

# Southern India

An escorted tour with YOU Travel Orewa  
7th - 21st March 2025



SEE INSIDE  
FOR FULL  
ITINERARY

## At a glance:

17 day tour

.....  
Fully escorted with local English-speaking guides, and a YOU Travel Orewa host  
.....

Visit Mumbai (of Slumdog Millionaire fame), Chennai, Pondicherry, Kochi, Munnar Hill Station (home to tea estates)  
.....

Two night Kettuvallam houseboat cruise where you will cruise through scenic lakes and floating villages whilst enjoying traditional southern Indian dishes served by your chef.

## Have you ever wanted to see Mumbai, the New York of India?

Join us on this fascinating exploration of India's south, from the modernity of Mumbai to the heritage of Chennai and Pondicherry, the melting-pot of Kochi and the emerald-green plantations of Munnar.

The legacy of colonial times remains, blending with ancient traditions evident in the varied architecture, religions and cuisines we will encounter along the way.

We end with a tranquil Kettuvallam cruise through the scenic backwaters of Kerala.

**YOU Travel Orewa**

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# Itinerary:

## Friday 7 March 2025

### Auckland - Singapore

Local pick-up and transfer to Airport.

3.15 pm Depart AUCKLAND on flight SQ286 8.55 pm Arrive

SINGAPORE and overnight

~ Crowne Plaza, Singapore Airport

## Saturday 8 March 2025

### Singapore - Mumbai

7.45 am Depart SINGAPORE on flight SQ422

10.35 am Arrive MUMBAI

Namaste and Welcome to India! You will be met, assisted and transferred to check into your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure until dinner at the hotel this evening.

Formerly known as Bombay, Mumbai is referred to as the New York of India. Mumbai has lots to offer, from its renowned Bollywood film industry, fashion, colonial-era architecture, gateway of India by waterfront, the home to Asia's largest slums to the world's most expensive homes. Mumbai with its colonial and Art Deco buildings, tall skyscrapers, wild traffic and frenetic pace of life, is one of India's most intriguing cities.

~ Trident Nariman Point Hotel for 2 nights **D**

## Sunday 9 March 2024

### Mumbai

This morning you will be met by our expert guide for a full day's sightseeing starting with a visit to the 140- year-old washermen's colony - an open-air laundromat locally known as Mahalaxmi Dhobi Ghat. Next, we visit Mani Bhawan which was the HQ of Mahatma Gandhi.

At Churchgate railway station we witness the unique lunchbox delivery system, Dabbawala. This practice started in 1890 when the British and Persians needed convenience meals delivered. Dabbawalla's collect hot, home-cooked lunches and deliver them to office workers around the city by bicycle or train. Continue to Sassoon Docks, one of the oldest docks in the city where you will see fish hung out to dry.



In the afternoon visit iconic 1871 Leopold Cafe & bar, a must visit for Shantaram fans.

Later we head for the Gateway of India, built on the harbourside to welcome King George V and Queen Mary to India. Here we enjoy a photo-stop outside the popular Taj Mahal Palace Hotel and surrounding colonial era buildings such as the Bombay High Court, Bombay University and the Prince of Wales Museum.



Next is the UNESCO World Heritage site - Victoria Terminus Train Station, built in 1888 in the finest Victorian-Gothic style. Later we visit the Dharavi slums, famed location of the movie 'Slumdog Millionaire'. Gain an insight into slum life visiting their schools, maze-like alleyways and small industries. After the tour return to hotel.

**BD** • Many of the sightseeing spots we will be covering are areas mentioned in the infamous 2003 novel – Shantaram (by Gregory David Roberts). So if you haven't already read this book, it may be worthwhile. Or now available to watch on Apple TV..

## Monday 10 March 2025

### Mumbai - Chennai

After breakfast transfer to Mumbai airport for your flight to Chennai. (Flight details to be confirmed)

In Chennai, you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

~ The Residency Towers for 2 nights (or similar) **BD**

## Tuesday 11 March 2025

### Chennai

After breakfast, meet our guide for a talk about the traditions of the local culture. We take a heritage walk at the British Fort St. George, built in the 17th century it is the pristine HQ of state government. Next visit the oldest surviving English church in India, St Marys Church, famed as the wedding venue for Clive of India. Capture the real life of Madras in the bustling bazaars of George Town and see the colourful 7th century Dravidian architecture of Kapaleeshwarar Temple.

