

24 February 2025: Arrive Chennai

Arrive in Chennai. After customs formalities, baggage claim, you will meet with the representative of MoreIndia travels to transfer to the hotel (check in at 12:00). Chennai is the gateway to southern India, established in 1639 by the East India Company. It is one of the oldest cities of the country. You will have a half-day guided visit to St. Mary's Church, the Basilica of Saint Thomas, believed to have been built by St. Thomas. Overnight stay at the hotel.

25 February 2025: Chennai/Mamallapuram

After breakfast, we will drive to Mamallapuram (previously known as Mahabalipooram), built in the 7th century. This ancient Pallava port is the sight of several antique sculptural marvels. In this ancient seaside town, shrines and huge sculptures cut out of rocks more than 1200 years back during the reign of Pallava Kings in the region can be seen. The only shore temple that remains here is the spectacular two - spired shrine, unique because it houses both Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu in its sanctum-sanctorum. Overnight stay at the hotel.

26 February 2025: Mamallapuram/Kanchipuram/Mamallapuram

We will have breakfast, and then drive to Kanchipuram (76 kms/1.5 hrs). It is the ancient capital of the Pallavas and is famous for being a city of 1000 temples, and still has 124 shrines - it is also famous for its silks. The first temple, dedicated to Shiva, was built in the 7th and 8th century and has paintings on the walls. Other temples we will visit include Ekambaswara, Kailasanatha, Sri Kamakshi, and Varadarajaswamy. Later, we will drive to Mamallapuram and check in at the hotel. Overnight stay at the hotel.

27 February 2025: Mamallapuram/Pondicherry

After breakfast, we will go to Pondicherry (131 kms/3.5 hrs), which carries a strong whiff of the French presence in India. This former French colony on the east coast of South India merged with the rest of the country in 1954. Legend says that Pondicherry is where St. Agasthya settled. Overnight stay at the hotel.

28 February 2025: Pondicherry/Chidambaram/Tanjore

We'll have breakfast, and then drive to Chidambaram, also known as Thillai. We will visit the famous Nataraja temple with the root of the sanctum, a sanctorum covered with golden plates is located in the centre of the town covering an area of 40 acres. In this temple, postures from the Bharatnatayam form of dance are depicted in sculpture. Natrāja is Lord Shiva as a cosmic dancer. In the afternoon, we will drive to Tanjore (104 kms/3 hrs). Tanjore was once the capital of Chola Kings and has the Brahadeswara temple (the big temple of God). The temple tower rises to a height of 15 mts from a square base of 29 mts, and then tapers off, making a total of 66 mts. Overnight stay at the hotel.

1 March 2025: Tanjore/Trichy/Madurai

After breakfast, we will visit the palace, which has an art gallery, a library, a hall of music, and the Schwartz Church. Later, we will drive to Trichy (Tiruchirappalli), and later we will visit Srirangam Temple. Then, we will go to Madurai, where we will have an overnight stay at a hotel.

2 March 2025: Madurai

We'll have breakfast and then explore Madurai's great 17th-century Meenakshi Amman Temple, the largest temple complex in Southern India and as significant to the region's architectural legacy as the Taj Mahal is to Northern India. This 15-acre complex is a joyful homage to Shiva and the triple-breasted goddess, Meenakshi.

After this, we will go back to the hotel. This evening, we will participate in a prayer ceremony at Minakshi Temple*. The rituals and spiritual atmosphere will encompass us. **Recommended to wear appropriate attire (covered clothing) when visiting the temple.* Overnight stay at the hotel.

3 March 2025: Madurai/Thekkady (Periyar)

After breakfast, we will drive to Thekkady. In the evening, we will visit one of the region's spice gardens (also well-known around the world). Between cinnamon, pepper, cardamom, vanilla, and star anise, all your senses will awaken. These spices also have many benefits, which make up a large part of Ayurvedic medicine. We will discover the secrets of making the famous Indian Masala that perfumes most Indian dishes. Fill up on spices for you and your loved ones. Overnight stay at the hotel.

4 March 2025: Thekkady/Kumarakom

After a leisurely breakfast, we will take a steep slope to journey overland to the village of Kumarakom. En route, we will stop for lunch at a local restaurant in Kanjirappally, a gateway to Kerala's hill country. Overnight stay at a beautiful lakefront hotel.

5 March 2025: Kumarakom/Mararikulam

After breakfast and a leisurely morning, we will board a traditional houseboat for a day cruise on the beautiful backwaters surrounding Kumarakom. We'll glide through canals and lagoons shaded by coconut palms and pass sleepy rural villages. We'll be treated to a lunch of local specialties as we cruise. We'll then journey overland to Kochi. Enjoy the evening watching a spectacular sunset or swimming at the picturesque Marari Beach. Overnight stay at the resort.

6 March 2025: Mararikulam/Cochin

After breakfast we'll have leisurely a morning, enjoying Mararikula, Kerala's cleanest sandy beach, experiencing the local charm with matchless traditional hospitality. Mararikulam is much sought for sunbathing, yoga, meditation, and rejuvenating Ayurvedic massages. After lunch, we'll drive to Cochin (Kochi). Overnight stay at the hotel.

7 March 2025: Cochin

We will have breakfast and spend the day exploring the tropical coastal city of Kochi. There is an intriguing mix of cultural influences. The Dutch Palace at Mattancherry is renowned for its wall murals depicting scenes from the Ramayana; the Jewish Synagogue is at the heart of what is locally called the Jew Town; the St. Francis Church is the oldest European church in India; at the entrance of Kochi harbor, there are cantilevered fishing nets brought from southern China by traders, a testament to the centuries-old link between these regions. In the evening, we'll attend a Kathakali performance, at a dance theater showcasing Kerala traditions. Overnight stay at the hotel.

8 March 2025: Mararikulam-Cochin

After breakfast, drive to Cochin International airport to board your flight to your next destination.

Cost Inclusions:

- Airport transfers at arrivals and departures
- Meet and greet assistance of our representative at airports
- Welcome garlanding & a bottle of mineral water every day per person
- Accommodation on double/single sharing basis for 12 nights in 4-5 star hotels
- All meals are included (daily breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Houseboat cruise with lunch
- Guided tour of Spice Plantation
- Kathakali dance show in Kochi
- Boat Safari on Periyar Lake
- All transport services by AC coach with English speaking driver
- English speaking tour escort & local guides
- All monument entrances
- Government Service Tax @ 9.0%

Cost Exclusions:

- Expenses of personal nature like tips, laundry, drinks, etc.
- International airfare & visa fee
- Anything not mentioned in the Inclusions column
- Travel Insurance (strongly recommended)
- Personal expenses or other expenses incurred beyond our control such as bad weather, flight cancellation, road closure, landslides, political disturbances, etc.
- Add on trip to Clement Town (March 9-11, 2025)

Terms & Conditions:

To ensure that all participants get the most out of the tour, it is important that you are fully aware of the level of activity, fitness, and medical health required to successfully complete this itinerary. Please read through the entire itinerary and retreat waiver carefully prior to confirming your place on the tour. Having established the facts, it is your responsibility to contact us with any concerns regarding individual levels of fitness, health, or ability.

Standard check-in/check-out times at all hotels will be 12 noon. The duration and specifications of the package can be modified as per requirement. MoreIndia Travels reserves the right to re-arrange itinerary to suit hotel availability without changing the total number of days in each destination and without compromising any services.