

Heritage of Tropical South | 22 Days



India is a country, or rather a Subcontinent. Its diversity can be seen in every corner. This country is a melting point of cultures. The landscape in the north ranges from the cool, towering mountain range of the Himalayas, through the tropical areas in the east and south to the dry desert region of the Thar of Rajasthan in the west. In terms of area, India is the seventh largest country in the world and the second largest in terms of population.

You have to experience southern India with all your senses!! Because the charm of the region is made up of the diverse impressions that give us a vivid picture of people's everyday lives. Join the crowd of devout pilgrims and let the temple elephant bless you! Discover temple cities populated by thousands of pilgrims, sniff the scent of spices in the cardamom mountains and relax with a traditional Ayurvedic oil massage. You will discover old harbor and Hindu temple cities in Tamil Nadu, the fascinating mountain world with tea, coffee and spice plantations as well as the tropical nature of Kerala with the unique lagoon system of the backwaters and will lead you, sometimes off the beaten path, to the bent cultural and natural treasures deep in the valley South of the subcontinent. Despite all the diversity, they have a common root!

This trail takes you through the most sought-after attractions and experiences through the culturally rich Tamil Nadu and Nature of Kerala with a special inclusion of UNESCO Nature & Cultural Heritage sites! You will get to know so close the local community and their lifestyle, varied cuisine and the local traditions. Some exquisite strolls and day hikes are also a highlight of this tour. The climax comes as the lagoons of Kerala

are cruised on a traditional houseboat before relaxing on the sweeping Marari Beach with an endless vista of sand and surf. You will never forget the local life experiences you come across during the tour.

Trip Highlights

- Kathakali-The Dance drama of Kerala
- Colonial tour of Cochin
- Country canoe cruise with farm lunch prepare by village women
- Witness enchanting manmade architecture in the ancient temples of Mahabalipuram, Kanchipuram and Pondicherry
- Spice Farm visit with Farm lunch
- Exclusive visit to the Dolmen site at Marayoor
- Visit to the Tribal village
- Tea plantation trekking with Tea Factory visit
- Exclusive colonial lunch at a Tea Bungalow
- Full day guided trekking with bamboo rafting in Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary
- Boating in Periyar Sanctuary
- Visit to Meenakshi Temple
- Organic Farm visit with Farm lunch
- Bullock Cart Ride
- Tuk-Tuk Ride

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Chennai (Madras) | Drive to Mahabalipuram

Welcome to India! Upon arrival in Chennai a *travel-to-nature Asia* guide/representative will be at the airport

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to greet and take us to our hotel. Please look out for your name-card once you exit out of arrival area.

Our representative shall assist and transfer us to airport hotel or nearby restaurant for some refreshments and afterwards, leave Chennai and drive to Mahabalipuram, which is about 52 km and takes roughly 1 hour. Upon arrival, check in at your Beach Front Hotel/Resort for three night stay.

Afternoon: Free for independent activities and relax on the beach.

Accommodation: Ideal Beach Resort
Meal: Dinner

Day 2: In Mahabalipuram

We start our day with a delicious breakfast and proceed for the half day tour of Mahabalipuram (aka Mammallapuram) which include.

Shore Temples

It is believed that there were seven magnificent temples what are known as the seven pagodas, built near the sea shore, but the lonely survivor is the present shore temples; Arjuna's Penance, This rock bas-relief was built by king Narasimha I. This rock is shaped like that of a huge whale. The sculpture is carved at the back portion of the whale shaped stone; the five Rathas is a set of magnificent monolithic rock temples. They are built in the shape of pagodas and look similar to that of the Buddhist shrines and monasteries. Rathas in English means chariots. These chariots are constructed with towers, multi pillared halls, and sculptured walls which are chiseled out minutely. The Ratha's have an association to the great epic Mahabharata which describes the heroes of Mahabharata with their wife Dhruvadi, which is termed as pancha pandava rathas. Also there are remains of some ancient temples along the way to the top of hill & there is also a watch tower. After you have completed your sightseeing of Mamallapuram, return back to your hotel/Resort.

