



## bolt-on spotlight

### what you see

- Kochi
- Kumarakom and the Keralan backwaters
- Backwater village life
- Coastal Alleppey

PARTIAL ECLIPSE OVER KERALA - 15 JAN 2010

### what you get

- Breakfast daily, 2 lunches, 2 dinners
- 2 nights on a standard air-conditioned rice-boat
- Airport arrival and departure transfer
- Chauffeur driven vehicle from Kochi to Alleppey



## on location

### Your guide to on the ground...

#### visa requirements

Visas are required by all visitors to India. It is essential the visa is procured prior to travel. Visa forms are available from us and also supplied upon booking. Please ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of return from India. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change. Visa procurement is also the responsibility of the traveller and not of on the go.

#### climate

India has a three-season year known as the hot, the wet and the cool. The coolest time to visit is late September through April. Temps during this time are ideal for sightseeing. The hot season runs from around April through July. Conditions are hot and dry, especially in Rajasthan. July signals the start of the monsoon or wet season that continues until around end September. Although the weather is humid, the days are punctuated by intermittent rainfall.

#### time

India is 5 hours 30 mins ahead of GMT.

#### money

GBP£1.00 = INR79    USD1.00 = INR48 (subject to fluctuation). The Indian Rupee is exchangeable only in India. Exchange facilities are available at various bureau de changes and banks. A few ATM machines exist in major towns and cities.

#### 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. We recommend vaccinations for Typhoid and Hepatitis A. You are also advised to take anti-Malarial medication. Information can change so please check with your local health care provider.

## how much?

- **TIPPING KITTY**  
A small tipping kitty will be collected from all tour participants to cover tips en route.    USD\$7
- **Suggested tip for your tour guide**    INR250-450  
(Tipping is a personal gesture, this is just a guideline)
- Can of coke (330ml)    INR40-50
- Mineral water (local, 500ml or 1L)    INR30
- Meal for 2 (entree, main, local beer,)    INR1200
- Beer (local brew Kingfisher - 650ml)    INR150

## eclipse time line

**15th Jan 2010 - Partial eclipse over Kumarakom.**  
Eclipse Site Co-ordinates - 76° 14' 00"E, 9° 55' 00"N

**11.05am** - The moon first touches the sun - this signals the start of the Partial Eclipse (1st contact)

**13.14pm** - The moon reaches its maximum magnitude and obscuration of 81.91%

**15.05pm** - The moon is no longer blocking the sun - end of the eclipse (4th contact)

## top experiences

- Watch an incredible sunset over the Kerala backwaters as you relax onboard the rice boat
- Check out Kochi with it's Jewish, Dutch and Portuguese roots and influences
- Sea food is a speciality in Kochi, especially the prawns, so make sure you indulge!
- Watch a performance of a Kathakali dance - an ancient colourful performing art
- Take a sunset cruise in Kochi to see the ancient Chinese fishing nets





# keralan backwaters eclipse: itinerary

## day 1 - kochi

Kochi. Welcome to India and the start of your holiday! Arrive Kochi airport, where you will be met by a representative from on the go. You'll arrive for approximately 2 hours to Allepey and board a rice-boat for a journey through the backwaters in and around Allepey.

There are 29 major lakes in the backwater system but this area is being reduced dramatically by land reclamation. Water hyacinth is clogging up a number of canals and a combination of pollution and destructive fishing is responsible for the extinction of mangroves, crocodiles and migratory fish. Similar to punting in Cambridge, the crew propel the boat through the water using tall bamboo poles! The rice-boat is a simply furnished craft and consists of a thatched covered lounge/dining area, sleeping accommodation (with mosquito net) and a bathroom with a WC and washbasin. In the evening the boat is lit by hurricane lamps. Thatched awning on both sides of the boat allows the breeze and views to flow in. There is a small service area at the rear of the craft where the cook prepares simple meals using as many fresh provisions as can be plucked, caught or bought in the backwaters.

A distance of some 20 kms will be covered, during which time the boat will glide past colourful local villages. Chugging slowly on rice-boats through the shallow, palm-fringed waters, we will see a part of Kerala society that revolves around fishing and the processing of coir (coconut fibre), copra (dried coconut meat) and cashews. Families live on impossibly narrow strips of land, somehow managing to raise cows, pigs, chickens and ducks and cultivate small vegetable gardens. Residents paddle rapier-thin canoes hewn from trunks of the jackfruit tree across the water to sell groceries and deliver rice hay. Lunch, dinner and overnight - Rice-boat.

## day 2 - PARTIAL ECLIPSE

Breakfast. This morning we get ready for the spectacle of one of the most complete PARTIAL SOLAR ECLIPSES OF 2010 over the sleepy backwaters.

