



A Southern Soujourn



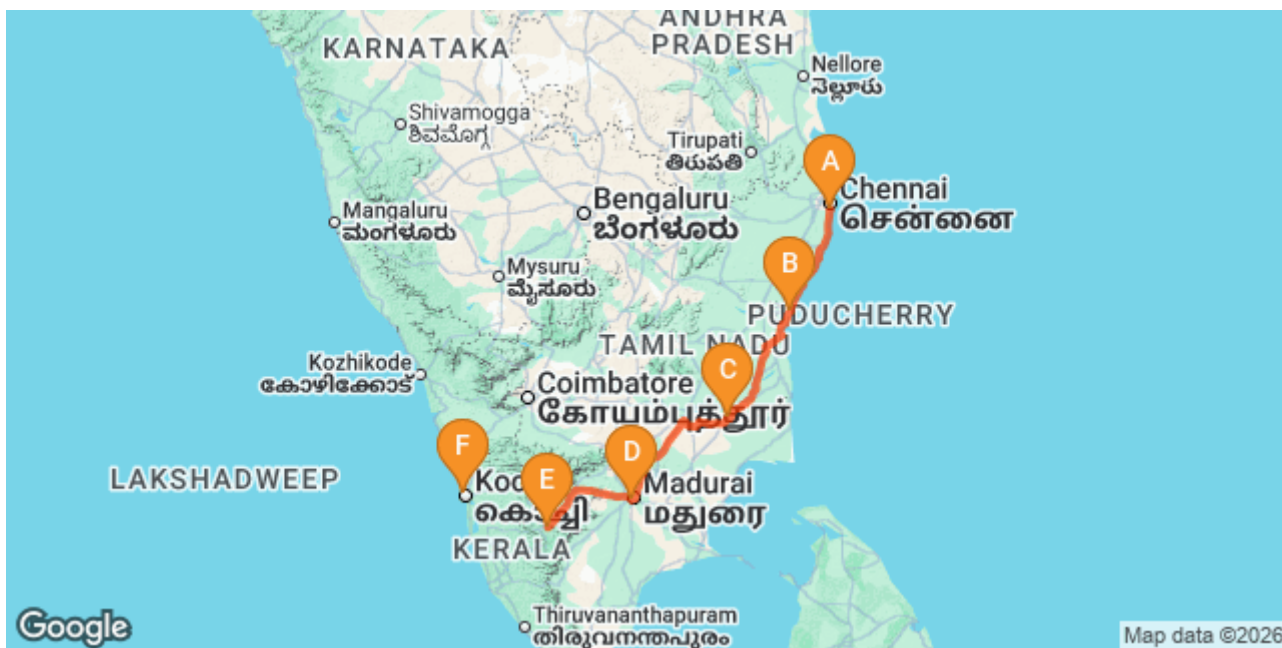


A Southern Soujourn

Chennai - Puducherry - Thanjavur - Madurai - Thekkady - Kochi

14 Days / 13 Nights

Date of Issue: 15 January 2026



Introduction

Discover a side of India that blends vibrant culture, ancient traditions, and serene landscapes. From the intricate Pallava and Chola temples of Tamil Nadu to the colonial elegance of Pondicherry, and from bustling markets to the tranquil backwaters of Kerala, this journey offers a rich tapestry of experiences. Wander through sleepy fishing villages, tropical coastlines, and lush hinterlands, immersing yourself in local life, cuisine, and spirituality. Perfect for travellers seeking slow, meaningful exploration, this itinerary reveals a South India that is authentic, unhurried, and unforgettable.

