

# Wildlife & Birding in Western Ghat: World's Top Biodiversity Hotspot | 16 Days



India boasts a mammal fauna of over 450 species. Many visitors are familiar with the well-known national parks in the north of the country, and of course the magnificent Bengal Tiger. In fact, this supreme predator occurs over a much wider range than might be expected, and in the south of the country there are Project Tiger reserves which also offer the opportunity to observe some of the very rare mammals found only in south India and Sri Lanka. The moist, tropical hill forests of the state of Kerala form a distinct vegetation zone in the Western Ghats hills, which has resulted in the evolution of many bird species unique to this region of the country and a corresponding rich diversity of endemic mammals.

This Wildlife trail in the Western Ghats " is specially designed for the Nature enthusiasts who wish to explore a bit of extra than ordinary and be part of our our theme "Man & Environment conservation Coonservation".

All our Nature & Wildlife related programs are well crafted by our Naturalist Mr Benny Kurien with proper guidance from our operational team. Mr. Benny is a Naturalist and Wildlife expert on Western Ghats of India with an in depth knowledge on the flora and fauna and bird life. He is associated with our Responsible Tourism initiatives through many Eco Tourism Societies in different Wildlife spots in the Western Ghats. This is mainly to support the tribal people to earn a decent livelihood.

The focus of this adventurous new tour will be the wildlife of southern India. It offers a chance of seeing many of the more widespread Indian species such as Indian Elephant, Sloth Bear, Tiger and Leopard, as well as Gaur and Dhole and a selection of the endemic south Indian mammals, including Nilgiri Tahr, Lion-tailed Macaque, Nilgiri Langur, Travancore Flying Squirrel, Grizzled Giant Squirrel, Stripe-necked Mongoose and Nilgiri Marten. We will be looking for some of southern India's specialties, rare and endemic birds of the Western Ghats, including Grey Junglefowl, Blue-winged Parakeet, White-bellied Treepie, White-bellied Blue Flycatcher, Grey-headed Fishing Eagle, Brown Fish Owl, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Green Imperial Pigeon, Black-backed Woodpecker and Malabar Crested Lark and many more...

There is also a cultural part to give an extra colour to the program.

### Trip Highlights

- Exclusive theme-Man & Environment Conservation site visits
- Tiger, Sloth Bear & Leopard possible, Nagarhole, Bandipur, Kabini
- Lion-tailed Macaque & Nilgiri Langur, Athirappally
- White-bellied Treepie, Nilgiri Pipit & White-breasted Laughing-thrush, Munnar
- Visit tea plantations, Nilgiri Tahr, Munnar
- Malabar Trogon, Malabar Grey Hornbill &, if lucky, Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Thattekad Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary
- Stay on a houseboat & explore Kerala's famous waterways
- Evening trail in Mudumalai Sanctuary
- Kokkerabellur Pelicanery visit
- Tribal cooking session
- Riverside walks in Athirappally
- Mararyoor & Chinnar visits
- Wetland birding in Kerala Backwaters
- Drive through the Nilgiri Biosphere Sanctuaries

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- Houseboat cruise followed by Overnight stay on board
- Beach experience
- Led by expert local naturalist guides

## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrive in Bengaluru | Drive to Mysore via Kekkerebellur Pelicanery (160 km | 3.5 hrs)

Welcome to India! Upon arrival in Bengaluru a *travel-to-nature Asia* guide/representative will be at the airport to greet and take us to our hotel to freshen up. Please look out for your name-card once you exit out of arrival area.

Later we will leave for Mysore. En-route we will stop at Kekkerebellur Pelicanery in Maddur village to see one of the best and undisturbed natural habitats for various migratory birds, especially famous for its Spot Billed Pelicans and the Painted Storks that can be sighted here in large numbers. Overnight in Mysore.



The city of palaces, Mysore, is the second largest city in the Indian state of Karnataka. Located on the foothills of the majestic Chamundi Hills, Mysore is considered to be one of the most well-planned and cleanest cities in the country. Adorned with a number of palaces, Mysore is the place that takes one back in time to the magnificent and affluent 'royal era of India'. It is the previous capital of the Mysore Maharajahs, who ruled Mysore state from this royal

city for several centuries. Thanks to royal patronage a large number of artists, writers and craftsmen have flourished in Mysore, making it the cultural epicenter of Karnataka. Mysore still retains an aura of old-world charm and much of the city's architectural heritage remains intact. The city's proximity to famous national parks makes it a popular destination for wildlife enthusiasts from across the world.

