

Best of Kerala

07 Nights/08 Days

Cochin -1, Munnar -2, Periyar -1, Kumarakom -2, Alleppey 1

Day 1

COCHIN (ARRIVAL) + LSS 25 Kms



Arrive Cochin, Check-in at Hotel. After Lunch, explore **Cochin** - We visit 'The Jewish Synagogue' at the heart of what is locally called the Jew Town, 'The St. Francis Church', the oldest European Church in India, 'The Santa Cruz Basilica' originally built in 1557 by the Portuguese, **The Dutch Palace**, **Spice market** at the narrow streets and the 'Chinese fishing nets' are huge cantilevered fishing nets believed to have brought to Kochi by Chinese traders. **(Please note: Jewish synagogue & Dutch palace are closed on Friday & Saturday).**

Evening visit the famous dance drama of Kerala, the "**Kathakali**" This dance can be characterized by grotesque gesticulations, amazing costumes and very extensive make-up. The stories are mostly taken from the epics Mahabharatha and Ramayana. Back to hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 2

COCHIN – MUNNAR (135 Kms/04 Hrs)



Early morning leave for Munnar (with packed breakfasts) en-route, visit **Kodanad Elephant Orphanage**. Located 85 kms/ approx 1 hrs 30 min away from Kochi, Kodanad is set on the southern banks of the Lake Periyar and amid the beautiful high ranges. It is an interesting place where about in total 11 elephants are taken care off.

Arrive Munnar by afternoon and check in at your hotel.

Munnar is surrounded by about 30 tea estates, amongst the highest in the world and a forest that is still rich in wildlife. The luxuriant forest is hung with pepper vines and the hills around Munnar are covered with the rare Neelakurunji plant which flowers only once in every 12 years.

Later enjoy an orientation tour of the city. Drive past the local fruit and vegetable market where people throng daily for fruits, vegetables and other household goods. Visit the **tea museum** where you can witness the process of making Tea. Culminate the tour with a visit to a beautiful local church. Overnight stay.

Day 3

MUNNAR + LSS 50 Kms



After breakfast, witness a fun activity of elephants the mahouts take the elephants to nearby river body to give them a bath. The mahouts scrubbed their bodies with outer part of the Coconut. As Elephants are fond of water, they enjoy this exercise really well.

Note: This activity is done in morning only (0730 - 0930 hrs) as afterwards the Elephants are taken on their normal routine work.

Later visit **Eravikulam National Park** is 15 kms from Munnar and has an area of 97 km². The park is located along the Western Ghats and has the largest viable population of the Nilgiri Tahr. The park also has other animals such as Nilgiri marten, ruddy mongoose, small clawed otter, dusky striped squirrel, Sambar Deer, Golden Jackal, Wild Dog, Indian Porcupine, Funambulus etc. There are many species of birds too such as Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, White Bellied Short wing, Black-and-orange Flycatcher etc.

Day 4

MUNNAR – PERIYAR (160 Kms/04 Hrs)



After breakfast, checkout and drive to Periyar. **Periyar Tiger Reserve** lies in the Western Ghats in the Idukki District of the Indian state of Kerala. . It was declared a Tiger Reserve in 1978. The Sanctuary was extended to 777 sq. km. in 1950 and renamed as Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary. The core area of the Reserve, 350 sq. km. was declared a National Park in 1982. In this reserve there are about 49 species of mammals, 265 species of birds, 36 species of reptiles, 12 species of amphibians, 35 species of fishes and 160 species of butterflies have been identified so far. Check-in at Hotel. Then proceed for Guided **Spice Plantation tour**, Followed by **Elephant ride (20 minutes)**. Back to hotel by evening. Overnight stay.

Day 5

PERIYAR – KUMARAKOM (130 Kms/03.15 Hrs)



After breakfast drive to Kumarakom. En-route stop at **Spice Plantation for a sumptuous lunch.** Arrive by afternoon and check-in to your resort. Rest of the day will be at leisure to enjoy the waterfront. Overnight stay.

Day 6 KUMARAKOM



Day will be at leisure. Experience the ancient science of life - Ayurvedic massage available at the hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 7 KUMARAKOM – ALLEPPEY (40 Kms)



Following a leisurely breakfast, embark on the traditional Rice barge (House boat) to **Alleppey** – Land of Backwater situated on the banks of Vembanad Lake, Alleppey also known as Alapuzzha - is one of the most magnificent Backwaters destinations of the Kerala state. Set in the labyrinth of Backwater channels and bridges the town is one of the best gateways to explore the unspoiled natural beauty of the countryside. Apart, Alleppey is known for the production of the high quality coir goods, rice bowl of Kerala, boasts of a diverse variety of fauna and its famous annual Snake Boat Race festivals on arrival Check-in to **House Boat** – Lunch in House Boat.

Afternoon House boat takes you on a tour through the backwaters, a splendid area full of canals, lakes and coves. You can sunbathe on the deck or observe the landscape from the protection of the cabin. The population's whole life takes place here on the water. The people sail, fish, swim and bathe here. They do their washing and their washing up. They are so adapted to the water that you can see people talking for an hour, while they are up to their necks in water. Peddlers take care of the supplies and the public transport goes on the water.

Countless water birds wait for their chance to catch a fish. The trip goes through a wonderful area full of palm trees, rice fields and floating water plants that surround the boat like emerald Green Island. Evening leisure House boat. Overnight on board.

Day 8

ALLEPPEY – COCHIN (60 Kms/1.30 Hrs)



Early morning disembark from your comforts of the house boat and transfer to Kochi airport to take a flight to your onward destination.