich flora and fauna because it lies very close to the North Western Ghats rainforests, one of the rare biodiversity hotspots of the world.

How to reach Goa:

By Air: Dabolim Goa International Airport

By Road: NH 66 from Mangalore / Panvel, NH 748 from Belgaum linking to other cities in Deccan. Regular buses operate from Mumbai, Pune and Bengaluru

By Train: Madgaon Station, Vasco da Gama Station

Major Cities: Panjim, Vasco da Gama, Margao

"A kaleidoscopic blend of Indian and Portuguese cultures, sweetened with sun, sea, seafood, susegad and spirituality, Goa is India's pocket-sized paradise"

- Lonely Planet

NORTH GOA

Sparkling with sea, sand and sunshine, North Goa welcomes you to a picturesque land of natural beauty. Concentrated with the foreign tourists, soft golden sands line the shores backed by colorful makeshift beach shacks, lively bars, buzzing flea markets, peaceful yoga retreats, the place is truly a traveler's delight.

Places to visit:

Beaches: Calangute, Baga, Arambol, Mandrem, Morjim, Candolim, Anjuna, Vagator, Chapora. Anjuna Flea market, Siolim, Arpora Saturday Night market, Mapusa market, Bicholim, Chapora fort, Fort Aguada, Nightclubs

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES IN GOA

Goa has become one of the popular hubs for Adventure Sport Activities with various options including:

Water Sports Activities:

- Sea Kayaking, Wind Surfing, Jet-Skiing, Parasailing, Banana Ride, Surfing, Speed Boat Ride, Bumper Boat Ride, River / Backwaters Kayaking

- Snorkeling & Dolphin Spotting in "Ilha Grande" (Grand Island)

Land Based Activities:

- Cycling Trip to Divar Island, Nature Trail of Chorao Island, Countryside Bike tour, Quad Biking, Hot Air Balloon Rides, Bungee Jumping

- Trekking or Jeep Safari to Dudhsagar Waterfalls, a four-tiered waterfall located in the Mandovi River, one of India's tallest waterfalls.

CENTRAL & INTERIOR GOA

Wedged between Goa's two biggest rivers, the Mandovi and the Zuari, this region is home to the state capital of Panjim, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Old Goa, picturesque Dudhsagar Waterfalls, inland islands, bird sanctuaries & spice plantations.

Places to visit:

Basilica of Bom Jesus, Se Cathedral, ASI Museum, Chapel of St. Catherine, Arch of Viceroy, Church of St. Catejan, Mangueshi Temple, Shanta Durga Temple, Big Foot Museum, Dona Paula Bay, Goa Science Centre, Miramar Beach, Dudhsagar Waterfalls, Spice Plantations, Dr. Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, Panaji Handicrafts Emporium, Goa State Museum & Secretariat Building, Church of our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, Panjim market.

SOUTH GOA

The southern region of Goa lies to the south of the Zuari River, defined by quiet fishing villages, swaying coconut groves, beautiful rice paddies and virgin golden sands line the shores backed by colorful beaches. The less touristy area boasts one of the best beaches, peaceful yoga retreats, the place is truly a traveler's delight.

Places to visit:

Beaches: Arossim, Benaulim, Colva, Cavelossim, Mobor, Cola, Palolem, Agonda, Majorda, Varca, Butterfly, Galgibaga.

Cabo de Rama Fort, Margao Market, Assolna, Chandor, Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary, Our Lady of Remedios Church

GOAN CUISINE

The cuisine of Goa is a delicious reflection of its history and heritage, originated from its Konkani roots and four hundred years of Portuguese colonialism.

Seafood, Coconut Milk, Rice, and local Spices are the main ingredients of Goan Cuisine. Being the state with a tropical climate, the spices and flavours are intense. Use of kokum and vinegar is another distinct feature.

Goan food is considered incomplete without fish. Rice and fish-curry is the staple of most Goans. Kingfish (Vison or Visvan) is the most common delicacy. Others include Pomfret, Shark, Tuna, Mackerel, Crabs, Prawns, Tiger Prawns, Lobster, Squid & Mussels.

The Portuguese introduced potatoes, tomatoes, pineapples, guavas, and cashews in the Goan cuisine with the most significant contribution being the introduction of Peri-Peri Chilli which is most important part of Goan spices.

