



**Tour Of South India**  
**With A Driver Guide In Your Own Exclusive Air-Conditioned Vehicle.**

**THE GRAND TOUR OF SOUTH INDIA**

Day	Date	Location	First Class Hotels	Standard Hotels	Schedule
01		Depart UK			
02		Arrive Bangalore	St Marks Hotel	Shilton Suites Studio Room	>Pick Up From Bangalore Airport
03		Mysore	Regaalis Mysore Superior Room	Kings Kourt Executive Suite	>Tippu Sultan's Fort, Tomb And Summer Palace At Srirangapatnam >Evening Visit To Chamundi Hill Including The Huge Stone Nandi Bull Bangalore-Mysore: 83 Miles Approx 2.5 Hours
04		Mysore	Regaalis Mysore Superior Room	Kings Kourt Executive Suite	>Visit The Extravagant Mysore Palace And The Maharajah's Private Museum >Mysore's Markets And Bazaars
05		Ooty And Coonoor	Taj Garden Retreat Coonoor Deluxe Room	Fortune Sullivan Court Deluxe Room	>Scenic Drive To Ooty Through Dramatic Winding Roads And Dense Forests Of The Nilgiri Hills Mysore-Ooty: 87 Miles Approx 4 Hours
06		Ooty And Coonoor	Taj Garden Retreat Coonoor Deluxe Room	Fortune Sullivan Court Deluxe Room	>Relax At Ooty And Coonoor
07		Coimbatore	The Residency	CAG Pride Deluxe Room	> <b>OOTY-METTUPALAYAM BY THE NILGIRI BLUE MOUNTAIN RAILWAY</b> Depart Ooty: 15:00 Arrive Mettupalayam: 18:35
08		Cochin	The Old Harbour Hotel	Hotel Arches	>Evening Kathakali Dance Performance Coimbatore-Cochin: 120 Miles Approx 4.5 Hours
09		Cochin	The Old Harbour Hotel	Hotel Arches	>Sightseeing At Cochin, Chinese Fishing Nets, Mattancherry Palace, Old Quarter Etc
10		The Backwaters	Lakeland Super Luxury House Boat	Lakeland Luxury House Boat	>Overnight Backwater Cruise Of The Southern Backwaters From Alleppey Cochin-Alleppey: 40 Miles Approx 1.5 Hours
11		Periyar	The Spice Village Spice Cottage	Wild Corridor	>Abraham Spice Garden, Spice Villages And Markets In Kumily >Boat Trip To See Wild Elephants At Periyar National Park Alleppey-Thekkady: 102 Miles Approx 4 Hours
12		Madurai	Taj Garden Retreat Deluxe Room	GRT Regency Superior Room	>Scenic Descent Of The Western Ghats >Tirumalai Nayak Palace >Evening Visit To Sri Meenakshi Temple Thekkady-Madurai: 108 Miles Approx 4 Hours
13		Tanjore	Ideal River View Resort	Hotel Sangam	>Visit To The Chettinad Palace >Traditional Tamil Lunch At Chettinadu Mansion (Payable Locally) >See The World Famous Tanjore Bronzes At The Nayak Palace >Afternoon Visit To Chola King Rajaraja's Magnificent Brihadiswara Temple Madurai-Tanjore: 101 Miles Approx 3.5 Hours

14		Pondicherry	Welcome Heritage Calve	Athithi	>Rickshaw Ride Through The Old French Quarter Tanjore-Pondicherry: 105 Miles Approx 4 Hours
15		Mahabalipuram	GRT Temple Bay	Sterling Beach Resort	>The Beach, Shore Temple And Stone Monuments At Mahabalipuram Pondicherry-Mahabalipuram: 60 Miles Approx 2 Hours
16		Mahabalipuram	GRT Temple Bay	Sterling Beach Resort	>Relax On The Beach At Mahabalipuram
17		Depart Chennai Arrive UK			>Pick Up From Chennai Airport Mahabalipuram-Chennai: 32 Miles Approx 1.5 Hours

Featured Hotels Dependent On Availability At Time Of Booking



Tanjore



Kerala Backwaters



The Mysore Palace.

