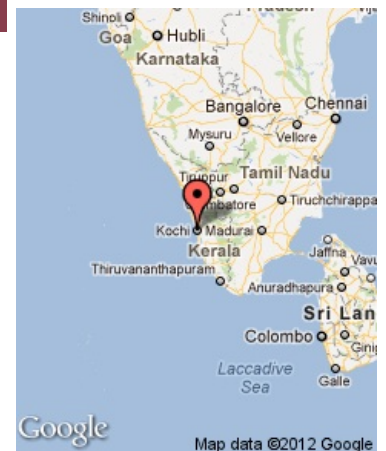


North Kerala Culture & Nature Tour



Highlights

Take a 2 week tour to North Kerala, a quiet contrast to the more popular, and consequently more developed, South of the region. Tranquil beaches, lush green vegetation, and a distinct lack of the more garish trappings of tourism development make this a haven for those seeking real peace and serene natural beauty.

It seems almost unbelievable that a place like this could have escaped the attention of the crowds for so long. Kerala is one of the most popular destinations in the world, and yet the North of the state remains largely unknown to outsiders; because of this it seems to have avoided the fate of so many destinations that become backpacking hotspots: instead of being littered with haphazard and often ugly development, the North is dotted here and there with beautiful homestays and luxury lodges, offering a completely different kind of Indian experience. For those that want to get away from the surface noise and crowds and delve deeper into the rich and distinctive Keralan culture and traditions, this is definitely the way to go.

On this tour you'll take part in a pottery workshop and learn about traditional Keralan handicrafts, and later witness the practice and performance of classical South Indian dance and music. You'll get to know more about the music of the region when you stay with a family of professional musicians, and become familiar with the phenomenal polyrhythmic complexity of Keralan drumming. You'll have a chance to get involved with the process of traditional weaving, and discover both the tropical beauty of the Nila River by boat, and the amazing local wildlife on safari in Tholpetty wildlife sanctuary, including Spotted Deer, Indian Bison, Elephants, and- if you're very lucky- even Tigers.

Is it for me?

This is a trip for those who are interested in exploring the culture and landscape of a beautiful part of South India that's still relatively unfamiliar to most Westerners. The emphasis is on real, meaningful interaction and fostering a genuine appreciation of the arts and traditions in this part of the world. The tour is well-paced, with structured activities during most days, but always ensuring that you have sufficient free time to digest your experiences. The tour also supports both local community projects and the Nila Foundation, set up to protect and regenerate Kerala's second-longest river.

Accommodation

Accommodation on this tour is in hotels and homestays/farmstays near the river Nila, all of which have their own character, including the Maranat Mana heritage home, the Pachyderm Palace, and, for your last three nights, the utterly lovely Neelieswar Hermitage (luxury accommodation), with a worldwide reputation for excellence in ecotourism. Rooms in all hotels have modern ensuite bathroom facilities, and rooms are spacious and very comfortable.

Kerala is deservedly famous for its cuisine, and that served by the hotels on this trip certainly upholds that reputation. Prepared with a highly developed understanding of subtle flavours that is informed by the centuries-old dietary knowledge of Ayurveda, the food is sure to be one of the many highlights on this trip.

Prices from

1,100 GBP (14 days) per person

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Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary is subject to change.

Day 1: On your arrival at Cochin, you'll be met at the airport and transferred to the River Nila (Bharatapuzha). In the afternoon you'll visit handicraft and pottery making centers and spend twilight with folk artists, in the courtyard of local household, showcasing the folk heritage of the River Nila.
Overnight in Nila.

Day 2: After breakfast, you'll visit Kerala Kalamandalam to meet with students and masters of classical dance and music school of Kerala. Then it's back to the hotel for lunch, and transfer to a traditional farmstay in the afternoon.
Relaxation and overnight at the farmstay.

Day 3: You'll take breakfast at the farmstay, then explore the life along the Tirur river in a country boat. You'll return to the farm stay for traditional Kerala with the host family.
After lunch, you'll visit Traveller's Forest, where you can plant a sapling. The Forest aims to motivate local communities, as well as travellers, to restore and preserve the valuable ecosystems.
Overnight in Nilambur.

Day 4: After breakfast at the homestay you'll spend some time with a family of Musicians. You'll hear a lecture on various kinds of musical instruments, followed by an amazing performance by the group. Lunch is at at your interpreter's house, after which you'll proceed to Nilambur, where you'll check in at your homestay. You'll spend the evening with host discussing Kerala's history, art and culture.
Overnight in Nilambur.

Day 5: You'll spend today relaxing at the home stay, with an optional visit to a pottery making centre or teak forest.
Overnight at the home stay

Day 6: After breakfast you'll visit TASARA, an initiative set up to provide jobs for local weavers and preserve the rich traditional knowledge, where you can participate in the weaver's workshops..
Overnight in Beypore.

Day 7: Today you'll continue with the activities at TASARA
Overnight in Beypore

Day 8: You'll check out after breakfast and transfer to Wayanad, where you'll check in at the hill side resort. You can then relax until the afternoon, when you can visit Edakkal caves, with rock etchings believed to date back 500 years.
Overnight in Wayanad.

Day 9: You'll take breakfast at the hotel, then start on a Spices Tour through various local community farms. You'll stop for lunch at a local house, then head to Meenmutty waterfalls in the afternoon, returning to the hotel in the evening.
Overnight in Wayanad

Day 10: After breakfast you'll transfer to a farmstay North of Wayanad where you'll relax until evening, when you'll go for a two-hour safari in the Tholpetty wildlife sanctuary.
Overnight at the farm house in Wayanad

Day 11 Wayand - Neeleswar:
You'll take an early morning safari at the Wildlife sanctuary, then transfer to Neeleswar after breakfast, Checking in at the beach hotel on arrival.
Relaxation and overnight at the beach hotel.

Day 12 Neeleswar:
Today is a day of rest, with the option of visiting the forts and temples of the region.

Day 13 Neeleswar:
Full day relaxation at the beach hotel.

Day 14 Neeleswar - Calicut
You'll check out after breakfast and transfer to Calicut airport.

Details

Getting there

You need to get to Kochi/Cochin. You can fly there from the UK, although you will need to change planes in Doha, Mumbai, Delhi or Dubai

Price includes

Accommodation (hotels on B&B basis), all meals at Kodeerimana, Nilambur, Tasara, Eddakkal Hermitage and Tholpetty, air-conditioned taxi, naturalist during tours, Cultural interpreters, taxes.

Price details

Price quoted above is per person, based on two sharing

Available

Jan—Dec

Typical Duration

2 weeks

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed