

Gane & Marshall

TAILOR-MADE DESTINATIONS

Discover Kerala



With the Arabian Sea to the west and the Ghats to the east, Kerala is a land of unique and varied terrain. This south-western Indian region is sustained by the disorderly network of lagoons, canals and rivers (over 44) that divide its interior, giving life to the paddy fields, coconut groves, and tea and spice plantations that are Kerala's main export. In many parts, Kerala is still underdeveloped, but its beautiful beaches, tranquil backwaters, lush hill stations and unusual wildlife make it one of Southern India's most unique destinations.

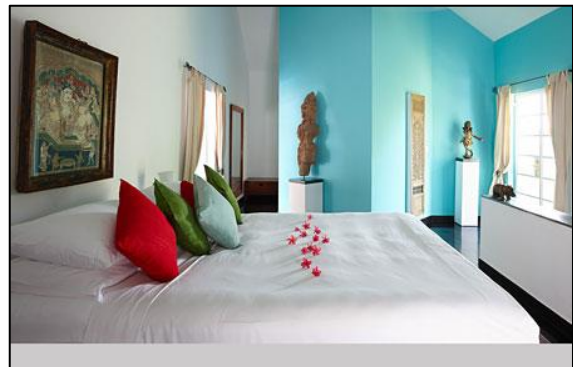
Day 1: Cochin

On arrival in Cochin you will be met by our local representative and transferred by private vehicle to Malabar House for two nights (B&B).

Malabar House

Malabar House is located in the heart of historical Fort Cochin, opposite St. Francis Church and a few minutes' walk from the Chinese fishing nets.

Not just another Cochin hotel, Malabar House is an important piece of Fort Cochin's & Kerala's history, dating back to 1755 when Jan Herman Clausing, a Dutchman, bought the property. It has since been owned by spice traders, tea traders and bankers. In 1996 it became Fort Cochin's first boutique heritage hotel.



Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

There are 17 rooms, all of which have been furnished with antiques and art. The rooms feature AC, cable TV, telephone, mini bar, coffee maker, Wi-Fi internet and safe deposit lockers. The hotel has a swimming pool, free bicycles, Ayurvedic treatments, a charming restaurant and wine lounge.

This is a small, cosy hotel situated amidst the vibrant, historical harbour city – ideally located for sightseeing, shopping and exploring, as well as for Kerala's famous backwater cruises.

Remainder of the day at leisure.

Day 2: Cochin

After breakfast at your hotel, depart on a half day Old Kochi sightseeing tour. Intended to help you get your bearings of the city, the tour will visit the Synagogue, Dutch Palace & St Francis Church.

The gateway to Kerala, Cochin (or Kochi) is a vibrant city. Subject to a succession of colonial rulers over the years, Cochin bears the influences of its Arab, Chinese, Portuguese, British and Dutch former masters, all of whom have left indelible marks on the history and development of the city. Today, however, Cochin is a major port in a thriving and fiercely independent India.



Cochin's core attractions are its beautiful synagogue, built in 1568 and home to giant Old Testament scrolls; the Dutch Palace, with its fine mural paintings, constructed by the Portuguese but heavily adapted by the Dutch before being presented to the Raja of Kochi in the 17th century; St Francis Church, the oldest European church in India, and burial ground of Vasco de Gama.

Return to Malabar House after your morning tour. The rest of the day is at leisure.

This afternoon, you might like to further explore the city independently. Your hotel offers free bicycle hire, allowing you to discover Cochin in your own time. Ask reception for a map and set off through the bazaars and lanes.

Few cities can offer such a unique mixture of history, culture and shopping as Cochin – just wander the area close to the hotel for beaches, museums, cafes, the famed fishing nets and shopping on Princess Street.



The streets in the immediate vicinity of the hotel, with their remnants of the Dutch colonial style houses, are fascinating to stroll around, especially in the early morning.

This evening, attend a Kathakali dance performance in one of Cochin's many theatres. One of the oldest theatre forms in the world, Kathakali originated in Kerala. It's a group dance, with the dancers taking varied roles in performances based on Hindu mythology, with a particular emphasis on the two epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

Day 3: Munnar

After breakfast, meet with your driver and depart Cochin for Munnar (180 Kilometres; approx. 4½ hours). On arrival in Munnar, check-in at the Windermere Estate for two nights in a Garden Room (B&B).

Windermere Estate

Windermere Estate is an upmarket retreat offering plush but homely accommodation in a unique and charming setting.

The rooms are set in bungalows that are a throwback to older days, with gabled roofs, high ceilings, beams of red cedar, teak furniture, terracotta and hardwood floors, linen furnishings and crochet & cross-stitch art framed on the walls. Cooled by the surrounding mist, there are no fans or air conditioners here, as they are simply not required. The large garden rooms have a verandah overlooking either the garden or valley.



The remainder of the day is at leisure for you to discover the estate.

Day 4: Munnar

After breakfast, take a morning tour of the Windermere tea plantation and tea museum, returning to the main estate for lunch.

In the afternoon, enjoy one of the many activities on offer in and around Munnar:



Bicycles Rides – The quiet roads of Munnar are perfect for cycling. Bicycles can be hired from the hotel or in town.

Shopping – Tea tops the must-buy list, but which ones!? There are many flavours of tea on offer: vanilla, masala, cardamom, ginger, jasmine, lemon and lemongrass. Munnar is also famous for its spices—cardamom, cinnamon and pepper can all be purchased in town. Most of the tea and spice shops are located in the market, where you can also buy wooden handicrafts and other souvenirs.

Treks & Walks – Close the Windermere Estate, the Western Ghats are a prime attraction for keen walkers. There are guided walks of 7km and upwards, offering spectacular views over the town from the Ghats. Shorter walks, to Laxmi Hills and Chokkanadu Hills, and to the Top Station, are also possible.