Afternoon: Free for independent activities.

Accommodation: Ideal Beach Resort
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

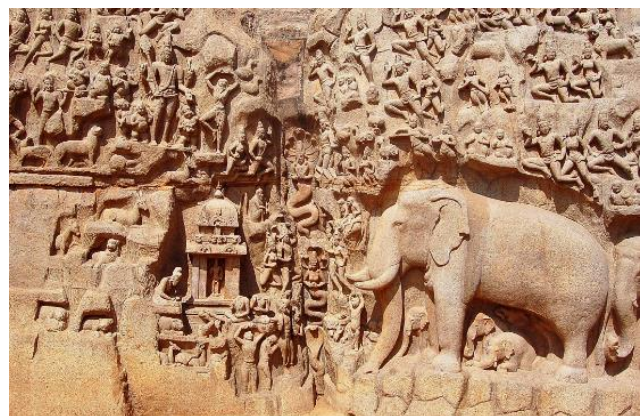
Day 3: Day trip to Kanchipuram

After breakfast, we proceed for a half day excursion/visit to Kanchipuram which is the ancient capital of the Pallava's famous as a city of 1000 temples and still has 124 shrines. The first temple dedicated to Lord Shiva was built in the 7th and 8th century and has paintings on the walls. Temple of Ekambaswara, Kailasanatha, Sri Kamakshi and Varadarajaswamy are of interest. Kanchipuram is also famous for silk products. The Kanchipuram is an important place for Hindus as it is the seat of the Great Saint – Shankaracharya.

After sightseeing of Kanchipuram is completed, we return back to Mamallapuram. It is approx. 67 km each way from Mamallapuram and takes roughly 1 & 1/2 hour.

Afternoon: Free for independent activities and relax on the beach.

Accommodation: Ideal Beach Resort
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 4: Drive Mahabalipuram - Pondicherry (95 km | 2 hrs)

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After breakfast, we leave Mamallapuram and drive to Pondicherry which is about 95 Km and takes about 2 hours. En route we make refreshment stops and witness salt collection/processing. We also see fisherman fishing and collecting prawns. Upon arrival in Pondicherry, check-in at the hotel.

Afternoon free in Pondicherry for independent activities or explore the Old French Quarters.

Accommodation: Anandha Inn

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 5: Pondicherry

After breakfast, we proceed for a half day sightseeing of Pondicherry to visit its important sights like Manakula Vinayagar Koil - this temple is more than 300 years old and is dedicated to Lord Ganesha. It has a golden spire and walls portraying forty different forms of Ganesha; Varadaraja Perumal Temple, this is believed to be the oldest temple in town dating back to 600 AD. The temple built in the typical Dravidian style complete with brightly coloured 'gopuram' and sculpted pillars is probably the oldest standing structure in Pondicherry. Also visit Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, this white and brown neo-gothic church is one of Pondy's finest Catholic churches. It was built by French missionaries in the 1700's in a contrasting Neo-Gothic manner with towers flanking a central gable and stained glass windows on the side. The church has an imposing entrance and the beautiful stained glass panels depict incidents from Jesus Christ's life. Also visit the Aurobindo Ashram & walk through the Old French

Quarters and along the sea shore . Pondicherry has four main beaches which are fairly popular with tourists & the beaches here are relatively clean and not much crowded.

Afternoon free for independent activities.

Optional activities: A visit to an elephant orphanage to spend some time with the Gentle Giants can be arranged. It's a part of our responsible tourism initiative to support the protection of elephants.

Accommodation: Anandha Inn

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 6: In Pondicherry | Visit to Auroville

After breakfast, we head out for a half-day tour to visit Auroville, which is about 15 km and takes approx. ½ hour from Pondicherry.

