

MUMBAI & DRAVIDIAN TRAILS

14 NIGHTS/ 15 DAYS



Mumbai – Madurai – Chetnad – Tanjore – Kumbakonam – Kumbakonam – Darasuram – Gangaikonda Cholapuram – Pondicherry – Mahabalipuram – Kanchipuram – Mahabalipuram – Chennai – Depart

Day 01: Arrive Mumbai

You will be met by a member of our team at the airport along with car and chauffeur and transferred to your hotel for overnight stay.

Day 02: in Mumbai

Breakfasts. Whole day sightseeing with English speaking guide. Your day begins visiting the Elephanta caves, located on an island about 10 kilometres away from the shores of Mumbai. These caves comprise of temples carved from solid rock dating back to the 7th century. The main attraction is the three-headed bust of Lord Shiva, famously known as 'Trimurti'.

In the afternoon, visit rest of the places in Mumbai. A photo stop at the Gateway of India, drive past Mumbai University, the hanging gardens, the Gateway of India, Tower of Silence, the Dhobiwalas (washer men), Prince of Wales Museum and the central Maidan (lawns where cricket is played). Most of the monuments built during the British era. You may choose to stroll across Fashion Street, a stretch famous for its export clothing and accessories. Later drive past Marine Drive also known as the Queen's Necklace. Later, ascend Malabar Hill to visit the beautifully adorned Jain Temple, Kamala Nehru Park and the Hanging Garden. Return to your hotel for night stay.

Day 03 Fly Mumbai – Madurai

After breakfast transfer to Mumbai airport in time to take your flight to 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. The busy city of Madurai is one of the oldest in South India and has been a centre of learning and pilgrimage for centuries. The 'must see' attraction is the enormous Sri Meenakshi Temple complex in the heart of the old town. It is a "riotously baroque example of Dravidian architecture" and "seethes with activity from dawn to dusk". Other sights include the Market, the Thirumalai Nayak Palace, the Gandhi Memorial Museum and the Madurai Government Museum. Check in and rest of the day free. Night stay in Madurai.

Day 04 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. Rest of the day explore the local market. Night stay at Madurai.



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Day 05 Madurai – Chettinad

After breakfast transfer by road to the town of Chettinad, famous for culture and gastronomy. In the afternoon 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. Night in Chettinad.

Day 06 Chettinad – Tanjore – Kumbakonam

After breakfast transfer by road to Kumbakonam. 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 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,

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 – Darasuram – Gangaikonda Cholapuram – Pondicherry

After breakfast drive 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.

Enroute visit the temple complex of Gangaikonda Cholapuram & Darasuram the fine example of Cholas Destiny. Check in hotel and Night in Pondicherry.

Darasuram: The 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



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Day 09 in Pondicherry

After breakfast the day dedicated to visit Pondicherry which will include AUROVILLE, was conceived as a tribute to Sri Aurobindo, an Indian philosopher, guru and poet who fought for the freedom of the country and who was the founder of Integral Center of Yoga "Aurobindo Ashram" in 1920. Auroville represents a new concept of education and urban life. It aims to be a universal city, where men and women are able to live in harmony and peace, respecting their religious and political beliefs. The purpose of Auroville is to achieve human unity.

Continue and walk through PONDICHERRY VILLE BLANCHE (white town) and VILLE NOIRE (black city), named after the majority of the French colonizers and Tamil Indians. Stop at the GANESH TEMPLE, which is usually full of locals wanting to get blessings from Lakshmi, a female elephant who has been living in Pondicherry for most of her life and leads a pleasant life.

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)
Night in Pondicherry

Day 10: Pondicherry – Mahabalipuram

After breakfast drive to Mahabalipuram for night stay. In the afternoon sightseeing of Mahabalipuram, famed for its beautiful 7th Century shore temple, its early rock cut temples with their characteristic mandapams (pillared pavilions), and five temples sculptured as Rathas (chariots). Once the second capital and seaport of the Pallava kings of Kanchipuram, the area is a World Heritage Site, it is fascinating to watch the artisans at work

Day 11: Mahabalipuram – Kanchipuram – Mahabalipuram

After breakfast proceed to Kanchipuram, one of India's seven sacred cities. The ancient capital of the Pallava and Chola dynasties, which still boasts of about 200 ancient temples. In addition to be an important pilgrimage centre, which is today a bustling centre of commerce, known best for its hand-woven silk fabrics, especially sarees.

Afternoon free at beach at Mahabalipuram. Night at Mahabalipuram.

Day 12: in Mahabalipuram

Free at beach. Night at Mahabalipuram.

Day 13: in Mahabalipuram

Free at beach. Night at Mahabalipuram.

Day 14: Mahabalipuram – Chennai

Morning leisure at the beach. In the afternoon drive to Chennai for night stay.

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



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Day 15: visit Chennai and final departure

After breakfast visit Chennai. We will begin our day visiting the 7th 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.

Note. Hotel check out time 12h

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.

Late evening depending on your flight, drop at Chennai International airport for flight to onward destination.

End of our services....

Note:

1. This tour can be modified as per your requirements.
2. If time allows you can include Ajanta – Ellora Caves in the programme.