Accommodation	Destination	Basis	Duration
The Leela Palace Chennai	Chennai	B&B	2 Nights
Palais de Mahe	Puducherry	B&B	2 Nights
Svatma	Thanjavur	B&B	2 Nights
Gateway Madurai	Madurai	B&B	2 Nights
Spice Village	Thekkady	B&B	2 Nights
Kumarakom Lake Resort Houseboat		B&B	1 Night
Brunton Boatyard	Kochi	B&B	2 Nights

Key

B&B: Bed and Breakfast

Included

- Hotels accommodation twin sharing at the hotels mentioned above or similar for a total of 10 nights in a mentioned category rooms with breakfast & inclusive of all currently government applicable taxes.
- Services of using air-conditioned vehicle for inter-cities transfers and sightseeing.
- Meeting and assistance on arrival / departure at airports.
- All sightseeing tours / excursions as per program mentioned above.
- Unlimited water bottle during long journeys.
- Service of an English (as per requirement) speaking local guides till 04 Pax & 04 Pax onwards we will provide English speaking accompanying escort.
- Rates include entrances to all the monuments as mentioned in the program.

Excluded

- Does not include any airfare, any item not mentioned above, any items of personal nature such as table drinks, laundry, telephone bills, video camera fees, tips to guides/escort, drivers, bell boys, etc.
- Any International airfare, Travel Insurances or Visa – Please ensure clients have a valid E-visa and passport for their travel to India.
- Any other expenses of personal nature.

Day 1 The Leela Palace Chennai, Chennai

Chennai

Chennai is Tamil Nadu's coastal capital and one of India's financial, cultural and tourism hubs. Attractions include the city's beaches, museums, shopping areas and historical sites, particularly the centrally located Kapaleeshwar Temple – a historical shrine to the goddess Shiva, featuring gaudily decorative gopurams (towers) covered with colourful carvings – and the group of ancient rock-carved temples at Mahabalipuram, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located roughly 60 kilometres from the city centre. Also of interest is the Guindy National Park, which occupies nearly three square kilometres of greenery in the city centre and is home to an array of birds, reptiles and (mainly smallish) mammals.

Day Itinerary

Upon arrival in Chennai, you will be warmly welcomed by our representative and transferred to your hotel in comfort. Take the day to unwind, refresh, and soak in the city's vibrant atmosphere at your own pace. Overnight stay at the hotel.

Overnight: The Leela Palace Chennai

Set along the serene Adyar Seaface in MRC Nagar, The Leela Palace Chennai is a grand seafront retreat overlooking the Bay of Bengal. Inspired by Chettinad architecture, the rooms and suites offer opulent comforts including marble finishes, curated art, and sweeping sea or pool views. Guests can indulge in diverse dining experiences, from Cantonese delicacies at China XO and regal Indian fare at Jamavar to global cuisine at Spectra and craft cocktails at Library Blu. Additional facilities include lush gardens, a tranquil spa, swimming pool, fitness centre, and elegant meeting and event spaces.



Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 2 The Leela Palace Chennai, Chennai

Day Itinerary

Begin your exploration of Chennai, a city where tradition and modernity converge. Once known as Madras, it boasts a rich colonial past alongside vibrant contemporary culture. Wander along the iconic Marina Beach, marvel at the intricate Dravidian architecture of Kapaleeshwarar Temple, step into the Government Museum to glimpse centuries of

history, and lose yourself in the colorful energy of bustling local markets. Experience the sights, sounds, and rhythms that make Chennai truly unforgettable

Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 3 Palais de Mahe, Puducherry

Puducherry

Puducherry – previously known as Pondicherry – is made up of four entirely separate enclaves along the Indian coast, all of which were colonised by the French in the 18th century. Named after the largest of these enclaves, this union territory has retained a strong European culture that makes it unlike any other place in India. Nowhere is this more evident than in Puducherry district, dubbed the ‘French Riviera of the East’, where antiquated colonial buildings line the quiet cobbled streets and tree-lined avenues of the old town, and many people still speak French as their first language.

Day Itinerary

Depart Chennai and journey along the scenic east coast towards Pondicherry, with a captivating stop at Mahabalipuram. This historic coastal town, once a thriving capital and trade hub, is renowned for its ancient temples, intricately carved rock-cut sculptures, and serene beaches. Explore the spiritual myths and legends embedded in this UNESCO World Heritage temple complex, a testament to centuries of devotion and artistry. Continue to Pondicherry, where you’ll be transferred to your hotel and can spend the evening at leisure, soaking in the city’s tranquil charm.

