

# CLASSIC SOUTHERN INDIA

## HIGHLIGHTS

- CRUISE THE TRANQUIL BACKWATERS IN A CONVERTED RICE BARGE
- OBSERVE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE LIFE, CULTURE AND CUSTOMS
- EXPLORE LUSH TEA PLANTATIONS

The south of India is rich in colour and redolent of the fragrant spices it is renowned for. Tea plantations, rice paddy fields and the spice-filled Cardamom Hills provide a spectacular backdrop when exploring the sights, scents and sounds of Kerala. Observing local village life while cruising on tranquil backwaters on a rice barge, taking in traditional dancing, temples and tropical plantations with the chance to discover the region's wildlife, this 13 day A&K journey culminates on the exquisite shores of the Indian Ocean.



### DAY 1

Fly from London to Dubai with Emirates.

### DAY 2

#### *Dubai/Kochi*

Arrive in Kochi (Cochin) where you will be met at the airport by your private car and driver. Staying at the beautiful boutique hotel Malabar House in Fort Cochin for two nights, today is mostly about acclimatisation although the evening's sunset cruise

will give you a taste of the bustling harbour of this former colonial port and surrounding plantations.

### DAY 3

#### *Kochi*

Spend today immersing yourself in all that Kochi has to offer; the spice markets, the Dutch Palace, St Francis Church and the opportunity to observe the local fishermen casting their ingenious Chinese nets and



hauling in their catch. In the evening enjoy wandering through the town to see a traditional Kanthakali dance performance.

### DAY 4

#### *Kochi/Munnar*

Today you will be driven in your private car to the charming little hill station of Munnar (a journey of 150kms and around 4 hours), the region's foremost tea growing area. Although long, the

drive itself is most absorbing as you wind your way through a photogenic landscape of undulating cardamom and tea plantations. You will stay at the delightful private retreat on the Windermere Estate for two nights.

### DAY 5

#### *Munnar*

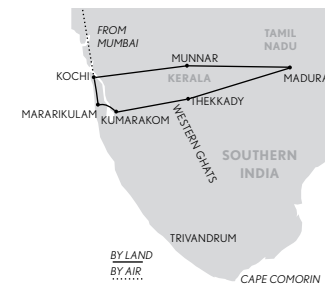
Spend all day exploring the Windermere Estate with its 60-acres of manicured tea gardens and lush green forests,

keeping your eyes peeled for exotic bird life and discovering more about the flora of the region.

### DAY 6

#### *Munnar/Madurai*

A dramatic morning drive takes you across rolling hills to the escarpment of the Western Ghats (170kms, 5 hours) descending into the different world of Tamil Nadu, a state with an ancient artistic culture that is liberally dotted with thousands of ornate temples. ➤



**THE A&K DIFFERENCE** With our leading reputation and rigorous selection policy, we employ the very best guides who ensure you acquire real insight into their culture and country. Our experienced team of experts, both in the UK and locally, are on hand to provide comprehensive support and ensure complete peace of mind. They anticipate individual needs and provide those extra little touches that make the difference between a good and an exceptional holiday, such as meeting you at the airport, private transfers in air-conditioned vehicles and a ready supply of chilled bottled water. With their unique contacts they can arrange special access to individuals, places and experiences not ordinarily available.

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You will stay overnight at the Gateway Hotel, from where your guide will help you unravel the mysteries of the magnificent Meenaskshi Temple.

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#### DAY 7

##### *Madurai/Thekkady*

Today you will be driven across rural plains and lowlands to Lake Periyar (137km, 4 hours), now a wildlife reserve, for an afternoon boat trip, keeping your eyes peeled for the colourful bird life and the lake's famous wild elephants which are often spotted drinking on its shores. Tonight you will stay at the Spice Village, a genuine eco-resort with resident naturalist comprising several individual cottages set in landscaped gardens with a swimming pool and Ayurvedic spa located just outside the National Park.



#### DAY 8

##### *Thekkady/Kumarakom*

Continue your journey by road to the picturesque backwaters of Kumarakom (130kms, 4 hours) to the Zuri Kumarakom Kerala Spa & Resort located on the shores of Vembanad Lake.

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#### DAY 9

##### *Kumarakom*

A full day in which to explore Kumarakom, perhaps enjoying an Ayurvedic Spa treatment in the Maya Spa.

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#### DAY 10

##### *Backwaters cruise*

Today brings a relaxing cruise of the backwaters aboard a beautifully

converted, simple but comfortable rice barge which will be your home overnight, moored at a suitable spot to enjoy the sunset. This is an enchanting way to observe fishermen at work, small villages and local people going about their business.

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#### DAY 11

##### *Kumarakom/Mararikulam*

A picturesque two hour drive through tropical countryside brings you to the delightful coastal fishing village of Mararikulam, where you will stay at the Marari Beach Resort in a luxurious palm-thatched cottage set in 55 acres of coconut grove on the edge of a golden beach.



#### DAY 12

##### *Mararikulam*

All day to enjoy the hotel's facilities and relax on the shores of the Indian Ocean (your stay here can be extended for as long as you would like).

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#### DAY 13

##### *Mararikulam/London*

Drive directly to Kochi Airport for your return flight via Dubai.

At A&K all of our journeys are individually tailored to suit your interests and timescale. You may like to remove days or add on a few extra days of relaxation on the coast or perhaps even Sri Lanka or the Maldives. As a guideline, this 13 day journey through Southern India will cost from £2,819 per person based on two adults sharing with international flights from the UK and is subject to availability. *Please bear in mind this is not a prescriptive itinerary but a suggestion to give you a taste of what is possible with the very highest level of comfort, service and convenience. Accordingly, we aim to quote to a standard as opposed to a price.*

Please call **0845 0700 615** to speak to an expert or visit [www.bercrombiekent.co.uk](http://www.bercrombiekent.co.uk)