



## Cultural Gourmet Trail - Specially Prepared



### The Experience

A fascinating journey through India's tropical south. Experience the diversity in scenery, architecture, culture and most importantly the people.

Karnataka is a tapestry of colours, cultures, flavours, landscapes, and timelessness. A place where vibrant worlds seamlessly blend into one another every few hundred kilometres. Sedate plains suddenly rise to dizzying mist covered hilly heights, and then plunge with careless abandon in a white watered freefall to become languid rivers

Kerala is a tropical bliss with an idyllic coastline and lush tropical hills. Despite its relative riches, for a part of the population in Kerala, life continues with agriculture, tea, coffee and spice plantations and the coir industry. Dubbed as God's Own Country, Kerala boasts of rich flora, fauna and the harmonious mixture of communities. Hills, backwaters & beaches – all at short travelling distances in between, - combined with Wellness Centres

Grade –Culinary & Culture

Category - Premium

Accommodation: 9 nights hotel stays.

### Trip highlights

- Traditional South Indian cuisine
- Cooking Demo by Chef Divya Prabhakar
- Soma Vineyard Tour
- Wine Tasting Session
- Demo on Malabari Cuisine by Mrs. Faiza Moosa
- Local market visits and Theyyam (Ritual Art Form)
- Heritage walking tours Houseboat cruise
- Enchanting backwaters –
- Kerala a Experience at a Toddy Shop
- Colonial Cochin



## TOUR ITINERARY

Upon arrival at Bangalore airport (31 August), meet and assistance by our office representative, followed by transfer to hotel ITC My Fortune.

### **Day 1 – 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 : Arrive Bangalore**

There are no activities planned and the day will be free to relax after the long International flight journey. Shopping trips can be arranged to Commercial Street where interesting shops have been trading for over a hundred years. Overnight at the hotel. **(Bed & Breakfast)**

### **Day 2 – 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 : Bangalore**

Breakfast at the hotel. This morning start your gastronomic journey and explore the true flavour of this city with go on a stroll to experience this cosmopolitan city with its lovely parks, long avenues of blossom trees and impressive Victorian-era architecture. Enjoy Tea at a colonial mansion – 140 years, old with **Mrs. Ranoo Umraz** – the proud inhabitant. The walk finishes at the home of Mrs. Ranoo Umraz who comes from an old Bangalorean family. Sip on to some local tea at Ranoo's house over a friendly interaction session with her family followed by a tour of her house & plants. This afternoon drive to the country side of Bangalore towards the **Soma Vineyards** to understand the history of wine cultivation in India. After strolling through rows of grape-bearing vines, witness the entire process of wine-making—crushing of grapes, fermentation to the final labelling and packaging. Head into the barrel room, setup with real oak barrels, where ageing of premium wine is done, Experience a **wine tasting session** of selected varieties of wines while enjoying a sunset around the surrounding vineyard hills. Finish your day with a **Barbecue dinner** at the vineyard. Overnight at the hotel. **(Breakfast & Dinner)**



### **Day 3 – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017: Bangalore**

Breakfast at the hotel. After a sleep-in start your gastronomic journey and explore the true flavour of this city with a guided walk through a **Farmers market** selling wholesale flowers, fruit, vegetables, spices and nuts. This will be followed by a **cooking demo and lunch** at the **Tasting Room of the Bengaluru Oota Company**. Savour traditional flavours of Karnataka with an excellent **banquet tasting menu** by Chef **Ms Divya Prabhakar**. Overnight at the hotel. **(Breakfast & Lunch)**

### **Day 4 – 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017: Bangalore – Mysore (170 km / 4hrs)**

Breakfast, Check out and drive south to Mysore. En-route stop at **Srirangapatna** (16km from Mysore) – the island fortress of





