

Tour Name: Ancient Caves with Temple & Backwater

Tour Duration: 15 Nights/ 16 Days

Tour Map: <https://tinyurl.com/mrs37yay>

Tour Overview

Embark on a mesmerizing journey through India's rich heritage with the "Ancient Caves with Temple & Backwater" tour. Begin in Mumbai, exploring its bustling streets and iconic landmarks. Journey to Aurangabad to uncover the ancient rock-cut caves of Ajanta and Ellora, marveling at their intricate sculptures and Buddhist heritage. Fly south to Hyderabad, where regal forts and palaces tell tales of dynasties past. Continue to Chennai, visiting historic temples in Kanchipuram and Mahabalipuram, before tranquil days in Pondicherry. Explore Tamil Nadu's cultural heartland with stops in Thanjavur, Trichy, and Madurai, each offering architectural marvels and spiritual sanctuaries. Conclude amidst the serene backwaters of Alleppey, a fitting end to this cultural odyssey through South India.

Tour Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Mumbai

- Arrive in Mumbai, India's bustling metropolis and financial capital. Transfer to your hotel and relax after your journey.

Day 2: Mumbai

- After breakfast, visit the Gateway of India, an iconic arch overlooking the Arabian Sea, offering picturesque views and historical significance.
- Take a ferry to Elephanta Caves (optional), a UNESCO World Heritage site known for ancient rock-cut temples dedicated to Lord Shiva, featuring intricate sculptures and cave architecture.
- Explore Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly Prince of Wales Museum), displaying a vast collection of artifacts, artworks, and historical exhibits from India's rich cultural heritage.
- Drive along Marine Drive, a scenic promenade also known as the Queen's Necklace, lined with art deco buildings and offering stunning views of the Arabian Sea.
- Visit the Hanging Gardens on Malabar Hill, known for their manicured lawns, flower beds, and panoramic views of the city skyline and Arabian Sea.
- Optional: Explore Dhobi Ghat, the world's largest outdoor laundry, witnessing Mumbai's unique dhobi culture.

Day 3: Mumbai - Aurangabad (Early Morning Flight)

- Fly to Aurangabad, a city with a rich historical legacy dating back to medieval times. Upon arrival, check into your hotel and unwind.
- Visit the UNESCO World Heritage site of Ellora Caves, renowned for its rock-cut temples and monasteries spanning Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain faiths. Explore the Kailasa Temple, a remarkable example of ancient Indian architecture.
- Explore Daulatabad Fort, an ancient hilltop fortress known for its intricate defense systems and panoramic views of the surrounding countryside.
- Visit Bibi Ka Maqbara, often called the "Taj of the Deccan," a mausoleum built in the 17th century resembling the Taj Mahal, known for its Mughal architecture and serene garden setting.
- Explore Panchakki, an ancient water mill dating back to medieval times, featuring a picturesque garden and an ingenious water-powered flour mill.

Day 4: Aurangabad

- After breakfast, visit Aurangabad Caves, rock-cut Buddhist caves dating back to the 6th and 7th centuries, known for their intricate sculptures and serene ambiance.
- Explore the historic city center of Aurangabad, visiting local markets and handicraft shops to experience the vibrant culture and cuisine of Maharashtra.
- Optional: Visit Sunheri Mahal Museum to explore historical artifacts and exhibits showcasing Aurangabad's cultural heritage.
- Relax in the evening or explore more of Aurangabad's local attractions and markets.

Day 5: Aurangabad - Hyderabad (Flight)

- Fly to Hyderabad, the "City of Pearls." Upon arrival, check into your hotel and refresh.
- Visit Golconda Fort, a massive citadel known for its ingenious acoustics, magnificent architecture, and historical significance as a stronghold of the Qutb Shahi dynasty.
- Explore Qutb Shahi Tombs, a serene necropolis housing the tombs of the Qutb Shahi rulers, showcasing Persian-style architecture and beautiful landscaped gardens.
- Visit Charminar, a landmark monument and mosque built in 1591 by Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, offering panoramic views of the bustling old city from its minarets.
- Discover Laad Bazaar, a vibrant market famous for its traditional lacquer bangles and exquisite Hyderabad pearls.
- Visit Salar Jung Museum, one of the largest private art collections in the world, housing diverse artifacts, sculptures, paintings, and manuscripts from various civilizations.
- Explore Chowmahalla Palace, once the seat of the Nizams of Hyderabad, known for its opulent architecture, courtyards, and a fascinating collection of royal artifacts.

