



Best of Karnataka & Kerala - 14 Days

Day	Destination
2 Nights	Bangalore
1 Night	Mysore
2 Nights	Ooty
2 Nights	Kochi
2 Nights	Thekkady
1 Night	Alappuzha
2 Nights	Mararikulam

Day 1: Day 1: Arrive Bangalore

Known as the 'garden city', Bangalore offers a leafy backdrop from which to explore the bustling streets of India's third largest city. Cosmopolitan restaurants line wide avenues where foodies can delight in a smorgasbord of south Indian flavours. Tea lovers can indulge in fragrant cups of Chai and a spell of people-watching from any of the tea stalls dotted around the city. A booming IT industry coupled with a city that seeks to preserve its green and colonial heritage has created a modern and sophisticated metropolis. Recently voted the most liveable city in India, Bangalore makes a great base for travelling southern India.

On arrival in Bangalore: Having cleared immigration, collected your luggage and passed through

customs, please make your way towards the exit of the terminal building where you will see a bank of people waiting for you. Amongst them will be Trail Blazer Tours Representative who will be waiting to greet you with a paging board with your name on. You will be transferred to your hotel and assisted with check in (Standard check in time at hotel is 1400 hrs).

Day 2: Day 2: Bangalore – Mysore

Serving as the capital of the Kingdom of Mysore from 1399 until 1947, the city of Mysore is a rich cultural and historical centre renowned for its beautiful Hindu palaces. Arguably the most captivating of these is the opulent Mysore Palace or Amba Vilas, particularly during the annual Dasara Festival, when every day after sunset it turns incandescent with the light of nearly 100000 bulbs. In the modern context, Mysore is considered one of India's cleanest and most efficiently planned cities, and has earned a reputation for its high quality sandalwood and silk.

Leave after breakfast with your private chauffeur driven vehicle to Mysore [**Approx. 160 kms / 4 hrs**] with a stop enroute at Srirangapatnam.

Srirangapatna

Srirangapatna alternatively known as Shrirangapattinam is a religious, cultural and historically significant town. This river island town's name is sourced from the famous Ranganathaswamy Temple which dominates the town, and this temple resembles Hoysala and Vijayanagar architecture as it was restrengthened and modified after its initial construction in the 9th century.

On arrival at Mysore, check into your hotel.

Day 3: Day 3: In Mysore

Enjoy a walking tour of Mysore followed by a visit to Mysore Palace and Chamundeshwari temple.

The walking tour starts with K.R circle & Small clock tower, followed with DevarajMarket, It is about more than a hundred year old market which has lot to be explore in and around. Take a Coffee break at Hotel Dasaprakash, to experience the local hospitality & food. Afterwards, proceed to Sayyaji Rao Road , it is the local shopping street of the city with ongoing local trade.

Day 4: Day 4: Mysore – Ooty

Resting in an amphitheatre amid the Nilgiri mountain range, Udhagamandalam, also called Ooty is a beautiful hill station surrounded by terraced rolling hills dotted with 19th-century tea plantations. Perched at an altitude of 2240 m above sea level, this misty mountain town once served as a summer retreat for the British elite who enjoyed its crisp cool climate. Known as the Queen of Hill Stations, the combination of scenic natural surrounds, Hindu temples and the Indian bustle make this a popular destination for visitors. Must-see attractions include: the Botanical Gardens, featuring ferns, orchids and a prehistoric fossilized tree; the Government Museum, showcasing the history of the Tamil Nadu region; and the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, recently declared a tiger reserve and a World Heritage Site.

Leave in the morning to Ooty.[Approx. 125kms / 4 hrs]

Ooty now called Ootacamund, is the Queen of slope stations and the capital of Nilgiri region. It is situated in Nilgiri hills, also known as the Blue Mountains. Ooty served as the summer capital of Madras Presidency and other small kingdoms. The place was much visited by British during the colonial days. Lofty mountains, great lakes, dense forests, sprawling grasslands, miles of tea gardens and eucalyptus trees greet the travellers. The hill station itself is a land of picturesque picnic spots.

Day 5: Day 5: In Ooty

Enjoy a toy train ride to Coonoortoday. Later in the day do a tour of the Botanical Gardens and St. Stephens Church.

The Nilgiri Mountain Railway toy train is the highlight of a visit to the popular hill station of Ooty, in south India's Tamil Nadu state. Established in the early 19th century by the British as the summer headquarters of the Chennai government, Ooty now draws tourists wanting to escape the stifling summer heat. The railway opened 1899 and was completed in 1908. It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2005. The quaint toy train pulls blue and cream wooden carriages with large windows.

