



Le Passage
to India

Local experts for



Fascinating Kerala



INDIA | 6 DAYS / 5 NIGHTS

Route: Round-trip from/to Kochi

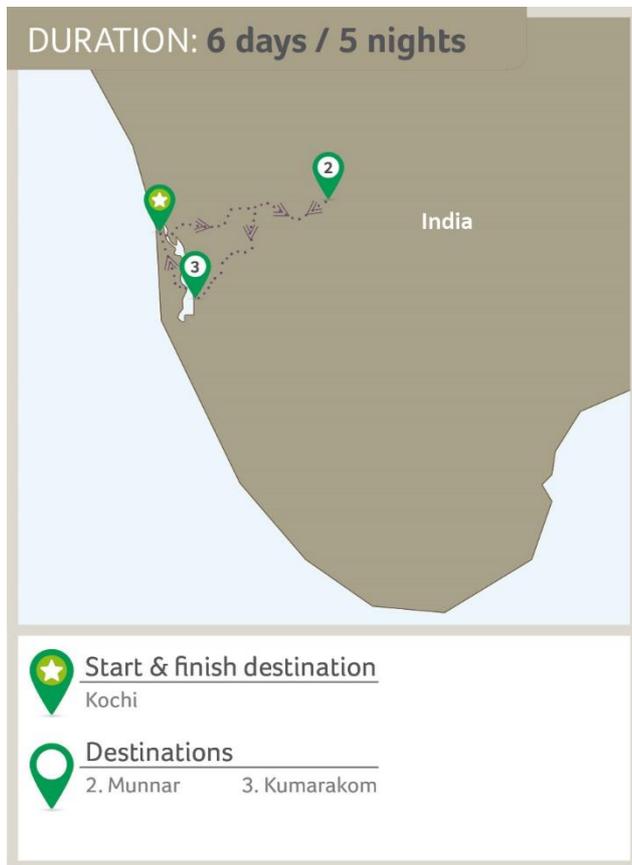
Type of tour: Culture, nature

Departure day: Saturday

TOUR OVERVIEW

Incredible India is more than a country – it's a multicultural subcontinent with dozens of languages and religions. And nowhere is this diversity more evident than in the exotic south. With the Arabian Sea to the west, the Western Ghats towering in the east and networked by 44 rivers, Kerala enjoys unique geographical features and an equable climate. With tranquil stretches of emerald backwaters, lush hill stations and exotic wildlife, Kerala is a destination that will capture your heart.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



Kochi: Sightseeing tour with visits to the Mattancherry Dutch Palace, the synagogue, St Francis's Church and Santa Cruz Basilica as well as the famous Chinese fishing nets

Munnar: Visit a tea museum and plantations in this picturesque hill station in the heart of Kerala's tea country

Backwaters Cruise: Sail on a traditional houseboat and see a side to India that visitors long to experience on this optional excursion

DON'T MISS

Kochi: Hire a bike and go for a ride in Fort Kochi area just before sunset – the place is abuzz and the colours are incredible

Munnar: Enjoy an evening walk in the local bazaar and try some of the locally produced homemade chocolates

Kovalam: Take a tuk-tuk to a nearby fishing village and savour local favourites such as banana chips and tapioca chips

DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 | ARRIVAL IN KOCHI

Meet and greet on arrival at Kochi International Airport, followed by an escorted transfer to the hotel by our airport coordinator. Kochi, which was formerly known as Cochin, is one of the most culturally diverse cities in India, with ancient Christian and Jewish communities as well as more traditional Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist ones. Its colonial past has also bequeathed a heritage that features Portuguese, Dutch and British culture and architecture.

In the afternoon, walk through the historic districts of the town. Our **walking tour** will take us to Jew Town, including the **Pardesi Synagogue** (Closed on Fridays and Saturdays); the **Mattancherry Palace**, known locally as the Dutch Palace (Closed on Fridays); **Fort Kochi**, reminiscent of European streets and houses; the **Chinese Fishing Nets** on the northern shore of Fort Kochi; and **St Francis Church**, near a typical English village green. Enjoy some time observing the fishermen working

the nets as the sun sets. In the evening, you will be taken for one-hour **Kathakali dance show** - the ancient and intriguing dance form of Kerala.

Overnight in Kochi hotel on bed-and-breakfast basis.