Day 6: Hyderabad

- Begin the day with breakfast at the hotel.

- Visit Birla Mandir, a stunning Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Venkateswara, perched atop a hill offering panoramic views of Hyderabad.
- Explore Nehru Zoological Park, home to a variety of species including big cats, elephants, and birds, perfect for wildlife enthusiasts and families.
- Visit Hussain Sagar Lake, an artificial lake built during the reign of Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah, offering boat rides and scenic views of the city skyline.
- Optional: Explore the lively markets of Hyderabad for traditional crafts, jewelry, and local delicacies.
- Evening at leisure to relax or enjoy a cultural performance showcasing the rich heritage of Hyderabad.

Day 7: Hyderabad - Chennai (Flight)

- Fly to Chennai, the cultural capital of Tamil Nadu. Upon arrival, check into your hotel and unwind.
- Visit Kapaleeshwarar Temple, an ancient Dravidian-style temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, known for its towering gopurams and intricate sculptures depicting Hindu mythology.
- Explore San Thome Basilica, a majestic church built over the tomb of St. Thomas the Apostle, reflecting its Portuguese architectural style and historical significance.
- Visit Fort St. George, the first English fortress in India housing St. Mary's Church, the oldest Anglican church in Asia, and the Fort Museum displaying colonial artifacts and memorabilia.
- Stroll along Marina Beach, one of the longest urban beaches in the world, offering a lively atmosphere and stunning views of the Bay of Bengal.
- Optional: Explore Chennai's bustling markets and street food stalls to savor South Indian delicacies and shop for local souvenirs.
- Evening at leisure to relax or explore Chennai's vibrant nightlife and cultural performances.

Day 8: Chennai - Kanchipuram - Mahabalipuram - Pondicherry (235kms)

- After breakfast, depart for Kanchipuram, known as the "City of Thousand Temples," famous for its rich history and silk weaving industry.
- Visit Ekambareswarar Temple, one of the Pancha Bootha Sthalas dedicated to Lord Shiva, renowned for its ancient architecture and towering gopurams.
- Explore Kailasanathar Temple, a magnificent Pallava temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, known for its intricate carvings and exquisite sculptures.
- Continue to Mahabalipuram, a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its rock-cut temples and monolithic sculptures depicting ancient Indian art and culture.
- Visit Shore Temple, a stunning example of Dravidian architecture overlooking the Bay of Bengal, dedicated to Lord Shiva and Vishnu.
- Explore Arjuna's Penance, an impressive rock carving depicting scenes from the Mahabharata and daily life, showcasing the artistic prowess of ancient India.
- Proceed to Pondicherry, a charming coastal town known for its French colonial heritage, serene beaches, and spiritual ashrams.

Day 9: Pondicherry

- After breakfast, explore the French Quarter of Pondicherry, known as "White Town," featuring colonial-era buildings, charming cafes, and boutiques.
- Visit Sri Aurobindo Ashram, a spiritual community founded by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, offering meditation sessions and spiritual retreats.
- Explore Auroville, an experimental township dedicated to human unity and sustainable living, known for its Matrimandir, a golden-domed meditation center.
- Relax at Promenade Beach, a popular seafront promenade offering scenic views and a refreshing sea breeze.
- Optional: Visit Pondicherry Museum to explore artifacts and exhibits showcasing the town's history, culture, and archaeological finds.
- Evening at leisure to enjoy French-inspired cuisine, shop for handicrafts, or stroll along the charming streets of Pondicherry.

