

Journey to South India

With Fran Gallo & Arvind Singh


January 2 - 18, 2020

Chennai to Kochin! Meet the natural beauty, stunning architecture, and the intriguing cultures of South India. This journey combines daily yoga and a fabulous tour including colorful culture, a cooking class, and wild elephants! Begin in the relaxing beach town of Mamallapuram. Marvel at the intricately carved temples of Madurai, covered in vividly painted figures of deities, mythical creatures and monsters. Cross over the Western Ghats to Periyar National Park, India's earliest wildlife sanctuary and one of the best places to see the Asian elephant. Walk in a spice plantation and learn about the many different uses of spices, both in medicine and food. Cruise on a wooden rice boat through Kochi's maze of backwaters to observe village life along the shore.

**Please note that trip itinerary is subject to change and improvement as needed.*

Date	Activity	Evening Location
2 Jan	Depart home city for Chennai, India	Overnight flight
3 Jan	Arrive in Chennai, a busy seaport on the Coromandel Coast of Tamil Nadu, India. Our driver will meet you at the airport and take you to the hotel.	ARRIVE CHENNAI
4 Jan	Morning: Yoga 7:00 am. After a leisurely breakfast, we will have a short orientation to India and then explore Chennai. Evening: Rest and relax. Welcome dinner at the hotel.	Chennai
5 Jan	Morning: Yoga 7:00 am. After a leisurely breakfast, we head for the famous city of Kanchipuram, nick named "the city of Thousand Temples." Kanchipuram is considered one of the seven holiest cities to the Hindus of India. It is a <i>ksetra</i> , a sacred ground, a field of active power, a place where moksha, final release can be obtained. We will explore some the famous temples of Kanchipuram. Evening: Rest and relax. Dinner at the hotel.	Kanchipuram
6 Jan	Morning: Arise early and head for Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary. A trained bird guide will accompany us into the sanctuary. Afternoon: Drive to Mamallapuram, located on the coast on the Bay of Bengal. After you check in, you will have some free time on your own. Yoga at 4:00. Evening: Dinner at the hotel.	Mamallapuram
7 Jan	Morning: Yoga 7:00. After breakfast start your day at Mamallapuram with a visit to the beautiful 7th-century Shore Temple which is surrounded by lush gardens, followed by an exploration of the celebrated bas-relief at Arjuna's Penance and the Five Rathas. Afternoon: Be at leisure on the beach, shopping, or walking around the town. Evening: Dinner at the hotel.	Mamallapuram
8 Jan	Morning: Yoga 7:00. Today you continue to Tiruchirappalli, the old citadel of the Chola Dynasty in the medieval period. On the way we will visit Thanjavur, an important center of South Indian art and architecture. the Brihadeeswara Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site is located in the center of the city. Evening: Dinner at the hotel and evening rest and relax.	Tiruchirappalli