The moon will first touch the sun at 11.05pm, gaining its maximum magnitude at 13:14 obscuring 81.8% of the sun. Elsewhere at this time, an Annular Eclipse is occurring. On the site of the Annular Eclipse, the Sun - Moon alignment is perfect. The moon is farther from the Earth than normal and hence its apparent size is not quite sufficient to cover the sun completely. For those under the centre line of the sun and moon's path, the moon

would appear slightly smaller in diameter than the

Sun and a thin ring of sunlight will remain visible around the dark silhouette of the moon.

As our Eclipse location is just outside the centre line of the moon's path (not directly beneath the centre line) 81.91% of the sun will be covered. It is close to being an Annular Eclipse though not quite and hence the phenomena we will see is termed a partial eclipse. One of the best ones at that! The sun will seem to peek out from behind the moon in a thin extended crescent shape, as if the moon had taken a big bite out of the sun! As the event unfolds the sky will change to a deep purple as the horizon falls into shades of orange and red.

The day is free to spend as you choose, so maybe opt for a swim, soak up the sunshine, enjoy the scenic beauty of colourful villages and have a sumptuous meal on banana leaves. In the evening, witness sunset through coconut palms. Enjoy dinner under million stars. Sleep and dream with the pleasant roll of backwater. Lunch, dinner and overnight - Rice-boat.

## day 3

Allepey - Kochi - breakfast. We disembark at Allepey. Drive to Kochi airport in time to connect with your onward flight.

## kochi

Formerly a princely state, Kochi is also fondly referred to as "The Queen of the Arabian Sea". Its beautiful lagoons, lakes and greenery offer a lovely setting if you plan to extend your stay. Long famed in the history books, Kochi (formerly known as Cochin) offered refuge to Jews more than 2,500 years ago. Be on the lookout for the Pardesi Synagogue built in 1568 and street signs indicating Jew Town. (Descendants of those Jews remain in the region). Jew Town is home to a number of craft and antique stores.

The Portuguese founded the first European colony in Kochi in the 16th century, and their influence can still be detected. The Dutch quickly followed and eventually, the British. The cosmopolitan mix of cultures makes the city fascinating. See the tombstone marking the original burial place of Vasco da Gama (his remains were later sent to Portugal) at St. Francis Church, and visit some of the city's other

churches, temples and mosques. Two academies teach and give demonstrations of Kalaripayattu, believed to be one of the oldest martial art and you can see these demonstrations daily.

If interested in shopping for rosewood, shell handicrafts or spices, go to Mahatma Gandhi Road. A sunset cruise to see Chinese fishing nets is also highly recommended. At the entrance of Cochin Harbour, Chinese fishing nets are a fascinating sight. Built of teakwood, these nets were erected between 1350 and 1450 AD. They are mainly used at high tide, requiring at least four men to operate their system of counterweights. The nets are lowered into the water by the crane like structure and raised a few minutes later.

## environmental commitment

Preserving the natural state and beauty of the areas we pass through is essential. In helping to preserve the historical and religious legacy of India; it's coastlines and waterways, local cultures, flora and fauna, please read on and see how you can do your bit. Please respect the following;

- Take no relic from historical sites with you, be it a small chunk of fluted marble, stonework or carving.
- Dress appropriately if entering a place of worship such as a Hindu temple. Show respect for the sacred beliefs of others.
- Avoid removing or disturbing any plant life that keeps topsoils in place.
- Do not engage in hunting or the purchase of trophies of endangered species. It's illegal in India's parks and sanctuaries, and to import the hide of an endangered species is also illegal into many Western countries including the UK, Australia and New Zealand.
- Sanitary products should be wrapped and disposed of in a bin, to avoid blocking sometimes temperamental plumbing systems.

India's south-western coastline is enviably world-famous for its tropical waters, inland waterways and stunning shorelines fringed by towns, villages and natural jungle and forestation. Help us to reduce environmental impact for the benefit of all, by disposing of litter responsibly.

on the go promotes the recruitment, training and employment of local people in tourism. As well as benefiting the local people, on the go believes this fosters national pride in India's illustrious history. Understanding today ensures the preservation of India for tomorrow.

\*The go guide & information contained herein has been compiled with care and in good faith. It is as accurate an illustration as can be given with regard to the proposed itinerary. Circumstances beyond our control such as inclement weather or local conditions could force us to amend the proposed itinerary. This document does not form part of a contract between the client and on the go and their affiliates. Any costs shown may be subject to change but are an accurate reflection of costs at the time of writing this go guide. Please also be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and remain the responsibility of the traveller and not that of on the go.