Day 10: Pondicherry - Chidambaram - Gangai Konda Cholapuram - Darasuram - Thanjavur (185km)

- Depart for Chidambaram, known for Nataraja Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva in his dancing form, showcasing Chola architecture and intricate carvings.
- Visit Gangai Konda Cholapuram, an ancient temple complex built by Rajendra Chola I, known for its Dravidian architecture and historical significance.
- Explore Darasuram, home to Airavatesvara Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its intricate sculptures and musical stone pillars.
- Continue to Thanjavur (Tanjore), known as the cultural capital of Tamil Nadu and home to Brihadeeswarar Temple, a masterpiece of Dravidian architecture.
- Visit Brihadeeswarar Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, renowned for its towering vimana (temple tower) and massive Nandi statue.
- Explore Thanjavur Palace and Art Gallery, showcasing a collection of ancient sculptures, manuscripts, and royal artifacts.
- Optional: Witness a traditional dance performance showcasing Bharatanatyam, a classical dance form rooted in Tamil Nadu's cultural heritage.

Day 11: Thanjavur - Trichy (60km)

- After breakfast, drive to Trichy (Tiruchirappalli), a bustling city known for its temples, cultural heritage, and vibrant markets.
- Visit Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam, one of the largest functioning Hindu temples in the world, dedicated to Lord Vishnu.
- Explore Rockfort Ucchi Pillayar Temple, situated atop a rock formation with panoramic views of Trichy and its surroundings.
- Visit Jambukeshwarar Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva and one of the Pancha Bootha Sthalas, known for its ancient architecture and religious significance.
- Stroll along Trichy's bustling streets, shopping for traditional handicrafts, textiles, and famous Trichy cigars.
- Evening at leisure to relax or explore the vibrant local markets and culinary delights of Trichy.

Day 12: Trichy - Madurai (135km)

- After breakfast, depart for Madurai, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in India and a cultural hub of Tamil Nadu.
- Visit Meenakshi Amman Temple, a magnificent Dravidian-style temple dedicated to Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Sundareswarar, known for its towering gopurams and colorful sculptures.
- Explore Thirumalai Nayakkar Palace, an opulent palace built by the Nayak dynasty, showcasing Indo-Saracenic architecture and grand courtyards.
- Visit Gandhi Memorial Museum, dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi's life and teachings, featuring a comprehensive collection of memorabilia and exhibits.
- Optional: Explore local markets like Puthu Mandapam and enjoy a culinary tour to savor Madurai's famous street food and traditional South Indian dishes.
- Evening at leisure to witness the magical evening ceremony at Meenakshi Amman Temple, showcasing traditional music, dance, and rituals.

Day 13: Madurai - Thekkady (160km)

- After breakfast, depart for Thekkady, nestled in the heart of the Periyar National Park, known for its wildlife sanctuary and spice plantations.
- Enjoy a guided spice plantation tour, learning about cardamom, pepper, cinnamon, and other spices grown in the region.
- Embark on a boat safari on Periyar Lake, offering a chance to spot elephants, deer, bison, and a variety of bird species in their natural habitat.
- Visit Kadathanadan Kalari Centre, showcasing traditional Kalaripayattu martial arts and ancient healing techniques of Kerala.
- Optional: Trekking and bamboo rafting activities in the Periyar Tiger Reserve, exploring the lush greenery and diverse wildlife.
- Evening at leisure to relax at your resort, enjoying the serene ambiance and natural beauty of Thekkady.

Day 14: Thekkady - Alleppey (135km)

- After breakfast, drive to Alleppey, known as the "Venice of the East," famous for its backwaters, houseboats, and tranquil beauty.
- Board your private houseboat for an overnight cruise through the scenic backwaters of Kerala, passing through lush green landscapes and traditional villages.
- Enjoy freshly prepared Kerala cuisine on board, featuring seafood delicacies and local specialties.
- Cruise along Alleppey's canals and lagoons, witnessing daily life along the backwaters and catching glimpses of traditional fishing methods.
- Relax on the deck of your houseboat, enjoying sunset views over the backwaters and a peaceful night amidst nature's tranquility.
- Optional: Experience a traditional Ayurvedic massage or cultural performances on board the houseboat.