**Accommodation:** Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel

### Day 2: Mysore

After an early breakfast, we drive to Ranganathitta Bird Sanctuary just outside Srirangapatna. The Cauvery river meanders around a string of tiny islets, which together form a splendid nesting site for birds at Ranganathitta. We explore the wetland on boat that takes us within touching distance of the birds, as marsh crocodiles bask in the sun on the sandy beach. Delight in watching the winged visitors making happy forays into the water.

Later we will do some sightseeing in Mysore. Highlights of this will include the breathtaking Maharajah's Palace and the delightful Brindavan Gardens, which spread over 150 acres and have a series of dancing fountains built on the terraces of Krishnarajasagar Dam. Other sights we may visit include v Srirangapatnam, the summer residence of Tipu Sultan, St. Philomena's Church, built in an imposing Gothic style and City Market.

The main attraction of Mysore is the Mysore Palace. A breathtaking assemblage of Indo-Saracenic, Hindu, Muslim, Rajput and Gothic architecture styles, this palace once served as the residence of the Wodeyars, the royal family who ruled Mysore for more than seven centuries. The Jagmohan Palace is another worth-visiting site in the city. This palace too served as the residence of the Wodeyar Kings, before the Mysore Palace was built. Today, it has been tastefully converted into an art gallery that displays one of the widest collections of artefacts and paintings in South India.

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Evening Palace visit again (optional) for light & Sound show followed by palace lighting. Overnight in Mysore.

### Highlighted Species (between Bengaluru and Kabini)

Birds: Egyptian Vulture, Spot bellied Pelican, Painted Stroke, Open bill, Spoon bill, little grebe, purple heron, purple moorhen, Bhrumini kite, spot billed duck, River tern etc – Renganathittu, Kukkarahalli Lake in Mysore city, are excellent for photographing those birds

Mammals: Smooth coated otter – best in Renganathittu

Reptile: Mugger crocodile and Monitor lizard

**Accommodation:** Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel

**Meal:** Breakfast

### Day 3-4: Drive Mysore - Nagarhole National Park (Kabini) (65 km | 2 hrs)

Today we will drive to Nagarhole National Park, to the west of Mysore, where we will spend two nights at the cottages. From here we can explore this 640-square kilometre National Park, sitting in the Western Ghats, the lengthy chain of mountains running right down the western side of peninsula India. In the earlier era, this was a private hunting spot of Mysore's king and then became shikhar hotspot for British viceroys and Indian royalties. A region of hills and hollows, Nagarhole contains a mixture of Teak and Mathi forest, little villages and cultivated land. Travelling by jeep, we will explore these grasslands and forests where we will see some of the 1,000 Elephants that range through the area. The Park should also provide us with our first chance of seeing the Gaur or Indian Bison, the largest and most impressive of all the world's wild cattle. With luck we may see Tiger, Leopard or Sloth Bear, or perhaps a pack of Dhole (Asiatic Wild Dog). Chital (Spotted Deer), Common Langurs and Wild Boar are numerous here.

We will be staying at the Kabini River Lodge during our time exploring Nagarhole. This lodge has a scenic

location on the bank of the River Kabini, at the southern fringes of Nagarhole National Park, and offers basic but comfortable accommodation. The restaurant overlooks the River Kabini and offers Indian, Chinese and Continental buffet-style meals. In Nagarhole we will undertake game drives in shared jeeps or shared canters.

We will be looking for some of southern India's bird specialties here, such as Grey-headed Fishing Eagle, Brown Fish Owl, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Green Imperial Pigeon, Black-backed Woodpecker and Malabar Crested Lark. Nearby, where the river has been dammed, we may take to the water in coracles in search of the waterbirds that favour its marshy fringes. Indian Shags, Little Cormorants, and a variety of storks and kingfishers are all to be found here. Overnight in Kabani.



### Highlighted Species-Kabini

Birds: Indian Cormorant, Greater cormorant, Woolly necked stroke, Osprey etc - best location for photographing them during boat safari.

Land safari offers: Lesser adjutant (Between November and March) in Tiger tank area. White bellied woodpecker, Indian Roller, Crested serpent eagle etc .

In house area: River tern, sun birds, Indian pitta, Bhrumini starling , lap wing, plovers and snipes , copper smith barbet , Malabar barbet , puff throated babbler, Asian paradise fly catcher, Malabar parakeet, Indian grey horn bill etc.

Mammals: Tiger, Leopard, Black Panther, Elephant,

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Wild gaur, Sambar, Spotted deer, common Langur  
Reptile: Muggur

**Accommodation:** Red Earth Kabini  
**Meal:** Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 5: Drive Kabini - Bandipur Tiger Reserve & National Park (70 km | 2.5 hrs)

Extremely picturesque drive through the plateau towards South east section of Nilgiri bio reserve and through King Sanctuary where we make birding stops en-route and where Bandipur National Park and Mudumalai Tiger Reserve is located. The Bandipur National Park is one of the most fascinating wildlife centers, nestled in the foothills of the Nilgiri.