Explore fine Indo-Saracenic buildings by the beachside including San Thome Basilica built by Portuguese explorers in 1520. At sunset we visit Chennai's Marina Beach to interact with locals playing cricket and selling their catch of the day. **BD**

## Wednesday 12 March 2025

### Chennai - Pondicherry

After breakfast and check out you will be driven to the French city of Pondicherry (150 kms, 3 hours). Enroute visit the Shore Temples of Mahabalipuram.

~ The Promenade hotel for 2 nights (or similar) **BD**

## Thursday 13 March 2025

### Pondicherry

Welcome to 'Cote d'Azur' of India! Influenced by the 1674 French East India Company, we explore this unique heritage on a walk through the colonial streets of Old Pondicherry Town with its mustard-coloured houses, chic shops and quaint boulevards. See the Muslim Quarter, Ville Noir and French Quarter.

# Itinerary:

Later we visit Auroville, an experimental community founded in 1968 by the spiritual leader Mirra Alfassa as a town where people from all over the world could live in harmony. The philosophy of Auroville is based on the teachings of Sri Aurobindo, a poet, philosopher, visionary and guru, who died in 1950. **BD**

## Friday 14 March 2025

### Pondicherry - Chennai - Kochi

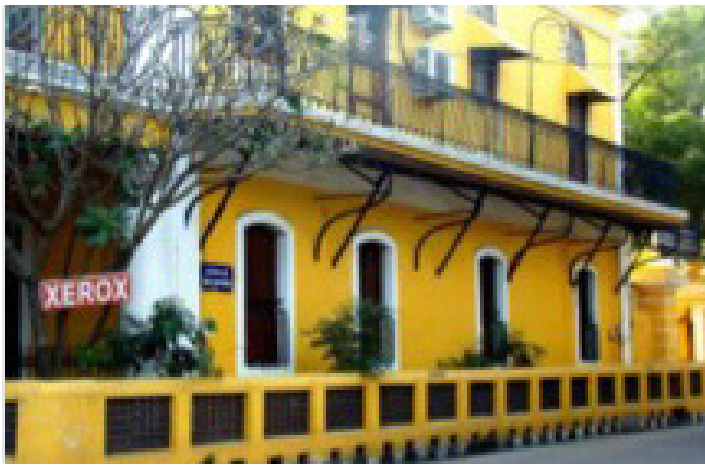
Today after breakfast and check out you will be transferred to Chennai airport for the flight to Kochi.

5.45 pm Depart CHENNAI on Indigo Airlines Flight 6E 597

7.00 pm Arrive KOCHI

Upon arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

~ *The Crowne Plaza* for 2 nights (or similar). **BD**



## Saturday 15 March 2025

### Kochi

After breakfast you will be met by our expert local guide for your heritage tour. We will walk in the Old City (Fort Kochi) which has drawn explorers to its shores for over 600 years. Discover traditional houses at vibrant Princes Street, known for the British, Portuguese and Dutch architecture of its local residences, street bazaars and cafés.

We reach Old Kochi Beach to see local fisherman demonstrate the use of 14th century giant Chinese fishing nets introduced by traders of the Mongol Empire.

We continue on to India's oldest European church built by Portuguese Friars. The St Francis Church dates back to the 1500's and is where the tomb of Vasco da Gama rests.



Next we drive or hop-on a local Tuk-Tuk to Mattancherry. The 16th century Portuguese Dutch Palace here features preserved murals from Hindu and South Indian epics. Explore the Jewish town of Kochi where a 400-year-old Pardesi Jewish Synagogue resides.

