



**Tour Of South India
With A Driver Guide In Your Own Exclusive Air-Conditioned Vehicle.**

THE GRAND TOUR OF SOUTH INDIA

| Day | Date | Location | First Class Hotels | Standard Hotels | Schedule |
|-----|------|------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 01 | | Depart UK | | | |
| 02 | | Arrive Bangalore | St Marks Hotel | Shilton Suites Studio Room | >Pick Up From Bangalore Airport |
| 03 | | Mysore | Regaalis Mysore Superior Room | Kings Kourt Executive Suite | >Tippu Sultan's Fort, Tomb And Summer Palace At Srirangapatnam >Evening Visit To Chamundi Hill Including The Huge Stone Nandi Bull Bangalore-Mysore: 83 Miles Approx 2.5 Hours |
| 04 | | Mysore | Regaalis Mysore Superior Room | Kings Kourt Executive Suite | >Visit The Extravagant Mysore Palace And The Maharajah's Private Museum >Mysore's Markets And Bazaars |
| 05 | | Ooty And Coonoor | Taj Garden Retreat Coonoor Deluxe Room | Fortune Sullivan Court Deluxe Room | >Scenic Drive To Ooty Through Dramatic Winding Roads And Dense Forests Of The Nilgiri Hills Mysore-Ooty: 87 Miles Approx 4 Hours |
| 06 | | Ooty And Coonoor | Taj Garden Retreat Coonoor Deluxe Room | Fortune Sullivan Court Deluxe Room | >Relax At Ooty And Coonoor |
| 07 | | Coimbatore | The Residency | CAG Pride Deluxe Room | > OOTY-METTUPALAYAM BY THE NILGIRI BLUE MOUNTAIN RAILWAY Depart Ooty: 15:00 Arrive Mettupalayam: 18:35 |
| 08 | | Cochin | The Old Harbour Hotel | Hotel Arches | >Evening Kathakali Dance Performance Coimbatore-Cochin: 120 Miles Approx 4.5 Hours |
| 09 | | Cochin | The Old Harbour Hotel | Hotel Arches | >Sightseeing At Cochin, Chinese Fishing Nets, Mattancherry Palace, Old Quarter Etc |
| 10 | | The Backwaters | Lakeland Super Luxury House Boat | Lakeland Luxury House Boat | >Overnight Backwater Cruise Of The Southern Backwaters From Alleppey Cochin-Alleppey: 40 Miles Approx 1.5 Hours |
| 11 | | Periyar | The Spice Village Spice Cottage | Wild Corridor | >Abraham Spice Garden, Spice Villages And Markets In Kumily >Boat Trip To See Wild Elephants At Periyar National Park Alleppey-Thekkady: 102 Miles Approx 4 Hours |
| 12 | | Madurai | Taj Garden Retreat Deluxe Room | GRT Regency Superior Room | >Scenic Descent Of The Western Ghats >Tirumalai Nayak Palace >Evening Visit To Sri Meenakshi Temple Thekkady-Madurai: 108 Miles Approx 4 Hours |
| 13 | | Tanjore | Ideal River View Resort | Hotel Sangam | >Visit To The Chettinad Palace >Traditional Tamil Lunch At Chettinadu Mansion (Payable Locally) >See The World Famous Tanjore Bronzes At The Nayak Palace >Afternoon Visit To Chola King Rajaraja's Magnificent Brihadiswara Temple Madurai-Tanjore: 101 Miles Approx 3.5 Hours |
| 14 | | Pondicherry | Welcome | Athithi | >Rickshaw Ride Through The |

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|----|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--|
| | | | Heritage Calve | | Old French Quarter Tanjore-Pondicherry: 105 Miles Approx 4 Hours |
| 15 | | Mahabalipuram | GRT Temple Bay | Sterling Beach Resort | >The Beach, Shore Temple And Stone Monuments At Mahabalipuram Pondicherry-Mahabalipuram: 60 Miles Approx 2 Hours |
| 16 | | Mahabalipuram | GRT Temple Bay | Sterling Beach Resort | >Relax On The Beach At Mahabalipuram |
| 17 | | Depart Chennai Arrive UK | | | >Pick Up From Chennai Airport Mahabalipuram-Chennai: 32 Miles Approx 1.5 Hours |

Featured Hotels Dependent On Availability At Time Of Booking



Tanjore



Kerala Backwaters



The Mysore Palace.