Head off for a mesmerizing railway journey as you board Toy Train from Ooty to Coonoor. The almost nostalgic toy train gives visitors a revitalizing travel experience moving through lush green tea estates, thick forests, tall eucalyptus trees and lofty mountains. Covering a distance of 19 km, the Ooty to Coonoor route offers the most spectacular scenery along its way. The journey is slow and gives you ample opportunity to discover nature's bounties.

Divided into several sections, The Botanical Garden, cover an area of around 22 hectares, and lie on the lower slopes of Doddabetta peak. The garden has a terraced layout. It is maintained by the Tamil Nadu Horticulture Department. Its architect was William Graham McIlvor. The Marquis of Tweeddale prepared the initial layout during the late 1840s. During that time Ootacamund (Ooty) was under British control. The Gardens have around a thousand species, both exotic and indigenous, of plants, shrubs, ferns, trees, herbal and bonsai plants. In the centre of the Gardens lie a fossilized tree trunk estimated to be 20 million years old.

The St. Stephen's Church in Ooty is indeed a marvellous and breath-taking architectural marvel that the British left for us after they finally gave us our independence. The Church is one of the earliest churches that you will find in the Nilgiris district. The structure dates back to the 19th century and was built by the British government. The date of the commencement of construction was cleverly chosen to coincide with the birthday of King George IV. The fabulous pale-yellow building of the St Stephen's Church bears testimony to the marvels of British architecture that existed during those times. This grandeur is also reflected in the painting of 'The Last Supper' that can be found in the Church.

Day 6: Day 6: Ooty – Cochin

Also known as Cochin, Kochi is a city in southwest India's coastal Kerala state. This attractive city has served as a popular port for over 600 years and is known for its eclectic architecture and its array of religious monuments, museums, galleries, cafes and antique shops. The city stretches across a number of peninsulas and islands, which can be reached by a network of water taxis and bridges. The majority of Kochi's visitor highlights can be found on the peninsula of Fort Kochi. These highlights include the St Francis Church, the oldest European-built church in India; and Mattancherry Palace, which dates back to 1557 and contains some exceptional Kerala murals and temple art. Other must-see attractions include the Kerala Folklore Museum, displaying more than 4,000 cultural and ethnic artefacts; the 16th-century Jewish Synagogue; and the local market, where the air is filled with the aroma of exotic spices.

Leave after breakfast with your private chauffeur driven vehicle to Kochi[Approx. 6 hrs]. Arrive and check-in at the hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure.

Day 7: Day 7: In Cochin

A day to explore the city visiting Fort Kochi, Chinese fishing nets, the Jewish Synagogue, Dutch Palace and witness a Kathakli dance performance at a local theatre in the evening.

Fort Kochi

Fort Kochi takes its name from a long-gone fort which was built during its occupation by the Portuguese. The Portuguese were followed by the Dutch, who left their own legacy, and hot on their heels came the British with their own unique ways.

Independent now for many years, Fort Kochi remains a colourful melting pot of diversity, retaining its colourful history in its architecture and culture.

Jewish Synagogue (Closed on Friday afternoon and Saturdays)

This synagogue was built in 1568 by the Malabar Yehudans or Cochin Jewish community. It was built

close to the Mattancherry Palace Temple on the land gifted by King Rama Varma, a former ruler of Kochi. The Mattancherry Palace Temple and the Mattancherry synagogue share a common wall. This synagogue is the oldest one in the Commonwealth of Nations.

As one approaches the synagogue on Jew Street, its white facade begins to appear very prominently. A clock tower can also be seen, towering over and close to the facade. This was built in 1760 by Ezekiel Rahabi an affluent Jewish businessman. Of the four faces of the clock, the one facing the maharaja's palace showed the time in Malayalam. And among the other three, the face with etchings in Roman numerals was meant for the traders. Of the remaining two faces of the clock, one had writings in Hebrew while the other remains blank.

Stepping inside the Synagogue, one's eyes would easily go to the glass chandeliers and blue willow-patterned Chinese floor tiles. The chandeliers are of Belgian origin. Also of interest are the Scrolls of the Law housed here and the several gold crowns received as gifts and the brass-railed pulpit. And for some exclusive pieces from history, the synagogue also houses the copper plates of privileges given to Joseph Rabban, the earliest known Cochin Jew, dating from the 10th century, written in Tamil, by the ruler of the Malabar Coast.

Kathakali

Kathakali is a highly stylized classical kerala dance performance noted for its attractive make-up of characters, their elaborate costumes, detailed gestures and well-defined body movements presented in tune with the anchor playback music and complementary percussion.

Kathakali is said to have evolved from other performing arts like Kootiyattam (a classical Sanskrit drama existing in Kerala), Krishnanattam and Kalarippayattu. Kathakali explicates ideas and stories from the Indian epics and Puranas.

