

# EXPLORE!

Tailormade South Indian Temples  
15 days

India - Trip code TMIN7



## Tailormade South Indian Temples

### South Indian Temples and Beaches

Discover South India's historic harbour ports, intricately carved temple complexes and old British hill stations on this two week journey. Cruise the Keralan backwaters, soaking up local life as you go, and end relaxing on the palm-fringed beaches on the Arabian Sea in Goa.

### Enriching tailormade journeys – for you

This bespoke journey features some of our favourite spots in India. You can choose to take our destination experts' recommendations and travel just as you see the itinerary here, or contact us to add your own special touches; maybe spend a couple of nights on a houseboat in Kerala or head east to the Bay of Bengal, to Chennai and Mamallapuram. We're here to design your perfect holiday.

Call us on 01252 883 184.

## Trip highlights

### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

#### Premium

Our premium accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

### TRIP PACE:

#### Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

# Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

## DAY 1 - Depart the UK

Depart the UK on your overnight flight to Cochin

 None

## DAY 2 - Arrive in Kochi

Today you arrive in the bustling port city of Kochi (Cochin). With a beautiful natural harbour that earned it the title of 'Queen of the Arabian Sea', Kochi was founded on trade, originally with the arrival of Jewish and Arab spice traders in the first century AD. Its prosperity and importance increased even more with the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century, to be closely followed by the Dutch and the English, an eclectic heritage that helped produce a fascinating mix of styles and influences.



**Accommodation: Trident Hotel - Kochi** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available

 None

## DAY 3 - Free morning; afternoon Fort Kochi tour

This morning is free for you to relax before setting off this afternoon on a city tour around Fort Kochi on foot. Take in the architectural charm of India's oldest church, St Francis Church built in 1510 AD, where Vasco do Gama was buried for a while. You will also visit the Dutch Palace at Mattancherry, the old Jewish synagogue, as well as the port's famous cantilevered Chinese fishing nets. In the evening enjoy a traditional Kathakali dance show.




**Accommodation: Trident Hotel - Kochi** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available

 Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Backwaters day cruise on a houseboat

Depart Kochi this morning and drive to Alleppey. From here you board your houseboat and spend the remainder of day cruising around the serene backwaters; a vast network of lakes, lagoons, rivers and canals. A houseboat cruise gives you first-hand experience of Indian village lifestyles and how people make a living from the waterways. Late this afternoon transfer back to Kochi for the night.



**Accommodation: Trident Hotel - Kochi** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast Lunch

## DAY 5 - Journey to Metupalayam

A morning train to Coimbatore takes you across the Western Ghats, towards the old hill stations of the British Raj. On arrival you will transfer by road the short distance to Metupalayam, on the banks of the Bhavani River in the foothills of the Nilgiri Mountains.



**Accommodation: Hotel EMS Mayura** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Toy train to Ooty

Metupalayam is the rail junction for the Nilgiri narrow gauge railway and the remarkable 'Toy Train' to the historic hill station of Ooty, the only rack and pinion railway in Asia. Departing early this morning you head into the hills, travelling via the town of Coonoor and covering the 46 km journey in a little over four hours. Pulled by steam and crossing forested hills and girder bridges, the blue and cream carriages hark back to a golden age of engineering, when seemingly no hurdle could halt the ever-expanding British Empire. The railway itself boasts an interesting array of statistics, including a gradient of 1 in 12, no fewer than 208 curves and an impressive 13 tunnels. Given the terrain over which it has to negotiate it is also probably the slowest train in the country, averaging just 10.5 km an hour. This afternoon is free to explore something of Ooty's natural and colonial charms at your leisure.



**Accommodation: The Monarch** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

## DAY 7 - Arrive in Mysore

Departing Ooty today you journey to the city of Mysore, famed for its silk and sandalwood as well as its Dasara festivities. The so called 'City of Palaces', it was, until the middle years of the last century, the heart of the regal state of Mysore. Today it is renowned as the cultural capital of Karnataka. The rest of the afternoon is free for you to explore at your leisure.



**Accommodation: Southern Star Mysore** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Mysore sightseeing

Mysore offers a great deal of interesting sights, including the huge Maharajah's Palace. Originally built in the 14th century, the palace has undergone two subsequent re-buildings and is today an opulent mélange of Hindu and British architecture. After a visit to the palace, see the enormous monolithic sculpture of the sacred bull Nandi, carved from a single piece of rock in the 17th century, it is one of the largest in the country. The Nandi carving stands halfway up the Chamundi Hills which overlook the city, also home to the towering Sri Chamundeswari Temple.



