

short stay: nilgiri hills

go guide

don't leave home without it



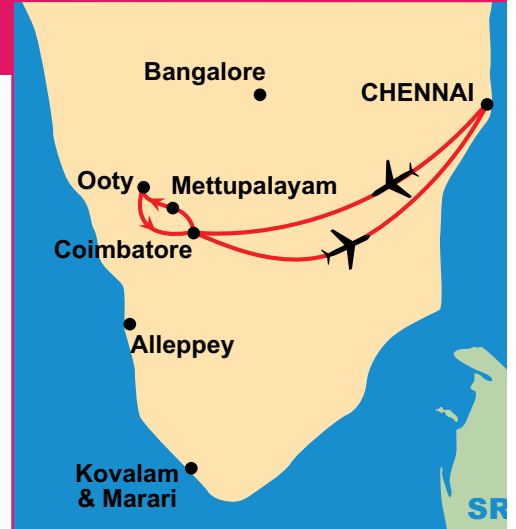
short stay spotlight

what you see

- Mettupalayam - toy train
- Ooty

what you get

- Breakfast daily
- 3 nights -3★ hotels
- 1 night - train - Chennai - Coimbatore (1st class a/c sleeper)
- Economy class flight - Coimbatore - Chennai
- Nilgiri Blue Mountain Railway - toy train
- Airport 'Meet & Greet' and departure transfer
- Touring and excursions as per itinerary
- Chauffeur driven 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

- Travel on the toy train - Nilgiri Blue Mountain Railway.
- Capture on camera the rolling hills in the early morning sunshine
- Enjoy being on one of the slowest trains in India as it makes its way through 208 curves.
- Take a boat trip on picturesque Ooty lake
- Try a thali meal. A little bit of everything on a big tray.





nilgiri hills: itinerary

day 1

Chennai - Coimbatore. Overnight train from Chennai to Coimbatore, 1st Class Air Conditioned sleeper. Overnight - train.

day 2

Coimbatore - Mettupalayam - breakfast. Arrive Coimbatore, drive to Mettupalayam and check into your hotel. Rest of the day is free. Overnight - Mettupalayam.

day 3

Mettupalayam - Ooty - breakfast. Early morning transfer to Mettupalayam railway station for the Nilgiri Blue Mountains railway toy train to Ooty. At a maximum speed of 33km/hour, this 'toy train' treks across plains, plantation and forest clad hills. The 16 tunnels and tall girder bridges on the way, along with the breathtaking view, make this toy train journey to Ooty, something not to be missed! Beginning at Mettupalayam, you cover 46kms in 4 hours, enjoying the view along the way. The train is unusual in the fact that the engine pushes its carriages rather than pulls them along. Overnight - Ooty.

day 4

Ooty - breakfast. There is no sightseeing included at Ooty but the vehicle will remain at your disposal for sightseeing the nearby places. Overnight - Ooty.

day 5

Ooty - Coimbatore - Chennai - breakfast. Drive to Coimbatore for your flight to Chennai. Upon arrival in Chennai, transfer to the international airport for your onward flight.

sightseeing options in ooty

Ooty, an abbreviation of the anglicized name of Udhagamandalam, is the queen of the hill stations located in the Nilgiri mountain ranges of Tamil Nadu. Its situated at the junction of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, at a height of 2268 meters. The Botanical Gardens has numerous varieties of trees and plants, shown off at the flower show every year in May. It was designed by the gardeners of Kew Gardens in London back in 1847 and covers 20 hectares. Check out Ooty lake, which was built in the early 1800's - look out for the signs saying "avoid dancing on the boats"! Kothagiri is the oldest hill station in the region located 20 Kms from Ooty and is noted for its favourable climate and natural scenery. In Kothagiri, Rangaswami Rock and Pillar, Kodanand View Point, St. Catherine Falls and Elk Falls are worth seeing. Head to Doddabetta peak - the highest peak in the Nilgiri range- for stunning

views of the hill ranges around Ooty. All Indian festivals are observed in Ooty with lot of enthusiasm by the residents of the hill station. Day at Leisure in Ooty.

festival 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 -

• 5 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 (gulaal) 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. Holi dates -

india since independence

European powers began vying for colonial control of India in the 1600s, with the British eventually gaining the upper hand, through a highly effective and organised system called the Raj. They ruled most of India until after World War II, when a movement led by Mohandas Gandhi and others finally won independence. As the British exited, the region was partitioned into predominantly Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan. The 1947 partition provoked the greatest exodus in human history as 10 million people changed sides - Muslims fleeing west toward Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs travelling east into India. Terrible mob violence resulting in the slaughter of between 250,000 and 500,000 occurred before partition was completed.

India's history since independence has been marked by disunity and intermittent periods of chaos. In January 1948, a Hindu fanatic assassinated Gandhi. His right-hand man, Jawarhalal Nehru, became India's first Prime Minister. Nehru was a successful leader, steering the young nation through a period of peace that was contrasted by the rule of Lal Bahadur Shastri, who fought Pakistan after it invaded two regions of India. Shastri died in 1966 after only 20 months in power. Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, succeeded him.

With the name Gandhi (though no relation to Mahatma), Indira was a powerful, unchallenged leader, and opposition remained negligible until she abused her power by trying to suppress the press. When the rising opposition began to threaten her power, she called a state of emergency and continued to reform the nation, actually making some positive economic and political changes despite her questionable tactics. Her most unpopular policy was forced sterilisation, and she was eventually defeated at the polls in 1977 by Morarji Desai of the Janata party. She won back power in '79, however, but was later assassinated in 1984 by a Sikh terrorist. Her son, Rajiv, was quickly swept into power with an overwhelming majority. Despite his previous disinterest in politics, he brought new and pragmatic policies to the country. He established a "technocratic" vision for India, eased import restrictions and encouraged foreign investment that jump-started the economy between 1986 and 1990. He was assassinated by Tamil Tigers in 1991, whilst on the campaign trail.

Although India's political climate remains divisive - India and Pakistan have fought three major wars, including one in 1971 that led to the creation of Bangladesh, the country has attained stability in recent years. Despite its turbulent and often-violent politics, India has remained a democracy. Continued economic development has been impressive. In the 1990s, the Rao Government continued on from where Rajiv Gandhi had abruptly left off. The government abandoned decades of economic isolation and welcomed foreign investors. As a result, advanced industries such as computer software development have blossomed, though rising prices have proved unpopular. Today, India seems poised to realise its potential as a strong economic power on the international stage.

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updated June 2010