

Captivating Kerala - 7 days

go guide

don't leave home without it



A World Of Discovery



Uncover the delights of tropical Kerala in the south of India. Visit historic Fort Kochi and the picturesque hill station of Munnar with its verdant tea plantations and spend a night aboard a houseboat, gliding along the tranquil, palm fringed backwaters.



WHAT YOU SEE AND WHAT YOU GET

Trip Highlights

- Kochi - Fort Kochi, Dutch Palace, St Francis' Church and Chinese fishing nets
- Munnar Hill Station and tea plantations
- Spice plantation
- Kumarakom - A picturesque cluster of islands
- Lake Vembanad - one of Asia's largest freshwater lakes
- The palm-fringed backwaters
- Coastal Alleppey - gateway to the backwaters
- Kathakali dance performance

What's Included

- 6 breakfasts
- 1 lunch, 2 dinners
- 5 nights 3-4 star and heritage hotels, 1 night deluxe air-conditioned houseboat
- Guided tour of the Tea Museum in Munnar
- Houseboat cruise along the Kerala backwaters
- Guided tour of Fort Kochi
- Traditional Kathakali dance show
- Airport arrival and departure transfers on day 1 and day 7
- Services of local English speaking specialist guides
- English speaking Indian tour leader for groups of 6 or more
- All relevant transfers and transportation

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: \$20-25 USD
- Entrance Fees: \$20-25 USD
- International flights and visas

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Kochi

Saturday. Welcome to Kochi. Arrive Kochi airport, included transfer to hotel. Kochi is long famed in the history books, Kochi (formerly known as Cochin) offered refuge to Jews more than 2,500 years ago. The Portuguese founded the first European colony in Kochi in the 16th century. The Dutch quickly followed and eventually, the British. The cosmopolitan mix of cultures makes the city fascinating. This evening we watch a Kathakali performance. Kathakali is the fascinating traditional dance form of Kerala. **Overnight - Kochi**

Days 2-3 : Munnar



Kochi - Munnar. This morning we enjoy a guided tour of historic Fort Kochi. We see the elegant Chinese fishing nets and explore the winding streets of the old town, visiting St Francis' Church, Parsi Synagogue (exterior only) and a Dutch palace.

After our sightseeing in Kochi we drive east to Munnar - a picturesque hill station nestled on the verdant slopes of tea plantations. Located at a lofty height of 1600m, Munnar in South India offers breathtaking views of the surrounding hills carpeted with tea plantations. From many locations in Munnar, one can view Anamudi (2695m), South India's highest peak. The rest of the afternoon is free to relax or explore the area. The next morning we'll visit a tea plantation, where we learn about the various stages of tea processing. **Overnight - Munnar (B:2, D:2)**

Day 4 : Kerala backwaters



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This Go Guide has been compiled with care and good faith. It gives an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. This document does not form part of a contract between the traveller and on the go and their affiliates. Any costs shown are subject to change though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of on the go



Munnar - Alleppey - Kerala backwaters. We set off early this morning to visit the Tea Museum of Munnar. After its a scenic 4 - 5 hour drive to Alleppey. Mid afternoon, we board a simply furnished private rice-boat for a journey through the lush backwaters. Our private rice-boat takes us sedately along the enchanting palm-fringed backwaters, covering a distance of some 20 kms, during which time the boat glides past local villages and fascinating scenes of everyday rural life. Watch a beautiful sunset over the backwaters and enjoy tasty meals (starting with a late lunch) prepared by the onboard chef using fresh local produce.
Overnight - Deluxe rice boat (B, L, D)

Days 5-6 : Kumarakom



Keralan Backwaters - Kumarakom. We disembark the houseboat after breakfast this morning at Kumarakom. Perched sleepily amongst a tangle of lush tropical waterways known as the Keralan backwaters, Kumarakom is technically a cluster of islands on Lake Vembanad - one of Asia's largest freshwater lakes. This is an ideal place to relax for the next two days and enjoy the beautiful scenery. There is also a wonderful bird sanctuary spread across 14 acres, which is a favoured haunt of migratory birds and certainly worthy of a visit.
Overnight - Kumarakom (B:2)

Day 7 : Kochi

Alleppey - Kochi - breakfast. Today marks the end of our memorable journey. After breakfast we travel back to Kochi and transfer to the airport.

Please Note: Your flight from Kochi on day 7 should not depart any earlier than 2pm. If your flight leaves late afternoon/evening, a day room at a hotel in Kochi can be arranged for an additional fee (payable locally). We are also able to book post tour accommodation upon request. Please contact us for further details.(B)

Kathakali Performance

Kathakali is a stage drama of the region that dates from the 17th century and is a delight to watch. Singers and musicians tell the story whilst the Kathakali performers portray good and evil, courage and weakness, prosperity and poverty, all part of the classic 30 odd stories that have survived through the years. A real pantomime well worth seeing.

Ayurvedic Medicine

Kochi is the place to shop for Ayurvedic medicines as the plants used are grown in the Western Ghats

region. Over 2000 plants are described in Ayurveda and the most common and frequently used of these are readily available. Or take the pampering route and have an Ayurvedic massage done.