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# keralan backwaters: itinerary

If looking to offer donations or gifts to local people - in particular children, please do so discreetly and without show. Despite generous acts of goodwill, people still like to retain their dignity. Useful gifts to consider include educational items such as English language books (English is taught in many schools), chalks, pens, paper, balls and small items reflecting where you are from. Don't allow your visit to change the lifestyles of local people and communities unless they want it. Our Western ways may not always be a hit in other countries and amongst other cultures.

## jan 15th 2010 eclipse

On January 15th 2010 an annular solar eclipse will be passing through a narrow corridor of the earth and creating a sight to behold for those in its path. It will be the LONGEST annular eclipse in the 3rd millennium - the duration will not be exceeded until the year 3043! It will be visible across Africa, the Indian Ocean, India, Sri Lanka and South East Asia.

Those just outside of the central path of the annular eclipse, will experience a partial eclipse. In Kerala we will witness a partial eclipse, which will look similar to an annular eclipse due to our close proximity to the central path.

## what is an annular eclipse?

A solar eclipse is when the moon passes directly between the earth and the sun, blocking your view of the sun. As the moon has an elliptical orbit around the earth, the size, from our perspective varies depending on at what point in its orbit it is. An annular eclipse occurs when the Moon is at the furthest point away from us in its orbit, and therefore its apparent size is not quite sufficient to cover the Sun completely. So even though the Sun- Moon alignment is perfect, the Moon will appear slightly smaller in diameter than the Sun and a thin glowing

ring of sunlight will remain visible around the dark silhouette of the Moon. The name annular eclipse comes from the Latin annulus, meaning ring.

## stages of a partial eclipse

**Eclipse begins** - The moment when the edge of the moon first touches the sun. At first it is almost unnoticeable because daylight is not diminished. The fading of the light is a very gradual process. Even when the moon approaches 50% of coverage the sky doesn't significantly change, it is more like the dullness of heavy cloud cover.

**Maximum Eclipse** - The moon reaches its maximum magnitude and obscuration of 81.91% and a shadow is cast across the earth. The length of maximum obscuration depends upon your distance from the central line.

**Eclipse ends** - The moon is no longer visible on the sun and this signals the end of the annular eclipse.

## viewing the eclipse safely

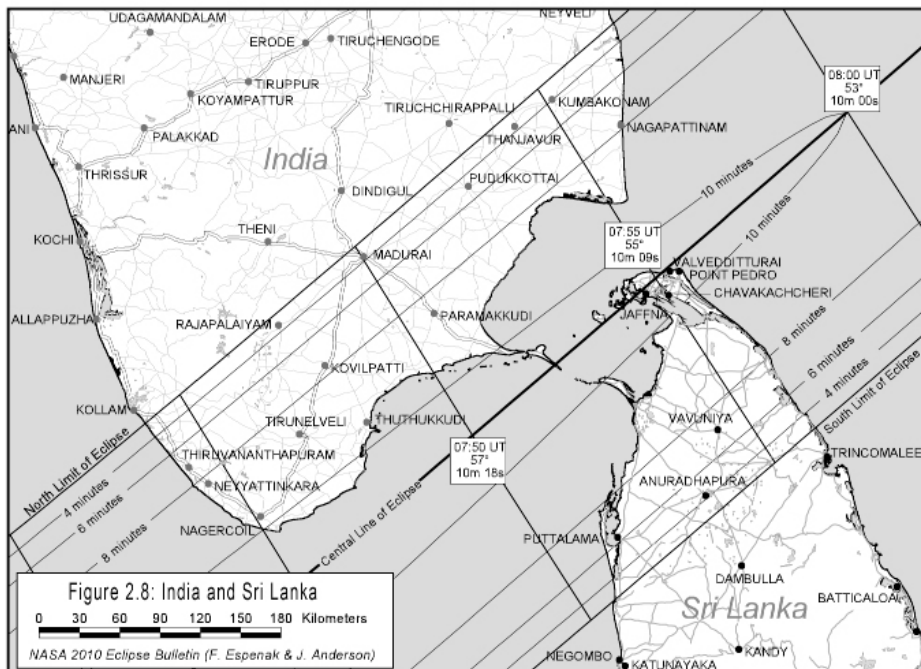
Viewing the sun directly during an eclipse can cause permanent eye damage. We will provide simple solar eclipse viewing glasses which have been certified as safe by the European Community and will carry the 'CE' logo. These glasses will allow you to safely watch the eclipse but you must not look at any stage of the partial eclipse without glasses.

## nature of the eclipse

Please be aware that perfect viewing conditions of the eclipse cannot be guaranteed and there is a chance that cloud may obscure our views. Despite this, there is an excellent chance of clear blue sky and Kerala is just above the centre path making it a favourable viewing spot for a partial eclipse.

## important, please note

Our tour is designed for people who would like to experience the fascinating sights & sounds of India and have an amateur interest in astronomy, rather than for serious eclipse-chasers as there is no formal commentary given on the subject.



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