

short stay: kovalam beach

go guide

don't leave home without it



short stay spotlight

what you see

- Kovalam - southern Indian coastal resort

what you get

- 4 breakfasts
- 4 nights - 3/4★ hotels
- Airport arrival and departure transfer from Trivandrum airport
- Chauffeur driven air conditioned vehicle



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

USD\$1 = INR46 (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**
INR400 (USD\$8.50) if the day includes local guide & sightseeing
INR200 (USD\$4.50) if the day excludes local guide & sightseeing
- **CAMERA FEES**
Please note that nearly all temples, museums, game parks and sights has a fee for camera use.
- 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

things to bring

- Insect repellent to guard against pesky mosquitos
- Spare camera batteries/film so you can go snap happy.
- If you fancy a tipples, take advantage of Duty Free buys.
- Buy some Indian Rupees at the airport on arrival.
- Buy a phrasebook and practice your holiday Hindi.
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs.
- Keep a supply of small notes for local transactions.
- Keep a photocopy of your passport data pages.

top experiences

- Capture the view of Vizhinjam Mosque from the lighthouse promontory
- Rejuvenate yourself with some Ayurvedic treatments
- Take a day trip to Trivandrum and shop in the bazaars
- Indulge in some traditional mendi henna decoration on your hands. It's non permanent!
- Explore the beautiful backwaters on a rice boat
- Relax on the beautiful palm fringed beaches





kovalam beach: itinerary

day 1 - trivandrum

Trivandrum - Kovalam. Welcome to India and the start of your holiday! Arrive Trivandrum airport, where you will be met by a representative from on the go. Transfer to Kovalam and check into your hotel - Travancore Heritage resort (or similar). Overnight - Kovalam

days 2 - 4 - kovalam

Kovalam - breakfast. Resting lazily at the southern tip of India and just south of Trivandrum is palm-fringed Kovalam. Of the three crescent shaped beaches that adorn the coastline, the southern-most 'Lighthouse' Beach, is a picturesque drawcard. The lighthouse on the promontory offers a spectacular view across to the Vizhinjam Mosque. One can spend days here lolling around on the sand, retreating under the awnings of the nearby beach cafes and simply relaxing. If you are a fan of watersports, try your hand at kayaking, surfing or waterskiing or for a more relaxing pursuit, spend a day sailing the Kerala backwaters on a traditional houseboat. For a spot of shopping and culture visit the bazaars and historical sights of Trivandrum, a mere 20kms away. For evening entertainment watch the indigenous dance of Kerala called Kathakali or check out Kerala's martial art Kalarippayattu. Whatever your interests there is plenty to do and see in and around Kovalam, allowing you to be as active or inactive as you desire! Overnight (3) - Kovalam

day 5 - kochi

Kovalam - Trivandrum - breakfast. Drive to Trivandrum airport to catch your onward flight.

ayurveda

After having been practised for centuries by tribes, Ayurvedic medicine is thousands of years old. It is believed to have been practised since the Vedas and the Buddha period was the time when surgical treatments associated with Ayurveda died out and the herbal medicinal side came to the forefront. Ayurveda has two main principles - prevention and cure. There are three main doshas from the basic principles of Ayurveda; Vata - the combination of space and air elements, Pitta - the fire element and Kapha - water and earth elements. Your constitution type is the dominant dosha. Disease is regarded as a symptom of an imbalance of these doshas and its the imbalance that will be treated, not the disease. Ayurveda looks at not just the physical complaint but also the patient's habits, emotional traits and family background when diagnosing. Kerala is the only state in India with practices this system of medicine with absolute dedication and therefore the perfect place to pamper and rejuvenate yourself with some Ayurvedic treatments.

festivals in india

India is a country of colourful festivals and special events. Two of the biggest festivals in the Hindu calendar are Diwali (Deepavali) and Holi. Meanwhile, the Pushkar Camel festival in Rajasthan brings together one of the most colourful spectacles on earth. on the go offer tour dates that coincide with both of these vibrant festivals.

Diwali - the Festival of Light is the happiest festival of the Hindu calendar. At night, countless oil lamps are lit to show Rama the way home from his period of exile. In all the festival lasts 5 days. On day 3, time is spent worshipping Lakshmi - the goddess of fortune. Traditionally, this is the beginning of the new financial year for companies. Diwali has also become the Festival of Sweets. Giving sweets has become as much of a part of the tradition as lighting oil lamps and firecrackers. It is also celebrated by the Jains as their New Years Day. Diwali dates - **05 November 2010**

Holi - the Festival of Colour is one of most exuberant Hindu festivals, with people marking the end of winter by throwing coloured water and powder (gual) at one another. It gets quite mad! Don't wear good clothes on this day, and prepare to duck! On the night before Holi, bonfires are built to symbolise destruction of the evil demon Holika. It is mainly a northern festival; there is no real winter to end in the south, so it isn't as widespread there.

fabulous food!

India's vast range of climates, cultures and peoples has produced a very diverse culinary repertoire. Curry is the word that springs to mind when people think of India food. Believe it or not, there is no such thing as 'curry' in India. It's an English invention, an all-purpose term to cover the whole gamut of Indian spicing. Although all Indian food is certainly not curry, this is the basis of Indian cuisine. Curry doesn't have to be that hot it'll blow your head, although it can be made that way, if you ask! Rather, for the most part Indian food is very, very aromatic, since the spices used by Indian chefs and cooks in India don't arrive in the cooking pot via a pre-packed tub of spice. Indian chefs and cooks have about 25 spices on their regular list and it is from these that they produce the curry flavour. Normally spices are freshly ground with a pestle and mortar, and blended in certain combinations to produce varying flavours and heat. It is the freshness of the spices that transform the dish. Curries can be vegetable, meat-lamb, mutton or chicken in content, though never beef. The cow is sacred to the Hindu people and India in general, so it is extremely rare to see beef on any menu across the

country. Lamb also substitutes beef at McDonalds in India. Ask for a Maharajah Mac!

thalis

Thalis are an all-purpose Indian dish offering a variety of curried vegetable dishes, relishes, poppadams, puris or chapatis and a mountain of rice. Often served on a metal tray with a number of small bowls known as katoris holding each dish or just small indentations moulded into the metal tray, Thalishes are consistently tasty and cheap.

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.
- Stick to designated paths. Erosion is a problem on hill and mountainsides, especially at high altitudes.
- 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.
- Take all personal litter with you.
- Sanitary products should be wrapped and disposed of in a bin, to avoid blocking sometimes temperamental plumbing systems.
- If needing to perform your ablutions beyond the confines of a WC, be sure to bury any waste.

kathakali

The 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 and there are many venues in Kochi.

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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