Overnight: Palais de Mahe

Palais de Mahe is located in Puducherry, in the French quarter. The hotel is close to the seaside promenade, just 50 metres from the Bay of Bengal. The property offers spacious rooms with TVs, coffee/tea makers, and safes. Guests can enjoy delicious meals at the on-site restaurant and refreshing drinks at the cocktail bar. Additional hotel amenities include a café, an Ayurveda centre, a courtyard swimming pool, and Wi-Fi.



Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 4 Palais de Mahe, Puducherry

Day Itinerary

After a leisurely breakfast, set out to explore the unique charm of Pondicherry. Visit the serene Aurobindo Ashram and wander through the thoughtfully planned streets of Auroville, experiencing a blend of spirituality, art, and philosophy. Stroll along the French Quarter with its colonial architecture, and take in the calm seaside ambiance that defines this former French colony. Spend the evening at leisure, soaking in the city’s tranquil and contemplative atmosphere.

Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 5 Svatma, Thanjavur

Thanjavur

Situated between Trichy and the coast of Tamil Nadu, Thanjavur is an important centre of South Indian religion, art, and architecture. It is also an agricultural hub, fondly known as the 'rice bowl of Tamil Nadu'. Its most visited monument, the exquisite Brihadeeswara Temple, is located at the centre of the city and a style of painting, called Tanjore, which is unique to the region, can be seen here. The temple is one of the Great Living Chola Temples, which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites located in and around Thanjavur. Thousands of people still worship at the Cholas' grand Brihadishwara Temple every day.

Day Itinerary

Continue your journey south from Pondicherry to Thanjavur, a city steeped in cultural heritage and artistic tradition. Marvel at the magnificent Brihadeeswarar Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and discover why Thanjavur has long been a hub for classical arts. From Bharatanatyam dance and Carnatic music to Tanjore painting and bronze sculpture, the city's vibrant artistic legacy comes alive at every corner. Upon arrival, check in to your hotel and spend the evening at leisure, soaking in the serene ambience of this historic city.

Overnight: Svatma

Svatma is a luxury heritage hotel in a quiet lane in Tanjore, Tamil Nadu and raises the bar for hotels in this area. Surrounded by beautifully landscaped grounds, Svatma has been lovingly designed and restored as a testament to Tamilan art and culture.

Each of Svatma's 38 rooms and suites are individually appointed. An unparalleled luxury option in Tanjore. There's three restaurants serving Tamil cuisine to choose from in different areas of the hotel. It also features a gym, yoga center and luxury spa.



Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 6 Svatma, Thanjavur

Day Itinerary

Delve into Thanjavur's rich cultural tapestry as you explore its magnificent architecture. Stand in awe before the iconic Brihadeeswarar Temple, a marvel of Chola craftsmanship, and wander through the regal halls of Thanjavur Palace, where history and artistry intertwine. The rest of the day is at your leisure to soak in the city's serene charm.

Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 7 Gateway Madurai, Madurai

Madurai

Located in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, Madurai is the oldest existing city on the Indian peninsula, and one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, with a recorded history spanning more than 2500 years. It is known as ‘the city of temples’ due to its countless ancient Hindu shrines, including the great Meenakshi-Sundareswar Temple, spread over 6 hectares and featuring a series of 50-metre-high gateway towers that can be seen from afar. The best time to visit Madurai is between October and March, when temperatures are between 20-35 degrees.

Day Itinerary

After breakfast, check out and set off on a scenic drive through the fertile Cauvery delta en route to Madurai. Pause at a charming Chettinad village, where grand mansions adorned with intricate woodwork, vibrant tiles, and ornate interiors offer a window into the region’s opulent past. Delight in a traditional Chettinad lunch, bursting with fresh local spices and regional flavors, a true feast for the senses. Continue your journey to Madurai, where you’ll check in to your hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure, soaking in the city’s historic ambiance.