Day 8: Day 8: Cochin – Thekkady

A tourist attraction in Kerala, Thekkady is a district located at the Periyar National Park. Thekkady comprises evergreen forests and savanna grasslands, and is known for its natural spices such as black pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and clove. Elephants, tigers, sambar and many other species inhabit the park. Top attractions include the exquisite ancient Mangla Devi Temple, the aromatic Abraham's spice garden, and the massive waterfall at the sleepy, picturesque village of Chellarkovil. Take in panoramic views of the extraordinary landscape from the Chellarkovil viewpoint, and picnic on the rolling, lush green lawns at Pandikuzhi. Don't miss the opportunity to visit the Kadathanadan Kalari Centre, to see demonstrations of the best traditional martial arts. Thekkady is home to India's sole Tiger Reserve, and has a rich living tribal culture.

This day you will be driven to Periyar by your private vehicle, on arrival check-in a hotel.[Approx 4 Hrs.]

Rest of the day at leisure.

Day 9: Day 9: In Thekkady

This day proceed for a Nature walk at Periyar National park.

Different nature trails traversing diverse habitats form the trekking routes, generally 4 to 5 km. in length. This is an interpretive program offering excellent opportunity to watch birds, butterflies and other wildlife. The trails often pass through evergreen and moist deciduous forests interspersed with marshy grasslands. The program is offered between 7.00 am and 10.30 am and between 2.00 pm. and 3.00 pm. and lasts for about 3 hours. A maximum of 5 persons can go for trekking at a time along each nature trail, accompanied by a trained tribal guide. The Nature walk is the right program to feel nature, hear her whispers and smell her flowers.

Return to the hotel for breakfast.

Later in the afternoon, visit the Spice Plantation. Gift wrapped in lush green spice plantations, Periyar is the heartland of spices. The trip covers spice plantations such as cardamom, pepper, vanilla, clove, cinnamon, nutmeg, ayurvedic herbs etc. Over twelve varieties of spices including ginger, garlic, cardamom, vannilla, pepper, cinnamon, coffee, tea, clove and nutmeg is cultivated in Thekkady and its neighbouring villages.

Day 10: Day 10: Thekkady – Alappuzha

Alappuzha, also known as Alleppey, is set along the coast of the Laccadive Sea. Dubbed the 'Venice of the East', it is renowned for its houseboat cruises which float along the tranquil backwater canals of Kerala. It is said to be one of the most popular tourist centres in the state. While cruising the palm-shaded canals is the main attraction, visitors can also enjoy visiting Alappuzha's beautiful beaches, exploring the little riverside villages dotting the lush countryside and discovering an array of resplendent temples. Don't miss the annual Nehru Trophy Boat Race held at Punnamada Lake.

This daydrive to Alleppey [Approx. 135 Km – 4 Hrs.] to arrive and board the Houseboat at 12:30 for a cruise over the backwaters of Kerala.

Cruise is followed by lunch at houseboat. These houseboats or Kettuvallam as they are traditionally called were at one time the mode of transportation for man and goods. Today, these are made to cater to the discerning guests who can lay back and enjoy the gentle cruise. Cruise the backwaters from the main Vembanad Lake through the small estuaries that link small villages to the mainland. Today, these are refurbished and all modern conveniences have been added for tourists who visit this beautiful water locked region of the country.

Day 11: Day 11: Alleppey – Mararikulam

Situated only 40 km from the city of Cochin, in the Alappuzha district, Mararikulam is a charming little coastal village known for its pristine sand beaches, swinging coconut palms and quiet, laidback atmosphere. The village has managed to avoid the mass development associated with many of the other beach towns in the area resulting in an untouched natural environment dotted with only a handful of small resorts. The main attraction in the area is the exquisite Marari beach where you will find fishermen heading out daily to fish the waters of this stretch of the Malabar coast, much as their ancestors have done for generations.

Disembark the Houseboat and then leave for Mararikulam(Approx 30 minutes.)

Arrive Marari and you will be transferred to your hotel.

Day 12: Day 12 – 13: In Mararikulam

Days are at leisure at the resort. Option to take yoga/meditations, visit to the fisherman's village, fish-landing, cycling through the village or to rejuvenate with some spa/ayurveda massages!

Day 13: Day 14: Mararikulam – Cochin Depart

At an appropriate time, your Trail Blazer Tours Representative will assist and transfer you to Kochi international airport [approx. 2 hours drive] to board your flight back home.

About Tour

This journey covers the Southern part of India i.e. Karnataka & Kerala – the Gods own country.

Highlights

- Explore the religious, cultural and historically significant towns with its architectures.
- Visit the Hill station & experience scenic train ride in Hills .
- Covers Fort Kochi, Jewish synagogue & Kathakali – the traditional dance drama of Kerala.

- Nature walk at Periyar National park & visits Spice Plantation.
- Cruise on the placid backwaters of Kerala.
- At the end Relax at the Marari Beach.