On arrival we check into our resort set on the borders of the Sanctuary for couple of nights stay. Evening we take a game drive for a guided safari through the Sanctuary.

As we penetrate deep into the forests, we can almost hear the mute conversations between the animals and the trees. There's a lot, lot more to discover. Peafowl, partridges, quail, hornbill, giant squirrel, dhole (wild dog) elephants, sambhar, barking deer, etc. An endless variety of wildlife flourishes here and the trees sheltering them are even or beautiful. The green fauna and flora of these rain forests are unimaginable with a thick population of wild animals. Overnight in Bandipur.

**Accommodation:** The Wildflower Resort & Spa  
**Meal:** Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 6: Badipur Tiger Reserve & National Park

Early morning and evening we go on Game drive inside the park and during daytime we explore around the resort to spot birds and other wildlife. Be prepared for an unforgettable experience. We might encounter a tiger prowling amidst the mix of deciduous and evergreen forest and scrubland vegetation.

Bandipur National Park is a playground for wildlife with elephants taking the lead role. Set against the picturesque backdrop of the enchanting Nilgiri Mountains with their mist-covered peaks, Bandipur was once the Mysore Maharaja's private hunting ground. It was brought under project Tiger in 1974. This is one of the best game sanctuaries in India to observe and photograph wildlife in close proximity. A temple perched atop Himavad Gopalswamy Betta, the highest peak in the Bandipur range, is worth a visit. Bandipur National park has an area of 874.2 Sq.Km and flanked by Karnataka's Rajiv Gandhi National Park to its northwest, Tamilnadu's Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary to its Southwest and Kerala's Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary to its Northwest. Together these constitute the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The Flora and Fauna are of deciduous and evergreen forests and scrubland vegetation. Overnight in Bandipur.

### Highlighted Species in Bandipur:

Birds: Grey hornbill, White rumped vulture, Indian roller and more

Mammals: Tiger, Leopard, Elephant, sambar, spotted deer, sloth bear, ruddy mongoose)

**Accommodation:** The Wildflower Resort & Spa  
**Meal:** Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 7: Drive Bandipur - Ooty (2 hrs) | Ooty - Mettupalayam by Train | Drive Mettupalayam - Coimbatore

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After an early breakfast, drive to Ooty, a colonial hill station known as the queen of Nilgiris. By 1.30 PM, reach Ooty railway station to board the Nilgiri Mountain train to Mettupalayam. (Any last-minute cancellation of the train will end up in driving down through the scenic road). On arrival at Mettupalayam, your driver will receive you to drive to Coimbatore. Overnight at Coimbatore Hotel.

**Accommodation:** The Residency Towers  
**Meal:** Breakfast

### Day 8: Drive Coimbatore - Valparai - Athirappally (190 km | 5 hrs)

After breakfast, drive to Athirappally. You will be driving through Valparai and Sholayar in which is a good stretch through Sholayar Forest which region is known for its presence of Lion Tail Macaque and Great India Hornbill. On arrival, check into your hotel near to the waterfalls Overnight at hotel.

Athirappally is one of the best hotspots for Malabar Pied Hornbill in Western Ghats. The drive from Athirappally to Anamalai through Sholayar rainforest, Anamalai forests of Valparai will give ample scope for spotting Malabar Grey horn bill (endemic), ruby throated bulbul (endemic), Great Hornbill, Emerald pigeon, Indian Dollar bird, Grey Headed fish eagle, and many other species of forest birds. During the drive we have only permission to stay short time slots for birding. This drive will also gives us chances of spotting two endemic species of primates of Western Ghats, wild gaur, giant squirrels, elephants etc.

From the point of view of a Naturalist or Wildlife enthusiast, these waterfalls consist of 14850 hectares of tropical wet, evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous riparian forest ranges. The protected forestland of Athirappally & Vazhachal is one among the world's top biodiversity hotspots, as it serves as a home to endangered, as well as some threatened species of flora and fauna. This place supports the natural riparian ecosystem which consists of about 319 species of flowers out of which 24 are endemic to the Western Ghats and 10 are rare and endangered.

Out of 85 species of fresh water fish found in River Chalakudy, 35 are endemic and 9 are endangered species. Forest wildlife in the area includes the Asiatic elephant, tiger, leopard, bison, sambar, and lion-tailed macaque. The unique 180 metres (590 ft) elevation riparian forest in the Athirappally-Vazhachal area is the only location where all four South Indian species of hornbills — the Great Hornbill (the State Bird of Kerala), Malabar Pied Hornbill, Malabar Grey Hornbill, and the Indian Grey Hornbill are found living together. It's been said that the Vazhachal forest division is the second most biodiverse area in the State. The International Bird Association has declared it an 'Important Bird Area' and the Asian Nature Conservation Foundation has recommended that the area should be declared a sanctuary or a national park. The Wildlife Trust of India says it represents one of India's best elephant conservation efforts.