Explore the street markets which includes a spice tour. The area has been a trader's hub since the 14th century, its markets renowned for trading between the Europeans and Arabs. Today it is home to traditional spices, oils, arts and crafts. Returning to your hotel, we will this evening go to a vintage wood-lined theatre for a traditional Kathakali Dance show, telling ancient stories with intricate hand-eye coordination. Before the show begins, we go backstage to see the dancers' make-up routine and ceremony. **BD**

## Sunday 16 March 2025

### Kochi - Munnar

After breakfast and check out you will be picked up from your hotel and driven to Munnar (135 kms). On arrival check in and spend the rest of the day at leisure. Munnar Hill Station sits in the Western Ghats range of mountains at 5,000 feet above sea level. This is South India's largest tea-growing region, carpeted in emerald green tea plantation hills.

~ *Fragrant Nature hotel* for 2 nights (or similar) **BD**



## Monday 17 March 2025

### Munnar

Located high in the Cardamom Hills, Munnar was developed to cultivate spices and varieties of tea plants during the British Raj Era. The entire area is covered with thick forests and neatly groomed tea estates with planter's bungalows and grand old churches.

This morning we visit some of the family-owned tea plantations in the region. Learn about growing tea and see how the leaves are classified, processed, and packaged. We also visit the iconic Tata Tea Factory and Museum to taste the various spices, herbs to teas that are grown in the area. Some of the main spices cultivated here are ginger, garlic, cardamom, vanilla, pepper, cinnamon, coffee, tea, clove and nutmeg - the fragrance is in the air!

Next, we take a walk in the Eravikulam National Park of Kerala. Amongst other rare flora and fauna found here, encounter the Nilgiri Tahrs a species of mountain goat exclusive to the region. Exotic birds can also be seen.

Spend the rest of the day relaxing, enjoying the sunset with some High-Tea at your hotel. **BD**



# Itinerary:

## Tuesday 18 March 2025

### Munnar - Alleppey

After breakfast and check out, we journey to Alleppey Jetty Point (160 kms) to board a traditional Kerala backwater houseboat. These converted rice barges called 'Kettuvallam' are over 100 feet long and built of coconut fibres. Enjoy traditional South Indian meals created by your onboard chef.

~ Lakes & Lagoon Houseboat 2 nights (airconditioned room) **BLD**

## Wednesday 19 March 2025

### Alleppey

Relax and enjoy your journey at a leisurely pace as we cruise through scenic lakes, lagoons and floating villages, witnessing every-day rural life. **BLD**



## Thursday 20 March 2025

### Alleppey - Kochi

After breakfast you will be picked up from Alleppey Jetty for the drive to Kochi (90 kms, 2 hours) and check in at your hotel. Enjoy a traditional Kathakali Dance show of Kerala in the evening, followed by a farewell dinner.

~ Fragrant Nature hotel **BD**

## Friday 21 March 2025

### Kochi - Singapore

Today is at leisure to explore and perhaps pick up some last-minute souvenirs. There is a late checkout this evening so that you have the use of your room all day. You will be picked up from your hotel late this evening after dinner (around 7.30pm), and transferred to Kochi airport for your onward flight. **BD**

11.05 pm Depart COCHIN on Singapore Airlines flight SQ535

## Saturday 22 March 2025

### Singapore - Auckland

6.10 am Arrive SINGAPORE

8.45 am Depart SINGAPORE on Singapore Airlines flight SQ281

11.35 pm Arrive AUCKLAND

Airport to Orewa (or local) transfer provided.

### Includes:

- Local pick up/drop off from Orewa to Auckland Airport
- Economy Class airfares throughout
- Personalised meet and greet at all airports
- Accommodation and hotels as per itinerary or similar in 4-star hotels & Deluxe Houseboat
- Breakfast and dinner daily in India (all meals onboard the houseboat)
- All transfers, tours and excursions by an air-conditioned vehicle
- Local English-speaking guide for tours
- Gratuities for guide and driver

### Not included:

- Tourist Visa and Travel Insurance
- Items of personal nature use eg laundry, drinks etc
- Porterage gratuities
- Video camera fees at monuments and parks
- Meals other than those stated in the itinerary
- Early check-in and Late check-out at hotels, if not mentioned in the itinerary

**\$ 11,999\*** pp  
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Please enquire about an option to upgrade to Premium Economy or Business Class on international flights.

Terms and conditions apply, and will be provided with your booking form.

**Please register your interest,  
or request booking form from:**

**YOU Travel Orewa**

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