Tipu Sultan and the early capital of the Mysore Wodiyars - Here you will find monuments such as Tipu's mosque with its twin minarets built in 1787, Tipu's Summer Palace (known as the Daria Daulat Bagh) built completely on wood and converted into a museum that houses some fantastic artefacts and paintings related to Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, and the Gumbaz where lie buried Tipu Sultan, Haider Ali and others of the royal family. Proceed on to Mysore and check-in at your hotel. This afternoon proceed on a sightseeing tour to visit the **Maharajah's Palace**, one of the most beautiful buildings in India. Inside, you will find a kaleidoscope of stained glass, beautiful carved wooden doors and mosaic floors. Continue towards the colourful **Devarajan Market**. Tonight we go to the **Gitanjali homestay** to experience **Kodava cuisine** (from Coorg) and culture. Enjoy elaborate, ethnic Kodava dishes served on banana leaf platters, and an interaction with your host Mrs **Yamuna Achaiah**. Kodava or traditional Coorgi cuisine is bold in flavour as well as content and uses a lot of meats and spices. Yamuna has been the host for eminent groups from the National Geographic magazine, the Smithsonian, the Museum of Modern Art and many others. Back to the hotel for your overnight stay. **(Breakfast & Dinner)**



#### **Day 5 – 5th September 2017: Mysore - Tellicherry (200 km / 6 hrs)**

Explore Mysore through an early morning **Heritage walking tour** and get a feel of this charming city. Pass by some lovely colonial structures, old local monuments and temples and learn the stories behind them with your **storyteller**. End your tour with a good local cuppa, **South Indian filter coffee** before heading back to your hotel for breakfast. Later check-out and proceed to **Thalassery**, a centre of the ancient pepper trade and referenced in the early 14th century writings of Marco Polo. Check-in at **Ayisha Manzil Homestay**. Expect heritage rooms with antique furniture and large bathrooms in an old colonial bungalow. **(Breakfast & Dinner)**



#### **Day 6 – 6th September 2017: Thalassery**

Breakfast with the hosts, **Mr and Mrs Moosa**. This morning make a stop at the famous **Fish Market** and experience the daily trading activities in this busy market. Continue towards the coastal beach town of **Kannur**, cradle of ageless folk arts like Theyyam and folk music. There is an opportunity to experience the ritual dance of Theyyam, its unique costume and lively footwork. The dancer transforms himself to a deity through extreme devotion and the rhythmic chanting of mantras. **Mrs.Faiza Moosa**, the hostess will conduct a **cooking class** in authentic North Kerala Muslim cuisine in the late afternoon followed by dinner. Take home the real taste of Kerala along with sweet memories. Overnight stay at hotel. **(Breakfast, lunch and dinner)**



## Day 7 – 7th September 2017: Thalassery – Cochin ( 6 hrs by Train)

Tea/Coffee served at the Manzil. Check-out, drive to the train station to board **Train to Kochi** (Parasuram Express: 07.40-13.35 hours). On arrival in Kochi, you will be met, assisted and transferred to the hotel **Brunton Boatyard**. Enjoy the rest of the day at **colonial Fort Kochi**. See the **Chinese Fishing Nets** of Cochin. The huge cantilevered Chinese Fishing Nets that droop towards the waters like over-sized hammocks have become a hallmark of Fort Kochi. Walk to the **St.Francis CSI Church**, the oldest European church in India built in 1503, where the Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama was originally buried and pass by the fine **Santa Cruz Basilica**. Late Evening **Dinner** at a **private residence** in Cochin. Overnight stay at the hotel. **(Breakfast & Dinner)**



## Day 8 – 8th September 2017 : Cochin sightseeing– Kumarakom ( 50 km /2 hrs)

Breakfast and Check out. Early start - Experience the local life of Cochin during a **Cochin tour**.–Take a **tuk tuk**– the most popular mode of transport among the locals, stop at the **Dhobi Khana** (laundry station), once throbbing with activity but now a picture of slow extinction. Continue through the narrow streets of **Mattancherry** visit the **Fruit market** on Palace Road where locals shop for fresh and organic produce at bargain prices. Don't miss a stop at the **Spice Market**, where the exotic fragrance of the finest ginger, cloves, cardamom, turmeric and pepper emanate from the spice warehouses lining the street. Pause and have **"one metre tea"** at one of the tea stalls. Visit the **Jewish Synagogue** at the heart of what is locally called the Jew Town, and take a glimpse of the **Dutch Palace** with its beautiful mural paintings from the 17th century. After the Cochin tour, we then leave Cochin for the inland **Backwaters** and **Lake Vembanad**. Board your