**Accommodation:** Casa Rio Resort  
**Meal:** Breakfast



### Day 9: Athirappally

Athirappally is a scenic combination of forests and little streams. Falling from a height of 42 m, this is one of the largest waterfalls in the state. Many endangered and endemic species of flora and fauna are found in the forests of the Athirappally-Vazhachal area. The drive from Athirappally to Anamalai through Sholayar rainforest, Anamalai forests of Valparai will give ample scope for spotting Malabar Grey horn bill (endemic), ruby throated bulbul (endemic), Great

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Hornbill, Emerald pigeon, Indian Dollar bird, Grey Headed fish eagle, and many other species of forest birds. During the drive we have only permission to stay short time slots for birding. This drive will also gives us chances of spotting two endemic species of primates of Western Ghats, wild gaur, giant squirrels, elephants etc.

An iconic must-see attraction of Kerala is Athirapally waterfall nicknamed as "The Niagra of India", is also found here. Located on the west-flowing Chalakudy River near the Vazhachal Forest Division and the Sholayar ranges, this 42-metre high waterfall and the nearby Vazhachal Falls are popular tourist destinations. It is situated on the border of Sholayar Forests of the Western Ghats in South India.



No doubt Athirapilly-Vazhachal area is one among the world's top biodiversity hotspots, as it serves as a home to endangered, as well as some threatened species of flora and fauna. This place supports the natural riparian ecosystem which consists of about 319 species of flowers out of which 24 are endemic to the Western Ghats and 10 are rare and endangered. Out of 85 species of fresh water fish found in River Chalakudy, 35 are endemic and 9 are endangered species. Forest wildlife in the area includes the Asiatic elephant, tiger, leopard, bison, sambar, and lion-tailed macaque. The unique 180 metres (590 ft) elevation riparian forest in the Athirapilly-Vazhachal area is the only location where all four South Indian species of hornbills — the Great Hornbill (the State Bird of Kerala) , Malabar Pied Hornbill, Malabar Grey Hornbill, and the Indian Grey Hornbill are found living together.

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### Highlighted Species Athirapally:

Birds: Malabar Pied horn bill, Malabar Grey horn bill, lesser fish eagle ,Great horn bill, lesser hill myna, Indian Dollar Bird, White bellied wood pecker, blue caped rock thrush, lesser fish eagle  
Mammals- Nilgiri Langur, Lion tailed Macaque , Elephant  
Reptiles: King cobra, large scale pit wiper etc )

**Accommodation:** Casa Rio Resort

**Meal:** Breakfast

### Day 10: Drive Athirappally - Thattekkad - Munnar (135 km | 4 hrs)

We leave early today to Thattekkad Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, one of the low altitude evergreen forests, situated by the banks of River Periyar where we go for a guided birding tour in Thattekkad Sanctuary and Urulanthanni rain forest patches. After lunch, we head to Munnar for 2 nights stay.

Thattekkad Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, covering an area of barely 25 km<sup>2</sup>, was the first bird sanctuary in Kerala. Salim Ali, one of the best known ornithologist described this sanctuary as the richest bird habitat on peninsular India. Thattekkad literally means flat forest, and the region is an evergreen low-land forest located between the branches of Periyar River, the longest river in Kerala. is one of the low altitude evergreen forests. It is a home for 280 species of birds including Cylone Frog Mouth, Grey hornbill, White-bellied tree pie, Rufous babbler, Wayanad laughing thrush, Grey headed bulbul, White-bellied blue flycatcher, Crimson-backed sunbird, Nilgiri wood pigeon, Malabar parakeet etc. and a number of water birds.

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Munnar in the heart of tea-growing country in the rolling hills and grassland provide a last refuge for the Nilgiri Tahr, the only species of wild goat found south of the Himalaya. Now much reduced in numbers and restricted to a few isolated ranges, this Sanctuary retains a thriving population of Tahr. The unique grassland vegetation of the High Range stands in marked contrast to the lush tropical forests. The rhododendrons in the sholas should be flowering, and they offer a fine spectacle. The Sanctuary also provides a good opportunity to observe two of the region's endemic bird species, the White-breasted Laughingthrush and Nilgiri Pipit. We will stay at Tea County, Munnar.