Day 01 – Depart UK

Day 02 – Bangalore



Tipu Sultan's Palace At Bangalore

Bangalore

Capital of the southern state of **Karnataka**, **Bangalore** today is **Asia's** fastest growing cosmopolitan city. It is home to some of the most high tech industries in **India**. Blessed with a salubrious climate, gardens and parks, shopping malls and the best restaurants and pubs in this part of the globe. **Bangalore** is the ideal gateway to **India** and beyond.



Brigade Road In Central Bangalore



Day 03 – Day 04 Mysore



The Extravagant City Palace At Mysore

Mysore

The **Mysore Maharaja's Palace** is one of the most extravagant sights in the whole of **India**. Built in **Indo-Saracenic** style with domes, turrets, arches and colonnades, the palace is a treasure house of exquisite carvings and works of art from all over the world.

Brindavan Gardens is one of the best gardens in **South India**. Spread over 150 acres this beautiful location has featured in the song and dance routines of many **Bollywood** movies.

Mysore is replete with memories of the legendary warrior **Tippu Sultan** who fought wars with the **British** at the end of the 18th Century. **Tipu Sultan's Fort** at **Srirangapatnam** with double wall defences was considered the second strongest in **India**. Located just outside the fort is **Tipu Sultan's Wooden Summer Palace** with ornate and beautiful frescoes. At **The Gumbaz** lie the tombs of **Tipu Sultan** and his father **Hyder Ali**.



Spice Market Stall At Mysore



Day 05 – Day 06 Ooty



Scenic Beauty Of Ooty

The Road To Ooty

The ascent from the plains of **Karnataka** to **Ooty** is achieved through a dramatic series of 36 hairpin bends and winding roads leading from the dense forests of the **Nilgiri Sanctuaries**. The **Mysore** trunk road actually passes through the **Mudumalai National Park**, where wild elephants are frequently seen by the roadside.

Ooty And Coonoor

At a height of 7347ft stands **Udhagamandalam (Ooty)** the **Queen of Hill Stations**, founded by the **British** in the 19th century to escape the oppressive heat and serve as summer headquarters for the **Government Of Madras**. If you are chasing the atmosphere of the **Raj**, it still just about lingers in places like the **Ootacamund Club** the best preserved of all the former **British** clubs in **India**, where snooker was invented by **Neville Chamberlain**. The well-kept **Botanical Gardens**, **Ooty Lake** and **The Savoy Hotel** are also worth visiting.

Coonoor is the second largest hill station in the **Nilgiris**, surrounded by tea plantations. Its climate is milder than **Ooty** and the weather remains pleasantly cool throughout the year.



Colours Of The Nilgiri Hills

Day 07 – Coimbatore



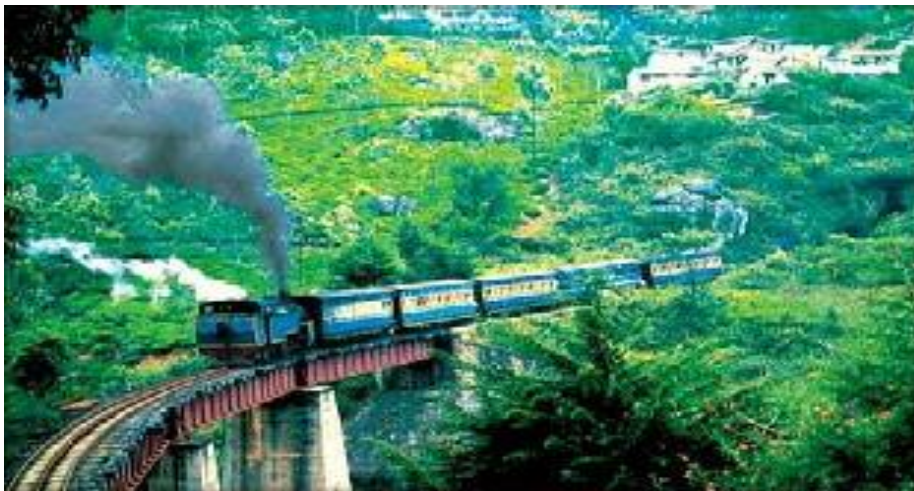
Coimbatore

The Nilgiri Mountain Railway - Ooty To Mettupalayam

One of the most famous train journeys in the world starts from the railway head at **Ooty**. **Mettupalayam** is reached in 4 hours on **The Nilgiri Mountain Railway** (46 km). A ratchet and pinion track travels through many hair-raising curves and fearful tunnels beside deep ravines full of verdant vegetation, gurgling streams and tea gardens. The scenery, as it unfolds during the trip, is breathtaking, awe-inspiring and fantastic.