Auroville is an experimental township where people from across the world of all cultures and traditions come and live together in peace. It was founded in 1968 by Mirra Alfassa, a disciple of Aurobindo and fondly known as the 'Mother' of Sri Aurobindo Society. This universal township was inaugurated on 28 February 1968 with the agenda that it will be a place with people willing enough to make this a hub of uninterrupted education and progress, regardless of their caste, creed, nationality or race. People from 124 countries including Indians from 23 different states came together with some of their native soil brought from their homelands and deposited in a marble urn.

Accommodation: Anandha Inn

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 7: Pondicherry - Thanjavur via Chidambaram (175 km | 4 hrs)

In the morning we leave Pondicherry and drive to Thanjavur, which is about 175 km takes roughly 4 hours. En route stop at Chidambaram to visit its mighty temple complex spread over 50 acres in the heart of the city. It is an ancient and historic temple dedicated to Lord Shiva Nataraja and Lord

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Govindaraja Perumal, one of the few temples where both the Shaivite and Vaishnavite deities are enshrined in one place. To the followers of Shaivism (Saivism) or the saivaite, the very word koil refers to Chidambaram. In the same way, to the followers of Vaishnavism it refers to Srirangam or Thiruvarangam. Chidambaram is one of the 5 holiest Shiva temples in India.

After temple visit, we continue drive to Thanjuvar and upon arrival in Thanjavur, check in, at a hotel/resort. Remainder of the day free in Thanjavur for independent activities.

Accommodation: Ideal River View Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 8: In Thanjavur

After Breakfast, we proceed for half day sightseeing tour of the city and visit the Brihadeswara Temple, the biggest attraction of Thanjavur – it is also known as the Big Temple, built during the reign of the Great Chola emperor, Raja Raja Chola and this temple is an architectural marvel.

Protected by deep trenches on either sides and is a favorite among the pilgrims. The shrine itself is a 216 feet structure and atop the temple is the spherical stone which weighs 80 Tons. The sanctum is dotted with paintings from the Chola and Nayak periods. The statue of Nandi -the Bull, welcomes at the entrance. The other places of sightseeing in Thanjavur is The Thanjavur Maratha Palace which is home to the centuries-old Saraswathi Mahal Library, with palm-leaf manuscripts, and Thanjavur Art Gallery, with bronze statues. Thanjavur is known for its rich architecture, exquisite handicrafts, paintings, bronzes and south Indian Musical instruments

Rest of the day free for independent activities.

Accommodation: Ideal River View Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 9: Thanjavur - Trichy - Madurai (190 km | 4 hrs)

Morning, after breakfast, we drive to Madurai which is about 190 km and takes roughly 4 hours. On the way we stop in Trichy to visit the Trichy's -the most famous landmark of this bustling town - the Rock Fort Temple, a spectacular monument perched on a massive rocky outcrop which rises abruptly from the plain to tower over the old city. It is reached by a flight of steep steps cut into the rock and from its summit you get a fantastic view of the town plus its other main landmarks. Also visit the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple which is one of the largest and most interesting temple complexes in India, built on an island surrounded by the Cauvery River and covering a staggering 2.5 sq. km

After sightseeing in Trichy are completed, we continue drive to Madurai and upon arrival in Madurai, check in at the hotel. Remainder of the day free for independent activities.

Accommodation: Fortune Panidyan

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 10: In Madhurai

In the morning, after breakfast, leave for half day Sightseeing tour of Madurai, The most prominent tourist attraction in Madurai is the Meenakshi Amman Temple dedicated to Goddess Shakti or Meenakshi. It is one of the important centers of Hindu pilgrimage. The Meenakshi temple exemplifies the Dravidian architecture with gopurams (large gateways) and mandapams (multi-pillared halls) covered from top to bottom in an abundance of multi-coloured images of gods, goddesses, animals and mythical figures. This

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temple was built by Kulasekara Pandya and the most impressive feature of this temple are the soaring towers that stand on the granite bases and have stucco figures of deities, mythical animals and monsters tinted in vibrant colors.