### Highlighted Species Thattekad

Birds: Srilankan Frogmouth, Malabar grey horn bill, Jerdon's nightjar, Indian pitta, ruby throated bulbul. White bellied tree pie, Indian dollar bird, Malabar Trogon, lesser whistling teal, legge's hawk eagle, Black Bazza etc

Reptiles: King cobra, large scale pit wiper etc.

**Accommodation:** Devonshire Greens

**Meal:** Breakfast

### Day 11: Drive Munnar - Marayoor – Chinnar

We'll have a full day (and second night) at Munnar with a visit to Marayoor & Chinnar in order to fully explore and appreciate the wildlife of this unique region.

Today's trip will be a mixture of game drive and short hikes in tribal villages, sandalwood forest and hike to Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary.

Farm lunch will be provided at Marayoor village where we will also visit a tribal village and the dolmen site.

Driving through Shola Forest patches which harbors many endemic species of primitive plants, orchids and animals. It has high endemism of plants and birds. It posses 12 species of endemic birds of western ghats like, Nilgiri fly catcher, Nilgiri laughing thrush etc.

The golden tree ferns and other spore producers from Gondwanaland is the high light of this forest. This forest also holds Tiger, leopard including black panther, rare and endemic Nilgiri marten, clawless otter, golden cat etc. Nilgiri langur, Malabar giant squirrel etc are the arboreal animals of the forest.

We will reach Marayoor valley where we taste a traditional lunch in banana leaf. Time permits we will also visit to a rock cut temple, ancient inscriptions etc. and hike to the Mount of the Dead, a world famous Megalithic site with dolmens, dolmenoid and dolmenoid cists.

Proceed to Chinnar wildlife sanctuary. Hiking through the wildlife zone and visit to a Mesolithic Cave art site. As we go on the nature trail in Chinnar, we are bound to come across a fascinating plethora of bird and animal life. The sanctuary has an area of 90 sq.km. Chinnar has the unique thorny scrub forest with Xerophytic vegetation. The undulating terrain with rocky patches manifolds the scenic splendor of the sanctuary. As the altitude varies from 500 to 2,400 m above sea level within a few kilometers radius, there is a drastic variation in the climate and vegetation.

This sanctuary has also rainfall ranging from 600 mm to 3000 mm and a dry season ranging from three to six months. Elephant, gaur, leopard, spotted deer, sambar, grizzled giant squirrel, hanuman languor, long eared fish owl and many more inhabit the Chinnar forests. The grizzled Giant squirrel is an endangered species found here.



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### Highlighted Species Munnar:

**Birds:** Nilgiri fly catcher, Nilgiri Thrush, Indian robin, Nilgiri flower pecker, Black and orange fly catcher, broad tailed grass bird, Rufous babbler, Kerala laughing thrush, Indian black bird, Black eagle, lesser kestrel, white bellied blue robin, yellow browed bulbul, Yellow throated bulbul, Spot bellied eagle owl, brown fish owl, Shama, Small minivet, Jacobin Cuckoo, Spectacled piculet, brown checked fulveta, etc .

**Mammals:** Nilgiri tahr, Nilgiri Langur, Brown mongoose, Brown palm civet, Malabar giant squirrel (southern Morph), dusky squirrel, Nilgiri Marten , velvet fronted nuthatch Elephants, Grizzled giant squirrel, Wild gaur, barking deer

**Reptiles:** large scale pitwiper, green vine snake, Anamalai Salaia Highlighted Species Chinnar Starred tortoise, Rock Agama

**Accommodation:** Devonshire Greens

**Meal:** Breakfast



### Day 12: Drive Munnar - Kumarakom (170 km | 5.5 hrs)

We'll drive to Kumarakom which is famous for its backwater & scenic beauty, sprinkled with traditional houseboats, country crafts, rural lifestyles and Tranquility. The slender coconut palms standing here, there and everywhere, it's never ending paddy fields, meandering lagoons and backwaters, mangroves

nesting birds of a hundred varieties can peacefully calm and invigorate your mind with renewed inspiration for your vocation and life. And that is the pristine beauty of Kumarakom.

On arrival, we check into our resort on the backwaters. Early evening, we go for a wetland birding. Overnight at the Resort.

**Accommodation:** Lakesong Resort

**Meal:** Breakfast

### Day 13: Alleppey Houseboat (70 km | 1.5 hrs)

Early morning, we visit Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary. This will provide the opportunity for a last look at a wide variety of water and forest birds. The Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary is spread across 14 acres, the bird sanctuary is a favourite haunt of migratory birds and an ornithologist's paradise. Egrets, darters, herons, teal, waterfowl, cuckoo, wild duck and migratory birds like the Siberian stork that live in flocks are a fascination for visitors. The best way to watch the birds of the Kumarakom sanctuary is a boat trip round the islands.

After a leisurely breakfast, drive to Alleppey to 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



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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. Overnight Houseboat.

