

SOUTH INDIA, GRAND TOUR

24 NIGHTs / 25 DAYS



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 – Aurangabad

Breakfasts. Morning transfer to Airport for Flight to Aurangabad on arrival meet and drive directly to Ajanta to visit the most world-famous caves, a fine example of Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples which is a vast collection of art, paintings and scriptures. They are 30 caves in numbers. After sightseeing return to Aurangabad for night stay.

Day 04: Visit Ellora and night train to Hyderabad

Breakfasts. Morning Visit the caves of Ellora, enroute Visit Daulatabad Fort. Most of the caves are a fine collection of Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples. Afternoon Visit Aurangabad City Including Water Mil and Mini Taj. The sightseeing will over by 16.30- 1700 Hrs. After visit transfer to the train station for Hyderabad. Night stay in the train.

Day 05: Arrive Hyderabad, visit and night train to Hospet

Arrive Hospet, meet at the train station and Transfer to a hotel to have shower etc. (Day Room) Rest of the day Sightseeing of Hyderabad which includes Char Minar the beautiful monument of granite, lime and mortar. Further you visit the Mecca Mosque, the structure of the mosque which is like Mecca Medina in Saudi Arabia.

Continue to visit the Qutub Shahi Tomb, which represents the architectural tradition of Qutub Shahi dynasty. The tombs are set up in different styles, depicting Hindu, Persian and Pathan forms.

Late evening transfer to Hyderabad Station to Connect night train to Hospet. Night stay in the train.



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Day 06: Arrive Hospet

Pick up upon arrival at train station and transfer to the hotel for night stay. Rest of the day Sightseeing of Hospet which includes a visit to the three major temple complex- The Vittala Temple, The Virupaksha Temple and The King's Palace. Continue to visit the 14th century quaint town built on the banks of the Tungabhadra river. Night stay.

Day 07: Hospet – Badami – Hospet

Day trip to Badami enroute visit 6th century temples of Aihole and Pattadakal. Aihole, a tiny hamlet on the banks of the Malaprabha River. If you wish you can visit Hindu Durga Temple, The Lad Khan temple and Buddhist temple. Late evening back to Hospet for night stay.

Day 08: Night train to Bangalore

Morning Free at Leisure. Check out noon. (12h check out) In time drop at train station for Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka. Night in Train.

Day 09: Arrival Bangalore - Mysore

Morning arrival Bangalore. Meet and transfer to Mysore for night stay. If you wish, have a quick panoramic visit of Bangalore before reaching Mysore. Rest of the day free. Night in Mysore.

Day 10: in Mysore

Full day sightseeing of Mysore. Sightseeing in this town normally includes a visit to the Maharaja's Palace. The palace is open to visitors every day and is a fascinating mixture of styles – unfortunately cameras are not allowed inside. Sunday or public holiday, the Palace is lit by thousands of bulbs from 7pm to 8 pm and there is a great holiday atmosphere. Chamundi Hill is one of the landmark tourist attractions of Mysore. Access to the hilltop that has a Hindu Temple and great views of the surrounding countryside is by road or, for the more energetic, via the thousand or so steps. The giant Nandi statue is located around the 800th step and is also available for those travelling by road. Visit to Devaraja fruit and vegetable market (particularly in the morning when the products are fresh. Return to hotel for night stay.

Day 11: Mysore – Bandipur wildlife - Calicut

After breakfast drive to Calicut enroute visit Bandipur wildlife sanctuary, a perfect place for nature enthusiasts and animal lovers. Most of the common wildlife can be seen at close range but most spotted are Asiatic wild elephants and tigers.

After the visit continue to Calicut, currently known as Kozhikode, one of the scenic landscapes in the state of Kerala. Night stay in Calicut,

Day 12: Calicut – Cochin

Breakfast. Morning Transfer to cochin enroute Visit Elephant camp at Guruvayoor, the sight of so many elephants within one area is awesome and a must visit.

Arrive Cochin and check in at the hotel for night stay. Rest of the day free.



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Day 13: in Cochin

Breakfast. Full day sightseeing of Cochin which includes visiting Mattancherry (Dutch) Palace with its marvellous murals, St Francis Church (the original burial place of Vasco da Gama), the Chinese fishing nets and Jew Town with its old Synagogue and streets full of shops selling antiques and souvenirs. The colourful 'go-downs' used by the spice traders are close by and there are two good book shops near the Synagogue. **Visitors to the Synagogue are asked to dress modestly – no shorts, short skirts or sleeveless tops. Bare shoulders and midriffs are not permitted.** Please note Friday & Saturday are Jewish holiday you will not be permitted inside the Synagogue.

Your visit to Cochin would not be complete without a visit to a performance of Kathakali. This 500-year-old dance drama is performed by all male dancers, accompanied by music, who play out a story, using their eyes, face muscles, hands and feet. A must is to reach the theatre ahead of time, in order to see the performers putting on their incredible make-up and their magnificent costumes.