Coimbatore

Coimbatore, also known as **Kovai**, is a major industrial city in **India** and the second largest city in the state of **Tamil Nadu**. It is known as **Manchester of South India** because of its textile factories, engineering firms, automobile parts manufacturers, and its highly industrious population that has produced many successful entrepreneurs.



The Nilgiri Blue Mountain Railway



Day 08 – Day 09 Cochin



Chinese Fishing Nets At Cochin Harbour

Cochin

Cochin is a wonderfully cosmopolitan **Indian** city with a multi-cultural history. It also has one of the country's largest ports. The famous and photogenic **Chinese Fishing Nets** are built along the northern shores of **Fort Cochin**.

The **Jewish Synagogue** and its **Old Quarter** are also worth a visit, for their quaint shops, selling everything from wooden carvings to bedspreads, from ornate mirrors to exotic spices. Nearby is the **Mattancherry Palace**, which was home to the **Verma Kings** and today is a fine museum.

Cochin also features the oldest church in **India**: the **Church of St Francis**, built in 1503 by the **Portuguese** (it briefly housed the remains of **Vasco de Gama**, who died here), and is now used by the **Anglican Church of South India**.

An evening **Kathakali Dance Performance** will allow you to sample one of the oldest theatre forms in the world in which dancers take various roles traditionally based on themes from **Hindu** mythology.



Kathakali Performance



Day 10 – Rice Boat



View Of Deluxe Bedroom And Backwaters Riceboat Journey

By Private Rice Boat Through Kerala's Backwaters

Rice Boats

A boat journey through **Kerala's Kuttanad Country**, a 75km stretch of shimmering waterways and dense tropical greenery wedged between the hills and the sea is one of the most **Memorable Experiences Any Traveller Could Have In India**.

Kettuvallams of olden times were rice and spice barges that used to transport harvests from **Kuttanad** to **Cochin** for sale. Many of these traditional craft have been converted into long houseboats with all the creature comforts of a good hotel including furnished bedrooms, modern bathrooms, cozy living rooms and even balconies for angling.

Each boat has a fully equipped kitchen and an experienced cook to prepare authentic **Kerala** cuisine with sea food specialties and fresh vegetables.

The Backwaters

The **Backwaters** are one of the unique attractions of **Kerala**, a chain of canals extending about 1500 kms incorporating a network of 44 rivers, lagoons and lakes.

The canals and lagoons are lined by swaying palm trees and **Chinese Fishing Nets**, cooled by a gentle breeze, and studded with water hyacinths. All kinds of craft ply these waters ferrying cargoes of spice, rice, nuts, *coir* (coconut fibre), *copra* (dried coconut) and people.



Rice Boat Interior



Rice Boat On Shores Of Vembanad Lake

Day 11 – Periyar



Wild Elephants At Periyar Lake Wildlife Reserve

The Periyar Lake National Park

Set high in the ranges of the **Western Ghats** is the **Periyar National Park and Tiger Reserve**. Within its 777 sq km of deciduous and evergreen forest roam some 750 **Elephants** that are best observed on a 2-hour boat trip around the lake at the heart of the sanctuary.

Apart from **Elephants**, other animals to be seen at **Periyar** include **Gaur (Indian Bison)**, **Wild Pigs**, **Sambar (Elk)**, **Barking Deer**, **Mouse Deer**, **Dhole (Indian Wild Dog)** and very rarely, a **Tiger**.

There are now, an estimated 40 **Tigers** and a similar number of **Leopards** in the reserve. Four species of primates are found at **Periyar** - the rare **Lion-tailed Macaque**, the **Nilgiri Langur**, **Common Langur** and **Bonnet Macaque**. **Periyar** also happens to be the habitat of the elusive **Nilgiri Tahr**, which is rarely to be seen.