## Day 02 – Bangalore



Tipu Sultan's Palace At Bangalore

### Bangalore

Capital of the southern state of **Karnataka**, **Bangalore** today is **Asia's** fastest growing cosmopolitan city. It is home to some of the most high tech industries in **India**. Blessed with a salubrious climate, gardens and parks, shopping malls and the best restaurants and pubs in this part of the globe. **Bangalore** is the ideal gateway to **India** and beyond.



Brigade Road In Central Bangalore



### Day 03 – Day 04 Mysore



The Extravagant City Palace At Mysore

#### Mysore

The **Mysore Maharaja's Palace** is one of the most extravagant sights in the whole of **India**. Built in **Indo-Saracenic** style with domes, turrets, arches and colonnades, the palace is a treasure house of exquisite carvings and works of art from all over the world.

**Brindavan Gardens** is one of the best gardens in **South India**. Spread over 150 acres this beautiful location has featured in the song and dance routines of many **Bollywood** movies.

**Mysore** is replete with memories of the legendary warrior **Tippu Sultan** who fought wars with the **British** at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. **Tipu Sultan's Fort** at **Srirangapatnam** with double wall defences was considered the second strongest in **India**. Located just outside the fort is **Tipu Sultan's Wooden Summer Palace** with ornate and beautiful frescoes. At **The Gumbaz** lie the tombs of **Tipu Sultan** and his father **Hyder Ali**.



Spice Market Stall At Mysore



## Day 05 – Day 06 Ooty



Scenic Beauty Of Ooty

### The Road To Ooty

The ascent from the plains of **Karnataka** to **Ooty** is achieved through a dramatic series of 36 hairpin bends and winding roads leading from the dense forests of the **Nilgiri Sanctuaries**. The **Mysore** trunk road actually passes through the **Mudumalai National Park**, where wild elephants are frequently seen by the roadside.

### Ooty And Coonoor

At a height of 7347ft stands **Udhagamandalam (Ooty)** the **Queen of Hill Stations**, founded by the **British** in the 19th century to escape the oppressive heat and serve as summer headquarters for the **Government Of Madras**. If you are chasing the atmosphere of the **Raj**, it still just about lingers in places like the **Ootacamund Club** the best preserved of all the former **British** clubs in **India**, where snooker was invented by **Neville Chamberlain**. The well-kept **Botanical Gardens**, **Ooty Lake** and **The Savoy Hotel** are also worth visiting.

**Coonoor** is the second largest hill station in the **Nilgiris**, surrounded by tea plantations. Its climate is milder than **Ooty** and the weather remains pleasantly cool throughout the year.



