

KERALA, SOUTH INDIA

11 nights – Nov 2024

A guided adventure for inquisitive women



DAY 1: SUN 17 NOV

KOCHI

Arrive in Kochi anytime today. Welcome to “**God’s Own Country**” where you will be met at the airport and transferred to hotel. Kerala is blessed with a unique set of geographical features that have made it popular with visitors. A long shoreline with serene beaches, tranquil stretches of emerald backwaters, lush hill stations, exotic wildlife, and welcoming locals await you!

Accommodation: Hotel Eight Bastion or similar 4 (2 nights)*

DAY 2: MON 18 NOV

KOCHI

By foot, we explore **Fort Kochi** and **Mattanchery** to see the important landmarks, such as St. Francis Church and the Jewish synagogue. There is a captivating history to discover about the various cultures that have passed through Kochi's ports over the years. Back to the hotel for a few hours rest by before our evening out.

Prepare to be mesmerised as we watch performers apply intricate makeup, before experiencing an enthralling performance of **Kathakali**. This traditional dance form is a beautiful way of storytelling through dance and facial expressions, accompanied by live music and singing. It's a truly enchanting experience that you won't want to miss!

DAY 3: TUE 19 NOV

KOCHI – MUNNAR

Rise early, for a chance to see fishermen at work with their massive **Chinese fishing nets**. This is a wonderful time of day to capture the nets being flung out as the sun rises over the Arabian sea. Return to hotel for breakfast, and check out.

Today we travel up into the **Western Ghats mountain range**, 1600m above sea level. Sit back and relax on a scenic drive, stopping enroute for photo opportunities. Once a summer retreat for the British during Colonial times, **Munnar** is now a popular tourist destination where visitors come to soak up its unending expanse of lush tea estates, misty valleys, rivers and mountains, and exotic varieties of flora and fauna. On arrival, check in to hotel and relax.

Later, enjoy a walking tour of the small city of Munnar. With a population of just over 30,000 this is an easy town to get around.

Accommodation: Chandys Windwood or similar 4 (1 night)*



DAY 4: WED 20 NOV

MUNNAR | THEKKADY

After breakfast, we'll set off too to explore **Eravikulam National Park** on foot. The views are stunning across the tea-capped peaks. As we stroll amongst the flora and fauna, keep your eyes peeled for the endangered species of Nilgiri tahr. In the afternoon, visit a **Tea Museum** to learn about the history and processing methods of tea production. Later, enjoy a picturesque drive through to Thekkady.

Accommodation: Greenwoods Resort or similar 4 (2 nights)*

DAY 5 - THU 21 NOV

THEKKADY

Thekkady is known as '**the city of spices**' and offers serene countryside and spice plantations. This morning we will learn about the spices which thrive in this area - black pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and cloves as we roam through a plantation with a spice expert. We follow up our newfound knowledge with a **cooking class**.

Afternoon at leisure. You might like to visit an elephant farm, use one of the hotel's bikes to cycle around the area, or just relax by the hotel pool. **Kalaripayattu** is the oldest form of martial arts and this evening we will witness a fascinating display of harmonious synergy which will leave you mesmerised.

Day 6 – FRI 22 Nov

ALLEPPEY

After breakfast, we'll continue our journey towards Alleppey stopping en route at **Aranmula**. This ancient village is famous for its metal mirrors, and the **Parthasarthy Temple** sitting on the banks of the Pampa River – a beautiful temple dedicated to Lord Krishna. We'll also visit an institute which promotes traditional architecture and mural painting and **St Mary's Church** in Champakkulam – one of the oldest churches in Kerala believed to have been established by St Thomas.

Accommodation: Uday Backwater Resort or similar 4 (1 night)*

DAY 7 - SAT 23 NOV

BACKWATERS BY HOUSEBOAT

Kerala is awash with rivers and a cruise onboard a houseboat to explore the backwaters is a must-do experience. The boats are a modern transformation of **traditional Kettuvalloms** (rice barges) and are the perfect way to get off the beaten track and observe the local rural lifestyles. There will be the opportunity to walk along the dykes surrounding paddy fields and interact with the farmers, see toddy-tappers and watch how they collect the sap of coconut palm, and make the potent alcoholic drink known as "toddy". As the day ends, soak up the stunning display of colours as the sun sets over the water.