Popular Goan dishes include Fish curry called Humann and Rice, also known as Kadi or Ambot, Fried Fish, Fish Suke or Dhabdhabit, Fish Udid Methi or Uddamethi, Kismur, Dangar or fish cutlets, Kalputi, Bhaji or Shak, Khatkhate, Tondak, Varan, Payasu, Patoli, Mangane, Kheer, Pickles, Papads, Solachi Kadhi, Ambot tik, Arroz doce, Balchao, Bebek (Bebinca), Cafreal, Canja de Galinha, Chamuca, Croquettes, Feijoada, Roast beef and beef tongue, Sorpotel, Xacuti, Samarein Chi Kodi, Patoleo or Patoli, Sanna, Solantule Kodi, Vindaloo, Cashew laddus, Nevryo, Khaje, Revdyo, Sakharbhat, Madgane, Payasa, Halwa dali kapa, Dodol, Serradura, Kuswar & Perada.

AYURVEDA



INTRODUCTION TO AYURVEDA



Ayurveda Herbs and Spices

In Sanskrit, Ayurveda means the “Science of Life” (Ayus = Life and Veda = knowledge/science). It is one of the holistic traditional system of medicine, evolved from brahma sages of ancient India more than 5000 years. The entire science of Ayurveda is based on five elements i.e. space, air, water, fire, earth (Panmahabhuta theory). The elements combines into Tridosha i.e. Vata, Pitta, Kapha which determines the physical & mental condition. If any dosha is in imbalance, the body-mind connection begins to suffer and the disease process begins.

Our focus is on authentic Ayurveda rather than just wellness. Every treatment plan is selected and customized based on each condition. The herbal medicines for external and internal treatment are freshly picked from our herbal garden with love & affection. We are using milk from our own farm for the treatment purpose.

Food is an intrinsic factor in balancing the bio-energies according to each individual’s body constitution and the balance of the five elements. Ayurveda also strongly recommends the consumption of fresh and organic food and encourages mindful or meditative eating by which the full essence of food can be assimilated by the body in an aware, fully engaged and respectful manner. The chef at the kitchen on his part closely follows the doctor’s instructions for each individual’s diet and accordingly prepares food using fresh vegetables.

PANCHAKARMA & REJUVENATION

DETOXIFICATION THERAPY

Duration: 14 days , 21 days

Panchakarma is an intensive cleansing therapy, which literally means “five actions”, which is essentially about purification of the body. The five actions of Panchakarma are Vamana (induced vomiting), Virechana (purgation), Kashaya Vasti

and Sneha Vasti (two kinds of medicated enemas) and Nasya (nasal medication). At the first stage the body is prepared for removing “toxins” through Snehanam which make the body unctuous or oily internally and externally, and second through Swedanam which means therapeutic sweating. Once the preparatory stage is completed, the doctor will prescribe panchakarma cleansing procedures depending on medical condition and dosha basis. In the final stage of the treatment, the patient undergoes corrective measures through medicines, moderate therapeutic treatments, appropriate diet and activities for the body and mind. On completion of the Panchakarma treatment, the imbalances that lead to diseases in the individual is stabilized and brought to equilibrium. In some cases, there is a stage prior to Snehana called Rookshana – which literally means “drying” and is done to make the body’s channels ready to absorb Sneha – oil.



Swedanam

STRESS MANAGEMENT THERAPY / MANASHANTI CHIKITSA

Duration: 14 days , 21 days

Literally meaning mental peace, treatments for stress management work to relieve the ill-effects that come from the burden of mental strain-stress, insomnia, lack of concentration, fatigue and headaches, and help in improving your mental health. The treatment course for Manashanti chikitsa/treatment follows the 3 stages, Poorvakarma - preparatory phase, Shodana - cleansing or eliminating phase and finally Samana which is the corrective and rejuvenation phase.

During the first stage, the body is prepared for removing toxins through Snehanam - internal and external oleation, followed by Swedanam - therapeutic sweating. Once the body is prepared, the doctor will determine the cleansing or panchakarma treatment based on each individual’s body constitution and medical condition.