Colours Of The Nilgiri Hills

## Day 07 – Coimbatore



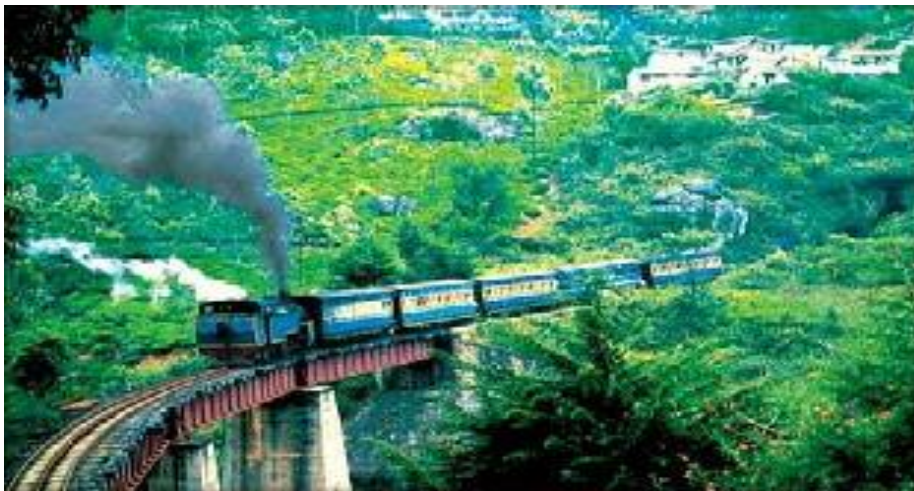
Coimbatore

### The Nilgiri Mountain Railway - Ooty To Mettupalayam

One of the most famous train journeys in the world starts from the railway head at **Ooty**. **Mettupalayam** is reached in 4 hours on **The Nilgiri Mountain Railway** (46 km). A ratchet and pinion track travels through many hair-raising curves and fearful tunnels beside deep ravines full of verdant vegetation, gurgling streams and tea gardens. The scenery, as it unfolds during the trip, is breathtaking, awe-inspiring and fantastic.

### Coimbatore

**Coimbatore**, also known as **Kovai**, is a major industrial city in **India** and the second largest city in the state of **Tamil Nadu**. It is known as **Manchester of South India** because of its textile factories, engineering firms, automobile parts manufacturers, and its highly industrious population that has produced many successful entrepreneurs.



The Nilgiri Blue Mountain Railway





## Day 10 – Rice Boat



View Of Deluxe Bedroom And Backwaters Riceboat Journey

### By Private Rice Boat Through Kerala's Backwaters

#### Rice Boats

A boat journey through **Kerala's Kuttanad Country**, a 75km stretch of shimmering waterways and dense tropical greenery wedged between the hills and the sea is one of the most **Memorable Experiences Any Traveller Could Have In India**.

**Kettuvallams** of olden times were rice and spice barges that used to transport harvests from **Kuttanad** to **Cochin** for sale. Many of these traditional craft have been converted into long houseboats with all the creature comforts of a good hotel including furnished bedrooms, modern bathrooms, cozy living rooms and even balconies for angling.

Each boat has a fully equipped kitchen and an experienced cook to prepare authentic **Kerala** cuisine with sea food specialties and fresh vegetables.

#### The Backwaters

The **Backwaters** are one of the unique attractions of **Kerala**, a chain of canals extending about 1500 kms incorporating a network of 44 rivers, lagoons and lakes.

The canals and lagoons are lined by swaying palm trees and **Chinese Fishing Nets**, cooled by a gentle breeze, and studded with water hyacinths. All kinds of craft ply these waters ferrying cargoes of spice, rice, nuts, *coir* (coconut fibre), *copra* (dried coconut) and people.



Rice Boat Interior



Rice Boat On Shores Of Vembanad Lake

## Day 11 – Periyar



Wild Elephants At Periyar Lake Wildlife Reserve

### The Periyar Lake National Park

Set high in the ranges of the **Western Ghats** is the **Periyar National Park and Tiger Reserve**. Within its 777 sq km of deciduous and evergreen forest roam some 750 **Elephants** that are best observed on a 2-hour boat trip around the lake at the heart of the sanctuary.

Apart from **Elephants**, other animals to be seen at **Periyar** include **Gaur (Indian Bison)**, **Wild Pigs**, **Sambar (Elk)**, **Barking Deer**, **Mouse Deer**, **Dhole (Indian Wild Dog)** and very rarely, a **Tiger**.

There are now, an estimated 40 **Tigers** and a similar number of **Leopards** in the reserve. Four species of primates are found at **Periyar** - the rare **Lion-tailed Macaque**, the **Nilgiri Langur**, **Common Langur** and **Bonnet Macaque**. **Periyar** also happens to be the habitat of the elusive **Nilgiri Tahr**, which is rarely to be seen.

### Trips To Spice Villages

**Thekkady** is the centre of the spice growing area of **Kerala**, and the aromas of spices are everywhere. Numerous **Spice Plantation Villages** have guided tours to identify various spice plants and even cookery demos using spices. At **Kumily Market** there is a huge cardamom auction and shops selling different types of spices.



