

The Tropical South



Turkode
AIT

Turen destinasjon
Kovalam

Destinasjoner
India

Reisen er levert av



Turen starter
Cochin

14 dager
Fra : NOK

15 894

Oversikt

Discover Kerala and Tamil Nadu; the two southern most states of India



Reiserute

Day 1

Start Cochin.

The group flight usually arrives in Cochin in the afternoon and we transfer to our hotel. Those clients not travelling on the group flight will make their own way to the hotel and will join us for the afternoon. Please note that if you arrive in the morning, you may have to wait to be allocated a room as normal check-in time is mid-morning. Set on the Malabar, or 'Pepper Coast', Cochin (Kochi) is one of South India's most interesting towns and is believed to have been the first European settlement in India. Rich in history despite recent growth it retains a relaxed, quiet atmosphere. Narrow spits of land and coconut covered islands jut out into the wide, almost enclosed bay whose neck is lined with the famous Chinese fishing nets. On arrival at our hotel there is free time to either explore Cochin or simply relax after your travels. Abad Atrium Hotel or similar

Day 2

Sightseeing around Cochin; optional sunset cruise at Fort Cochin and explore historic spice port.

Today we do a sightseeing tour of Fort Cochin and Mattancherry, where most of the historic buildings are located in amongst the narrow streets. The Portuguese Vasco de Gama landed here in 1498 and began trading with the Raja of Cochin. The Mattancherry Palace was built by the Portuguese in the mid 1500's and then was largely rebuilt by its second occupants, the Dutch. Built in traditional Kerala style the wooden architecture and wall paintings of scenes from the Ramayana are still well preserved. Jewish settlers first arrived in Cochin in 587BC and a synagogue dating from the late 1500's still stands in Fort Cochin. Although now there are only about half a dozen Jewish families, the synagogue is a real gem and the individual hand painted 18th century blue ceramic Cantonese floor tiles are evidence of past trading with China. St Francis Church is where Vasco de Gama died in 1524 and the building reflects the new European influence in the area. The Santa Cruz Cathedral is close by and was originally used as a warehouse by the British. The Chinese fishing nets line the entrance to the harbour and were introduced by the Chinese in the late 14th century. There is time to wander round the tiny back streets of Jew Town hunting for souvenirs in the many antique shops and warehouses. There is the option to join a sunset cruise at Fort Cochin or take in a Kathakali Dance Show. Please note the show option is also available on day 8 in Periyar. Abad Atrium or similar

Day 3

To Munnar.

After breakfast we drive away from the coastal plain to Munnar set amongst Kerala's highest mountains that form a jagged line due east of Cochin. The drive is 160km and should take approximately 5-6 hours. Munnar is a beautiful hill station on the Western Ghats at about 1600m above sea level. It was once a summer resort of the British Government in South India. The town is situated at the confluence of the three mountain streams (Mudrapauzha, Naliathanii and Kundala) and is surrounded by lakes, reservoirs, forests and several tea estates. Anamudi (2695m), the highest peak in South India dominates the skyline and the many smaller peaks are a walker's paradise. Eastend Hotel or similar

Day 4

Day trek through tea plantations and the hills of Munnar.

After an early breakfast, we take a short drive through old Munnar and travel down to Nagarmudi, a tiny village, where we start our trek accompanied by a local guide. The trek begins with a long gradual ascent through the tea plantations and then climbs into Seven Malai Hills. Just before reaching the top we enjoy walking through cardamom and coffee plantations. Our hard work will be rewarded with spectacular views over Chitrapuram Dam, Changulam Lake, Annamudi Peak, Munnar and other villages. We then descend back to our vehicle. There is an optional visit in the afternoon to a Tea Museum. Please note that there are a couple of steep ascents and descents on this trek. Approx. walking time 4 hrs. Eastend Hotel or similar

Day 5

To Madurai.

Leaving Kerala behind we drive 165km through the hills to the colourful temple town of Madurai, in Tamil Nadu. The drive should take approximately 6-7 hrs and we should arrive mid-afternoon. In the evening there are many restaurants to choose from: some of the best are on rooftops, which in addition to allowing us to sample some of the specialities of the region, offer fantastic views over the city. Germanus or Hotel J C Residency or similar

Day 6

Visit colourful Sri Meenakshi Temple; optional cycle rickshaw ride through town.