Accommodation: Air-conditioned Houseboat (2 nights)



DAY 8: SUN 24 NOV

BACKWATERS BY HOUSEBOAT

This morning we'll continue our cruise and explore the cluster of lagoons of the **Vembanad wetland** eco-system with its backdrop of mangroves, paddy fields and coconut groves, and home to many endemic and migratory birds.

DAY 9: MON 25 NOV

KUMARAKOM

Early this morning, we take a **canoe ride** into the smaller channels of the backwaters. A perfect time to listen to birds chattering, sip a chai with locals, visit a local village, and snap images of this beguiling area. Later we check in to an **Ayurvedic resort** where you can plan and book your treatments for the next few days.

Accommodation: Coconut Lagoon or similar 4 (2 nights)*

DAY 10: TUE 26 NOV

KUMARAKOM

The term '**Ayurveda**' is derived from two Sanskrit root words: 'Ayu' = life + 'Veda' = knowledge or science of life. It is one of the world's oldest holistic healing systems, originating over 5000 years ago, and ultimately focuses on promoting a healthy and satisfying life experience that is free of negative emotions. Unlike Western medicine, Ayurveda looks at wellness as a whole: perfect health is defined as a state of balance between mind, body, spirit, and social well-being and can help you balance and improve several aspects of your life, including digestion, sleep, skincare, and mental health. You've got the whole day to relax and try some Ayurvedic treatments, including amazing massages.

DAY 11: WED 27 NOV

KOCHI

After your Ayurvedic experiences you will surely float out of the Resort this morning! Board our private vehicle and relax as we drive back to Kochi. Enroute we will visit **Vaikom village**, renowned for coir weaving, coconut-related handicrafts, and other cottage industries. We have two delicious meals to look forward to today - a Kerala-style lunch served on banana leaves and a farewell dinner in a special location this evening.

Accommodation: Eight Bastion Hotel or similar 4 (1 night)*



DAY 12: THU 28 NOV

END KOCHI

As most flights will be departing late this evening, we have included a late check-out from the hotel. You have the day to relax, perhaps do some last-minute shopping in town. There are several bustling **old markets** in Mattanchery and Jew Town where you can buy spices, antiques, and all sorts of other curios. Or perhaps hire an e-bike from the hotel for a cycle around the city. There is also a lovely pool to relax beside.

Transfer to Kochi airport is included today.

COST

NZ\$5,980 per person twin share

NZ\$8,100 single

If you are travelling solo and would like to twin share, let us know. Price is subject to change until confirmed and paid in full.

INCLUDES

- Local English speaking Tour Guide / Photography Expert
- 11 Nights accommodation & late check-out in Kochi
- Daily breakfast & dinner throughout the tour, except on the Houseboat which will include all meals.
- Private air-conditioned vehicle
- All activities and visits specified in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to all the monuments mentioned as per the itinerary
- Canoe ride in Alleppey and Kumarakom
- Kathakali Dance show
- Kalari show
- Kerala food cooking demonstration
- Unlimited packaged drinking water
- Arrival and departure transfers
- All tipping
- All applicable current taxes and Government Service Tax
- Escorted by Marie Coles from Roam Travel Adventures (min. 8 passengers)

EXCLUDES

- International Airfares
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Meals not mentioned as being included.
- Personal extras, such as drinks, laundry, telephone, spa treatments etc



YOUR LOCAL GUIDE – HARSH AGARWAL

Harsh (pronounced Hersh) is the Co-founder of Maharaja Tours based in Agra. He is a qualified tour guide and award-winning photographer. Harsh's focus is on quality exploration and experience and he is also happy to assist you to improve your photography skills (with Iphone or DSLR). As an extra bonus, Harsh is also a qualified Yoga teacher. Time permitting, there will be the option to practice Yoga on this trip.

www.harshtravelphotography.com



YOUR CHIEF NAVIGATOR – MARIE COLES

Marie is the founder of Roam Travel Adventures and, lover of travel and meeting people from all walks of life. She has escorted tours to Africa, Middle East, Europe, India and her homeland New Zealand. *“This will be my fourth trip to India with Harsh. I'm excited to show you the beauty of Kerala, with its serene waterways, lush hill stations, and fascinating Ayurvedic history”.* Marie