Sirodhara is a special treatment, which is pouring the medicated oil or decoction over the forehead for a certain period. It helps to normalize the hormones, regulate sleep, mental stress & anxiety.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT (STHOULYA CHIKITSA)

Duration: 14 days , 21 days

This Ayurvedic treatment for weight management works by increasing metabolism, which will help in utilizing the fat and increasing the body’s vitality, so that less fat is accumulated in the body. It is essentially about purification of the body by eliminating excess cellulite deposits and preventing the body from disease. Any treatment offered begins with the three kinds of diagnostic procedures in keeping with the pure Ayurveda treatments. These are: 1. Darshana - Observing 2. Sparshana - Palpating and 3. Prasna - Interrogating. The doctor determines your Doshas or body constitution through extensive examination using these methods of diagnosis and accordingly arrive at a course of treatment. Udwarthanam is one of sthoulya chikitsa i.e. rubbing of herbal powder on a specific time period. Its helps in reducing cellulites and fat accumulation.

ANTI-AGEING THERAPY

Duration: 14 days , 21 days

The various cells and tissues of the body undergo changes as age advances. Therefore, it is necessary to rejuvenate the body system for a better harmony to the mind and soul. Ayurveda prescribes treatment for repairing the wear and tear of the body due to ageing process. After proper purification by evacuating measures, one can increase the vital energy called “Ojas” which improves strength and vitality through the “Rasayana” intake.

This process ensures prolonged lifespan, youthfulness, good health, complexion, intellect, power of retention and strength. The 21 days package includes body massages with medicated oils, Njavaratheppu or Njavara Kizhi (Massage with rice pudding or stumbing massage), with decoctions or milk, Snehanam (intake of medicated ghee) Virechana (purgation), Thalapothichil (special head pack), Shirodhara, (pouring of herbal oil on forehead), herbal bath, steam bath and Rasayana (rejuvenation medicines) intake with very special diet.

PAIN CARE THERAPY

Pain management in Ayurveda has a holistic view which incorporates several therapeutic procedures under the principles narrated in Ayurveda. Treatment is give on individual basis. Doctor will gather your information about your medical history, current conditions, and previous treatments. The type of treatment is purely based on what is best for your body constituents.

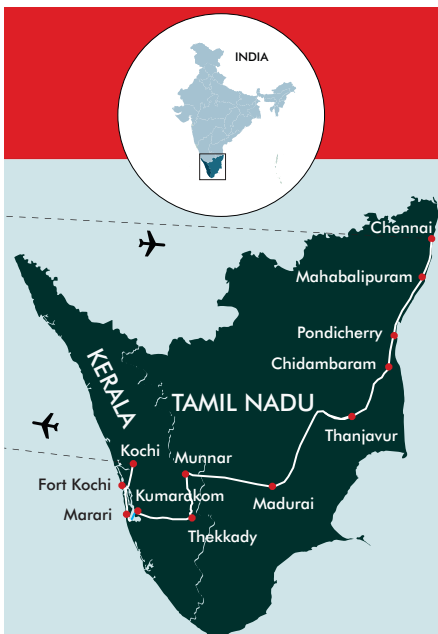
EXUBERANT SOUTH INDIA

DISABILITY IS NOT A BARRIER TO SEE THE WORLD

OUR TEAM IS READY FOR YOU



User friendly Tour



Duration: 20 nights / 21 days

Chennai - Mahabalipuram - Pondicherry - Chidambaram - Thanjavur - Madurai - Munnar - Thekkady - Kumarakom - Houseboat - Marari - Fort Kochi - Kochi

Day 1: CHENNAI

Arrival in Chennai airport. Assistance by porter at the airport and transfer to hotel in Chennai. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Chennai.

Day 2: CHENNAI - MAHABALIPURAM

Morning drive to Mahabalipuram, a port city of Pallava dynasty built in 7th century. Check-in to the beach resort in Mahabalipuram. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Mahabalipuram.

Day 3: MAHABALIPURAM - PONDICHERRY

Morning drive to the union territory of Pondicherry, a former French colony since 1674 which became incorporated into Indian union in 1954. Check-in to hotel and the rest of the day is at leisure. Overnight: Pondicherry.

Day 4: PONDICHERRY

Day at leisure. In the evening we will go for a short tour with visit to the main places in Pondicherry. Overnight: Pondicherry.