Today there is an opportunity to go on an early morning heritage walk through Madurai (approx. £15 or US\$20 depending on group size), allowing us to observe the local community going about their everyday life; milking cows, women doing rangoli in front of their houses, breakfast being prepared on the roadside food stalls, and fruit and vegetable markets in full action. Coffee and a snack are provided on this optional tour. Madurai is one of Tamil culture's most vital centres and the temple and bazaar are at the heart of this vibrant and colourful city. The most famous sight is the Meenakshi Temple, an outstanding example of Vijayanagar temple architecture. Built between the 16th and 18th century, it is at the heart of the city and the life of the town revolves around it. It is a hive of activity and the scene of an almost continuous religious festival. The temple's nine towering gopurams stand out with their colourful stucco images of gods, goddesses and animals. There are about 4,000 granite sculptures on the lower levels and numerous pillared temple halls surrounding the Golden Lotus Tank. The main temple is dedicated to Meenakshi, the 'fish-eyed goddess' and the consort of Shiva. One of the spectacular parts of the complex is the 16th century Thousand Pillared Hall with exquisitely carved columns and a sculptured ceiling, which depicts a wheel showing the 60 Tamil years. There is also time to visit the Thirumalai Nayaka Palace, which was built in 1636 in Indo-Mughal style by the Nayak dynasty. Or why not take a cycle rickshaw ride through the town. The colourful and lively bazaars are also wonderful to visit and Madurai is renowned for its silk and cotton. Germanus or Hotel J C Residency or similar

Day 7

To Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, home to wild elephant and many other animals and birds. Dinner and cooking demonstration in a local family home.

Leaving Madurai we drive in the morning to the small bustling village of Thekkady, from where we visit the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, one of the largest parks in India. The drive from Madurai is spectacular as the road climbs through the Western Ghats and we have fantastic views across Tamil Nadu. In the afternoon there will be enough free time to wander around in the village and explore the bazaar, where we can visit the numerous shops selling cardamom, vanilla, peppercorns, turmeric and other spices. The whole area is a centre for spice growing, and this evening there will be a short walk around a spice garden, where we can see many different spices growing. We then have a special dinner and a cooking demonstration with a local family in their home. (Driving time approx. 4-5 hrs) Grand Thekkady or similar

Day 8

Explore Periyar; morning jungle walk followed by an optional boat trip on the lake.

In the morning, before breakfast, we join our local guide for a nature walk in the Wildlife Sanctuary (approx. 2-3 hrs) and return to our hotel in time for breakfast. In the afternoon there is the option to go on a boat cruise on the lake. This is an ideal way to get close to the animals and we have the opportunity of spotting elephant, otter, wild pig and buffalo. There is also an abundance of bird life - kingfishers, storks and hornbills are the most commonly spotted. Tickets can be purchased online in advance (approx. £8 or US\$10). We recommend doing this in order to avoid possible long queues at the ticket office. Please inform your leader if you wish to book this in advance. Optional activities you can choose from today include an Ayurvedic Massage (approx. £10-15 or US\$13-20), a tribal dance show (approx. £5 or US\$7), Kathakali Dance Show (approx. £3 or US\$4), Bamboo Rafting (approx. £20-30 or US\$27-40) or a Martial Arts Show (approx. £3 or US\$4). Grand Thekkady or similar

Day 9

To Erattupetta Planters Homestay.

Leaving the hills, we make our way to Erattupetta Planters Homestay; a cosy eco-friendly mansion built 50 years ago, surrounded by tall rubber trees and tropical fruit trees. This is a fantastic opportunity to explore the rural life of Kerala, with a village walk and a visit to a spice plantation. With the songs of birds, the cool breeze and the rustle of trees, this is also a great place to relax. Further activities can be organised here, such as yoga and cooking lessons. Erattupetta Planters Homestay

Day 10

To Kumarakom; village walk

Today we make our way to Kumarakom, driving through tea and fruit plantations on our way. After checking into our hotel we have the chance to explore the surrounding villages by foot and gain an insight into traditional life. There is also the opportunity to go on an optional shikara ride or country boating on the backwaters (approx. £4 per person). Other activities that can be arranged include village cycling or the opportunity to see coir-making or carpet weaving. Kumarakom Heritage Hotel or similar

Day 11

Board houseboat for backwater cruise.

After breakfast and a visit to the coir museum, we board our houseboat at midday and begin our cruise along the backwaters of Kerala. The houseboat cruise is one of the highlights of the trip - these enchanting boats, built of Anjili wood and bamboo, were the traditional method of transporting goods for hundreds of years. Now they have been decorated and made into comfortable cruise boats. The network of rivers, streams, lagoons and canals occupies the alluvial plain between the Western Ghats and the Indian Ocean. As our boat meanders through areas of lush tropical vegetation we have the opportunity to view not only the prolific bird life but also gain a different perspective on village life. The cruise takes us along shallow, palm-fringed canals where coconut fibre, copra (coconut meat) and cashews are loaded on to dugouts. In the evening the boat is anchored by a bank and we can watch the sunset over the rice paddies. All the houseboats are comfortably equipped and have 2-5 twin bedded rooms with a bathroom. There is a cook, driver and assistants for each boat and the food served is traditional Kerala fare using local produce. No trip to Kerala would be complete without the wonderful experience of the backwaters aboard these traditional vessels. Houseboat

Day 12

Leave houseboat and drive to Kovalam.

