



SOUTH INDIA

With its palm-fringed beaches, rice paddies and spice-laden air, the green south of India offers fascinating contrast to the north. Cruise by houseboat upon the tranquil lagoons of Kerala, passing villages surrounded by lush fields and soaring coconut trees, or relax at one of the many world-class Ayurveda retreats. Discover the showy Hindu temples of Tamil Nadu, and enjoy a dramatic performance of Kathakali, a classical Keralan dance.

Houseboat, backwater cruise © Shutterstock

BACKWATER CRUISE

8 days/7 nights

From \$1603 per person twin share

Hotels/Houseboat

Departs daily ex Kochi

Price per person from*: Cat AA Cat A Cat B Cat C
\$2661 \$2406 \$2011 \$1603

*Based on two people sharing, singles on request.

Note: Houseboat accommodation is basic but comfortable.

INCLUSIONS

Transfers, city tours and excursions in private air-conditioned Innova vehicle with English speaking driver, local guide (Kochi only), entrance fees, accommodation, meals as per the itinerary, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel, standard still camera fees.

AA Brunton Boatyard/Windermere (Planter's Villa)/ Premium Houseboat (A/C)/Kumarakom Lake Resort

A Taj Malabar Resort & Spa/Windermere (Estate Rm)/Premium Houseboat (A/C)/Coconut Lagoon (Lake Front Pool Villa)

B Eighth Bastion/Windermere (Garden Rm)/ Houseboat (A/C)/Coconut Lagoon (Heritage Bungalow)

C Hotel Arches/Ambady Estate/Houseboat (A/C)/ Abad Whispering Palms

The tranquil southern Indian state of Kerala is characterised by spice plantations, meandering rivers, verdant hills and beautiful beaches. This gently paced tour takes in the most enchanting areas including the charming port city of Kochi and the backwaters - a maze of canals which can be explored by boat providing a glimpse into rural village life.



Flavours of the South © Shutterstock

Day 1 Kochi

Arrive Kochi and transfer to your hotel. Afternoon at leisure. Enjoy an evening performance of Kathakali, an expressive traditional dance form.

Day 2 Kochi

Morning city tour. Highlights include the Dutch Palace (closed Fri), Jewish Synagogue (closed Sat), Santa Cruz Basilica and the iconic Chinese Fishing Nets. Afternoon at leisure. B



Chinese Fishing Nets, Kochi © GITO

Days 3/4 Munnar

Morning departure for Munnar (4 hrs), blanketed by lush green tea estates. Enjoy an afternoon walk around tea and spice estates. On Day 4 take a scenic 5 hour trek through lush plantations, dense shola forests, mountain ridges and grasslands. B/BL

Day 5 Houseboat

After breakfast drive to Alleppey (5 hrs) and board your houseboat to begin your backwater cruise. Overnight on board. BLD

Days 6/7 Kumarakom

In the morning disembark from your houseboat in Kumarakom and check in to your hotel. Afternoon visit to a bird sanctuary, an ornithologist's paradise. Day 7 is at leisure to enjoy the beautiful mosaic of mangrove forests and coconut groves interspersed with waterways and canals. B

Day 8 Tour ends Kochi

Transfer to Kochi Airport (2 hrs). Tour ends. B



Beautiful Munnar © Shutterstock



Meenakshi Temple © Shutterstock



Kathakali Dancer © Shutterstock

WONDERS OF THE SOUTH

15 days/14 nights

From \$3816 per person twin share

Hotels/Houseboat

Departs daily ex Chennai

Price per person from*: Cat AA Cat A Cat B Cat C
\$5009 \$4815 \$4221 \$3816

*Based on two people sharing, singles on request.

INCLUSIONS

Transfers, city tours and excursions in private air-conditioned Innova vehicle with driver and English speaking local guides as per itinerary, entrance fees, accommodation, meals as per the itinerary, 1 bottle of water per person per day for all surface travel, standard still camera fees.

Note: Houseboat accommodation is basic but comfortable.

- AA** The Leela Palace/La Villa/Ideal River View Resort/Visalam/The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai/Paradisa Plantation/Premium Houseboat (A/C)/Kumarakom Lake Resort (Meandering Pool Villa)/Brunton Boatyard
- A** Taj Coromandel/Palais de Mahe/Ideal River View Resort/The Bangala/The Heritage/Spice Village/Premium Houseboat (A/C)/Kumarakom Lake Resort (Luxury Pavilion Room)/Taj Malabar Resort & Spa
- B** Trident/Maison Perumal/Ideal River View Resort/Chidambaram Vilas/GRT Regency/Shalimar Spice Garden/Houseboat (A/C)/Coconut Lagoon/Eighth Bastion
- C** The Pride Hotel/Promanade/Ideal River View Resort/Chidambaram Vilas/Fortune Pandiyan/Elephant Court/Houseboat (A/C)/Abad Whispering Palms/Hotel Arches

Indulge your senses on a journey through southern India, a land of exotic flora and fauna, stunning beaches, and fragrant spices with a soundtrack of temple bells. Starting in bustling Chennai, this tour offers you the chance to discover flamboyant religious architecture and a rich cultural heritage. Highlights include the colourful temples of Tamil Nadu, the colonial landmarks of Kochi and Kerala's idyllic backwaters.