DAY 2 | KOCHI – MUNNAR (210km – 5.5 hrs)

Take to the road after breakfast at the hotel, driving inland to Munnar, which is some 1,600 metres above sea level in the Western Ghats Mountains. Pass **lush and verdant landscapes**, which become progressively more beautiful the higher you climb. On the way, we stop at the **Athirapally Waterfalls**, one of the most impressive waterfalls in India. These magnificent falls on the River Chalakudy are located at the entrance to Sholayar hill range. This waterfall drops from a height of 25 m (80 ft) and is the biggest waterfall in Kerala. In monsoon season, the water rises gaining power, and the streams join together to lend the falls the nickname of 'The Niagara of India'. Admire spectacular views of the Sholayar hills and a unique view of the waterfalls from the viewpoint.

Continue to Munnar, and on arrival, check in to the hotel, with the rest of the afternoon at leisure to explore the small market of this quaint little hill station. Also worth a visit are the street food kiosks, very popular among the locals.

Overnight in Munnar hotel on bed-and-breakfast basis.



DAY 3 | IN MUNNAR

Breakfast at the hotel is followed by a **sightseeing tour of Munnar**. Nowadays, Munnar is all about the tea industry but its development dates from its days as the cool summer retreat of British administrators in Kerala, and English country cottages are dotted around Munnar town and its hinterlands. The surrounding area features rolling hills of virgin forests, scenic valleys, mountain streams, splashy waterfalls and sprawling tea plantations, which seem to go on forever into the horizon. Visit the informative **Tea Museum in the Nallathanni Estate** to learn more about the process of tea making. The museum has exhibits such as old machinery used for tea production as well as intriguing photographs relating the history of the local industry. A documentary screening also informs about Munnar's tea heritage and how it went from being a rainforest as recently as the 1880s to one of the world's prime tea producing areas.

Then visit the **CSI Church of Christ**. Built by the British in 1910, the church boasts unique architecture. Built on a rocky outcrop, it displays some lovely stained glass and commemorative brass plaques. The afternoon is at leisure for you to relax at the resort or stroll through the quiet pathways crisscrossing the endless tea plantations.

Overnight in Munnar hotel on bed-and-breakfast basis.

DAY 4 | MUNNAR – KUMARAKOM (150KM – 4.5 HRS)

After a leisurely breakfast, drive to Kumarakom on the eastern shore of Lake Vembanad, with its majestic canals, streams and distributaries along banks that weave an intricate and beautiful web. On arrival, check in to the hotel. **Kumarakom** is a stunningly beautiful cluster of backwater fishing villages set against the backdrop of Lake Vembanad. Also, spread across 14 acres, the local bird sanctuary here is a birder's paradise. An enchanting backwater destination, Kumarakom is truly one of the gems of Kerala, offering exotic sights of flora and fauna, boat cruises, and fishing experiences.

Overnight in Kumarakom hotel on bed-and-breakfast basis.

Optional spice plantation tour (not included). A fascinating and informative visit to spice plantations and the smaller spice gardens. The owners pride themselves on their adaptation of organic farming methods. The visit enables you to get a deeper understanding on how the spices, used in everyday cooking throughout the world, are grown, harvested and processed before finally finding their way to the local supermarket. A must for foodies.

DAY 5 | KUMARAKOM

Enjoy the day at leisure to enjoy the various facilities available at the hotel.

Overnight in Kumarakom hotel on bed-and-breakfast basis.

Optional backwaters cruise (not included): Head to Alleppey to board a houseboat for a scenic and leisurely cruise through the famed backwaters. The houseboats are adaptations of kettuvallams boats, used for generations to transport rice and spices. Only natural materials are used and not a single nail should have to hold the boat together. Sail through the intricate labyrinth of backwaters, canals and brooks, which crisscross paddy fields, marshlands and lagoons. The serene natural beauty and simple charm of the backwaters surprises at every turn. This is the Kerala countryside at its best. As your boat journey comes to an end, disembark at Alleppey and transfer back to your hotel in Kumarakom.

DAY 6 | KUMARAKOM – DEPARTURE KOCHI (55km – 90 min)

Depart Kumarakom after breakfast at the hotel and transfer to the Kochi Airport.

Breakfast included.

END OF SERVICES

For more information please contact: info@lpti.in