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Day 15: Alleppey - Cochin (60km)

- After breakfast on board, disembark from your houseboat and drive to Cochin (Kochi), a historic port city known for its blend of cultures and colonial architecture.
- Visit Mattancherry Palace (Dutch Palace), showcasing Kerala murals, Hindu temple art, and royal artifacts.
- Explore Fort Kochi, a historic neighborhood known for its colonial buildings, art galleries, and Chinese fishing nets.
- Visit St. Francis Church, the oldest European church in India, and burial place of Vasco da Gama.
- Witness a Kathakali dance performance, a traditional art form depicting stories from Hindu epics through elaborate costumes, makeup, and expressions.
- Enjoy a sunset cruise on Cochin Harbor, offering panoramic views of the Arabian Sea and Cochin's waterfront.

Day 16: Departure from Cochin

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Optional: Visit Jewish Synagogue in Jew Town, showcasing rare antiques and historical artifacts.
- Transfer to Cochin International Airport for your onward journey, concluding your memorable tour of Mumbai to Ajanta & Ellora Caves, South India Temples, and Kerala Backwaters.

Package Price (USD Per Person Sharing Double/Twin Room)**Valid for Travel: 01 October 2026 – 15 April 2027**

Persons	Solo	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3★ Standard	4,800	2,621	2,312	2,302	2,074	2,042	1,916	1,822
4★ Deluxe	5,853	3,110	2,801	2,792	2,564	2,531	2,406	2,311
5★ Luxury	8,012	4,474	3,899	3,890	3,662	3,630	3,504	3,410

Valid for Travel: 16 April 2027 to 20 September 2027

Persons	Solo	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3★ Standard	4,644	2,486	2,176	2,167	1,939	1,907	1,781	1,687
4★ Deluxe	5,318	2,831	2,522	2,513	2,285	2,252	2,127	2,032
5★ Luxury	6,997	3,940	3,365	3,356	3,128	3,096	2,970	2,876

Single Room Supplement

3★ Standard: USD 720 | 4★ Deluxe: USD 1,284 | 5★ Luxury: USD 2,344

Triple Sharing Discount (Per Person)

3★ Standard: USD 91 | 4★ Deluxe: USD 188 | 5★ Luxury: USD 406

Price Includes:

- Assistance on arrival at airport.
- 15 Nights' accommodation in selected price category hotels.
- Daily breakfast at hotels.
- Private AC car/van for airport transfers, sightseeing, and excursions as per the program.
- English speaking tour guide on sightseeing days (local guide in each city), as per program.
- Monument entrances and activities charges mentioned in the itinerary.
- Bottled drinking water in car.
- Government taxes.

Price Does Not Include:

- Mumbai - Aurangabad - Hyderabad - Chennai flight fare approx INR 15, 500 per person in economy class.
- Camera charges at monuments if any.
- Meals other than mentioned in the inclusions.
- Expenses of personal nature like liquor, laundry, tips, telephone, fax, internet etc.
- Gratuities and optional activities.
- Anything not mentioned in inclusions.

Hotels used or similar for 15 nights' accommodation

3 Star Hotels

- Mumbai x 2 nights: Hotel Godwin, Colaba/ Hotel Suba Palace
- Aurangabad x 2 nights: The Fern Residency/ Amarpreet Hotel
- Hyderabad x 2 nights: Hotel Abode/ Aditya Park
- Chennai x 1 night: ZONE By the Park/ Raj Park
- Pondicherry x 2 nights: Shenbaga Hotel/ Anandha Inn Convention Centre
- Thanjore x 1 night: Sangam Hotels
- Trichy x 1 night: Red Fox Hotel/ Hotel Blossoms
- Madurai x 1 night: JC Residency/ Hotel Royal Court
- Thekkady x 2 nights: Abad Green Forest/ Hotel Treetop

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- Alleppey x 1 night: Deluxe Houseboat (AC During Night Only)

4 Star Hotels

- Mumbai x 2 nights: Fariyas Hotel/ The Gordon House
- Aurangabad x 2 nights: Lemon Tree Hotel
- Hyderabad x 2 nights: The Golkonda Hotel/ Lemon Tree Hotel
- Chennai x 1 night: Accord Metropolitan/ The Park Chennai
- Pondicherry x 2 nights: Le Pondy/ Accord Puducherry
- Thanjore x 1 night: GReaT Trails Riverview Resort
- Trichy x 1 night: Courtyard by Marriott
- Madurai x 1 night: Fortune Pandiyan Hotel/ Regency Madurai by GRT Hotels
- Thekkady x 2 nights: Amritara Shalimar Spice Garden/ The Elephant Court
- Alleppey x 1 night: Premium Houseboat (Full Time AC)