Extra Sightseeing

Kochi sites are closed on the following days, Parsi Synagogue - closed Friday and Saturday, Dutch Palace - closed Friday. This in no way affects our tour, should you wish to visit independently please plan your time accordingly.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Climate

India has a three-season year known as the hot, the wet and the cool. The best time to visit is between late September and April when temperatures are cooler and therefore ideal for sightseeing. In the summer months of May to July it is less crowded and conditions are perfect for sightseeing and photography, although parts of India are extremely hot. July signals the start of the monsoon or wet season that continues until early or mid September. Although the weather is humid, the days are punctuated by intermittent rainfall and the monsoon in India is actually quite spectacular and quite refreshing.

Health Requirements

It is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus and Polio, if you haven't had a booster in the last ten years. Food and waterborne diseases are more common, so we recommend vaccinations for Typhoid (valid 3 years) and Hepatitis A (validity varies). You are also advised to take anti-Malarial medication.

Currency

The Indian Rupees (INR) is non-exportable and only available in India. Pounds Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are easily exchanged upon arrival at any major bank or your hotel. ATM's are also available in all major towns and cities.

If planning on using your ATM card whilst in India, please let your bank know of your travel plans prior to departure to avoid your bank assuming that the transaction is fraudulent and blocking your card. Exchange rates are subject to fluctuation.

USD 1 = INR 45
GBP 1 = INR 75
EURO 1 = INR 65
AUD 1 = INR 47

Time

India is 5 hours 30 mins ahead of GMT.

Essential Packing

- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs.
- A photocopy of your passport data pages.
- The voltage in India is 230-240V. Most outlets in India accept round 3 pin plugs (not a UK, European or USA plugs). You should pack a Universal Adaptor and check that it is suitable for India.

- Insect repellent to guard against pesky mosquitos
- Spare camera batteries/memory card so you can go snap happy.
- Consider packing some pencils, pens or modest educational supplies that can be given to village schools or street children.
- If you fancy a tippie, take advantage of Duty Free buys.
- Buy some Indian Rupees at the airport on arrival.
- Buy a phrasebook and practice your holiday Hindi.
- Keep a supply of small notes for local transactions.

Holiday Money

Funds collected in India for entrance fees and tip kitty (if applicable to your holiday) or optional excursion that you may wish to participate in is payable in local currency (INR).

Pre-Tour Accommodation

If arriving on day 1 of a holiday, that includes an airport arrival transfer (as indicated in the 'What you Get' section of this Go Guide) we will be at the airport, ready to transfer you to your hotel. Further if you are booking pre-tour accommodation with us an airport arrival transfer will also be provided. If arriving prior to 9am on day 1 (essentially on a flight that arrives very, very early in the morning) you will need to purchase a night of pre-tour accommodation to save you waiting until standard hotel check in time, which is generally 2pm.

Arrival Transfers

If your tour or short stay includes an airport arrival transfer (as indicated in the 'What you Get' section of this Go Guide) from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, our arrival procedure is as follows:

Arrive to Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, where after you have attended to customs and immigration formalities, please proceed to the arrival hall. Please have your tour voucher handy and make it available to our representative who will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall, holding a prominent one of the go tours logo signboard, ready to escort you to our awaiting transportation and onward to your tour start hotel

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes in the arrival hall) or your flight to India is delayed please call the emergency contact number as stated on your tour voucher and our local office who will then advise on the best course of action.

If travelling on our Captivating Kerala tour (with arrival via Kochi Airport) or one of our 'Short Stays' where an airport arrival transfer is included in your holiday, the procedure for meeting you at the airport is the same as those detailed above.

IMPORTANT:

Due to security reasons for the upcoming Republic Day of India on the 26th January 2012, our airport representatives are not be allowed to enter



the International Airport at New Delhi from 14th January to 30th January 2012.

If you are travelling with us between now and 28 Jan Please exit the airport via GATE NUMBER 05. Our representative will be waiting here (outside the airport) for you holding an On The GO Tours sign.

Departure Tax - effective as of 01 Dec 2011

As of 01 Dec 2011, an airport development fee will be levied to all flights departing from Indira Gandhi International airport, New Delhi.

The fee will be collected directly at the airport for all international and domestic tickets issued prior to this date. For all tickets issued/ purchased after 01 Dec 2011, the cost will be included in the ticket cost.

The amount (payable to your respective airline at check in) is as follows and can only be paid in Indian Rupees (INR). It would be ideal for you to have close to or the exact amount to avoid delays.

Domestic flights: INR 221 per person

International flights: INR 1434 per person

Visas

All foreign nationals must obtain a visa for a visit to India and it is essential the visa be procured prior to travel. A 6 month single entry visa (valid from the date of issue) is issued for most nationals planning to visit India. If you are planning to visit a neighbouring country such as Nepal, Bhutan or Sri Lanka and return to India you will require a multiple entry visa which must be procured in advance of travel. In order to obtain this, you will need to provide the embassy with a detailed itinerary and full flight information, showing the dates and ports of exit and re-entry to India.

If you are a resident in the UK we offer a visa service to save you the inconvenience of having to queue at the embassy, please visit our website or contact us for further information.

Visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement prior to departure is solely the responsibility of the traveller and not of on the go. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of return from India.

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