Day 5: PONDICHERRY - CHIDAMBARAM

Morning drive to Chidambaram and visit to the famous Natarajar Temple, one of the Five Sabhas

(divine stages) where Lord Shiva performed the cosmic dance. The architecture of this temple is unique and dedicated to the art of Bharatha Natyam, a classical dance form of state of Tamil Nadu. Transfer to hotel. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Chidambaram.

Day 6: CHIDAMBARAM - THANJAVUR

Morning drive to Thanjavur and visit to the famous Brihadeeswarar temple, built by the great Chola king Rajaraja Chola 1 during the 10th century. Later, you will check-in to the hotel. Overnight: Thanjavur.

Day 7: THANJAVUR - MADURAI

Morning drive to Madurai, an ancient city around 2600 years old situated in banks or River Vaigai. Check-in to hotel. Overnight: Madurai.

Day 8: MADURAI - MUNNAR

Today, we will be saying goodbye to Tamil Nadu and enter the state of Kerala popularly known as the "God's Own Country". Drive through the Western Ghats to the hill station of Munnar known for its sprawling tea plantations and picture book towns. Check-in to resort. Rest of the day is at leisure. Overnight: Munnar.

Day 9: MUNNAR

After breakfast, we will go for a half day sightseeing tour of Munnar. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Munnar.

Day 10: MUNNAR

After breakfast, we will go for half day sightseeing tour of Munnar. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Munnar.

Day 11: MUNNAR - THEKKADY

Morning drive through the scenic Western Ghats, passing by tea, cardamom, pepper, coffee and rubber plantations to your resort in Thekkady, one of the finest wildlife reserves in India. Check-in to your resort. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Thekkady.

Day 12: THEKKADY

Day at leisure. In the evening, we will watch Kalaripayattu, the martial art form of Kerala in theatre. Overnight: Thekkady.

Day 13: THEKKADY

Day at leisure. Overnight: Thekkady.

Day 14: THEKKADY - KUMARAKOM

Morning drive to Kumarakom and check-in to the backwater resort facing the picturesque Vembanad lake. Rest of the day is at leisure to unwind and relax at the resort. Overnight: Kumarakom.

"Kumarakom, 16km west of Kottayam and on the shore of vast Vembanad Lake – Kerala's largest lake – is an unhurried backwater village with a smattering of dazzling top-end sleeping options and a renowned bird sanctuary. Arundhati Roy, author of the 1997 Booker Prize – winning The God of Small Things, was raised in the nearby Aymanam village."

- Lonely Planet

Day 15: KUMARAKOM

Day at leisure. Overnight: Kumarakom.

Day 16: HOUSEBOAT DAY CRUISE

Check-in to houseboat at Kumarakom and cruise through the picturesque backwaters passing by paddy fields and coconut groves of Kuttanad region and the rustic villages along the canals and backwaters. In the evening you will check-out from houseboat and will be transferred to resort in the pristine palm-fringed Marari beach. Overnight: Marari.

Day 17: MARARI

Day at leisure. Overnight: Marari.

Day 18: MARARI

Day at leisure. Overnight: Marari.

Day 19: FORT KOCHI

Morning drive to Fort Kochi, the first European township in India with each and every nook of the island steeped in history. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight: Fort Kochi.

Day 20: FORT KOCHI

Day at leisure. In the evening we will go for Explore Fort Kochi tour. Overnight: Kochi.

Day 21: DEPARTURE

Transfer to Kochi airport.

INCLUSIONS:

- Wheelchairs
- Wheelchair friendly rooms and vehicles
- Male / Female support staff / escort



Aranmula Vallamkali

KERALA FAIRS & FESTIVALS



Thiruvur Pooram

ONAM



Onam Pookalam

Month: August / September

Onam is an ancient festival which still survives in modern times. Onam is the Kerala's rice harvest festival and the festival of rain flowers which fall on the month of Chingam.

Onam celebrates the Asura King Mahabali's annual visit from Patala (the underworld). Onam is unique since Mahabali has been revered by the Hindu people of Kerala. The King is so much attached to his kingdom that it is believed that he comes annually from another world to see his people living happily. It is in honour of King Mahabali that Onam is celebrated.

