

Live A Larger Life

Best of Kerala, Beaches and Backwaters



Trivandrum - Varkala - Thekkady - Madurai - Munnar - Kochi
- Alleppey (houseboat) – Alleppey Waters Resort - Kochi

15 nights from \$3550* pp | departs Feb / Mar 25

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Kerala Backwaters houseboat stay
- Backwaters Resort for a few nights to finish off – how about a traditional Ayurveda Experience
- India's south famous Kathakali Dance Performance
- India's south warmth, colour, diversity and beauty, handcrafted for you
- My handpicked chosen beaches with vibe you won't find elsewhere
- Mountain Tea Estates & Spice Plantations
- Perriyar National Wildlife park & boat ride
- Personally escorted
- Transfers from Newcastle to Sydney airport.

INCLUSIONS

- All sightseeing inclusions as per itinerary including boat rides guided walking tours, local cooking class, Kathakali Dance show, Fishing village tour and so much more....as all my group tours.
- Deluxe air-con vehicle with experienced driver and English-speaking local guide
- Handpicked accommodation –personally chosen
- Daily buffet breakfast and other included specialty meals.
- Tea estates, Spice Plantations and entrance fees to national parks & walks
- Specialty meals giving you the local flavours of Kerala

**Conditions apply. Secure your spot with a non-refundable deposit of \$600. Pay a 2nd instalment of \$2000 within 30 days. Balance due 01 Sep 24. Price is based on per person double / twin share. Single supplement price \$4790 to have your own room. Prices are correct at time of publication. The package is based on minimum of 14 people. If the minimum is not reached the price will be recalculated based on the number of participants. Cancellation fees will apply. Check for full terms and conditions. <https://www.travelmanagers.com.au/terms-and-conditions>



Live A Larger Life
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Your itinerary

Best of Kerala, Backwaters and Beaches 16 Days / 15 nights land tour

Trivandrum - Varkala - Thekkady - Madurai - Munnar - Kochi -
Alleppey (houseboat) – Alleppey Waters Resort - Kochi

Day 1: Arrival Trivandrum - Varkala. Meeting assistance on arrival at Trivandrum airport and transfer to Varkala (40 Kms/1.5 hours). Overnight at hotel

Day 2: Varkala Beach. This is the beach for the beachlovers !!! Lovely walks along the coastal cliffs and a vibrant little town of cafes, stalls This beach has the "Kuta meets Katmandu" vibe and the property we will stay at has views over the ocean. Overnight at hotel

Day 3: Varkala Beach. A day of leisure. Varkala has several places of tourist interest like a beautiful beach, a two-thousand-year-old shrine - the Janardhana Swamy Temple, the Sivagiri Mutt, founded by the great Hindu reformer and Philosopher Sree Narayana Guru.

Day 4: Varkala – Thekkady After breakfast transfer to Thekkady and check-in at your hotel

Afternoon, proceed with boat ride (Subject to available) at Periyar Wild Life Sanctuary. Periyar tiger Reserve, Thekkady, is an example of nature's bounty, with great scenic charm, rich bio-diversity and providing veritable visitor satisfaction. Sprawled over an area of 777 Sq. km. Periyar is one of the 27 tiger reserves in India. Zealously guarded and efficiently managed reserve is a repository of rare, endemic and endangered flora and fauna and forms the major watershed of two important rivers of Kerala, the Periyar and Pamba.

Evening witness "Kalariyapayattu" performance (traditional martial art) at a local theatre. Overnight at Hotel

Day 5: Thekkady After breakfast enjoy "Nature/Jungle walk" (2-3 Hours)

Different nature trails traversing diverse habitats form the trekking routes, generally 4 to 5 km. in length. This is an interpretive program offering excellent opportunity to watch birds, butterflies and other wildlife. The trails often pass through evergreen and moist deciduous forests interspersed with marshy grasslands. A maximum of 5 persons can go for trekking at a time along each nature trail, accompanied by a trained tribal guide. The Nature walk is the right program to feel nature, hear her whispers and smell her flowers.

Afternoon get ready for some local shopping, we will arrange a Jeep for the same; drive (45 Minutes) to **Cumbam a live vegetable Market** in Kerala Tamil Nadu Border, the drive to the market really interesting, you can see the local Farm and Plantation of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. On the way you can see some commercial plantations of Cardamom, Pepper, Coffee etc. and you can see the processing of Cardamom. It is an opportunity to see why the Kerala cuisine is so different from most of the other Indian cuisines. While moving towards Tamil Nadu you can also see the Farm of Grapes, Pomegranate, Banana, Cocoa, Papaya and other wide varieties of Vegetables; buy some fresh vegetable directly from the Local farmers and drive back to Thekkady. On arrival at Thekkady explore the Spice Plantation local Naturalist will explain about each Spice and it's processing later proceed to the **local family house** where they will demonstrate the Travancore style preparation with your vegetable and have a delicious dinner with the local family members. Overnight at hotel

Day 6: Thekkady – Madurai (By surface: 140 KMS/4 Hours) After leisurely breakfast drive to Madurai. On arrival check-in at Hotel

Madurai, located along the banks of the Vaigai River, is believed to be one of the oldest cities in India with a history dating back to the 3rd century BCE. Ruled by a series of south Indian kings, most notably, the Pandyas, the city was a bustling center for trade, religion and learning. It continues to be the cultural capital of Tamil Nadu, and is today renowned for its temple-dotted skyline. The famous Meenakshi Amman Temple lies at the center of this city.