9 Jan	<p>Morning: 7:00 Yoga. After breakfast, continue your journey to Madurai, stopping on the way for a visit to the Rock Fort. A climb of 434 steps leads to the ancient temple of Ganapati on top and a further climb to a Shiva temple. Madurai is the oldest city in Tamil Nadu and South India's greatest temple town. As such, it is a significant pilgrim site. Over the five hour drive we will get a sense of how people live in Tamil Nadu villages. Stop for lunch. Rest and relax upon reaching Madurai.</p> <p>Evening: 5:00 optional bird-watching walk around the hotel. Free. Dinner at the hotel.</p>	Madurai
10 Jan	<p>Morning: Yoga 7:00 am. Today you will visit the thousand-year-old Meenakshi Temple, one of India's largest pilgrim sites with its 12 towering gopurams. It is an unforgettable experience to observe the rituals and celebration during the evening puja ceremony inside the Meenakshi Temple. Later, visit the Tirumala Nayak Palace-a gracious building revealing the power and wealth of the Nayakas who made Madurai their capital in the 16th and 17th centuries.</p> <p>Evening: Dinner at the hotel. Optional shopping.</p>	Madurai
11 Jan	<p>Morning: Yoga 7:00 am. Optional bird-watching. After a leisurely breakfast, embark on a tour of temples outside the city of Madurai, including the Alagar Hills and Tripura Kundran Rock temples.</p> <p>Again, this evening, we shall visit the Meenakshi temple for the evening Pooja ceremony.</p> <p>Evening: Dinner at hotel.</p>	Madurai
12 Jan	<p>Morning: Yoga 7:00 am. After breakfast drive through the Western Ghats to Periyar National Park, India's earliest sanctuary and one of the best places to see the Asian Elephant. After checking into your hotel, you visit one of the spice plantations this area is famous for and learn about the many different uses of spices, both in medicine and food.</p> <p>Evening: Rest and enjoy free time. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.</p>	Periyar / Tekkady
13 Jan	<p>Morning: Early breakfast. In the early morning (around 7 am), you'll enjoy a forest trek inside the National Park which takes 1-3 hours depending on the group's interest. After the trekking, drive back to hotel and take free time until late afternoon when you will take boat ride on the Periyar River. Periyar, meaning <i>big river</i>, is the longest river in the Indian state of Kerala. Early evening is a nice time of day to see many animals come to the water to drink. Look for river otters, elephants, Indian bison (gaur), Nilgiri ibex, jungle cat, sloth bear, Indian giant squirrel, sambar, and wild pig, to name a few.</p> <p>Evening: Yoga 5:00 pm. Dinner and free time.</p>	Periyar / Tekkady
14 Jan	<p>Morning: Yoga 7:30 to 9:00 am. Today you have all day free for Ayurvedic, consultations, treatment, and massage at the Cardamom County which provides a free consultation and reasonably priced treatments. Explore the village or simply relax.</p> <p>Evening: Dinner at the hotel.</p>	Periyar / Tekkady
15 Jan	<p>Morning: At 7:30 am, we leave Periyar for Kumarakom, where you embark on your houseboat, eat your lunch and start an enchanting cruise along the beautiful backwaters of Kerala; just relax and lay back while you navigate slowly through the tranquil waterways. It is a wonderful opportunity to discover Kerala's rural lifestyle. You'll see that Kerala is known for its cashew nuts, coir trade, rice, pepper crops & coconuts. Your chef on houseboat will prepare delicious Kerala specialties on board. Enjoy Yoga on board 4:00 till 5:15pm. Dinner and overnight on board.</p>	Houseboat

<p>16 Jan</p>	<p>After a breakfast on the houseboat, disembark, say goodbye to the backwaters and head for Cochin, Kerala's most cosmopolitan city and an important trading center for spices. The afternoon is yours, until yoga from 3:00-4:15.</p> <p>Early in the evening you will enjoy Kerala's signature performance of Kathakali, a classical form of dance, drama and music that is more than 400 years old. Then head to the home of Maria George for a South Indian cooking demonstration and delicious home-cooked South Indian dinner! Overnight at the hotel.</p>		<p>Cochin</p>
<p>17 Jan</p>	<p>Yoga from 7:00 till 8:15; later proceed for breakfast from 8:45 till 9:30. After breakfast you start your exploration of Fort Cochin. Follow in the footprints left centuries ago by the Dutch, Portuguese, British, Arab and Chinese and soak up the cultural atmosphere as you stroll along the quaint narrow lanes of Fort Cochin to visit the Dutch Palace, St Francis Church and India's oldest Jewish Synagogue in Jew Town. Later head to the harbor where local fishermen use the old Chinese fishing nets, introduced and erected centuries ago. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.</p>	<p>Cochin</p>	
<p>18 Jan</p>	<p>Early morning yoga and breakfast, then check out and head to the airport to connect to your flight home, taking with you many wonderful memories and fabulous photographs! Namaste!</p>	<p>DEPART COCHIN</p>	
<p>Fly home with wonderful memories</p>		<p>In transit</p>	

Trip cost: \$4950 includes: All transportation within India, accommodations (on a sharing basis) in five-star hotels, breakfasts and dinners, porters, bottled water, hotel and driver tips, entrance fees, and group activities. It also includes a specially prepared orientation booklet and personal advice on travel to India. Cost does not include tip for guide, drinks, room service, non-group activities, personal expenses, or international airfare.

A deposit of \$500 will reserve your spot (fully refundable before July 30, 2019). 50% of the total cost of the tour is due by July 30. If the retreat/tour is canceled due to lack of participants, you will be granted a full refund. A minimum of 10 people is required for the trip to occur. You will be contacted after July 30 to let you know if we have met our minimum so that you can go ahead and purchase your flight. Please send in your check with the [registration form](#) as soon as possible to guarantee your place and help us make all the transportation and hotel bookings in a timely way. Group size is limited to 15.

	<p>EARLY BIRD SPECIAL Register before July 30, 2019 and receive a complimentary ayurvedic spa treatment of your choice at any hotel on your trip!</p>	<p>Contact Kelley McHenry 206-546-2599 206-755-1405</p> <p>info@spiritualindiajourneys.com http://spiritualindiajourneys.com</p>
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