After visit to Meenakshi temple is completed, we continue with short drive to Tirumalai Nayak palace and visit the palace and its museum and afterwards. if time permits, continue drive to Gandhi Museum:- this is the most distinguished among the tourist attractions in Madurai and is a living memorial of Mahatma Gandhi. Later on return back to hotel for rest & free for Independent activities.

Towards late evening, after dinner, we visit Meenakshi temple again to witness the special evening ceremony at this temple which is a regular event at this temple. Here the Idol of goddess Meenakshi is carried in palanquin followed by a procession and taken into chambers of The Lord Shiva for the night and this procession takes roughly 1/2 hour. Next morning she is brought back to her own chambers.

Accommodation: Fortune Pandiyar
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 11: Madurai – Periyar (Thekkady) (135 km | 3 hrs)

After breakfast, we leave Madurai and drive to Periyar, which is 135 km and takes roughly 3 hours, The first 110 km are on flat road but last 25 km are uphill drive through beautiful landscape/hills.

On the way we make an stop at Harvest Organic Farm for a guided walk. From the main road, we will be welcomed to drive through the village road to the farm. We will also be given a bullock cart ride experience en route to the farm. A Garden farm lunch will be served. Later guided walk through the farm. Upon arrival in Periyar, check into the hotel.

Thekkady – one of the world’s most captivating natural life saves. The Periyar untamed life haven in Thekkady is spread crosswise over 777 sq. kms. of which 360 sq. km is thick ever green backwoods.

Noted for its geomorphology, decent variety of natural life and picturesque excellence, the asylum was announced a Tiger Reserve in 1978.

Afternoon, we may visit to Spice Village located in the Periyar wilderness, high in the western ghats of Kerala. Pepper and cardamom, cinnamon and ginger, nutmeg, mace and anise the Periyar hills became nature's taste factory in the 14th century, as Cochin became nature's harbor, the port of lading for a spice-hungry world. On the road to Spice Village, it's easy to feel this centuries-old allure yourself.

Remainder the day free for leisure activities.

Accommodation: Peppervine Hotel
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 12: In Periyar

Today in Periyar is to explore its surroundings and time to relax and for independent activities. During the day we will take a boat ride on the Periyar lake to witness the wild life. First we drive from your hotel to the landing point of the lake which is inside the sanctuary and from here take the boat ride for about 2 hours and if lucky, we see many wild animals, including wild Elephants, Gaur, deer species by the bank of the lake. Also, we shall see many aquatic birds.

Accommodation: Peppervine Hotel
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 13: Periyar (Thekkady) - Munnar (125 km | 4 hrs) Day 14:

After breakfast, we leave Periyar (Thekkady) and drive to Munnar which is about 125 km and takes roughly 4 hours with stops en route.

Munnar, breathtakingly beautiful - a haven of peace and tranquility - an idyllic tourist destination in God's own country with unending expanses of tea plantations pristine valleys and mountains...exotic species of flora and fauna in its wild sanctuaries and forests with aroma of spice scented cool air. Munnar

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has all these and more. It's the place you would love to visit. It's the place you would wish never to leave. Set at an altitude of 1,600 m. in Idukki district, situated at the confluence of three mountain streams, Munnar was the favored summer resort of the erstwhile British rulers in the colonial days. Sprawling tea plantations, picturesque towns, winding lanes, trekking and holiday facilities makes Munnar a holiday resort. Among the exotic flora found in the forests and grasslands here is the Neelakurinji a flower, which bathes the hills in blue once every twelve years. Munnar also has the highest peak in South India - Anamudi (2,695 m), dominates the skyline and the many smaller peaks are a walker's paradise.

Upon arrival in Munnar, check in at the Hotel. Afternoon free for independent activities or to explore the local surroundings.