THRISSUR POORAM

Place: Thrissur

Month: April / May

Thrissur is best known for its mammoth Pooram festival held in the month of Medam. It is the most colourful and spectacular temple festival of India. Devotees and spectators from all parts of the state and even outside throng the Pooram.

Introduced during the reign of the Raja of Kochi, Sakthan Thampuran (1775-1790), Pooram is an assemblage of suburban deities before the presiding deity at the Vadakkumnathan (Siva) temple in down town Thrissur. The Pooram celebration is held at the Thekkinkadu grounds.

Traditionally, two groups representing the main geographic divisions of Thrissur, Paramakkavu Temple and Thiruvambadi Temple, rival to add to the Pooram's grandeur. Both teams field face to face arrays of richly caparisoned elephants accompanied by 'elinjithara melam', the largest live orchestra of musical instruments in the world. The event is followed by 'Kudamattam', a competition in the swift and rhythmic changing of brightly coloured and sequined parasols is conducted.

ARANMULA VALLAMKALI

Place: Aranmula **Month:** August / September
Noted for its grandeur and long tradition, the Aranmula Uthrittathi boat race is considered as a ritual than a race that takes place on the Uthrittathi asterism during the Onam festival.

Legend has it that a devout Brahmin vowed to offer all the requirements for the thiruvona sadya (the grand traditional feast on the day of Thiruvonam) at the Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple. Once, the boat known as Thiruvona Thoni carrying these offerings was attacked by enemies. In order to protect the Thiruvona Thoni people from neighbouring areas sent their snake boats. Later on, this practice evolved into an offering to Lord Parthasarathy in the form of a snake boat race, held on the Uthrittathi day which eventually became popular as the Aranmula boat race.

PULI KALI

Place: Thrissur **Month:** August / September
Pulikali, or the fun and frolic of tigers, is an event that has become synonymous with the festival of Onam in Kerala, held at the Swaraj Round in Thrissur district of Kerala. The tigers are not real ones but men dressed and painted as tigers.

As part of the performance, groups of local men would have their bodies and faces painted to resemble tigers. Apart from the true colours of a tiger, one would also come across other colours and patterns and even the facial features of lion on the bodies of performers. The make-up is time-consuming and it is quite a labour to undo the make-up, which is mostly done with oil paints. The theme of the performance is playing hide-and-seek with a hunter wielding a gun. The event generates a great deal of excitement both for the spectators from near and far and for the performers.



Pulikali

GURUVAYUR ANAYOTTAM



Guruvayur Anayottam (Elephant Running Race)

Place: Guruvayur

Month: February / March

As per the history, Guruvayur was once under the Trikkana Mathilakam temple and did not own any elephants. The practice was for the elephants which were paraded in the Trikkana Mathilakam temple festival to be loaned to the Guruvayur temple where the festival was usually held a couple of days later. There was once some misunderstanding between the authorities of the two temples and Trikkana Mathilakam temple authorities wanted to teach the smaller Guruvayur temple a lesson by not sending the elephants for the festival. The elephants were tethered at the Trikkana Mathilakam temple after the festival there. Apparently, the elephants managed to break the iron chains at night and ran all the way to Guruvayur temple, with their bells clanging and reached the temple well before the time for the ezunnallathu (the ceremonial procession of the deity).

In order to commemorate this event, an elephant race is conducted on the first day of the annual festival in Guruvayur. Trikkanamathilakam temple was destroyed by the Dutch in 1755 and it was no longer a rival to Guruvayur which prospered by the day and has now more than 50 elephants housed in the majestic Punnathoor Kotta.

As part of the race, elephants have to run for half a kilometre till the eastern entrance of the temple. The winning elephant gets the honour of carrying the Thidambu (the replica of the idol of Lord Guruvayoorappan) on all special occasions for one year.

KERALA FAIRS & FESTIVALS



Thrissur Pooram Chamayam

KODUNGALLUR BHARANI



Velichappads at Kodungallur Bharani

Place: Kodungallur **Month:** March / April
The legendary Bharani festival is noted for the spectacular event called 'kaavu theendal' in which thousands of sword wielding oracles both men and women called 'velichappads' wearing vermilion costumes swarm the temple premises of Kodungallur Bhagavathy temple. The oracles run in a trance around the temple and smite their crown with sword, proclaiming their communion with the Mother Goddess. Meanwhile the devotees strike the temple rafters with sticks and hurl offerings over the roof and on to the inner quadrangle. Following the festival, the temple would remain closed for a week. The doors will open after the purification rituals are performed to clean the stains of 'kavu theendal'.