Day 1 Chennai

Arrive Chennai in the evening and transfer to hotel.

Day 2 Pondicherry

Drive to Pondicherry, the "French Riviera of the East". En route explore Mamallapuram, visiting the 7th century Shore Temple. BL

Day 3 Pondicherry

Enjoy a walking tour of this beautiful city including a visit to the 150 year old Church of The Sacred Heart of Jesus. Visit Auroville, a place of peaceful and harmonious living before enjoying a cooking demonstration and dinner with a local family. BD

Day 4 Thanjavur

Depart for Thanjavur (4 hrs) via Kumbhakonam, known as the "temple city" of South India. Enjoy an afternoon tour of an art school specialising in 16th century Tanjore paintings. B

Days 5/6 Chettinad

Morning visit to the famous Brihadeeswara Temple housing a gigantic black granite sculpture of Nandi, the bull of Lord Shiva before driving to Chettinad (2.5 hrs). Remainder of the day is at leisure. On Day 6 explore Chettinad, an area rich in cultural heritage, art, architecture and antiques. B

Days 7/8 Madurai

Drive to Madurai (3 hrs). Afternoon tour of the stunning Meenakshi Temple before witnessing an evening "Aarti" ceremony. On Day 8 take a half day tour of Madurai, before visiting Kadambhavanam, a centre which showcases local culture, where you enjoy a sumptuous Tamil dinner. B/BD

Day 9 Periyar

Transfer by road to Periyar (4.5 hrs). Enjoy an afternoon visit to a spice plantation. B

Days 10/11 Kumarakom

Morning excursion to the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary before driving to Kumarakom (4 hrs). The remainder of Day 10 and all of Day 11 are yours to explore on your own. B

Day 12 Houseboat

Drive to Alleppey. Following a town walking tour, board your houseboat and cruise the canals. BLD

Days 13/14 Kochi

Drive to Kochi (2 hrs). In the evening enjoy a picturesque boat cruise. On Day 14 explore the sites of Kochi including the Dutch Palace (closed Fri), Santa Cruz Basilica and the Chinese Fishing Nets. B

Day 15 Tour ends Kochi

Transfer to the airport. Tour ends. B



© Natural Focus Safaris



Beautiful waterways of Kerala © Shutterstock

HIDDEN GEMS OF KERALA

12 days/11 nights

From \$4545 per person twin share

Hotels/Houseboat

Departs daily ex Kochi (Cochin)

Tour cost per person from*:

Cat A	Cat B
\$5349	\$4545

*Based on two people sharing, singles on request.

Note: Houseboat accommodation is basic but comfortable.

INCLUSIONS

Transfers in private air-conditioned Innova vehicle or similar with driver and English speaking local guides, train Kochi to Calicut, entrance fees, accommodation on a full board basis except in Kochi and Bekal which are on a B&B basis, 2 bottles of water per person per day included for all surface travel, standard still camera fees.

- A** Brunton Boatyard/Premium AC House Boat/ Tranquil Resort (Tree House)/Evolve Back Nagarhole/Evolve Back Coorg/Taj Bekal Resort & Spa (Deluxe Delight Villa with courtyard)
- B** Eighth Bastion/Spice Coast Cruise/Wayanad Wild (Standard Room)/The Serai/The Windflower/Taj Bekal Resort & Spa (Superior Charm Room with balcony)

Discover beautiful northern Kerala with its spice estates, coffee plantations and wildlife-rich forests while staying at intimate boutique hideaways. Explore the colonial buildings of old Kochi, take a backwater cruise, go game-viewing at Nagarhole National Park and watch Olive Ridley turtles nesting on white sand beaches (seasonal).

Days 1/2 Kochi

Arrive Kochi and transfer to your hotel. A magnificent natural harbour, Kochi has been at the centre of the spice trade for centuries. On Day 2 enjoy a morning city tour visiting the Jewish area in Mattancherry, the synagogue (closed Sat) and Dutch Palace with its famous murals (closed Fri). See the iconic Chinese fishing nets and St Francis Church. Evening Kathakali performance. B



Spices of Southern India © Shutterstock



Evolve Back Nagarhole © Orange County Resorts and Hotels



Picturesque Kerala scenery © Shutterstock

Day 3 Houseboat

After breakfast drive to Alleppey (2 hrs) and board your houseboat to begin a cruise through the sleepy backwaters. Overnight on board. BLD

Days 4/5 Wayanad

Disembark your houseboat and transfer by train to Calicut. Arrive and drive through hills cloaked in tea and spice plantations to Wayanad. Day 5 at leisure to take a private estate tour or trek to the famous Edakkal Caves. BLD

Days 6/7 Nagarhole

Pass lush tea plantations en route to Nagarhole National Park (2 hrs) with its abundant birdlife and wildlife including elephant, antelope and tiger. Gameviewing is done by boat, vehicle, or on foot. BLD