Evening: Food Trail (Walking tour – 1700 to 2000 hrs)

Madurai is seriously ancient. Its recorded history goes back as far as the 3rd century BC. And from then to now, it seems to have been populated by gourmands. There are written recipes dating back to that time, which are followed till date. In a city that takes its food so seriously, exploring local food is a great starting point for getting acquainted with the city. Madurai street food makes for a perfect backdrop for stories of the city and its people. How did the Muslims indulge their fancy for iced drinks in hot, sultry Madurai? WHY should you eat Indian



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food with your fingers? What are poppy seeds doing in a popular South Indian sweet? Join us on the food trail and taste the best foods in Madurai, as a storyteller dishes out delectable stories of the city, its people and the way of life here.

DAY 7: Madurai After breakfast proceed for a walking Tour “Once upon a Madurai” (0700-1000 Hours) Madurai, a flourishing market town since at least the 2nd century BCE, the centre of power for many dynasties, and a seat of divinity from time immemorial...In a city that has been so much to so many, is it any wonder that you stumble upon stories wherever you go? Why would a street in Madurai be named after a man who had a piece of its history razed to the ground? How could a bad case of the sniffles have shaped a city’s history or a teeny little toad halted the grandiose plans of a mighty king? Join us on a short walk through this ancient city and chance upon her stories; stories that zigzag the obscure lines separating history and myth; stories of people who made Madurai, and of those who were her undoing; stories of fickle kings and towering monuments, of whimsical Gods and extraordinary mortals; stories that take you behind the scenes for a glimpse into the city’s heart.

Later proceed for a city tour of Madurai visiting the Thirumalai Nayak Mahal built in 1523, Meenakshi Temple complex and the Gandhi Museum, housed in a 300-year-old palace and dedicated to promoting the Mahatma’s teachings. Overnight stay at hotel

DAY 08: Madurai – Munnar (By surface: 160 KMS/5 Hours) After leisurely breakfast drive to Munnar. On arrival check-in at Hotel Later in the afternoon proceed with guided city tour of Munnar visiting Tea Museum followed by a tea tasting session and later walk in the town. Overnight at hotel

DAY 09: Munnar After breakfast proceed for Letchmi Hills trek. Letchmi Hills trek (03 to 05 hours, depending on client’s interest)

This covers 30 to 40 minutes trek through tea plantations, then 2 hours trek through grasslands, rocky mountain slope, tea plantations, shola forest etc. Refreshment will be during the trek. Then trek through coffee / cardamom plantation. Another 45 minutes to 1 hour, walk through tea plantation to finish the trek. Vehicle will pick up again at the finishing point at around 5-8 KMS from Munnar towards Mankulam Road (depending on the duration of the trek). Afternoon, visit of Eravikulam National Park
OR Top Valley Trek with Jeep (03 to 05 hours, depending on client’s interest)

Drive about 29 kilometers from Munnar town towards Top Station through few of the major sightseeing spots of Munnar like Madupatty Dam, Echo-Point, and Kundala Dam etc... it could take about 45 minutes to 1 hour drive to the starting point. Trek will start with tea estate village, will lead to tea plantation and to evergreen shola forest, grasslands, etc..., also trek on the ridges of Western Ghats Eastern Slope which offers spectacular view to low land of Tamil Nadu and the second highest peak in south India, the highest tea estate in the World “Kolukkumalai” etc..., also this is one of the best trek to explore some of the endemic birds of this region. Our trek will start at the height of 1800 meters MSL (approx.) and the highest point of the trek will be about 2250 meters MSL. Finish the trek at (near) Top Station and drive back to Munnar. Overnight at hotel

DAY 10: Munnar – Kochi (By surface: 150 Kms / 04 Hours) After breakfast drive to Kochi and check-in at Hotel

Evening free at leisure Evening: Witness India’s most spectacular Kathakali Dance show drama based on stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata. The dancers are elaborately made up with paint and masks, accompanied with drummers and musicians. Overnight at hotel



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DAY 11: Kochi After breakfast proceed for sightseeing of Kochi visiting the Dutch Palace, the Jewish Synagogue - (which remains closed on Fridays) St. Francis Church and the Santa Cruz Basilica. While driving along the coastline, at the Harbour's mouth, one can also view the unique and still-in-use "Chinese Fishing Nets" which were introduced by the Chinese traders in the 14th Century. The tour ends in the Fort Kochi area where you can walk through the historical Dutch and Portuguese buildings. Some parts of this nearly 500-year-old Fort are still well preserved.

