

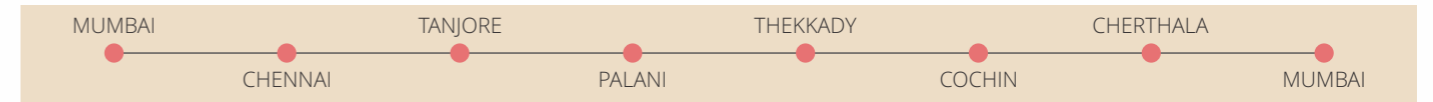
INDIA SOUTH



STH5 > 16 DAY TOUR

SOUTH INDIA IN STYLE

This itinerary lets one experience some of the best that south India has to offer, in style. Travel through Tamil Nadu and Kerala staying in some of the most unique hotels of the region. Each of the properties has been hand-picked with a criterion to be an oasis of calm that one would love to return to after the day's exploration. Few of them are privately owned, with the trademark warmth of a friendly home.



Insider Tips:

- Ideal for individual travel.
- This itinerary is best done during the months of December, January, February and March. It gets hot and humid after that.
- It rains in Tamil Nadu during the months of October and November and again from June to September. In Kerala, the rainy months last from June to September.
- The Festival of Sacred Music, with its repertoire of global artists, is held in the month of March every year at Thiruvaiyaru, a small, quiet town near Tanjore by the river Cauvery.
- The quirky Cochin Carnival, with its quirky floats, is held at Fort Cochin on January 01 every year. It was started by the Portuguese in the 16th century to welcome the new year.
- Every February, Mumbai plays host to the the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, a community celebration of music, dance, theatre, literature, cinema, visual arts, urban design and architecture within one of the most beautiful and historic precincts of the city, the Kala Ghoda Art District.





TOUR ITINERARY | STH 5

DAY 01 ARRIVAL MUMBAI

Warm welcome at the airport by our representative and transfer to one of Mumbai's oldest and most beautiful hotels, located opposite the Gateway of India.

DAY 02 IN MUMBAI

In the afternoon, visit some of the main sights of Mumbai such as the Gateway of India, Prince of Wales Museum, the Dhobi Ghat and Mani Bhawan. Spend the evening at AER, the rooftop bar of Four Seasons. The stunning views and its ambience make for a super evening. Enjoy dinner in an exclusive, 'members only' club.

DAY 03 MUMBAI – CHENNAI

Fly to Chennai. On arrival, transfer to a hotel which has been a landmark of the bustling city of Chennai for more than three decades. Visit some of the main sights of Chennai such as the San Thome Basilica and the Government Museum. The Bronze Gallery here, which houses some of

the finest bronzes from the early years of the first millennium, is a must see.

DAY 04 IN CHENNAI

Lunch at a private home of a well-known Chennai resident. Later in the afternoon, walk around Mylapore, a bustling neighbourhood in the heart of Chennai, which pre-dates the city by at least 2000 years. It has kept alive many traditions and arts that Chennai is so well known for.

DAY 05 CHENNAI – TANJORE

Fly to Trichy. Continue by road to Tanjore, once the seat of the Chola Kings from 300 BC to 1279 AD. Spend a relaxed afternoon exploring the hotel, reflective of the abundant charm of Tamil Nadu – its arts, architecture, culinary heritage and culture.

DAY 06 IN TANJORE

In the morning, visit the Brihadeshwara Temple Complex constructed in 1010 AD, a UNESCO

World Heritage Site and one of India's most outstanding temple complexes. Witness a bronze casting demonstration by a master artist. The bronze sculptors of Tanjore have not only kept a millennium-old tradition alive but also thriving.

DAY 07 TANJORE – PALANI

Drive to the lush forest and coffee plantations of the Palani Hills. Spend two relaxing nights here in the 18th century garden hotel which is a terrific example of building traditions of Kerala.

DAY 08 IN PALANI

Spend the day walking the many paths of the estate, visiting the farm, the lake, the coffee-drying yards and the village beyond, or just listen to the bird songs.

DAY 09 PALANI – THEKKADY

Drive to Thekkady with its eternal rainforest, spice plantations and canopies. Spend a relaxed afternoon in the private pool villa of the hotel

Bharatnatyam is a 2000 year old dance form and is a part of the five dance forms of India which celebrates the five elements of the universe and human body – Air, Fire, Water, Earth and Ether. The other dance forms are Odissi, Kuchipudi, Mohiniattam and Kathakali. Bharatnatyam celebrates the element of Fire. Travel to any Hindu temple in Tamil Nadu and you will see female figurines carved on the walls and pillars in Bharatnatyam dance postures. Most of these female figurines are implied as divine courtesans performing the dance for the gods. Although Bharatnatyam has undergone a lot of changes, it still retains its ancient quintessence.

located on seven acres of private estate surrounded by cardamom and pepper plantation.

DAY 10 IN THEKKADY

Visit a spice plantation on the Tamil Nadu-Kerala border. Enjoy a private tour of the plantation and later, lunch.

DAY 11 THEKKADY – COCHIN

Drive to Cochin. Spend a relaxed afternoon at the lovely hotel in Fort Cochin. A 300-year-old building in the Dutch style of architecture with hints of Portuguese influences, it was the first hotel of Fort Cochin. Later in the evening, go for a leisurely stroll along the Chinese fishing nets close by, which make for great photographs at sunset.

DAY 12 IN COCHIN

Get acquainted with the city's history and heritage which is a wonderful mix of Dutch, Portuguese, British and Jewish influences. In the evening, take lessons in Syrian Christian cuisine from a local host and enjoy dinner with the family. Kerala's Syrian Christians are the descendants of the first converts when St. Thomas landed here in 52 AD and their contribution to the local cuisine has been manifold. The most notable dishes are the hoppers, duck roast, *meen vevichathu* (red fish curry) and the *isthew* (stew).

BHARATNATYAM

DAY 13 COCHIN – CHERTHALA

Drive to Cherthala on the backwaters of Kerala with its drenched greens and coconut palms. Spend three nights here in the gorgeously restored heritage villa.

DAY 14/15 IN CHERTHALA

Take leisurely strolls in the village, go on bicycling trips, take a boat ride or drive a short distance to the village of Mararikulam to spend a day by the beach or just enjoy the magical setting by the Vembanad Lake.

DAY 16 CHERTHALA – COCHIN – MUMBAI – DEPARTURE

Fly to Mumbai in the afternoon. Check into a day-use room. Later, transfer to the international airport for the onward flight.



Tamilians take great pride in Tamil as one of the original ancient classical languages.



Tamil Nadu and Kerala are hot and humid states.