**Accommodation:** Evergreen Houseboat

**Meal:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Day 14: Drive Alleppey – Marari Beach (35 km | 1 hr)

We enjoy your breakfast on board and leave our houseboat in Alleppey and drive to Marari, a relatively quiet beach paradise of Kerala.

On arrival check in at the resort on the Beach. Rest of the day at leisure on the beach. We may opt to go for an Ayurvedic Massage or a village walk. Overnight at the Resort.

#### Marari

Marari originates from "Mararikulam", one of the local fishing villages, where life still goes on much as it did a hundred years ago, with the men going out to sea each day to earn a living bringing in the daily catch. Completely new to the holiday maker. Marari offers endless miles of superb sand beaches backed by swaying palms, virgin territory where you can experience the local charm/and traditional Kerala Hospitality at it's best.

Marari Beach is an endless vista of sand and surf, but it is more. An authentic experience of the world of Kerala's traditional fishing villages, and a recreation of an ancient, harmonious way of life. The village of Mararikulam lies on a forgotten shore, midway up the Malabar coast, where the Indian Ocean finally decides that it has now become the Arabian Sea.

**Accommodation:** Turtle Beach Resort

**Meal:** Breakfast

### Day 15: In Marari Beach

Full day at the resort. Marari Beach is an endless vista of sand and surf, but it is more... An authentic experience of Kerala's traditional fishing villages, and a re-creation of an ancient, harmonious way of life. You may opt to take an Ayurvedic Massage... Visit the fishermen villages. By evening it may interesting to visit the local temple to watch the local crowd coming for worship and socialization. Overnight stay in Marari Beach.

**Accommodation:** Turtle Beach Resort

**Meal:** Breakfast



### Day 16: Drive to Cochin | Depart

On the way to the airport we visit Cochin. 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.

Depending upon our flight schedule we may have time today to 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

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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.

We will be taken to a hotel for freshen up and farewell dinner before leaving for the airport. Our ground handling team will assisted and transferred to Cochin International airport for our flight back home!!

Highlighted Birds: Plovers, sandpipers, frigate bird (between November to March), reef egret , black kite etc

Mammal: Dugong or sea cow, Short beaked Dolphin etc

**Meal:** Breakfast

### Includes

- Airport (pick up/drop off) transfers by private A/C vehicle
- Twin-Sharing room accommodation at all hotel/lodge/resort as mentioned
- Daily breakfast throughout the trip, other meals as mentioned in the itinerary

- All sightseeing and long distance transportation in private air-condition vehicle
- Guided Sightseeing, all activities and day excursions as per itinerary
- Services of a local guide for sightseeing tours
- 3 guided safaris at Kabini & Bandipur Tiger Reserve
- Entrance fees (national parks/conservation areas/monuments etc.)
- All applicable government taxes

### Excludes

- International flight tickets
- Visa fee
- Travel insurance
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Personal clothing and equipment
- Tips for trip leader/guide, driver, hotel staff and porters
- Items of personal nature such as alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, laundry, and other unforeseen expenses
- Items/services not listed in "included"
- Extra expenses/payment for 'Optional' activities/programs if opted in

### Accommodation

#### Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Mysore

One of the premier hotels in Mysuru (formerly known as Mysore), the Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Mysore offers city-center convenience and gorgeous views of the Chamundi Hills. When you're ready to relax, retreat to one of our spacious rooms and suites, each with top-notch amenities like free Wi-Fi and 24-hour in-room dining.

#### Red Earth Kabini

Among the amalgamation of waterways and forests lies Red Earth Kabini. An unpretentious resort located on the backwaters of the Kabini Dam, Red Earth

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Kabini encapsulates what Kabini is all about and promises to leave you with an experience of diversity and wellbeing that is unparalleled. Every experience at Red Earth Kabini promises to leave you with an everlasting memory of the wild.



### **The Wildflower Resort & Spa, Bandipur**

Wake up to the soothing melodies of nature, uninterrupted by calls or emails. Stroll through the meandering greens, to a flavorsome breakfast spread. Away from the maddening city life, untouched by TV, WiFi and cell-phone connectivity, discover the untamed side of nature at The Windflower Jungle Resort near the Bandipur Project Tiger reserve.

### **The Residency Towers Coimbatore**

The Residency Towers Coimbatore is one of the significant landmarks of Coimbatore. The hotel has been extensively refurbished and is the city's epitome of elegance and luxury. Equipped with 135 well-appointed rooms, dining experiences, and leisure facilities, The Residency Towers is how you can experience South Indian hospitality at its best.

