

Southern Splendour

South Indian heritage has been beautifully recorded in many **breathtaking** temple complexes. This tour focuses on **Tamil Nadu and Kerala**, following the Dravidian temple art evolution while exploring a land of **vivid colours, palm fringed beaches, hill stations, tranquil backwaters, plentiful wildlife, exotic flora and friendly people.**



Day 1 Arrive Chennai (Covelong)

Arrive Chennai and transfer to Covelong. Remainder of the day at leisure. Overnight at Taj Fisherman's Cove.

Day 2 Chennai (Covelong)

Mahabalipuram and Kanchipuram saw the beginning of Dravidian temple art. From the earliest examples, carved in solid granite on the beach, they spread with increasing refinement throughout southern India. Overnight at Taj Fisherman's Cove. (B)

Day 3 Covelong to Pondicherry

Drive to Pondicherry, the restored attractive former French colony with its chic streets, elegant houses and ornamental gardens. Afternoon sightseeing. Overnight at The Promenade. (B)

Day 4 Pondicherry to Thanjavur (Tanjore)

Drive to Tanjore, visiting the temples of Chidambaram en-route. Tanjore, considered the cultural capital of India in the 18th century, is still an important center of South Indian art and architecture. Afternoon sightseeing. Overnight at the Ideal River View Resort. (B)

Day 5 Thanjavur to Chettinadu to Thanjavur

Visit an architectural marvel, Chettinadu Mansion, built in 1902. Its 126 rooms, towering pillars, beautiful balconies and hidden lofts reflect a by-gone era of gracious living. Overnight at the Ideal River View Resort. (B.)

Day 6 Thanjavur to Madurai

Onward to Madurai, known as the Temple City. Afternoon at leisure. Overnight at The Gateway. (B)

Day 7 Madurai

Visit the Sri Meenakshi Temple. This stunning, massive temple complex forms the heart of the 2,500 year old city of Madurai. Overnight at The Gateway. (B)

Day 8 Madurai to Pollachi

Drive to the "Coconut City" of the south through the scenic Palni Hills. "Shenbaga Vilasam" built in the early 1900s sits in the midst of hundreds of acres of beautiful farmland. This small hotel is decorated with family heirlooms and antiques. Overnight at Shenbaga Vilasam. (B, L, D) Only vegetarian meals are served.

Day 9 Pollachi

Explore Pollachi on your own. Options include a village walk or cart ride. A visit to Palkkad Fort can also be arranged. Overnight at Shenbaga Vilasam. (B, L, D) Only vegetarian meals are served.

Day 10 Pollachi to Munnar

Drive to the hill station of Munnar, once the summer retreat of the former British Government in South India. Afternoon visit the Eravikulam National Park, home to endangered Nilgiri tahr (ibex). The area is a picturesque tapestry of lush tea plantations. Overnight at Windermere Estate. (B, L, D)

Day 11 Munnar to Periyar

Drive to Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, noted for its herds of



elephant, gaur and a rich variety of water birds. The forests are home to tiger and leopard. Afternoon game viewing is by boat. Overnight at Spice Village. (B)

Day 12 Periyar

Morning nature walk. Afternoon at leisure. Overnight at Spice Village. (B)

Day 13 Periyar to Cochin

By road to Cochin, "Venice of the East". Evening Kathakali dance drama, enacting stories from the Hindu Ramayana and Mahabharata epics. Overnight at Taj Malabar.(B)

Day 14 Cochin to The Backwaters

Sightseeing includes the Dutch Palace and 16th century Jewish synagogue. Board your houseboat and cruise along palm-fringed channels in the backwaters. Overnight on Houseboat. (B, L, D)

Day 15 Backwaters to Kovalam

Drive to Kovalam. The sumptuous Taj Green Cove Resort is set in 10 acres of exotic tropical beauty, with breathtaking views of the backwaters and unspoilt beaches. Remainder of the day at leisure. Overnight at the Taj Green Cove. (B)

Day 16 Kovalam

Day at leisure. Overnight at the Taj Green Cove. (B)

Day 17 Kovalam to Mumbai

Drive to Trivandrum and fly to Mumbai. Remainder of the day free. Overnight at the Taj Mahal Palace & Towers. (B)

Day 18 Mumbai

Morning visit to the cave temples on Elephanta Islands. Afternoon sightseeing of Mumbai. Overnight at the Taj Mahal Palace & Towers. (B)

Day 19 Mumbai and Departure

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.



Kathakali dancers