CHETTikulANGARA BHARANI



Chettikulangara Bharani

Place: Chettikulangara **Month:** February / March
Chettikulangara Bharani is the annual festival held at the Chettikulangara temple during the month of Kumbham. The festival and the temple are dedicated to Goddess Bhagavathy.

What makes the festival stand out among the other festivals of Kerala is a spectacular event called 'Kettukazhcha', a ceremonious procession of brightly decorated structures. The dazzlingly decorated structures, the bigger ones assumed as

horses and the smaller ones as chariots, and cultural performances are the highlights of this spectacular pageant. The chariots proceed from different points in the village, representing that particular region, and demonstrate the harmony that is there in these hamlets.

KADAMMANITTA PADAYANI



Kadammanitta Padayani

Place: Kadammanitta **Month:** April / May
Kadammanitta is famous for the Padayani performance at the Devi temple here, which is a burst of colour, energy and passionate devotion. Enjoy the spirit of a magnificent ritualistic art form that is rooted in legends and myths. Padayani is such an annual ritual, performed in Bhadrakali temples of Central Travancore that astonishes the audience with its splendid theatrical values.

MARAMON CONVENTION

Place: Maramon **Month:** February
Every year, the sand beds of River Pamba at Maramon in Kerala plays host to Maramon Convention, the largest Christian congregation in Asia. The congregation, which has a tradition of over a century, is attended by renowned Bible preachers from across the globe. The convention is organised by the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association, the missionary wing of the Mar Thoma Church. The week-long event attracts around twenty million believers from within and outside the country.

NENMARA VELA

Place: Nenmara **Month:** April
An astounding festival of colours, art forms, fireworks and elephants, Nenmara Vallangi Vela, organised by two deshams or counties namely Nenmara and Vallangi, is pumped up by the friendly rivalry of these two regions. The festival

provides an occasion to enjoy some of the colourful folk arts of this place such as Kummatti, Karivela and Andivela. On the twentieth day of the festival magnificent processions with caparisoned elephants are taken out from the two villages to the Nellikulangara temple. When the procession reaches the temple the two deshams present 'panchavadayam', the traditional percussion orchestra in a competitive spirit. The fireworks let loose their fantabulous colours which illuminates not just the night sky but the minds of all those who witness the event standing in the dry paddy fields.

SABARIMALA



Sree Dharma Sastha Temple, Sabarimala

Sabarimala Sree Dharma Sastha Temple, is a Hindu pilgrimage centre located at the Periyar tiger reserve in the Western Ghat mountain ranges of Pathanamthitta District. It is one of the largest annual pilgrimages in the world, with an estimated over 100 million devotees visiting every year. Sabarimala is believed to be the place where the God Ayyappan meditated after killing the powerful demoness Mahishi. Ayyappan's temple is situated amidst 18 hills, surrounded by mountains and dense forests. The dense forest around the temple is known as Poomkavanam. Sabarimala is predominantly for men of all ages. Females who menstruate are not allowed to enter the temple, because Ayyappan is a Bramhachari (celibate). There is a place near the temple; east to Sannidhanam, dedicated to the Vavar (a sufi and friend of Lord Ayyappa) which is called 'Vavarunada', an epitome of religious harmony. The journey to the temple is to be taken through difficult paths in the forest as the vehicles can go only up to Pampa.

Front Cover: Ottam Thullal, Art Form, Kerala
Photo Courtesy : Santhosh Thayil & Kerala Tourism

Incredible India


Santos King
www.santos.travel

Santos King Tours & Travels Pvt. Ltd.

Main Office: NH Bypass, Aluva - 683 101, Kochi, Kerala, India

Branch Office: Fort Kochi, Kerala, India

Eco-Tourism Adventure Park: Harithavanam, Aluva, Kerala, India

 +91 808 908 4080, 808 907 4080

 sales@santosking.com

 facebook/santoskingtours

 (+91) 808 908 4080

 www.santos.travel

 instagram/santoskingtours