Overnight: Gateway Madurai

Gateway Madurai is situated amidst the scenic beauty of Pasumalai Hill, offering panoramic views of the city and the Kodai Hills. Guests can relax in spacious rooms equipped with modern amenities, including complimentary Wi-Fi and TVs. Dining options feature an array of various on-site restaurants. Nearby attractions include the historic Meenakshi Temple and the Thirumalai Nayakkar Palace, perfect for cultural exploration. Leisure facilities at the hotel include an outdoor swimming pool, a fitness centre, and a tennis court, ensuring a comfortable and enjoyable stay for all guests.



Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 8 Gateway Madurai, Madurai

Day Itinerary

Madurai, one of Tamil Nadu’s most ancient cities, thrives around the magnificent Meenakshi Temple, a sprawling complex crowned with twelve towering gopurams, each intricately carved and painted in a riot of colors. Begin your day with a guided city tour, wandering through vibrant markets, bustling streets, and historic landmarks that reflect the city’s rich cultural tapestry. In the evening, experience the mesmerizing Hindu prayer ceremony at Meenakshi Temple,

where devotees from across the region gather to honor the fish-eyed Goddess. Return to your hotel to relax, with the rest of the day at leisure.

Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 9 Spice Village, Thekkady

Thekkady

A tourist attraction in Kerala, Thekkady is a district located at the Periyar National Park. Thekkady comprises evergreen forests and savanna grasslands and is known for its natural spices such as black pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and clove. Elephants, tigers, sambar and many other species inhabit the park. Top attractions include the exquisite ancient Mangla Devi Temple, the aromatic Abraham's spice garden, and the massive waterfall at the sleepy, picturesque village of Chellarkovil. Take in panoramic views of the extraordinary landscape from the Chellarkovil viewpoint, and picnic on the rolling, lush green lawns at Pandikuzhi. Don't miss the opportunity to visit the Kadathanadan Kalari Centre, to see demonstrations of the best traditional martial arts. Thekkady also has a rich living tribal culture.

Day Itinerary

After breakfast, check out of your hotel and embark on a scenic drive into Kerala, where rolling hills, verdant forests, and fragrant spice plantations unfold along the route. Upon arrival in Periyar, check in to your hotel and take a moment to unwind amid the lush surroundings. Explore the region's famed spice plantations and discover the history and cultivation of cardamom, pepper, cinnamon, and other aromatic treasures, gaining a true taste of Kerala's natural bounty.

Overnight: Spice Village

Spice Village, located in the cool highlands of Thekkady, offers guests an eco-friendly retreat inspired by the native Mannan tribe. The resort features elephant grass thatched cottages with modern amenities, including Wi-Fi, a minibar and en-suite bathrooms. Guests can savour spice-enriched culinary offerings at the on-site restaurant, which uses locally sourced ingredients. Nearby attractions include the Periyar Tiger Reserve and various spice plantations. Leisure facilities at the resort include a swimming pool and a wellness centre.



Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 10 Spice Village, Thekkady

Day Itinerary

Begin your day with a thrilling visit to the Periyar Tiger Reserve, venturing into its lush wilderness on a serene boat safari along the Periyar River. Glide through calm waters as the surrounding forest comes alive with elephants, deer,

and vibrant birdlife. Your naturalist will guide you, sharing fascinating insights into the flora, fauna, and intricate ecosystem of this verdant sanctuary, making for an unforgettable wildlife experience.

Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 11 Kumarakom Lake Resort Houseboat

Day Itinerary

Today, drive to Kumarakom, a tranquil haven set amidst lush greenery and winding backwaters, home to a vibrant bird sanctuary. Check in to your houseboat and embark on a serene cruise along the sparkling waterways, drifting past quaint villages, swaying palms, and glimpses of everyday life on the banks, as the golden glow of sunset casts a magical spell over this peaceful paradise.

