

# Tea & Spice of Kerala



a 12 day hike & boat in India

Kerala, sandwiched between the Arabian Sea and the mountainous Western Ghats, is known for its tropical greenery, quiet backwaters, spectacular wildlife reserves and endless tea and spice plantations. Our variety of hikes is as diverse as the countryside, visiting spice farms, tea plantations, thick jungles and historic cities. Relax at night in some of the area's finest hotels and dive into the colorful cuisine that draws on the locally grown spices.

## Day by Day Itinerary

### Day 1 - Arrive Cochin

Arrive Cochin by flight, meet at airport & transfer to hotel. Rest of time free to relax.

### Day 2 - Cochin Sightseeing, Drive to Munnar

After breakfast tour of Kochi to visit Dutch Palace - built by the Portuguese and presented to Raja Veera Kerala Varma of Kochi, the Palace was later renovated by the Dutch (closed on Friday), Jewish Synagogue - the oldest synagogue in the Commonwealth of Nations (closed on Friday & Saturday) & St. Francis Church - one of the oldest churches in India built by Europeans. Walk through Fort Kochi and see Chinese Fishing Nets - a unique cantilever fishing technique. Afternoon drive to Munnar (4 - 5hrs drive), reach & check in to hotel.

### Day 3 - Munnar - Tea Plantation hike & visit Tea Museum

Morning hike through Tea Plantation and explore Munnar's natural beauty. This will be followed by visit to Tea Museum. Rest day free

### Day 4 - Drive to Top Station, hike down to Mundan

Morning drive for about an hour to reach Top Station. Start trekking following a trail that descends through coffee and tea plantations, rice fields, coconut plantations and mango plantations and by passing waterfalls. The trail leads to the village of Mundan, reach & check in to hotel.

### Day 5 - Drive to Madurai, Afternoon Meenakshi Temple

After breakfast drive to Madurai (2 - 3hrs drive), reach & check in to hotel. Afternoon visit to Meenakshi Temple - a historic Hindu temple dedicated to Meenakshi, a form of Parvati, and her

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consort, Sundareswar, a form of Shiva.

**Day 6** - Madurai- AM Flower market, Drive to Thekkady, PM Spice Plantation visit

Early morning visit to flower market – one of the largest flower market in India renowned worldwide for Jasmine flower. Later drive to Thekkady (3.5 – 4.5hrs drive), reach & check in to hotel. Afternoon proceed for Spice Plantation visit and learn about the various spices and their uses in Indian cuisines.

**Day 7** - Thekkady - AM Jungle Walk, PM Boat ride on Periyar lake

Morning proceed for a Jungle Walk in Periyar National Park. Afternoon proceed for a boat safari on the Periyar lake. Both Jungle walk and boat safari provide opportunity to see the animals habiting at this park.

**Day 8** - Drive to Muhamma

After breakfast drive to Muhamma (3.5 – 4.5hrs drive), reach & check in to hotel. Afternoon village walk to learn about rural Kerala. Optional activities: village cycling for 1-2 Hrs, possibility for seeing coir making & carpet making.

**Day 9** - Drive to Alleppey, Board Houseboat

Morning drive to Alleppey, board Houseboat and cruise till sunset. Explore the rural life of Kerala and daily activities of people surrounding the backwaters while relaxing on the sun deck of the Houseboat.

**Day 10** - Drive to Kovalam

After breakfast disembark and drive to Kovalam (3 – 4hrs drive), reach & check in to hotel. Rest of day free to relax on the beach.

**Day 11** - Kovalam - day free

Full day free to relax on the sandy beaches of Kovalam (no vehicle services).

**Day 12** - Departure to Trivandrum airport.

After breakfast transfer to Trivandrum airport for flight to onward destination.

## Hotels:

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The tour uses 3 & 4 star hotels in the cities.

## What's Included:

- 11 nights Accommodation in the area's better hotels (double occupancy)
- Most meals from Dinner on Day 1 until Breakfast on Day 12
- Water, sodas or beer included at dinner
- Service of bilingual Team Pedalers Guide(s)
- Sightseeing and cultural activities
- Airport pick up & drop off

## Meeting & Flights:

Your guides will meet any flight during the day on your arrival day.

Fly into Cochin (COK) before 4 pm on Day 1

Fly out of Trivandrum (TRV) after 10 am on Day 11

## Visas & Travel Documents:

Passports and visas are required for all guests. Your passport should have at least 6 months validity past your intended travel dates. Visas can be obtained in advance from the nearest India Embassy or Consulate.

Citizens of the US can now apply for an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) at least four days prior to traveling in lieu of a traditional visa. Citizens of the UK can apply for a 2-Entry eVisa online through the India Embassy. Other electronic visa programs are coming for other countries, please check with your nearest India Embassy or Consulate.