

# TEMPLE TOURS, SOUTH INDIA

## 10 NIGHTS/ 11 DAYS



**Cheanni – Kanchipuram – Mahabalipuram – Pondicherry Tanjore- Gangaikonda Cholapuram  
– Darasuram – Kumbakonam – Tanjore – Chettinad – Madurai – Chennai**

### **Day 01 Arrival Chennai**

Meet upon arrival and transfer to your hotel for overnight stay. Rest of the day free. Night in Chennai.

Chennai (formerly known as Madras) is the capital city of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. ... The city is the fourth largest city of India. It was founded in 1661 by the British East India Company. The city is on the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal.

### **Day 02 In Chennai**

After breakfast visit Chennai. We will begin our day visiting the 7<sup>th</sup> century Kapaleeswarar Temple which is a fine example of Dravidian culture and the architecture of this temple is very impressive. Continue to visit a Tamil Classical Dance and Music school, Kalakshetra. Where you can see the students are keep learning. After visiting Kalakshetra we will proceed to San Thome Cathedral Basilica which was founded by Portuguese. The Cathedral has a fine example of Gothics paintings.

In the afternoon we will visit Fort St. George, founded by British Empire. Currently it has been converted not India Govt offices. Time free to walk around and mix with locals. Return to hotel for night stay.

### **Day 03 Chennai - Kanchipuram - Mahabalipuram (car, approx. 5h)**

After breakfast transfer to Mahabalipuram, stopping on the way to visit Kanchipuram, which is a temple town and one of the seven sacred cities in India and the temples are dedicated to both Lord Shiva as well as Lord Vishnu. Your visit will include the Sri Ekambaranathar Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva and one of the largest in the city, the Kamakshi Amman temple, Devaraj swami and the Vaikunta Perumal temple. From the original 1000 temples there are now just over 200 left. Kanchipuram is also one of the most important centres for hand woven silk and the favourite choice of Indian brides. Night stay at Mahabalipuram.

### **Day 04 In Mahabalipuram**

After breakfast visit Mahabalipuram. This tiny town on the shores of the Coromandel coast is famous for its 7<sup>th</sup> Century Shore Temples and Arjuna's Penance, a large relief carving on a rock twelve metres high and thirty metres long. There is also a cluster of smaller temples scattered over the main area. Night stay in Mahabalipuram.

### **Day 05 Mahabalipuram – Pondicherry (car, approx. 2 ½ h)**

After breakfast transfer to Pondicherry. Previously a French State, this small Union Territory has some different features to the surrounding area of Tamil Nadu. In the French Quarter there are wide well paved roads with shady sidewalks to explore the remaining French Architecture. In this area is the Aurobindo Ashram, parts of which are open to visitors. The Samadhi of Aurobindo and The Mother are set in an open courtyard in the main Ashram building. In the surrounding streets are various working departments of the Ashram open to visitors. Night stay in Pondicherry.

In the evening it is a pleasant activity for the clients is to walk on the foreshore overlooking the ocean. It is possible to arrange short boat trips on the sea front looking for dolphins. (Optional & Not included)



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### **Day 06 Pondicherry – Gangaikonda Cholapuram – Darasuram – Kumbakonam**

After breakfast drive to Kumbakonam, one of the best examples of Cholas Destiny. On the way you will visit the temple complex of Gangaikonda Cholapuram & Darasuram. Night stay in Kumbakonam.

**Kumbakonam:** Kumbakonam dates to the Sangam period and was ruled by the Early Cholas, Pallavas, Medieval Cholas, Later Cholas, Pandyas, the Vijayanagar Empire, Madurai Nayaks, Thanjavur Nayaks and the Thanjavur Marathas. It rose to be a prominent city between the 7th and 9th centuries AD, when it served as a capital of the Medieval Cholas. The town reached the zenith of its prosperity during the British Raj when it was a prominent center of European education and Hindu culture; and it acquired the cultural name, the "Cambridge of South India". In 1866,

**Darasuram:** This temple is a storehouse of art and architecture. The vimana is 85 feet high. The front mandapam itself is in the form of a huge chariot drawn by horses. The temple has some exquisite stone carvings.

**Gangaikonda Cholapuram:** Gangaikonda Cholapuram was erected as the capital of the Cholas by Rajendra Chola I, the son and successor of Rajaraja Chola, the great Chola who conquered a large area in South India at the beginning of the 11th century C.E. It occupies an important place in the history of India. As the capital of the Cholas from about 1025 C.E. for about 250 years, the city controlled the affairs of entire south India, from the Tungabhadra in the north to Ceylon in the south. The great temple of Siva at this place is next only to the Brihadisvara temple at Thanjavur in its monumental nature and surpasses it in sculptural quality

### **Day 07 in Kumbakonam**

Breakfast. We will visit the Kumbakonam (dozens of temples in this city). The Kumbakonam region has been inhabited since the 3rd century BC. By powerful Chola destiny. This town was always a military and religious landmark in the Tamil Nadu region. In Kumbakonam and its surroundings there are almost 200 temples, despite its size, and for this reason it is known as the City of Temples. Night stay in Kumbakonam.

### **Day 08 Kumbakonam – Tanjore - Chettinad**

After breakfast transfer by road to the town of Chettinad, famous for culture and gastronomy. Enroute we visit Brihadishwara Temple in Tanjore or Thanjavur, one of the best manifestations of Chola art. It is a very welcoming and friendly population where the Brihadeeshwara Temple is located, which is a UNESCO world heritage site. Check in and rest of the day free. Night in Chettinad.

### **Day 09 Visit Chettinad – Madurai (car, approx. 3h)**

After breakfast we will visit Chettinad famous for the old mansions and picturesque city of merchants whose lifestyle is reflected in its gastronomy, architecture, culture, art and customs. If you wish you can enjoy a bullock cart ride to interact with local artisans who specialize in jewellery, crafts and tiles.

In the afternoon drive to the mystical destination of Madurai. the cultural capital of Tamil Nadu besides being the second largest city in the state. The city derives its name from the divine nectar (Madhu) that was showered from the locks of Lord.

Check in at your hotel for 02-night stay. Rest of the day at leisure. Night stay in Madurai.



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### **Day 10 in Madurai**

Full Day Sightseeing of Madurai including Thiruparamkuntam. Madurai is famous for the Sri Meenakshi temple complex. The gopurams are covered by a coloured profusion of Hindu gods and goddesses, animals and mythical figures. A visit to Madurai shows the visitor the spiritual side of South Indian culture. The temple complex is a hive of activity from early morning until evening, attracting pilgrims and tourists alike. For 10 rupees the resident elephant will place a "tilak" on your forehead with his trunk. Afternoon free. Night stay at Madurai.

### **Day 11 Fly to Chennai and Final departure**

Depending on your flight, transfer to Madurai airport for Chennai and take connecting flight to onward destination.

**End of our services....**

**Note:** This tour can be modified as per your requirements.