Overnight: Kumarakom Lake Resort Houseboat

Set on the tranquil waters of Lake Vembanad in Kumarakom, Kerala, the Kumarakom Lake Resort Houseboat offers a luxurious escape aboard traditional kettuvalloms. The houseboats feature air-conditioned bedrooms and dining areas, a personal crew with an onboard chef, and flat-screen televisions. Guests enjoy complimentary purified water, tea and coffee service, luxury bath amenities, and Wi-Fi access. Dining is an immersive experience with freshly prepared meals served onboard, while resort guests also have access to the main property's swimming pool, fitness centre, and award-winning Ayurveda spa.



Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 12 Brunton Boatyard, Kochi

Kochi

Also known as Cochin, Kochi is a city in southwest India's coastal Kerala state. This attractive city has served as a popular port for over 600 years and is known for its eclectic architecture and its array of religious monuments, museums, galleries, cafes and antique shops. The city stretches across a number of peninsulas and islands, which can be reached by a network of water taxis and bridges. The majority of Kochi's visitor highlights can be found on the peninsula of Fort Kochi. These highlights include the St Francis Church, the oldest European-built church in India; and Mattancherry Palace, which dates back to 1557 and contains some exceptional Kerala murals and temple art. Other must-see attractions include the Kerala Folklore Museum, displaying more than 4,000 cultural and ethnic artifacts; and the 16th-century Jewish Synagogue; and the vibrant local market.

Day Itinerary

After breakfast, check out of your hotel and set off on a scenic drive through Kerala's lush countryside, dotted with vibrant villages and verdant landscapes. Arrive in Cochin, a captivating city on the Malabar Coast with a rich history as a royal capital and spice trade hub. Upon arrival, check in to your hotel and spend the rest of the day at leisure, soaking in the city's unique blend of culture, heritage, and coastal charm.

Overnight: Brunton Boatyard

Brunton Boatyard is a heritage hotel located on the waterfront of Fort Kochi, Kerala. Nearby attractions include the historic Mattancherry Palace, the centuries-old synagogue in Jew Town, and the bustling spice and antique markets. Sea-facing guest rooms feature en-suite bathrooms, air conditioning, Wi-Fi, tea and coffee makers, and private balconies. Guests can savour diverse culinary traditions at the on-site History Restaurant, which celebrates Kerala's multicultural past. The property also features a swimming pool, cultural experiences, and tranquil views of Vypin Island, making it an elegant retreat that blends colonial charm with modern comfort.



Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 13 Brunton Boatyard, Kochi

Day Itinerary

After breakfast, set out on a guided exploration of Fort Cochin, a historic enclave where cultures from across the globe converge. Wander past the iconic Chinese fishing nets, stroll along Dutch fortifications, and visit the ancient Sephardic

Synagogue, each telling a story of the city's rich heritage. Meander through charming streets lined with colonial architecture, and soak in the sights, sounds, and vibrant history that make Fort Cochin truly unforgettable.

Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Day 14 End of Itinerary

Day Itinerary

Enjoy a leisurely morning at your hotel, taking time to relax and soak in the tranquil surroundings. In time, check out and transfer to the airport for your onward journey, carrying with you memories of Kerala's serene backwaters, lush landscapes, and vibrant culture.

Basis

Bed and Breakfast

Transport

Transfers

Date	Company	Pick Up	Drop Off	Time	Vehicle
		Chennai International Airport [MAA]	The Leela Palace Chennai		Transfer
		The Leela Palace Chennai	Palais de Mahe		Transfer
		Palais de Mahe	Svatma		Transfer
		Svatma	Gateway Madurai		Transfer
		Gateway Madurai	Spice Village		Transfer
		Brunton Boatyard	Cochin International Airport [COK]		Transfer

Travel Information



Vast, diverse, deeply spiritual and utterly unforgettable, India is unlike anywhere else on earth – a melting pot of ethnicities and religions, a treasure trove of history and culture, and a curious mixture of chaos and serenity. Stretching across more than three million square kilometres, it encompasses a staggering array of landscapes, vistas and environs, and offers unparalleled travel experiences – from the beautiful beaches of Goa, to the compelling craziness of Kolkata, the sacred Ganges river banks of Varanasi, the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas in Kashmir and the ancient, exquisitely crafted temples dotted across the entire country. Not to mention the vibrant, friendly people, and the incredible cuisine.