### **Casa Rio Resort, Athirapally**

The Hillside Health Resort invites you to escape to the splendor, the quiet serenity, and paradise of Athirapilly forest and Largest Waterfall in Kerala. The Resort is entitled to a luxury created by Mother Nature – the breath-taking panoramic view of the misty fall will make you fall in love.



### **Devonshire Greens, Munnar**

Devonshire Greens is a leisure hotel overlooking the endless tea gardens of Munnar. Our resort enhances this experience by letting you connect with nature throughout your stay here. Wake up to the beautiful views of endless tea gardens against the background of the picture-perfect hills of Munnar. The silence of our resort lets you connect to the rhythm of nature.

### **Evergreen Hosueboats, Alleppey**

Invites you to a slow-motion pleasure hunt in a heaven of peace and tranquility away from the dins and bustles of towns and cities - the blue lagoons of Kerala's backwaters a heaven-sent opportunity to feed your wonder lust, - the scenic beauty, rural retreats, canals, lakes, coconut groves, paddy fields, village life, churches, temples, fishing, rowing, swimming, bird watching etc

### **Abad Turtle Beach Resort, Marari**

Abad Turtle Beach Resort in Mararikulam, is a beautiful beachfront resort that overlooks the white sandy beach and has a rivulet flowing on one side. The resort, located very close to the coastal village of Mararikulam, is spread across an area of 13 acres of land with 30 premium cottages. This is a premium resort with a private beach in Marari.

### **Group/Individual**

On this trip you will be traveling privately with your family & friends. Our representative/tour partner will look after your transfers to and from the airport and

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will be around to answer other questions you may have about your trip.

### Accommodation – Hotel, Resort

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a fine heritage hotel in another or a family-run guesthouse or lodges in a smaller town. Accommodation in remote areas tend to be basic and may not have western amenities.

### Single Accommodation

Single (room) supplement is provided on request (single supplement charge applies) and are subject to availability. Please advise us at the time of booking if you prefer a single room (where available).

### Food & Transport

All breakfasts, 1 lunch and 5 dinners are included.

Generally, you can eat out very cheaply in India. Where food is not included, you should allow at least 1,800 rupees (approximately Euro 20 & US\$22) per day for lunch and dinner. However, if you choose to dine in fine/expensive restaurants please allocate more than our suggested amount.

Please note, service in restaurants can be quite slow.

For airport, sightseeing transfers, and for long drives we use a private air-con car, jeep, van depending upon group size. Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

### Weather

Generally, the best time to visit India is from December to February, when it is warm during daytime and cool at night in most areas of India. December marks the beginning of the peak

travel season with higher-priced accommodation and flights.

It starts to get hot from March and the temperature reaches its average high point of 45°C (113°F) in May. If you can bear the heat, traveling India from April to May, you can expect the benefits of smaller crowds as well as big promotions from hotels and airlines (usually 50% off).

India's rainy season starts from June and lasts until September. North India is less affected by downpours than central and southern parts. You could still enjoy a good experience if you visit north Indian destinations like Delhi, Agra, Jaipur and other Rajasthan areas. Many national parks are closed because of floods and landslides. Goa becomes a "ghost city", with few travelers and many beach resorts closed. Ladakh, located in the far north is cool, and little affected by the rainy season, and it starts to welcome its high travel time from June to August.

Rain starts to ease from the middle of September. In October, most areas of India have dry weather. Though it is still hot, it feels much more comfortable than in May. Traveling in October and November, you'll not be drenched, while enjoying better deals than in December-February.

### Baggage Allowance

At time of writing the standard weight limit is one checked baggage on Qatar Airways is 25kg (55lb) and hand baggage 7kg (15lbs). We recommend packing only one piece of checked baggage. Luggage allowances for both hand and checked luggage are subject to change, we suggest you check the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure.

**ESSENTIAL/PRACTICAL  
INFORMATION**

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### Passport & Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for EU passport holders, and other nationalities should check with the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Visas are required if you are German and for most other nationalities. Visa information changes regularly for India; for the latest information on applying for a visa please follow these links for more information.

<https://indianembassyberlin.gov.in/pages?id=Mg,,&su bid=MTQ>,

**Please note:** Visa regulations can change without notice, therefore please check the current regulations or contact us.

### Vaccination & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements for this trip. Recommended vaccinations for this trip are: Polio, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhoid, Hepatitis A. The risk of malaria on this trip is slight, but you may wish to consult your GP/Family Doctor or travel health clinic for further advice. Dengue fever and/or Chikungunya are known risks in places visited on this trip. Both are tropical viral diseases spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available for either, and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your

questions about travel health we strongly recommend you contact your Medical Professional or a Travel Health Clinic prior to departure for up-to date information.