Accommodation: Abad Copper Castle
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 14: In Munnar

We start the sightseeing of Munnar visiting the tea plantations, Tea Museum, the Eravikulam National Park home of the endangered Niligiri Thar (Ibex), followed by visit to the Mattupetty dam, the Kundala Lake and other scenic spots. Also, we go for a short family hike and more.

Accommodation: Abad Copper Castle
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 15: In Munnar

Free day for independent activities or (optional) proceed for Nature Walk followed by village visit.

Accommodation: Abad Copper Castle
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 16: Munnar - Kochi via Kodanadu Elephant care Center (135 km | 3.5 hrs)

We check out from the hotel and leave for Kochi which is about 135 km and takes roughly 3 & ½ hours. En route stop to see Cheyyara waterfalls, Valara waterfalls, Attukadu waterfalls, Spice plantations etc. Also if you wish stop at Kodanadu to visit its elephant care center. Upon arrival in Cochin check in at the Hotel.

Afternoon free for independent activities and towards evening take a walk along the sea shore & watch the fishing nets being operational with sunset at the back drop.

Accommodation: Key Select by Lemon Tree Hotels
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 17: In Kochi

Morning sightseeing of Kochi visiting St. Francis church, Chinese fishing net, Santa clause basilica, Mattanchery palace, Jewish synagogue etc. Kochi (also known as Cochin) has been a port since 1341, when a flood carved out its harbor and opened it to Arab, Chinese and European merchants. Sites reflecting those influences include Fort Kochi, a settlement with tiled colonial bungalows and diverse houses of worship. Cantilevered Chinese fishing nets, typical of Kochi, have been in use for centuries.

Afternoon free in Kochi for independent activities.

Accommodation: Key Select by Lemon Tree Hotels
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

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Day 18: Kochi - Houseboat in Alleppey (65 km | 1.5 hrs)

We leave Cochin in the late morning and drive to Alleppey which is about 65 km that takes roughly 1 and ½ hours. We should reach Alleppey around noon and board the houseboat for 2 nights stay. The houseboat shall be for exclusive use and all the refreshments and meals like breakfast, lunch and dinner shall be provided on board. There shall be also some cruising across the lake and the canals with some stops by the villages. During the night, boats are anchored at specific places as they are not allowed to cruise after sunset.

Accommodation: Houseboat

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 19: On Board the Houseboat on Vembanad Lake

Day on board the Houseboat to relax and cruising.

Vembanad, also known as Punnamada is the longest lake in India, as well as the largest lake in the state of Kerala. With an area of 2,033 square kilometers and a maximum length of 96.5 km, it is the second largest Ramsar site in India only after the Sunderbans in West Bengal. Vembanad Lake is at the heart of Kerala Backwaters with hundreds of kettuvallams plied on it and numerous resorts on its banks. The Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary is located on the east coast of the lake.

Accommodation: Alleppey Houseboat

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 20: Drive Alleppey - Marari (20 km | 1/2 hr)

We leave houseboat after breakfast around 10 am and drive to Marari, which is about 20 km and takes roughly half hour.

Upon arrival in Marari, check in at your Beach Resort.

Accommodation: Abad Turtle Beach Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 21: At Marari

Days at Marari to relax and enjoy the Golden sandy beaches of Marari on the Arabian sea.

Accommodation: Abad Turtle Beach Resort

Meals: Breakfast

Day 22: Drive Marari - Kochi Airport (90 km | 2 hrs) | Depart Kochi

We leave Marari and drive to Cochin airport which is about 90 km and takes roughly 2 hours. Upon arrival at Cochin airport, check in for your homeward-bound flight.