Houseboat for your **Backwaters cruise at Alleppey**. These boats are reworked versions of ancient "kettuvallams" barges once used to carry cargo of rice and spices now offering comfortable floating accommodation through the backwaters. Cruise through the palm fringed canals enjoying the beauty of rural village life. By evening disembark at your accommodation in Kumarakom, Check-in at the lakefront **Coconut Lagoon** hotel. The rest of the day is free to enjoy the hotel's facilities and activities .The hotel has a well appointed Ayurvedic Spa where you can relax with a range of traditional Ayurvedic treatments and massage (The Ayurvedic tradition originates in Kerala).Overnight stay **(Breakfast + Lunch)**

## Day 9 – 9th September 2017: Kumarakom

Start your day before breakfast with an early morning **bird watching walk** accompanied by a naturalist. After breakfast, take a **boat ride**– there is no better way of taking a closer look at the life and activities on the backwaters. Stop at a local Toddy shop where Palm Toddy, a mildly alcoholic beverage is made from the sap of palm trees . This area is known for its fresh fish and shellfish. Your backwater journey continues through the lush green vegetation of the Kerala backwaters. Drive back to Hotel. Overnight at the hotel. **(Breakfast & Lunch)**



## Day 10 -10<sup>th</sup> September 2017: Kumarakom – Cochin Airport Transfer

Breakfast at the hotel. Check-out and transfer on time to Cochin International airport to connect with your flight to your next destination.



*Tour Ends*

### **Hotels**

<b><u>DATE OF STAY</u></b>	<b><u>DESTINATION</u></b>	<b><u>NO. OF NIGHTS</u></b>	<b><u>HOTELS</u></b>
01-04 September	<b>BANGALORE</b>	3	ITC My Fortune
04-05 September	<b>MYSORE</b>	1	The Metropole
05-07 September	<b>THALASSERY</b>	2	Ayisha Manzil
07-08 September	<b>COCHIN</b>	1	Brunton Boatyard
08-10 September	<b>KUMARAKOM</b>	2	Coconut Lagoon

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Tour includes

- Assistance on arrival and departure.
- All currently applicable taxes
- Planned activities such as cooking demos/wine tasting
- Heritage Walking tour in Mysore
- A special dinner of Kodava cuisine in Mysore
- A Cooking demo at Ayisha Manzil Homestay in Thalassery
- Train from Thalassery to Cochin by air conditioned Chair car coach
- Dinner at a private residence in Cochin
- Guided tour of Cochin
- Day cruise by House boat with Lunch & Snacks on board
- All activities mentioned above
- Melas as listed in the itinerary

### **Tour does not include :**

- Any expenses of personal nature such as Tips, extras at hotels such as laundry
- Beer, wine or spirits during meals. These can be purchased separately. Wines included in wine tasting session and dinner at winery
- Any domestic or international flights.
- Travel Insurance,
- Visa Charges



## INDIA: How can you possibly prepare yourself for Travel?

To take advantage of your trip, we suggest prepare yourself a little. Here are some travel tips which we hope will be useful, ensuring travel comfort, while travelling in Southern India.

### Passport & Visa

In order to enter India you will need:

A signed, valid passport and a tourist visa. Your passport must remain valid for at least 6 months beyond the completion of your trip. It is also imperative that your passport has at least 2 blank visa pages available for entry and exit stamps.

The government of India offers two options for tourist visas. Your entry requirements may vary depending on your nationality. Please consult the nearest diplomatic or consular office of the country or countries you will be visiting.