Day 14: Cochin – Alleppey (Houseboat)

Transfer to your Private Houseboat in Alleppey. Cruise starts with Lunch. The houseboat has facilities like kitchen and modern rooms. They are huge and slow moving but specially made for sheer leisure trips. Previously, Houseboat were used to ship spices, rice and other goods between Kuttanad and the Cochin port. It has made of hundreds of fine but heavy-duty planks of jack-wood and held together absolutely by coir knots (not a single nail is used). This framework is then coated with a caustic black resin extracted from boiled cashew kernels. It lasts very long years and years. Dinner & Night stay at Houseboat.

Day 15: Houseboat – Kumarakom

Breakfast. Disembark at Houseboat and transfer to Kumarakom for 01-night stay. The network of waterways in Kerala stretches from Kollam in the south to Cochin in the north and includes lakes, lagoons, rivers, canals and channels. This is a beautiful area where the visitor can visit small villages and enjoy the countryside and birdlife – either from a backwater resort or from the decks of a houseboat. Many of the resorts are on the banks of the vast Vembanad Lake at villages such as Punnamada and Kumarakom. This region of the backwaters, called 'Kuttanad', is known as the rice bowl of Kerala and is one of the most beautiful and interesting areas.

Day 16: Kumarakom – Periyar

After breakfast transfer to Thekkady for night stay.

Thekkady, high up in the Western Ghats, is a small town close to the entrance of Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary is part of Project Tiger, but tigers and leopards are rarely seen. However, it is said to offer the best chance of seeing wild elephant in the whole of India. There is also a good chance of seeing wild boar, Gaur bison, Sambar deer, Nilgiris langur, macaque monkey, otter and the Malabar giant squirrel, as well as a large variety of birds. Remember at altitude (Periyar is at 900m or more) temperatures can drop dramatically, especially at night.



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Day 17: in Periyar

Breakfast. Early morning boat safari (subject to weather condition and availability) over Lake Periyar. Return to your hotel for breakfast.

Afternoon visit to a private spice plantation. Wear closed shoes – it feels like a jungle walk. Spices growing here include vanilla, black pepper, cloves, cardamom, nutmeg and mace, surrounded by coconut palms, bananas and jackfruit. Rest of the afternoon at leisure - time to try out an Ayurvedic Massage. Optional and not included.

Day 18: Periyar – Madurai

Breakfast. After breakfast drive to Madurai and check in at hotel for night stay. Afternoon Sightseeing of Madurai. 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

Day 19: Madurai – Trichy – Tanjore

Breakfast. Transfer to Thanjavur on the way visit Trichy. The first is the temple complex of Sri Ranganatha Swamy which is dedicated to Vishnu. Although this temple is considered to date back to the 10th century it has been restored and has a totally different feel to the temple at Tanjore. This temple complex, with 21 gopurams, is possibly the largest in India. Non-Hindus can go to the sixth wall but not into the gold-topped sanctum. The other is the Rock Fort Temple perched 83m high on a rocky outcrop. There are small cave temples hewn by the Pallavas, a temple dedicated to Shiva halfway up and another dedicated to Ganesh at the summit. It is the setting rather than the temples that make this special but be prepared for the climb (437 stone-cut steps). Then proceed to Tanjore for night stay

Day 20: in Tanjore

Breakfast. Full day sightseeing. Thanjavur today is a pleasant, easy going town; 2000 years ago, it was the capital of the Chola kings. The magnificent Brihadishwara Temple, a wonderful example of Chola architecture, is now a World Heritage site. The temple has several pillared halls, many shrines (including 250 linga) and one of the largest statues of Nandi in India. There is usually a temple elephant at the main entrance. Other places to visit in Thanjavur include the royal palace, museum and art gallery.

Day 21: Tanjore – Pondicherry

Transfer to Pondicherry enroute visit Darasuram/ Kumbakonam/ Chidambaram. Continue to Pondicherry, this old French colony still maintains a feeling of being in France. There is a long stretch of promenade and behind this is the French enclave with its attractive colonial buildings. Eating here is interesting as you can eat Indian French as well as straight Indian. Pondy has a more 'international' feel than most Indian towns and this too due to its unusually high population of foreigners attracted by the proximity of the large ashram (Sri Aurobindo) founded in 1926 and Auroville, an international community project where people live in 'human unity'. Auroville is not a tourist attraction but if you are interested in its philosophy you are allowed to visit the visitor and meditation centres. This mix of cultures means that there is a wide range of products on sale here and the shopping is extremely good.



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Day 22: Pondicherry – Mahabalipuram

Morning Sightseeing of Pondicherry. begin your day visiting the famous Aurobindo Ashram. Later transfer to Mahabalipuram for night stay. Afternoon free.

Day 23: in Mahabalipuram

Breakfast. Morning 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. Afternoon free at beach. Night at Mahabalipuram.

Day 24: in Mahabalipuram

Free at beach. Night at Mahabalipuram.

Day 25: Mahabalipuram – Kanchipuram – Chennai airport – departure

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. **(HOTEL NOT BOOKED IN CHENNAI AS YOU WILL BE LEAVING TODAY)**

In time transfer to Chennai International airport for your onward journey.

End of our services....