Meal: Breakfast

Includes

- Airport (pick up/drop off) transfers by private A/C vehicle
- Twin-Sharing room accommodation at all hotel/resort/lodge 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
- Entrance fee at the monuments during the usual sightseeing as mentioned in the program (other than the optional ones)
- Services of an English-speaking guide as per program
- One boat ride in the Periyar national park for wild life viewing
- Organic farm House Lunch at Tambam, en route to Periyar
- All applicable government taxes

Excludes

- International flight tickets
- Visa fee
- Travel insurance
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary

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- 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 participated

Accommodation

Ideal Beach Resort, Mahabalipuram

A picturesque resort surrounded by lush greenery and a private beach, Ideal Beach Resort offers personalized service, traditional Ayurvedic massage, a mouth-watering dining experience and a relaxing pool; our team does not spare an expense when it comes to guest satisfaction.

Anandha Inn, Pondicherry

Anandha Inn Convention Centre and Suites, a four-star, luxurious and elegant hotel, is located center part of Pondicherry, the ideal place for memorable moments, be it with your friends or family. Built-in 1994, Anandha Inn Convention Centre and Suites meets tradition and modern design.



Ideal River View Resort, Tanjore

Located 15 minutes' drive from the centre of Tanjore, the Ideal River View is the best available hotel in Tanjore situated along the banks of the Vennar river. Each air-conditioned cottage faces the river and has a balcony. It is surrounded by semi jungle and paddy

fields. You can relax by the pool or enjoy a traditional Ayurvedic massage.

Fortune Pandiyan, Madurai

Fortune Pandiyan, a Madurai hotel, features 57 elegantly appointed spacious rooms including 11 Standard Rooms, 12 Deluxe Rooms, 26 Fortune Club Rooms, 3 Suites, and 5 Exclusive Club Rooms considered the best among all the hotels in Madurai. The rooms offer a wide range of modern amenities to suit the needs of the discerning traveler.



Peppervine Hotel, Thekkady

To feel the freshness of the vistas and recharge your mind with the energy in abundance from these natural marvels, we welcome you to Peppervine! Wander across Thekkady and find shade in our luxurious rooms. Our premises are equipped with all those modern amenities to provide you with comfort and functionality for a better stay here.

Abad Copper Castle, Munnar

Abad Copper Castle is nestled in the heart of Munnar and offers postcard views of the lush green valley on one side and the vast tea estates on the other, making it one of the best resorts in Munnar. Located just 2 km from Munnar town can take in this poetic beauty, which serves as the perfect antidote for the city-weary soul.

Key Select by Lemon Tree Hotels, Kochi

The hotel with its 151 smartly furnished rooms and apartments, offers you a wide array of accommodation options. Room categories include Keys Room and Keys Indulge and Suites. The hotel is

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equipped with a hip recreation bar – Unlock Bar, a multi-cuisine Coffee Shop KEYS CAFE, a 186 sq.mtr. of conference area, a fully functional gym.

Alleppey Houseboat

Houseboats in Kerala were traditionally cargo boats that carried rice, spices and other commodities, which now are transformed into luxury boats complete with bedrooms, kitchen, living area, bathrooms and other amenities. Today, these allow travellers to enjoy the breath-taking beauty of Alappuzha while gliding along and exploring the tranquil backwaters - an experience of a life time.



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 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

Unless you specifically request a single room (with supplement), we offer double room accommodation throughout the trip.

Food & Transport

Daily breakfast is provided throughout the trip and besides, two lunches and one dinner are also included.

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

The ideal time to visit tropical South India is during the winter season. The peak months of this season are from December to February when the weather is at its most pleasant. The hottest months of South India are from March to May when the average temperature hovers around 32 Degrees Celsius. June to September is the monsoon season that brings the highest humidity and heat with rainfalls.

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.

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ESSENTIAL/PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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 Delhi and other major cities. We recommend you change most of the money you need for the trip before leaving Delhi. Please do not rely wholly on ATM machines as often they are broken or

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run out of cash. Credit cards are accepted in larger shops in Delhi 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 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 keep a 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 26th 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 attractions sites may get overly crowded. But it's a good trade off as you will get to experience India more intimately.

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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.