Trips To Spice Villages

Thekkady is the centre of the spice growing area of **Kerala**, and the aromas of spices are everywhere. Numerous **Spice Plantation Villages** have guided tours to identify various spice plants and even cookery demos using spices. At **Kumily Market** there is a huge cardamom auction and shops selling different types of spices.



Chilli, Black Pepper And Cinnamon



Reflections At Periyar Lake Wildlife Sanctuary

Day 12 – Madurai



Sri Meenakshi Temple At Madurai

Madurai

An ancient city and centre of **Tamil** knowledge with origins lost in the mists of time, said to be over 2000 years old. **Madurai** was the capital city for the great **Pandya** kings.

The **Sri Meenakshi Temple** at **Madurai** is one the wonders of **India** and is famed for its architectural and religious importance. The complex houses 12 magnificent gopurams that are elaborately sculptured and painted, the tallest of which, the famous **Southern Tower**, rises to over 170 ft high.

Also worth visiting is **The Thirumalai Nayakar's Palace** (1623), a classic example of the **Indo-Saracenic** style of extravagant architecture. **Madurai** is famous for **Jasmine** flower sellers and spice markets that crowd the narrow streets around the main temple complex



A Devotee At Sri Meenakshi Temple



Day 13 – Tanjore



The Majestic Sri Brihadishwara Temple At Tanjore

Chettinad

The home of the **Chettians**, a prosperous banking and business community with palatial mansions such as **The Chettinad Palace**, built in 1912 with wide inner courtyards and spacious rooms. Huge granite pillars stand against stained glass and imported **Italian** tiles.

Tanjore

Tanjore or **Thanjavur** was the capital of the **Chola Empire** and is a flourishing centre for bronze sculpture and a unique style of painting. You can go to small workshops around the town to see bronze casting that has evolved to unsurpassed levels.

The famous **Brihadishwara Temple**, built by **Rajaraja The Great** (11thC) is one of **India's** finest UNESCO World Heritage Sites. You need to visit in the late afternoon when the crowds disappear and the sun's rays turn the granite structure into glorious golden hues.

The Royal Palace At Thanjavur was built partly by the **Nayaks** around 1550 AD. It is possible to climb the **Godagopuram**, an eight storey watchtower and armoury of 190 feet high. The museum's galleries contain a **World Famous Collection Of Magnificent Tanjore Bronzes** depicting ancient themes, dancers and deities.



Bronze Casting At Tanjore

Day 14 – Pondicherry



French Quarter At Pondicherry

Journey Up The Coromandel Coast

A lovely new road runs north along the coast to **Pondicherry** and **Mahabalipuram**, passing casuarina groves and farm orchards, as well as beautiful arid coastal landscapes containing huge salt pans.

Pondicherry

Pondicherry (Pondy) was a small union territory where the **French East India Company** set up a trading centre in 1673 and ruled even after independence to remain a part of **French India** until 1954. The former **French** colony is also known as **The French Riviera Of The East (La Côte d'Azur de l'Est)**, as a remarkable degree of **French** influence in **Pondy** exists today. The relics of **French** rule are evident from the dress of the police to the simplicity of the people.

The entire town is divided into 2 sections, the **French Quarter (Ville Blanche)** and the **Indian Quarter (Ville Noire)**. Many streets still retain their **French** names. **Pondy** has a great collection of boutique hotels such as **The Hotel De'LOrient** that serve excellent **French Creole** cuisine.



Huge 'Krishna Butter Ball' Stone Boulder At Mahabalipuram

Day 15 – Day 16 Mahabalipuram



Mahabalipuram

Mahabalipuram

The marvellous city of **Mahabalipuram** was the seaside capital of the **Pallava** dynasty. The artistic temperament of these rulers resulted in some of the greatest works of **South Indian** art.

The scenic **Shore Temple**, **The Five Rathas** (chariots) made from single stone boulders and **Arjuna's Penance**, the largest bas-relief in the world are highlights. The entire city resonates to the sound of chisels from small workshops that produce very ornate stone sculptures.



The Famous Arjuna's Penance Bas Relief



Day 17 – Depart Chennai - Arrive UK