After breakfast we leave our houseboat in Alleppey and start the drive along the scenic Malabar coast to the beachside town of Kovalam (approx. 4/5 hrs), passing through Quilon for a tea break en route. Once a relaxing hideaway on the old hippie trail, Kovalam has now been discovered, but the influx of tourism has not diminished this beautiful setting. Soma Palmshore or similar

Day 13

Free time for relaxing on the beach or optional trip to Kanyakumari

A free day to unwind on the idyllic soft sandy beach, or visit the many shops for some last minute souvenirs. This is a great chance to enjoy the fresh seafood in the many small beach restaurants. Try some of the Tandoori dishes - the clay ovens give a more authentic taste to bread and curries. There is also the opportunity to do an optional day's sightseeing from Kovalam to Kanyakumari, the end point of India where 3 oceans meet, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. If it's open, the trip also takes in the old wooden palace of the rulers of Travancore at Padmapuhamban - a marvellous building with fantastic woodcarvings, and the Hindu temple at Suchindran with its amazing stone carvings. This trip can be booked and paid for locally - please note it is a very long day and the road conditions are not very good. The cost of this excursion depends on group size, but it is usually INR 4800 (approx. £58) between 4 people travelling together, or INR 6400 (approx. £75) if more than 4 people travelling together. If visiting Padmanabhapuram Palace en route it's an extra INR 300 (approx. £4) per person. Soma Palmshore or similar

Day 14

End Kovalam.

Those on the flight inclusive package will transfer to Trivandrum airport early this morning for the daytime flight back to London. Land Only arrangements will finish after check-out from the hotel.

Viktig Informasjon

The trip destination

11 nights hotels, 1 night homestay, 1 night houseboat Travel by private air-conditioned private bus Group normally 4 to 16, plus leader. Min age 16 yrs

Food

All breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners included. Dinner is included at the homestay, and we also include a dinner and cooking demonstration with a local family in Periyar. The houseboat is full board. You should allow at least £15 (approx. US\$24) per day for lunch and dinner. You can eat out very cheaply in India, but if you go to the more expensive restaurants most of the time, you will spend more than the suggested amount. In most of the towns there is a good choice of restaurants and a choice between Indian and Western style food. If you are a vegetarian, India is probably one of the best destinations to travel to. Tea and soft drinks are very cheap. Please note that hotels (apart from 5-star hotels) and bars in Kerala are no longer allowed to sell alcohol, but it is still possible to buy alcohol in government shops. Mineral water is available in the bus in 20ltr containers so please bring a bottle with you to refill. Please note that service in restaurants can be quite slow.

Accommodation

Priser / Datoer

Ved skriftlig aksept av vårt tilbud bekrefter du/dere at våre betingelser er både lest og forstått og at evt kansellerings gebyrer kan tilkomme ved en evt. avbestilling av reisen

| Tilgjengelige datoer | Pris (1 voksen) | Pris (1 barn) | Status reise |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Sun, 23 Jan 22 / Sat, 05 Feb 22 | NOK 15 894 | På forespørsel | Ledig |
| Sun, 20 Feb 22 / Sat, 05 Mar 22 | NOK 15 894 | På forespørsel | Ledig |
| Sun, 27 Mar 22 / Sat, 09 Apr 22 | NOK 15 894 | På forespørsel | Ledig |
| Sun, 10 Apr 22 / Sat, 23 Apr 22 | NOK 15 894 | På forespørsel | Ledig |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|----------------|-------|
| Sun, 23 Oct 22 / Sat, 05 Nov 22 | NOK 16 506 | På forespørsel | Ledig |
| Sun, 20 Nov 22 / Sat, 03 Dec 22 | NOK 16 506 | På forespørsel | Ledig |
| Sun, 22 Jan 23 / Sat, 04 Feb 23 | NOK 16 506 | På forespørsel | Ledig |
| Sun, 19 Feb 23 / Sat, 04 Mar 23 | NOK 16 506 | På forespørsel | Ledig |
| Sun, 26 Mar 23 / Sat, 08 Apr 23 | NOK 16 506 | På forespørsel | Ledig |
| Sun, 02 Apr 23 / Sat, 15 Apr 23 | NOK 16 506 | På forespørsel | Ledig |
| Sun, 22 Oct 23 / Sat, 04 Nov 23 | NOK 17 118 | På forespørsel | Ledig |
| Sun, 19 Nov 23 / Sat, 02 Dec 23 | NOK 17 118 | På forespørsel | Ledig |
| Sun, 24 Dec 23 / Sat, 06 Jan 24 | NOK 18 097 | På forespørsel | Ledig |

Vi vil komme tilbake til deg med et tilbud på den forespurte reisen/pakken i løpet av 48 timer. Alle tilbud er uforpliktende og er vanligvis gyldige i 7 dager. Vi gjør oppmerksom på at reserverte tjenester kan bli kansellert innenfor disse 7 dagene og at pris kan endres inntil en endelig bestilling er mottatt.



VIRKE



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