Chilli, Black Pepper And Cinnamon



Reflections At Periyar Lake Wildlife Sanctuary

## Day 12 – Madurai



Sri Meenakshi Temple At Madurai

### Madurai

An ancient city and centre of **Tamil** knowledge with origins lost in the mists of time, said to be over 2000 years old. **Madurai** was the capital city for the great **Pandya** kings.

The **Sri Meenakshi Temple** at **Madurai** is one the wonders of **India** and is famed for its architectural and religious importance. The complex houses 12 magnificent gopurams that are elaborately sculptured and painted, the tallest of which, the famous **Southern Tower**, rises to over 170 ft high.

Also worth visiting is **The Thirumalai Nayakar's Palace** (1623), a classic example of the **Indo-Saracenic** style of extravagant architecture. **Madurai** is famous for **Jasmine** flower sellers and spice markets that crowd the narrow streets around the main temple complex



A Devotee At Sri Meenakshi Temple



## Day 13 – Tanjore



The Majestic Sri Brihadishwara Temple At Tanjore

### Chettinad

The home of the **Chettians**, a prosperous banking and business community with palatial mansions such as **The Chettinad Palace**, built in 1912 with wide inner courtyards and spacious rooms. Huge granite pillars stand against stained glass and imported **Italian** tiles.

### Tanjore

**Tanjore** or **Thanjavur** was the capital of the **Chola Empire** and is a flourishing centre for bronze sculpture and a unique style of painting. You can go to small workshops around the town to see bronze casting that has evolved to unsurpassed levels.

The famous **Brihadishwara Temple**, built by **Rajaraja The Great** (11thC) is one of **India's** finest UNESCO World Heritage Sites. You need to visit in the late afternoon when the crowds disappear and the sun's rays turn the granite structure into glorious golden hues.

**The Royal Palace At Thanjavur** was built partly by the **Nayaks** around 1550 AD. It is possible to climb the **Godagopuram**, an eight storey watchtower and armoury of 190 feet high. The museum's galleries contain a **World Famous Collection Of Magnificent Tanjore Bronzes** depicting ancient themes, dancers and deities.



Bronze Casting At Tanjore

## Day 14 – Pondicherry



French Quarter At Pondicherry

### Journey Up The Coromandel Coast

A lovely new road runs north along the coast to **Pondicherry** and **Mahabalipuram**, passing casuarina groves and farm orchards, as well as beautiful arid coastal landscapes containing huge salt pans.

### Pondicherry

**Pondicherry (Pondy)** was a small union territory where the **French East India Company** set up a trading centre in 1673 and ruled even after independence to remain a part of **French India** until 1954. The former **French** colony is also known as **The French Riviera Of The East (La Côte d'Azur de l'Est)**, as a remarkable degree of **French** influence in **Pondy** exists today. The relics of **French** rule are evident from the dress of the police to the simplicity of the people.

The entire town is divided into 2 sections, the **French Quarter (Ville Blanche)** and the **Indian Quarter (Ville Noire)**. Many streets still retain their **French** names. **Pondy** has a great collection of boutique hotels such as **The Hotel De'LOrient** that serve excellent **French Creole** cuisine.



Huge 'Krishna Butter Ball' Stone Boulder At Mahabalipuram

### Day 15 – Day 16 Mahabalipuram



Mahabalipuram

#### Mahabalipuram

The marvellous city of **Mahabalipuram** was the seaside capital of the **Pallava** dynasty. The artistic temperament of these rulers resulted in some of the greatest works of **South Indian** art.

The scenic **Shore Temple**, **The Five Rathas** (chariots) made from single stone boulders and **Arjuna's Penance**, the largest bas-relief in the world are highlights. The entire city resonates to the sound of chisels from small workshops that produce very ornate stone sculptures.



The Famous Arjuna's Penance Bas Relief



### Day 17 – Depart Chennai - Arrive UK