Banking and Currency

Currency

Local currency: Indian Rupee

Symbol: ₹

ISO code: INR

Subunit: The Indian Rupee is divided into 100 paise, but since 2011, only the 50-paise coin is still accepted as valid currency.

Banknotes: ₹5, ₹10, ₹20, ₹50, ₹100, ₹200, ₹500

Coins: ₹0.50 (50 paise), ₹1, ₹2, ₹5, ₹10, ₹20

₹500 and ₹1000 banknotes of Mahatma Gandhi series issued up to November 08, 2016, have ceased to be Legal Tender with effect from the midnight of November 8, 2016.

Banking

Card Transactions: Yes

ATMs: Yes

Mastercard: Yes

Visa: Yes

American Express: Limited acceptance

Diner's club: Limited acceptance

Banking Hours:

Weekdays: 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Weekends: Limited hours or closed, check with local banks.

Public Holidays: Yes (Varies, typically reduced hours)

Foreign exchange services: Yes

Travel, Transport and Getting Around

Air:

Main airlines: Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet, Vistara

International Airports: Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL), Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport

(BOM), Kempegowda International Airport (BLR), and others
Domestic Airports: Numerous, including Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, and Patna.

Road:

Driving on the: Left
Tar roads: Yes
Gravel roads: Limited
Valid International Driver's License needed: Yes
Car hire available: Yes
Taxis: Yes
E-hailing services: Yes

Bus:

Inter-city bus services: Yes
Local city bus networks: Yes

Rail:

Railway system: Extensive
Subway System: Limited (in select cities)

Water:

Ferries: Limited
Water taxis: Limited
Leisure cruises: Limited

Food, Drink and Cuisine Advice**Food and water safety:**

Can you drink the tap water: No
Fresh fruit and veg: Wash thoroughly or peel
Ice: Use commercially produced ice
Meat: Ensure it's well-cooked
Street food: Yes

Local cuisine: Indian cuisine is diverse and varies greatly by region. Highlights include dishes like biryani, curry, dosa, chaat, and tandoori specialties. Vegetarian options are plentiful.

Drinks: Chai, lassi, sugarcane juice, and various regional beverages like coconut water. Alcoholic beverages are available, with beer and whiskey being popular choices.

Tipping: Generally 5-10% in restaurants; tipping for other services is discretionary.

Climate and Weather

Annual rainfall: Varies greatly by region, 500 mm-4,000 mm

Average temperature: Varies greatly by region, 15°C-30°C

Summer:

Average highs: 25-45°C
Average lows: 20-30°C

Winter:

Average highs: 10-25°C
Average lows: 5-15°C

Best time to visit: The best time to visit India depends on the region and your preferences. Generally, the winter months from October to March offer milder temperatures and are ideal for exploring most parts of the country.

Clothing and Dress Recommendations

Spring and Summer

Cool, light, breathable and comfortable: Yes

Lightweight warm clothes: No

Winter and Autumn

Jerseys, cardigans, sweaters, jackets: Recommended

Heavyweight clothing and boots: No

General

Umbrella and raincoat: Yes

Warm gloves, hat and scarf: No

Swimming costume (bathing suit): Yes

Hat, sunglasses and sunblock: Yes

Walking shoes: Yes

Casual: Yes

Smart-casual attire: Yes

Internet Availability

Internet cafes: Limited, mobile data or Wi-Fi in accommodations and cafes available.

Accommodation options: Yes

Restaurants: Yes

Cafes: Yes

Shopping malls: Yes

Public parks: Limited

Libraries: Limited

Electricity and Plug Standards

Plug Type: Type C, Type D, Type M

Voltage (V): 230

Frequency Hertz (Hz): 50

*Travel plug adapter and voltage converter might be necessary depending on your appliances.