In the afternoon, proceed for a half-day excursion to "Kayal Island Resort". At Kayal enjoy a walk through the local village followed by a 30 minute Canoe ride through the backwaters to witness beautiful sunset. Return back to Kochi for overnight Overnight at hotel

DAY 12: Kochi After breakfast, proceed for an excursion to Kumbalangi Fishing Village...It is identified as the first Model fisheries and tourism village in India. Kumbalangi has a vast stretch of backwaters connected by interlocking waterways to the whole of Kerala. It is an ideal getaway location for tourists from all over the world. What makes it more interesting to visit Kumbalangi is that it is a virgin landscape unspoiled by excessive presence of tourists. Here you will find the calm, quite and tranquil landscape with warm inhabitants who depend on nature for their survival. A day in Kumbalangi can be a festival to remember...a treat for the eye and the mind. Kumbalangi is rich with exotic local cuisines, boat building and masonry, manually operated coir looms, fish farms etc. We will take a cruise in country boats to Kallanchery, an Island in Kumbalangi which is about 700mtrs length and 150 mtrs in breadth. There are around 500 people living there. Most of the people are engaged in fishing and clam meat processing for their livelihood, the Island is surrounded by Chinese fishing nets. The villagers are engaged in agriculture, fishing, crab & fish farming, coir making etc. Main crops cultivated here are coconut and betel nuts, nutmegs, vanilla, anthurium farm, and trees like teakwood, spices like pepper, pathimugham etc. In the aquaculture farm they cultivate shrimps, crabs, milk fishes, pearl spots and mullets etc. Return back to Kochi for overnight stay

DAY 13: Kochi - Alleppey (Houseboat) (By surface: 55 Km/1.5 Hours) After breakfast drive to Alleppey & check-in to DELUXE A/C HOUSEBOAT

Your houseboat carries you slowly down palm-hung waterways, past backwater settlements of thatched and tiled cottages, bright with cartons and hibiscus. You set your own pace: stopping where you like, resting when you like, and indulging yourself with the freshest of foods bought from the farmers and fishermen on the banks of the backwaters. Lunch, dinner & Overnight on Houseboat

DAY 14: Alleppey (Resort)

After breakfast dis-embark your houseboat and check-in at hotel in Alleppey at the backwater. Overnight at hotel

DAY 15: Alleppey Day free at leisure to explore and enjoy the beautiful backwaters .Overnight at Hotel

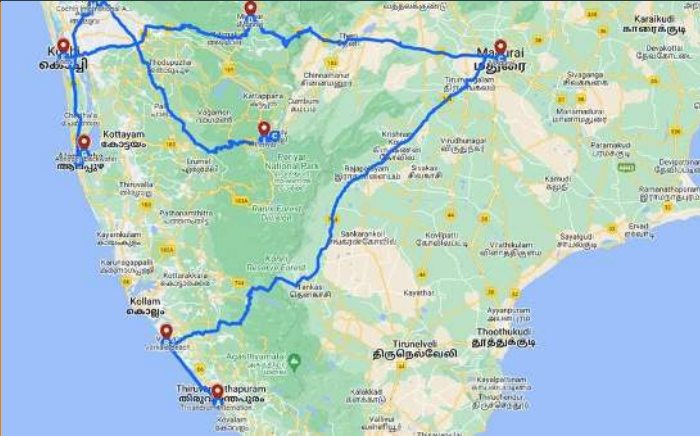
DAY 16: Alleppey – Kochi – Departure After breakfast check-out and transfer to airport to board onward flight



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Ask me for extensions to the coast of Goa, visit the awesome Golden Temple- Amristar, The Taj or join me in an Ashram

ADDITIONAL INFO

- INCLUSIONS:

- My handpicked accommodation on a twin/double share basis
- Breakfast daily
- Specialty dinners as per itinerary
- Loads of sightseeing as per tour itinerary
- English speaking local guide
- Air-conditioned private bus
- Transfers from Newcastle to Sydney airport

- EXCLUSIONS

- International airfares-Transfer from Sydney airport to your home. Can be arranged to match with your return flight.
- Travel insurance is mandatory-I can assist
- Tips for baggage at hotel, airport driver & guide we will have a guideline in place (tipping kitty)
- Personal items as laundry, internet, drinks etc.

WHERE YOU WILL STAY

- **Varkala:** Krisvatheeram Beach Resort
- **Periyar:** Cardamom county by Xandari
- **Madurai:** Heritage Madurai
- **Munnar:** Spice Tree
- **Kochi:** Fort Kochi or Eighth Bastion
- **Alleppey:** Houseboat 1 night
- **Alleppey:** Uday Backwater Resort

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