One option is a **multiple** entry visa which can be obtained through the traditional application process. This type of visa has a 1 year validity and allows multiple visits and a stay of up to 90 days. **You need to apply for a traditional Indian visa if you are exiting and re-entering India during the course of your tour.**

The other option is the Electronic Tourist Visa (eTV). This type of visa allows a **single** entry for a stay of up to 30 days in India. More information regarding the eTV system can be found here <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>. Please read and follow all instructions carefully to avoid any possible complications on arrival in India. Do not apply an eTV any earlier than 34 days and no later than four days before your scheduled date of arrival.

### Currency

India's unit of currency is the Indian Rupee.

Exchange currency only at authorized outlets such as exchange kiosks, banks and hotels. Keep receipts of Transactions which may be required when exit the country, and also if you intend to reconvert local currency.

We suggest travelling with some U.S. dollars or Euros, or Sterling Pound to be exchanged for local currency and at least two major credit cards. Hotels and some stores in large cities accept all major credit cards, but in small towns cash may be required. Notify your credit card company of your travel plans prior to your departure to avoid any fraud concerns.

ATM access is available in any cities. Cash is the best (generally, the only) option in street markets.

We do not recommend traveler's cheques as they are not as widely accepted as in previous years. Lodges outside of major cities do not accept traveler's cheques.



## Health

It is important to familiarize yourself with any potential health issues or concerns related to your destination.

### Required Vaccination

A yellow fever vaccination is required to enter India **only** if you are arriving from or have transited through a yellow fever endemic area in South America or Africa. If vaccination for yellow fever is necessary, you must carry an International Certificate of Vaccination provided by your physician; If you are advised against receiving the vaccination because of your personal medical history, a certificate from your Physician to this effect is required.

Visitors to certain northeastern regions of India (which include Sikkim and Eastern Himalayas) should be aware of higher elevations in these areas. You may experience altitude sickness. Please consult your healthcare provider for suggestions on prevention and treatment.

## Climate

India is a huge country and its weather conditions are affected by diverse regions which include mountains, deserts, highlands and coastal plains. In general, India's climate is warm and tropical although parts of northern and western India can be very cold from December through January.

The months of November to February bring the most pleasant weather throughout the country. Average temperatures in Delhi during this cool season range from daily highs of 60 -80 F to lows between 40 -50 F.

Summer begins in mid-March and lasts through mid-June with April and May being the hottest months. The heaviest rains of the monsoon season begin in July and last through mid-October, with the amount of rainfall varying by region. The northern states of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Sikkim in the northeastern hills, have a cooler, more continental influenced climate.

Use a website such as [weather.com](https://www.weather.com) to find average temperatures and rainfall during your travel times.

## Electricity

India - 220 volts and 50 hertz

## What You Carry

Smart Casual clothing such as lightweight pants, loose shorts, trousers and at the least, short-sleeved shirts are recommended. It is suggested that women pack a scarf large enough to cover bare neck and shoulders. Other items, worthwhile to carry are;

- Comfortable, walking shoes with low or no heels
- Sweater or lightweight jacket
- Lightweight raincoat or poncho
- Swimming suit
- Sunglasses, sun block and a sunhat
- Mosquito repellent
- Lightweight binoculars (optional)
- Simple first-aid kit, Prescriptions and medications



Charging cables for electronics.  
Adapter plugs

## Time Zones

India operates on Greenwich Mean Time +5 hours and 30 minutes.

## Language

In India, the National language is Hindi. Each state, however, has its own regional official language as well. English is widely spoken all over the country. After Hindi it is the most widely spoken tongue in India and probably the most widely written and read.

## Food and Drink

Do not use tap water for drinking. It is always preferable and safer to use only bottled water. All the hotels have water purification facilities. It is not necessary to brush your teeth in bottled water contrary to what you may have heard or read.

Regardless of precautions, changes in water and diet can result in mild abdominal upsets and nausea. To prevent serious illness, avoid suspect foods such as uncooked vegetables, peeled fruit, un-pasteurized milk and milk products. All the fresh fruit including peeled fruit at hotels where you will be staying are safe to eat. Avoid street vendors.