

BOUTIQUE KERALA

DAY 1

Depart London Heathrow for your overnight Emirates Airlines flight to Cochin via Dubai.

DAY 2

Upon arrival at Cochin International airport, you will be met and greeted, before being transferred to your hotel and assisted with check in.

You will be staying at [MALABAR HOUSE](#) for two nights.

In the evening, enjoy a walk around Fort Cochin area.

Cochin, also known as Kochi is a city of many parts. Around for a long, long time, Cochin played a pivotal role in the development of shipping and trade in the region. Cochin's prime location on the west coast, its fine bay and protected harbour made it popular with seafarers and merchant ships who made frequent stops to stock up on spices, coffee and wood enroute to the rich markets of Europe and West Asia.

Cochin prospered as a busy port city and commercial centre. Its seafront is still extremely relevant to Cochin and to India. It houses a Naval Base and one of India's busiest ports. Its twin city, Ernakulum, is an important railhead and industrial centre.

DAY 3

COCHIN

After breakfast you will proceed for a half day sightseeing tour of Cochin.

We shall begin the tour by visit to Dutch Palace, also known as Mattancherry Palace. It was built by the Portuguese and presented to the Raja of Kochi in 1555 AD. It acquired the present name after 1663 when the Dutch carried out extensions and repairs in the palace. At no time did the Portuguese or Dutch stay here. Its interiors are decorated with murals from the Ramayana and there are some lively displays of royal costumes and palanquins.

Then visit Jewish Synagogue, built in 1568 AD. The Great Scrolls of the Old Testament, the copper plates in which the grants of privilege made by the Cochin rulers were recorded and the exquisite Chinese hand-painted tiles are of interest here.

Later you will visit St. Francis Church in Fort Cochin. The Protestant church was originally built by the Portuguese in 1510 AD and is believed to be the oldest church built by the Europeans in India. It is here the remains of the inveterate traveller, Vasco-da-Gama were initially buried and 14 years later, his mortal remains were taken to Portugal.

Santa Cruz Baslica Church is also worth visiting. Some beautiful paintings can be seen here. The Chinese fishing nets that line the sea-front and exhibit a mechanical method of catching fish by local fishermen in Fort Cochin is what you will see on your way while returning to your hotel. Said to have been brought from China by traders of Kubalai Khan's Court, they are used at high tide.

In the evening, you will witness Kathakali dance performance.

Kathakali is a highly stylized classical Indian dance-drama noted for the attractive make-up of characters, elaborate costumes, detailed gestures and well-defined body movements presented in tune with the anchor playback music and complementary percussion. It originated in the country's present day state of Kerala during the 17th century and has developed over the years with improved looks, refined gestures and added themes besides more ornate singing and precise drumming.

DAY 4

After an early breakfast at the hotel, you will drive to Kanam.

Upon arrival, you will check into your hotel, [SERENITY](#) for a two night stay.

Serenity at Kanam estate is an intensely private 6 bedroom villa hotel surrounded by rubber estates and tropical spice gardens, located between Cochin and the backwaters. Thoroughly designed, yet retaining the heritage ambience, this dream come true 1920s estate bungalow blends into an unspoiled rural setting. Its position on a small hill top gives it wonderful views of the Blue Mountains.

Rest of the day is at leisure or explore the area.

DAY 5

KANAM

After breakfast you will spend few hours with Lakshmi, the elephant.

Take her to the river, wash her, feed her and be her Mahout for the day. Being so close to such a magnificent animal is a truly unique experience.

Later, enjoy a fabulous nature trek or just relax and enjoy the peace and calm of the estate.

DAY 6

After breakfast you will drive to Vechoor.

Upon arrival, you will check in at your Homestay, [PHILIP KUTTY'S FARM](#).

Philip Kutty's Farm is an exclusive home stay, run by a family, on a beautiful farm island, in the backwaters of Kerala.

Staying at Philipkutty's Farm is an excellent opportunity to enjoy the real Kerala experience in a fascinating picturesque location, with a caring family to look after you. It is a special place, as it provides something different, especially for those who prefer small and friendly places, and, could just be, the perfect hideaway for the bespoke traveller.

The property is 50 acre farm, hosted stay with home cooked food and the personal attention of the hosts.

In the afternoon, there is a visit to a spice plantation.

In the evening you will dine with the family and fellow travellers. An unforgettable experience to take in some Indian hospitality.

DAY 7

After breakfast you will embark for your house-boat for overnight stay in an air conditioned cabin with private facilities, having spent the day cruising the Vembanad Lake.

Kettuvallams, the stitched boats, provide the best way to experience the colourful backwaters of Kerala. The wood commonly used to make Kettuvallams is 'Anhili', which is found in abundance in central Travancore area. Large planks are tied together using handmade coir ropes and beaten coconut fibres. This gives the Kettuvallams enough strength to withstand heavy waves in the sea. Kettuvallams are built entirely without the use of nails.

