

21 Nights / 22 Days Tour of South India

This tour starts in Bangalore and takes in some of the palaces temples and nature reserves of South India, untouched jungle and Hill Stations. This tour is for people who want a real taste of South India.



Day 1 Bangalore to Mysore: Fly directly to Bangalore, known as the garden city, because of the large area covered by parks and gardens. There are many impressive building such as the parliament, courts, and museums. The Lah Bagh Gardens and Cubbon Park dominate the centre of the city.

Day 2 Mysore; Mysore was the former capital, and consequently has lots of Palaces. The Maharaja's Palace dominates the centre of the town and a guide will describe some of the hundreds of items in the Peacock Pavilion, Durbar Hall, and Amber Vilas, including the Golden Throne. Nearby is Chamundi Hill Temple, with unforgettable sunsets. 12 km away is Srirangapatnam, Tipu Sultan's island fortress, his exquisite Summer Palace, and his beautiful tomb in the Gumbaz.



Day 3 Bandipur National Park: The journey to Bandipur takes 2 hours. The National Park has Elephants and other wildlife. The 865 square km Bandipur is one face of the extensive Nilgiri Biosphere, which stretches to Nagahole and Wayanad.

Day 4 Wayanad: Vythiri Resort is set high in the virgin rainforests of Wayanad. It is reached by a 3 km track off the road, through tea terraces and forests, and is surrounded by waterfalls, which are particularly spectacular during the Monsoon season.

Day 5 Wayanad: The Vythiri rain forest offers a unique atmosphere for relaxation and enjoying the jungle. Many people bathe in the waterfalls and streams, which surround the resort. Several treks start from the resort into the jungle, along tea estates, and to viewpoints giving breath-taking views with waterfalls.

Day 6 Ooty: Drive to Ooty. Rest of day at leisure to visit Ooty town. Ooty (Ootacamund or Udthagamandalam) is a hill station built by the British as an escape from the hot summers in Madras, to which there is a good railway connection even today. The final 46 km of the journey from Mettupalayam is the Blue Mountain Railway, with a steam rack system built in 1908, taking 4.5 hours and having magnificent views.



Day 7 Ooty: Ooty has a bazaar and a 50 acre botanical garden. The Nilgiris are a trekker's paradise, with several trekking routes, which vary in distance, altitudes and terrain.

Day 8 - 9 Kodaikanal: Drive through the mountains to your hotel in Kodaikanal, which is more than 2000 m high (7000 ft). The views of the mountains and waterfalls are magnificent with many viewpoints down to the plains below.

Kodaikanal was built as a British hill station, and there are some remaining old houses that could be in any seaside town in England. The high altitude gives "Kodi" a pleasant climate markedly in contrast to that of the plains, making it suitable for trekking and sightseeing.

Day 10 - 11 - 12 Madurai: Transfer to Madurai, which is the most important centre for pilgrims in Tamil Nadu. In 302 BC the Greek Ambassador wrote of its splendour, and later the Romans complained about its exports of silks, pearls and spices draining their coffers. Today the massive Temple with its gaily-decorated towers is one of the greatest sights in South India. About 15000 pilgrims enter the temple each day, rising to 25000 at festival times. It is estimated that there are 33 million sculptures in the temple, as well as all the shrines, colonnades, paintings, murals, bathing tanks and 12 huge gopura or towers.



Day 13 - 14 Karaikudi: The fascinating homeland of the Chettiar merchants unfolds as a continuing panorama of spectacular ancient houses and palaces set in a flat and arid landscape. Visit the antique shops of Karaikudi, or cycle across the flat farmland to visit some of the 74 Chettiar villages.



Day 15 - 16 Tanjore: Set in the rich rice growing Cauvery delta is Tanjore (Thanjavur), a World Heritage Site, and one of the exceptional monuments in South India. The Cholas ruled the whole region during the years 750-1170, and made Tanjore their capital. Brihadisvara Temple was built during this time. The Temple has many shrines, frescoes, and buildings, as well as an exhibition in the complex. There is also a Palace built in the mid-16th Century, with the remains of an ornate Durbar Hall, and an art gallery with sculptures.



Day 17- 18 - 19 Transfer to Pondicherry, which was French until 1954, retains many influences from its colonial time. The museum has some eclectic exhibits, including Roman remains and the old French Governor Dupliex's four-poster bed. on day 18 and 19 visit some of the nearby attractions such as Gingee Fort, which dominated the region for centuries; Kanchipuram a town with 70 temples and famous for silk weaving or Auroville, a World-renowned centre for environmental studies, with a good restaurant.

Day 20 Mamallapuram Chennai: On Route for Chennai lies the World Heritage site of Mamallapuram, with the earliest examples of Indian Architecture. The Pallava rulers started the temples and rock carvings here in the 7th Century. There are 14 cave temples, 9 monolithic (made from one stone) shrines. 3 stone temples, and 4 rock carvings.



Day 21 Chennai: Chennai, the old capital of Madras, is now the capital of Tamil Nadu State. Visit George Town with its fort and many churches and houses, the 6 km beach in the centre of the town, and Mylapore where St Thomas arrived in AD 52 to bring Christianity to India



Day 22 Chennai: If timing allows, visit Chennai town. Transfer to airport for direct flights.