5 Star Hotels

- Mumbai x 2 nights: Trident Hotel/ President, Mumbai - IHCL SeleQtions
- Aurangabad x 2 nights: WelcomHotel Rama International/ Vivanta Aurangabad
- Hyderabad x 2 nights: ITC Kakatiya, a Luxury Collection/ Trident Hotel
- Chennai x 1 night: Radisson Blu Hotel GRT Chennai/ Hilton Chennai
- Pondicherry x 2 nights: Palais De Mahe/ La Villa
- Thanjore x 1 night: Svatma
- Trichy x 1 night: Courtyard by Marriott
- Madurai x 1 night: Courtyard by Marriott/ The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai
- Thekkady x 2 nights: Spice Village/ Hills & Hues
- Alleppey x 1 night: Luxury Houseboat (Full Time AC)

Payment Policy:

- Deposit of 25% of the package cost at the time of booking.
- Deposit of 50% of the package cost, 30 days prior to arrival date
- Deposit of 100% of the package cost, 10 days prior to arrival date

Cancellation policy:

- Note: Written cancellation will be accepted on all working days, except Sundays. Any cancellation sent on Sundays will be considered on the next working day (Monday).
- X-mas and New Year Period (20 Dec to 05 Jan): The payment is non-refundable during this period.
- After Trip Commencement: If you cancel the trip after it has commenced, the refund will be limited to the amount we are able to recover from hoteliers/contractors. We are not responsible for refunds on unused hotel accommodations, chartered transportation, or missed meals.
- 61 days or more before the tour: No cancellation charges.
- Between 60 to 30 days before the tour: Cancellation charges equal to 20% of the full tour booking value.

- Between 30 to 15 days before the tour: Cancellation charges equal to 50% of the full tour booking value.
- Within 5 days before the tour or no show: Cancellation charges equal to 90% of the full tour booking value.

Our Liabilities & Limitations:

- Price Changes: After the finalization of the tour/service cost, if there are any hikes in entrance fees, taxes, fuel costs, or guide charges by the Government of India, these will be charged as extra.
- Role as Agent: Agora Voyages acts only as an agent for hotels, airlines, transporters, railways, and contractors providing services. All receipts, contracts, and tickets issued by us are subject to terms and conditions of the service providers.
- Itinerary Changes: All itineraries are sample itineraries intended to provide a general idea. We reserve the right to change the schedule based on factors such as weather, road conditions, or the physical ability of participants to ensure safety, comfort, and well-being.
- Rate Modifications: Our rates are based on negotiated rates with hotels and airlines. If the rates are modified by these service providers, we reserve the right to adjust the quoted rates accordingly. Hotel bookings are based on usual check-in and check-out times, unless otherwise indicated.
- Liability Disclaimer: We are not responsible for delays, alterations, or expenses incurred due to natural hazards, flight cancellations, accidents, weather, sickness, political closures, or any unforeseen incidents.
- Damage, Loss, or Injury: We are not responsible for any loss, injury, or damage to persons, property, or otherwise, caused by acts of God, fire, accidents, machinery breakdowns, political disturbances, theft, epidemics, or other factors beyond our control.
- Insurance: We do not offer insurance for accidents, sickness, theft, or other unforeseen circumstances. We recommend travelers arrange for insurance in their home country. All personal property and baggage are at the client's risk at all times.
- Unforeseen Circumstances: We are not responsible for costs arising from landslides, roadblocks, bad weather, or similar unforeseen circumstances.

Tipping

- Tipping is not included in our price. It is optional but often expected in the travel industry. There is no limit on the amount you can tip, though the average guideline is around \$10-15 per day for guides, drivers, and other crew members.

Trip Comments

- After your trip, we would love to hear your experience. Any photos, suggestions, or feedback will be greatly appreciated. While we strive to make every trip perfect, we acknowledge that there is always room for improvement. Your comments, whether positive or constructive, are invaluable to us.