The houseboats are generally powered by a small outboard engine, allowing one to cruise along the backwaters. A sojourn in Kettuvallam, the House boat of Kerala, offers a panoramic view of one of the most picturesque aspects of the God's Own Country.

Throughout the day, watch village life unfold as you gently float by. You will cruise through the palm-fringed backwaters, throughout a night in waxing moonlights.

All meals will be served on board the house-boat.

The lullaby of the waves and the dazzling delights of the moonlit night will be experienced by spending a night aboard the Kettuvallam.

DAY 8

After breakfast you will disembark the houseboat and proceed to the hotel for check in at [PURITY](#) in Muhamma for a two night stay.

Rest of the day is at leisure.

DAY 9

MUHAMMA

After breakfast, the day is at leisure to pursue independent activities, or relax by the pool.

Optional tours include:

- Village Walk - Aymanam is a small village in Kottayam District of Kerala, bordering Lake Vembanad on the west. Visit by road the God of small things famed Aymanam village. Cruise in an open canoe through Meenachil river. Meet a Kathakali master who will explain various act and dance. Walk through nature. Watch small things.
- Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary - Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary is home to different species of birds, including migratory birds from Siberia. This sanctuary is spread across 14 acres and was established by the Government of India for preserving coconut trees and mandrakes, which are the natural habitat of birds. The popular bird species found at this bird sanctuary are water duck, waterfowl, owl, heron, egret, cuckoo and Siberian cranes. Tourists can also see kingfishers, paradise fly-catchers, night herons and golden-backed woodpeckers.

DAY 10

After breakfast, you will drive to Kovalam on the coast road.

Upon arrival, you will be assisted with check in at your Hotel, [NIRAAMAYA SURYA SAMUDRA](#) for a three night stay.

Kovalam offers an excellent diversity with Kovalam beach to suit all desires and occasions. Three curve shaped beaches, alienated by stony outcroppings, from the major attraction of this coastal resort. Backed by precipitously mounting headlands and covered by fertile coconut palms, the beaches, especially the southernmost part of lighthouse beach.

It is also lined with a host of shops and shacks offering all kinds of services; creating an unmistakable resort atmosphere. Curio shops, hawkers of Kashmiri and Tibetan products, moneychangers and beachwear shops, between the surplus of restaurants and hotels, do brisk business during peak tourist season.

In the evening, you are at leisure to relax at the Hotel.

DAYS 11 AND 12

KOVALAM

After breakfast, the day is at leisure.

Spend the day enjoying the beaches or pursue independent activities.

Optional tours include:

- The Lighthouse - Located at the southern end of Kovalam Beach, at a hillock named Kurumkal. Due to this lighthouse, the southern end of the Kovalam Beach is called as Lighthouse Beach. This lighthouse is 30 metres long and is painted in red and white colour. Tourists visiting this lighthouse can climb the 142 spiral stairs to reach the observation platform, from where views of Beemapalli Mosque and Poovar are available.
- Napier Museum- Established in the year 1855 this art and history museum was named after Lord Napier who was the governor of the then Madras (Chennai) from 1866 - 1872. Designed by Robert Chisholm, this architectural master piece was completed in the year 1880. Its gothic style architecture & minarets along with its Indo-Gothic structures boasts of natural air conditioning! This 150 year old museum houses rare collections of bronze idols, ancient ornaments, temple chariot & ivory carvings. The museum grounds houses the Zoological garden which is said to be the oldest in India, established in 1857 & spread over 55 acres.
- Sri Chitra Art Gallery – This gallery is situated adjacent to the Napier museum and has an explicit collection of Raja Ravi Varma paintings. Also on display are exquisite Mughal, Rajasthani & Rajput. The Tanjore and Balinese paintings popular for their intricate and elegant stone work with rich colors used in the paintings reflect the jewels of Indian art. The Sri Chitra gallery has an international appeal to art lovers with its display of Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese art works. The section on miniature paintings is sure to leave you awe inspired.

- Vivekananda Rock Memorial - One of the most interesting places to see in the southern part of India. It is situated in Kanyakumari and it is a fort and an island. Vivekananda Rock Memorial stands on top of a two rocks that are situated approximately 500 meters off the island. Although the Vivekananda Rock Memorial itself is fairly recent and built around the 1970's, the two rocks themselves have been there since the millennia. It is thought that the great philosopher Swami Vivekananda had meditated on the rock seeking enlightenment. Vivekananda Rock Memorial is open everyday and attracts many visitors constantly.

DAY 13

Have an early breakfast at the hotel, before being met and transferred to Trivandrum International airport for your flight to London via Dubai with Emirates.