### Local Time

GMT + 5 hours and 30 minutes

### Electricity

230/240 volts AC, 50 Hz. There are recharging facilities at most of the hotels, the electricity supply is not 100% reliable but it is usually only off for short periods of time.

### Money

The national currency of India is the Indian Rupee (INR), with an exchange rate at the time of publication of approximately 89 to the Euro and 82 to the US\$. It is illegal to import or export rupees. Do not accept torn or (very) dirty Indian banknotes from banks or in change as they will almost certainly not be accepted as legal tender in India. Please ask for low denomination notes of 100, 200 or 500 Rupees as 2000 Rupee notes can sometimes be difficult to use out of Delhi. You can change money back from Rupees into Euro or Dollars at Delhi airport (before going through security), but you must produce an exchange receipt showing that you changed money in India. You are advised to bring most of your money in cash as you may have difficulty changing travellers cheques outside Delhi. It makes no difference whether you bring Euro or US Dollars. You should change your money on arrival at Delhi either at the hotel or airport (please note that the hotel often gives a better rate than the airport). It is possible to change cash in Ladakh. You will need approximately €200-€250 for extra meals and tipping for the whole trip.

### ATM | Credit Cards

There are ATMs in Bengaluru, Cochin and other major cities. We recommend you change most of the money you need for the trip before leaving Bengaluru. Please do not rely wholly on ATM machines as often they are

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broken or run out of cash. Credit cards are accepted in larger shops in Bengaluru and other major cities.

### Extra Expenses & Spending Money

You will need to bring some extra money to cover drinks, laundry, souvenirs and any other personal expense, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Though it totally depends on individual but generally an approximate amount of US\$250 per person, per week should be sufficient (more if you enjoy a few beers); however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount. Or if you are the one frugal with money probably allocating less would also be suffice.

India has very good opportunities for shopping, especially for locally made goods, and in Delhi local guides may well offer to take you to emporiums as well as workshops where these goods are made. Many people find this a great opportunity to buy local handicrafts, silk, jewelry, carpets etc. Guides will often assume that visitors will want to go shopping, it is very much part of the culture, however if you do not wish to go, please make this clear to your local guide at the time.

Optional Tours may be offered in some city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each optional tour/activity will be arranged locally by our local partner/guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

### Tipping

Tipping is of course entirely at your discretion, but it is customary in India. Tipping can be an awkward affair especially when you are not familiar with the country. Your leader will help with tipping and will provide a list of suggested tips. This will include tips for drivers, hotel porters and other hotel staff, local sightseeing guides,

and if trekking will include camp staff such as guide, assistants, cooks and pony men. Sometimes your leader will collect a kitty during the trip and sometimes they will collect the tips towards the end of the trip (occasionally for very small groups the leader may need to collect a little more than the suggested amount). We suggest you allow Rs 6,000 (approx. €60 -70 / \$65-75) for this trip. Please try to tip in local currency.

Tipping of the local leader is not included in the above and is at your discretion. However, we suggest around Rs1000-2000 (approx.€11-25 /US \$12-25) per person for the leader depend upon the group size.

### Itinerary Change

In case of some unusual events/incidents the order of programs (sightseeing, excursions etc.) might have to change in order to accommodate the local situations. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements while maintaining the overall integrity of your trip.

The domestic airlines may change their schedule frequently and, in such cases, our local partner/guide will inform you about the changes.

### Travel Insurance

We highly recommend to choose/get an insurance plan/policy that covers your needs. And please make sure to keep/carry a hard-copy of your travel insurance documents on your person while on tour. It's prudent to check thoroughly the inclusions and procedure to file claims prior to purchasing insurance coverage. *travel-to-nature Asia* will not be responsible for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to purchase appropriate travel insurance from the date of booking.

### Public Holidays

During major Indian public holidays such as India's Republic Day 26<sup>th</sup> Jan, the Holi (Colors) Festival (generally falls around March), Diwali (sometime in Oct-Nov) etc. some business will be closed and air and ground transportation may be affected. Tourist

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attractions sites may get overly crowded. But it's a good trade off as you will get to experience India more intimately.

### Dress Code

Though modern-day Indian have become more liberal to dresses they wear, however, as a tourist we advise you to follow dress codes specially while visiting temples or mosques. Just dressing modestly and wearing non-revealing cloths should be fine. Women might also consider carrying a shawl in their daypack (this could be a sarong or light scarf) which you can wear over your shoulders and heads as a courtesy or just show respects. Religious sites and homes throughout India – for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter.

### Important Information

On all guided trips although our leaders/guides are well trained to deal with different capabilities, if they have any concerns about someone's ability to safely partake in an activity, or their impact on other people's enjoyment, we authorize them to take necessary action which, in some circumstances, may involve asking someone to miss that activity.

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