

Tour Name: Temples & Backwater Tour of South India

Tour Duration: 14 Nights/ 15 Days

Tour Map: <https://tinyurl.com/yasa4m4a>

Tour Overview

Embark on an unforgettable journey through South India with our "Temples & Backwater Tour of South India" tour. Explore ancient Dravidian temples in Chennai, Mahabalipuram, Thanjavur, and Madurai, each a testament to the region's rich cultural heritage. Cruise along the tranquil backwaters of Kerala aboard traditional houseboats in Alleppey, marveling at lush green landscapes and vibrant village life. Immerse yourself in the beauty of Munnar's tea plantations, where mist-clad hills and sprawling estates await. This tour blends spiritual discovery with natural splendor, offering a glimpse into the soul of South India through its temples, palaces, and breathtaking scenery.

Tour Itinerary

Day 1: Chennai

- Arrival at Chennai Airport.
- Visit the Kapaleeshwarar Temple, a 7th-century Hindu temple renowned for its Dravidian architecture and intricate sculptures depicting various deities. The temple's gopurams (gateway towers) and colorful sculptures are remarkable examples of South Indian temple architecture.
- Explore Fort St. George, the oldest British fort in India, which houses St. Mary's Church and a museum with colonial artifacts. The museum displays relics from the British era, including weapons, uniforms, and coins.
- Discover the Santhome Basilica, a Gothic-style church built over the tomb of St. Thomas the Apostle. It is known for its striking architecture and historical significance as a pilgrimage site.
- Visit the Government Museum, which has a vast collection of archaeological and numismatic artifacts, including Bronze Age artifacts and Roman antiquities. The museum's highlight is the Amaravati Gallery, showcasing sculptures from the renowned Buddhist site of Amaravati.
- Overnight stay in Chennai.

Day 2: Chennai - Mahabalipuram (120kms)

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Travel to Mahabalipuram.
- Visit the Shore Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site showcasing Pallava architecture and overlooking the Bay of Bengal. The temple complex includes intricately carved shrines and monolithic sculptures dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- Explore Pancha Rathas, the monolithic rock-cut temples dedicated to the Pandava brothers from the Mahabharata epic. Each ratha (chariot) is carved from a single rock and represents different styles of South Indian temple architecture.
- Admire Arjuna's Penance, a giant open-air rock relief carved on two massive boulders. The relief depicts scenes from Hindu mythology and daily life, showcasing the skill of ancient sculptors.
- Relax on Mahabalipuram Beach, known for its shore temples and stone sculptures. The beach offers serene views of the Bay of Bengal and is a popular spot for relaxation.
- See Krishna's Butter Ball, a giant natural rock formation balancing on a steep slope. The rock, resembling a ball of butter, has puzzled visitors for centuries due to its precarious position.
- Overnight stay in Mahabalipuram.

Day 3: Mahabalipuram - Pondicherry (120kms)

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Travel to Pondicherry.
- Explore Auroville, an experimental township promoting peace and sustainable living, highlighted by the Matrimandir. The Matrimandir, with its unique golden dome, is a meditation center representing the unity of humanity.
- Relax on Auroville Beach and enjoy water sports activities. The beach offers a tranquil setting for swimming and sunbathing.
- Pay homage at the French War Memorial, dedicated to the soldiers who sacrificed their lives in World War I. The memorial's serene surroundings make it a peaceful place for reflection.
- Visit the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, a spiritual retreat founded by Sri Aurobindo and Mirra Alfassa. The ashram is a center for meditation and spiritual teachings.

- Take a leisurely walk along Promenade Beach, a popular seafront promenade lined with cafes and landmarks. The beach offers scenic views of the Bay of Bengal.
- Overnight stay in Pondicherry.

Day 4: Pondicherry - Thanjavur (180kms)

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Drive to Thanjavur via visiting Chidambaram, Gangaikondacholapuram, and Darasuram.
- Chidambaram is famous for the Nataraja Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva in his cosmic dancing form. The temple's architecture and the intricate sculptures depicting Bharatanatyam poses are noteworthy.
- Gangaikondacholapuram boasts the Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple, an architectural marvel built by the Chola dynasty. The temple is known for its grandeur and intricate carvings.
- Darasuram is home to the Airavatesvara Temple, another masterpiece of Chola architecture. The temple is known for its exquisite carvings and sculptures, depicting scenes from Hindu mythology.
- Overnight stay in Thanjavur.