**Accommodation: Southern Star Mysore** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Temples at Belur and Halebid

Today you depart Mysore and head to Hassan, from here you will discover some of Southern India's best temples. Halebid was the Hoysala capital during the 12th and 13th centuries and the remaining (largely unexcavated) palace and ornate temples are a testament to Hoysala design. Inside the temple colourful friezes depict images of animals and Hindu gods. Continue to Belur to visit Chennakeshava Temple, built in 1117 AD. The intricately-carved walls, pillars and paved courtyards are wonderful examples of Hoysala art and architecture.



**Accommodation: Hoysala Village** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

## DAY 10 - Drive to Hampi

Departing Hassan this morning your explorations continue to Hampi. The flourishing capital of the Vijayanagar Kings between the 14th to 16th centuries, Hampi was once the powerbase of one of the largest Hindu empires in Indian history. The sudden destruction of the city, following the Battle of Taikota in 1565, saw it abandoned by its people, leaving behind a ruined city that, even today, still conjures up something of the spirit of its long departed occupants.



**Accommodation: Royal Orchid** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Wi-Fi available



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

## DAY 11 - Hampi sightseeing

Today you visit Virupaksha Temple, the principle place of worship in Hampi and one of the earliest structures in the city with the main shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva. Overlooking the temple to the south is the Hemakuta Hill, which has a scattering of early ruins including Jain temples and a monolith sculpture of Narasimha (Vishnu in his half-man half-lion incarnation). You continue to the 16th century Vittala Temple Complex, by far the most amazing monument in Hampi. The elaborately designed halls and musical columns produce different tones when tapped. You also visit the Royal Centre, home to the Lotus Mahal, the Elephant Stables, the King's Balance and the Queen's Bath. The Lotus Mahal is a delicately designed pavilion; the Elephant Stables is a grand building with domed chambers that once housed the state elephants; the King's Balance was where kings were weighed against grain, gold or money, and the Queen's Bath, an impressive structure with arched corridors open to the sky and surrounded by a moat.



**Accommodation: Royal Orchid** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Wi-Fi available



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

## DAY 12 - Train to Goa

Leaving Hospet behind, you take the early Amaravati Express train to Madgaon, arriving at the palm-fringed shores of Goa in the afternoon, the one-time Portuguese colony on the Arabian Sea. Under Alfonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese landed here in the 16th century, captured the original Arab trade settlement and began building a city with houses, gardens and fountains, monasteries, chapels and churches (most of them gone), including the white, 17th century cathedral of St Catherine, which still stands. The Portuguese influence is still very much apparent – the main religion is still Roman Catholic and siestas are still widely

practised in the hot afternoons. Like most areas in India, Goa has its own food specialities; you may want to sample the locally brewed spirit feni – a spine-tingling drink made from coconut or cashews.



### Accommodation: Regenta Resort Varca Beach (or similar)



Premium Hotel

Wi-Fi available



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

## DAY 13 - Free day in Goa

Today is free for you to explore at your leisure, or arrange a sightseeing trip with your Tailormade Regional Specialist. You may wish to visit Panaji, Goa's easy going capital; a friendly, sleepy town of narrow winding streets and whitewashed shuttered houses. Close by the capital are the superb beaches of Gaspar Dias and Dona Paula. The Malabar beaches here are very long and very white against the turquoise waters of the Arabian Sea.



### Accommodation: Regenta Resort Varca Beach (or similar)



Premium Hotel

Wi-Fi available



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

## DAY 14 - Free day in Goa

Time for some relaxation! Enjoy unwinding on the white sand beaches or by the pool at your hotel. Alternatively you could visit the churches and cathedrals of Old Goa, an UNESCO World Heritage Site.



### Accommodation: Regenta Resort Varca Beach (or similar)



Premium Hotel

Wi-Fi available




Swimming pool available



Breakfast

## DAY 15 - Depart India

Depart this morning on your flight back to the UK.

