

# Great Southern Getaway

15 days | Chennai to Kochi



Discover exotic stone carved temples, princely palaces and colonial hill stations. Take a train journey on the scenic Blue Mountain Railway, cruise the backwaters of Kochi and spot elephant from your jungle hide-away at both Mudumalai and Nagarhole National Parks.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

### Trip Highlights

- Coastal Chennai - capital of Tamil Nadu
- Mahabalipuram - Shore Temple and stone carvers since 8th century
- Coonoor Hill Station - mountain scenery, coffee and tea plantations
- UNESCO World Heritage listed Blue Mountain Railway
- Mudumalai National Park - home to the endangered Indian elephant and the Bengal Tiger
- Mysore - palaces, gardens and old world charm
- Somnathpur - home to the famous Keseva Temple
- Srirangapatnam Island & Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary
- Nagarhole National Park - tiger and elephant country
- Sultan's Battery - abandoned Jain Temple

- Guruvayur - famous Krishna Temple and Elephant Stables
- Athirapally lush rainforest and cascading waterfalls.
- Kochi - Parsi Synagogue, Dutch Palace and St Francis' Church

### What's Included

- 13 breakfasts (excluding day 3), 5 lunches and 5 dinners
- 13 nights standard hotels (superior and deluxe available on request) 1 overnight train journey on the Nilgiri Express
- 3 game drives - Mudumalai National Park
- 3 game drives - Nagarhole National Park
- Visit to Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary
- Evening cruise on the backwaters of Kochi
- Blue Mountain railway, toy train journey
- Kathakali dance performance
- Airport arrival and departure transfers on day 1 and day 15
- Touring and excursions as per itinerary
- Services of English-speaking Indian specialist guides at some sites
- Entrance fees to all relevant sights
- Chauffeur driven air-conditioned vehicle

### What's Not Included

- International flights and visas
- Laundry, drinks, items of a personal nature
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

## ITINERARY

### Day 1 : Chennai

Arrive Chennai airport and transfer to the seaside town of Mahabalipuram. Situated on the Bay of Bengal, Mahabalipuram offers long white sand beaches and some of the best archeological sites to be found in the state of Tamil Nadu. **Overnight - Mahabalipuram**

### Day 2 : Mahabalipuram

Mahabalipuram - Coonoor. Touring the town's sites to the rhythm of chisels chipping granite provides evidence of the strong stone carving traditions that have endured since the 8th century - Pallava dynasty. Visiting the beautiful ancient stone carved Shore Temple, presiding over the long, flat beach we discover high wall friezes, intricately carved bas reliefs and shrines dedicated to both Siva and Vishnu. It is also of interest to inspect the east facing alter designed to catch the rising sun and the large stone pillar with mountings to hold a beacon for sailors at night out at sea. Later we return to Chennai in time to board the Nilgiri Express bound for Mettupalayam. **Overnight - Train (B)**

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www.onthegotours.com  
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## Day 3 : The scenic blue mountain railway



Upon arrival to Mettupalayam we board the narrow gauge Blue Mountain Railway toy train destined for Coonor. Operating since 1899, the Blue Mountain Railway with its blue and cream steam livery has chugged from Mettupalayam to Otty via Coonoor, negotiating 16 tunnels, 31 major bridges and climbing to 2193 metres. The charming 4 hour journey offers sweeping mountain views and breathtaking scenery. Upon arrival to Coonoor, transfer to hotel and afternoon at leisure. **Overnight - Coonoor**

## Days 4-5 : Mudumalai

Coonor - Mudumalai - breakfast. Today we drive to the nearby Mudumalai National Park for a 2 night stay. Wake up each day with a foray of India's great wildlife right at your doorstep. The 322 sq km predominantly deciduous forest is a sanctuary for Indian bison, Nilgiri langur, bonnet macaques (monkeys), peacock, jackel, hyena and a few tigers and leopards. The northern reaches of the park are home to one of the largest population of elephant in all of India. Over the following days enjoy morning and afternoon jeep safaris and in the evening retire to your jungle lodge equipped with all the mod-cons to make for an enjoyable and relaxing stay. **Overnight - Mudumalai National Park (B:2, L:2, D:2)**

## Days 6-7 : Mysore



Mudumalai NP - Mysore. This morning its goodbye to your jungle hideaway and onward travel to Mysore - the former capital of the princely state, ruled by Wodeyars dynasty royalty from 1399 - 1947. The city of former glory and grandeur, enchanted admirers with its quaint charm, rich heritage, magnificent palaces, beautifully laid-out gardens, imposing buildings, broad shady avenues and sacred temples. After exploration we continue to Somnathpur, visiting the only complete temple of the Hoysala empire in the region. The small but exquisite Keseva Temple, dates from the 11th century. Day 7 offers a city tour of Mysore and visits to the island of Srirangapatnam and the Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary. **Overnight - Mysore (B:2)**

## Days 8-9 : Nagerhole NP

Mysore - Nagarhole NP. Today we drive west to Nagarhole National Park, once the Maharaja's reserve forest turned national park in 1955. The park name, Nagarhole is derived from the Kannada word, naga meaning snake and hole meaning stream. True to its name Nagarhole is criss-crossed with serpentine streams. Covering gentle hills bordering Kerala, the area includes swampland, streams and tributaries, moist deciduous forest, stands of bamboo and valuable teak and rosewood trees. Spot Asian elephant, four horned antelope, flying squirrels and on occasion leopard and tiger. A jeep safari is offered on the afternoon of day 8. Day 9 - morning and afternoon safaris. **Overnight - Nagerhole NP (B:2, L:2, D:2)**

## Day 10 : Sultan's Battery



Nagarhole NP - Sultan's Battery. The Tipu Sultan of Mysore captured the Jain temple built here in the 18th century. It is said that the sultan took the site as a fort and ammunition store to prevent any attack by English warships entering the Gurpur River. The original temple, believed to have been built in the 13th century served the Jain as a shrine and a centre for commercial activity. This afternoon offers free time to enjoy the tranquil surroundings and gaze upon the bountiful bird life found in the area **Overnight - Sultan's Battery (B)**

## Days 11-12 : Athirapally

Sultan's Battery - Guruvayur - Athirapally. Taking the coast road most of the journey to Athirapally, stops are made at Krishna Temple and the Punnathur Kotta Elephant Stables. Krishna Temple is one of the holiest sites in Kerala. The heaving Hindi pilgrimage centre is filled with stalls and thronged with devotees wanting to take darshan - a viewing with the deity. It is said to be one of the wealthiest temples in India, with a waiting list for the auspicious duty of lighting its oil lamps till 2025. Onward travel to Athirapally, blessed with a backdrop of lush rainforest and cascading waterfalls. **Overnight - Athirapally (B:2)**

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## Days 13-14 : Kochi



Athirapally - Kochi. Arrive Kochi and hotel check in. This evening we take a cruise along the backwaters of Kochi. Day 14, offers a guided sightseeing tour with visits to the Parsi Synagogue, Dutch Palace, St Francis' Church and evening Kathakali dance performance.

**Overnight - Kochi (B:2)**

## Day 15 : Kochi

Kochi - breakfast. Arrangements conclude after breakfast and onward transfer to the airport.(B)

### PRICES / DATES INFO

Prices shown are 'per person', based on a travelling party of at least 2 adults. The 'Single supplement' applies for single travellers who require their own room and needs to be added to the per person price.

### PRICES / DATES 2020

Date	Twin Share	Single
04 Apr	USD 5,545	USD 7,645

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