Day 5: Periyar

After breakfast, travel by road to Periyar (160kms; approx. 4 hours). On arrival, check in at the Spice Village Hotel for two nights in a standard Villa (B&B).

Spice Village

Spice Village can be found in the wilderness of Periyar, high in the western Ghats of Kerala. For centuries, this region attracted adventurers, empire builders, kings and merchants lured by the

spices and the wild beauty of the land. The Portuguese and Jewish settlers of Cochin turned the natural resources of the area into wealth by growing pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, mace and anise.



Spice Village attempts to capture the essence of life in a mountain tribal village – with some concessions, of course, to comfort (but not too many!) There is no air-conditioning, no television, and no piped music, just simple pine furniture and plain terracotta floors. There is little pretension, yet Spice Village is renowned for its excellent service and unique location. The resort consists of 52 cottages, set in eight acres of forest. The design of the cottages has been inspired by the local jungle dwellings, with thickly-thatched roofs supported by roughly cut wooden beams, intricately-carved double beds, and traditional fabrics.

Facilities at Spice Village include a swimming pool, badminton & tennis courts, and Ayurveda Spa.

Day 6: Periyar

After breakfast, join a guided tour of the spice plantation.

The plantation's naturalist and chef will guide you through the region's abundant wealth of spices, describing how they are grown and their various uses in cooking. The gardens of Spice Village should be a delight for any keen cook or botanist! Across its 14-acres, the property has almost 150 varieties of tree, including Indian Almond, Olive, Teak, and Black Plum. It is best visited during the months of April, May and June, when the fruit trees are in full bloom.



Afternoon at leisure. There are many activities to choose from, such as garden walks, bird watching, fishing, and a variety of treatments at the Ayurvedic facility. Sports facilities include

tennis, badminton, volleyball and yoga. You can even join an evening cookery class with the chef to learn the secrets of traditional Keralan cooking!

Day 7: Kumarakom

After breakfast, meet with your driver and depart Periyar for Kumarakom (120Kms; approx. 3½ hours).

On arrival, check-in at Kumarakom Lake Resort for two nights in a Meandering Pool Villa (B&B).



Kumarakom Lake Resort

Kumarakom Lake Resort is located on the banks of Lake Vembanad, amid the green and tranquil backwaters of Kerala. With 25 acres of lush greenery, Kumarakom Lake Resort is a comfortable, modern resort in a beautiful setting, where you can watch houseboats drift by from the comfort of your cottage, as the sun sets overhead.

Kumarakom Resort has its own river boat for sunset or full-day cruises along the Kerala backwaters. Fishing rods can be provided if you'd like to try your hand at fishing, or you may prefer to just relax in one of the lakeside hammocks. Other facilities include a floodlit badminton court and swimming pool.

Bicycles are provided and a great way to explore nearby Kumarakom Village, where there is a spa, restaurants and a traditional Kerala teashop.

Day 8: Kumarakom

Breakfast at the hotel, followed by a morning visit to the Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary. The sanctuary is home to numerous species, including kites, harries, herons, darters, teals and egrets, as well as migratory birds such as the Siberian stork.

Afternoon at leisure; enjoy an activity such a backwaters cruise, a trip to Kottayam, or cycling. Later in the day, don't miss the sunset cruise.

Day 9: Alleppey

After breakfast, meet with your driver and depart for Alleppey (25Kms; approx. 40 mins).

On arrival in Alleppey, board the Rainbow Cruises Houseboat and begin your tour of the Alleppey backwaters. Overnight on the houseboat in an AC bedroom (FB).



A floating holiday on the water in a Kerala houseboat is a truly charming and tranquil experience. You will set sail in a traditional Kettuvallom, with all the expected modern comforts. These 80-foot long crafts have been adapted into fully-furnished houseboats with en-suite bedrooms, lounge, deck, kitchenette and a crew with multilingual guide.

Day 10: Mararikulam

After breakfast, disembark in Alleppey, meet with driver and depart for Mararikulam (30kms; approx. time: 45 mins). On arrival, check into Marari Beach Resort for three nights in a garden villa (B&B).

Marari Beach Resort

Marari Beach Resort is a beautiful retreat situated on one of Kerala's most pleasant beaches, Marari. The lodge has a calm, relaxed atmosphere, its thatched cottages blending perfectly into the natural palm-fringed surrounds. The villas at Marari are set back from the beach; some have private pools. In-room amenities include air conditioning, minibar, tea/coffee facilities.



The food at Marari is a delight – local dishes prepared with fruits & vegetables from the lodge garden and fresh seafood caught locally.

At Marari, you can choose relax on the beach, take long walks and bicycle rides, or take time out to stroll down to the village and explore. There are regular cookery classes most evenings, where you can learn the delights of Kerala cuisine.

Facilities at Marari include a swimming pool, Ayurvedic spa, free wireless internet, tennis courts, beach volleyball, and yoga centre.

Day 13: Mararikulam - Kochi

Breakfast at the hotel, then depart for Kochi (50kms; approx. 90 mins). You will be dropped off at the airport if flying out today, or at your hotel in the city centre if continuing your tour.

Price Guide:

The cost of this safari itinerary is from **£1,895 per person**, based on twin share and subject to availability at the time of booking. For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).

Includes:

- Accommodation and meals as described
- All transfers, sightseeing and excursions as per the itinerary
- Qualified English-speaking guides
- Entrance fees
- All currently applicable taxes

Excludes:

- International flights
- Meals not specified
- Camera fee wherever levied
- Personal expenses
- Tips and gratuities
- Travel Insurance – ask us for a quote