 Breakfast

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 13  
Lunch: 1



### Transport

Private car  
Train  
Houseboat



### Trip staff

Local guides  
Driver(s)



### Accommodation

13 nights premium hotel

## Trip information

### Country information

### India Holidays & Tours

#### Climate

There is considerable variation between the different regions of India but, in general, the climate is tropical. Summer temperatures on the plains are very hot, but cooled by the South-West Monsoon, which lasts from June- September. During these months it can be very wet and therefore very humid. At altitude, temperatures can become quite cool at night even in the summer and may drop below freezing between December and February so warm clothing is necessary. In the winter, northern and mid India can be very cool, with cold evenings, so warm clothing, including plenty of layers, are essential. The south of India remains warm and sunny during the winter months.

#### Time difference to GMT

+5

#### Plugs

3 Pin Round

#### Religion

Catholicism, Hindu, Islam and Sikhism

#### Language

Hindi and English.

### Budgeting and packing

## India Holidays & Tours

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

**Lunch price**

£6

**Dinner price**

£8

**Beer price**

£1.4

**Water price**

£0.5

### Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Indian Rupee Recently new 500, 1000 and 2000 rupee notes have been brought in to circulation and as the old notes are no longer accepted there have been some cash flow issues. You don't need to worry about being given old notes as it's very easy to tell the difference, the new notes are pristine in comparison with most Indian money which is fairly tatty.

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

GBP/US\$ are the best currency to change into local currency.

**Where To Exchange**

The Indian rupee is a restricted currency and it is best not to obtain in the UK as rates are very poor. You can either change money at the airport on arrival or in major towns during the tour. Your Tour Leader will advise you on the best places in each town. Both GBP and USD cash are easy to exchange at the airport and at hotels however you will be restricted to changing £60 cash at a time and it's not possible to change money at these locations using a credit or debit card.

**ATM Availability**

ATMs are available in most large cities in India but they are very limited elsewhere so please do not rely on this.

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Very rarely, only in the larger outlets.

**Travellers Cheques**

Opportunities to exchange are limited.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Accommodation notes

**Booking a Single Room**

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

**Premium**

On premium level tailor-made tours you will stay at comfortable mid-range hotels, chosen for their location, ambiance or local character. Your rooms will be clean and well-appointed, with en suite bathrooms and air-conditioning or heating as necessary. Standard level hotels normally have restaurants, bars and often other amenities such as a swimming pool and gardens, offering a good level of comfort at a reasonable price.



#### Trident Hotel - Kochi

Located in the business district of Gurgaon, the Trident is set among seven acres of landscaped gardens with courtyards, walkways and a swimming pool. The rooms have a contemporary design and are furnished to a high standard.

#### Hotel EMS Mayura

Hotel EMS Mayura has 48 comfortable and spacious rooms. The property has a restaurant serving international and local cuisine. The hotel is perfectly located for the Toy Train to Ooty, a short 10 minute walk away to the station.

#### The Monarch

The Monarch hotel offers spacious, comfortable and modern rooms. The hotel has an indoor swimming pool, pool table, table tennis and a restaurant serving western and Indian dishes.

#### Southern Star Mysore

Ideally located within walking distance of the train station, the Southern Star Mysore is the perfect base from which to explore the city. Guest rooms are spacious and decorated with neutral colours. The hotel also boasts a choice of restaurants, pool, Jacuzzi and gym.

#### Hoysala Village

Hoysala Village has 30 cottages designed in a traditional way, with bare brick and wooden furniture, and located within lovely manicured gardens. Rooms are spacious with air-conditioning and en suites. The property has a restaurant serving local, Malnad cuisine. There is also a shaded pool, where guests can relax.

#### Royal Orchid

The Royal Orchid is a comfortable hotel located in central Hospet, just a short drive from the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hampi. The rooms are spacious and benefit from such mod-cons as Wi-Fi and flat screen television, while the hotel also features a swimming pool, spa and a restaurant.

#### Regenta Resort Varca Beach

Located very close to Varca Beach, this large hotel has rooms and suites set within blocks around the pool. Each room has a private balcony overlooking the pool or landscaped gardens and there is a poolside restaurant set among the gardens. The resort also has a relaxed cafe offering light bites, a gaming room for children and a gym.

## Essential information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

#### Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

### Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

#### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

#### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of

your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## India Holidays & Tours

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against Tetanus, Infectious Hepatitis, Typhoid and Polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider.

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