Days 8/9 Coorg

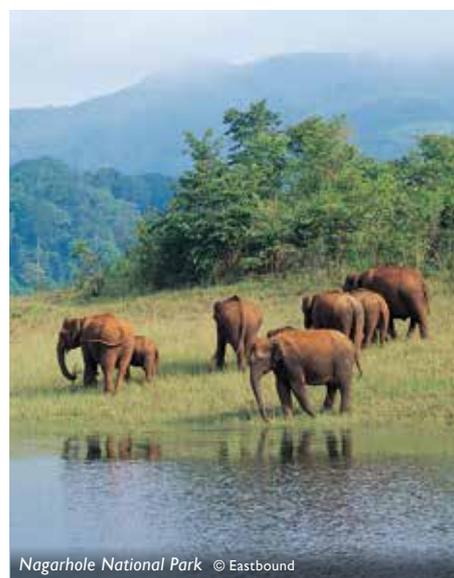
Enjoy wonderful scenery as you travel to the orange groves and tea plantations of Coorg, which you explore on a guided tour. Next morning visit the Dubare Elephant Camp. Afternoon is free for optional activities. BLD

Days 10/11 Bekal

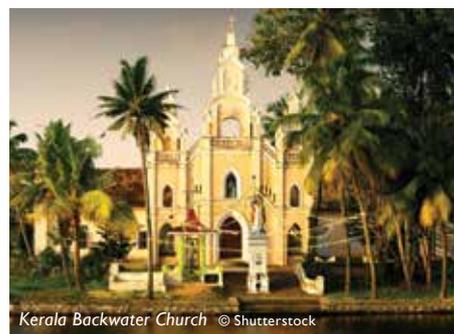
Drive to Bekal on the Arabian Sea. On day 11 visit the magnificent Bekal Fort and Thakadappuram Beach, renowned for rare Olive Ridley turtles that nest during the rainy season (Sep-Jan). B

Day 12 Tour ends Mangalore

This morning transfer to Mangalore airport (1.5 hrs). Tour ends. B.



Nagarhole National Park © Eastbound



Kerala Backwater Church © Shutterstock

STAY LONGER

Combine the wonder of searching for Bengal tigers in one of India's most impressive wildlife reserves, Ranthambore, with an exploration of South India on our Tigers and Southern Delights escorted small group tour (p10/11). Alternatively, head to Sri Lanka to explore the wonders of the enchanting island. Please contact our India travel specialists to start planning your journey.

T: 1300 363 302

SOUTH INDIA UNIQUE ESCAPES

3 days/2 nights

Palaces/Resorts

Unlock the secrets of South India when you stay at one of these gorgeous boutique properties. To be treated like a king, choose the imperial magnificence of Taj Falaknuma Palace in Hyderabad, built in the late 19th century by Nawab Viqar-ul-Umra, former Prime Minister of Hyderabad. For more down-to-earth indulgence, the southwestern state of Kerala is famed for Ayurvedic resorts which focus on achieving harmony between mind, body and spirit using techniques refined over 5,000 years. Pamper yourself by staying in at least one idyllic Kerala retreats during your holiday. To include any of these enchanting properties in your itinerary, contact our India specialists.

*Based on two people sharing, singles on request.

INCLUSIONS

Accommodation on a B&B basis, transfers in private air-conditioned Innova vehicle or similar, standard still camera fees. Taj Falaknuma Palace also includes half day Hyderabad city tour.



TAJ FALAKNUMA PALACE - HYDERABAD

3 days/2 nights from \$1508 per person twin share*

Departs ex Hyderabad

This 1894 architectural masterpiece is a vision in marble, with one of the world's finest collections of Belgian chandeliers. There are 60 lovingly restored guestrooms, which overlook the palace courtyard and the ancient city of Hyderabad, as well as two fine restaurants. Play billiards on a table whose only counterpart is located in Buckingham Palace or dine in the 101-seater dining room. The signature Taj Jiva Spa offers holistic rejuvenation drawing on ancient Indian therapies.



THE LEELA KOVALAM - THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

3 days/2 nights from \$602 per person twin share*

Departs ex Thiruvananthapuram airport

This sprawling cliff-top beach resort provides accommodation in 183 ultra-contemporary oversized guestrooms and suites, with five-star facilities at guests' disposal. Sample Kerala specialties in the all-day restaurant, sip a classic cocktail with views of the Arabian Sea or take a refreshing dip in the two stunning infinity pools. The Ayurveda spa combines modern and age-old treatments to ensure you leave restored and revitalised.



PURITY AT LAKE VEMBANAD - MARARIKULAM

3 days/2 nights from \$534 per person twin share*

Departs ex Kochi

A member of the prestigious Relais & Châteaux collection, this romantic colonial-style villa is situated on the shores of Lake Vembanad providing exceptional views. The retreat is entirely geared towards relaxation, and features 14 bright, spacious rooms and suites that open out onto terraces and verandas. Stylish sitting and dining areas are replete with outstanding antiques and stunning modern art. Purity also has a pool, a spa and wellness centre offering a wide range of treatments.