Day 5: Thanjavur - Trichy (60kms)

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Visit the Brihadeeswarar Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site showcasing Chola architecture and its towering Vimana. The temple is renowned for its massive lingam (symbol of Lord Shiva) and intricate frescoes.
- Explore Thanjavur Palace, the palace of the Nayak and Maratha dynasties, including its art gallery and Saraswathi Mahal Library. The palace complex houses a diverse collection of royal artifacts and historical manuscripts.
- Discover the extensive collection of ancient palm leaf manuscripts and rare books at the Saraswathi Mahal Library, a treasure trove of knowledge from ancient India.
- Drive to Trichy.
- Visit the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, one of the largest functioning Hindu temples in the world, known for its impressive gopurams (gateway towers). The temple complex spans an area of over 150 acres and is a pilgrimage site.

- Climb 434 steps to reach the Rockfort Ucchi Pillayar Temple, dedicated to Lord Ganesha. The temple offers panoramic views of Trichy and the surrounding countryside.
- Visit the ancient Jambukeswarar Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, known for its architectural beauty and religious rituals. The temple's sacred pond is believed to have healing properties.
- Overnight stay in Trichy.

Day 6: Trichy - Madurai (135kms)

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Drive to Madurai.
- Explore the Meenakshi Amman Temple, a masterpiece of Dravidian architecture dedicated to Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Sundareswarar. The temple complex is known for its towering gopurams adorned with thousands of colorful sculptures.
- Visit the 17th-century Thirumalai Nayakkar Palace, known for its Indo-Saracenic style and nightly sound and light show. The palace's grand architecture and spacious courtyards reflect the opulence of the Nayak dynasty.
- Discover artifacts, photographs, and documents related to Mahatma Gandhi's life and his struggle for independence at the Gandhi Memorial Museum. The museum's exhibits include personal belongings of Gandhi and photographs depicting pivotal moments in India's freedom struggle.
- Overnight stay in Madurai.

Day 7: Madurai - Munnar (160kms)

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Drive to Munnar.
- Check in at the hotel.
- Rest of the day to explore the tea estates and enjoy the serene beauty of Munnar's landscapes.
- Overnight stay in Munnar.

Day 8: Munnar

- Breakfast at the hotel.

- Explore Eravikulam National Park, known for its Nilgiri Tahr and tea estates. The park offers trekking opportunities amidst lush greenery and panoramic views of the Western Ghats.
- Visit the Tea Museum to learn about Munnar's tea plantation history and the tea production process. The museum showcases antique tea-making equipment and exhibits on tea cultivation.
- Visit Mattupetty Dam, known for its picturesque views and boating activities on the reservoir. The dam is surrounded by lush forests and offers opportunities for wildlife sightings.
- Enjoy panoramic views of the Western Ghats and the valley of Theni district at Top Station, a scenic viewpoint known for its mist-covered hills and tea gardens.
- Experience the natural echo phenomenon and stunning views at Echo Point, where sound waves echo against the surrounding cliffs.
- Visit Attukal Waterfalls, known for its scenic beauty and photography opportunities. The waterfall cascades down rocky cliffs amidst lush greenery.
- Explore the Rose Garden, which houses a variety of plants, including rare species of roses. The garden's manicured lawns and colorful blooms make it a peaceful retreat.
- Overnight stay in Munnar.

Day 9: Munnar - Thekkady (110kms)

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Visit spice plantations to learn about cardamom, pepper, cinnamon, and other spices grown in the region. The plantations offer guided tours where visitors can see spice cultivation techniques.
- Attend a demonstration of Kalaripayattu, a traditional martial art form native to Kerala. The performance showcases agility, strength, and weapon skills.
- Overnight stay in Thekkady.

Day 10: Thekkady

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Go bamboo rafting on Periyar Lake, known for its scenic beauty and wildlife sightings. The bamboo rafting expedition offers a tranquil experience amidst dense forests and hills.

- Visit local markets for spice shopping and handicrafts. The markets are ideal for buying fresh spices, souvenirs, and traditional handicrafts made by local artisans.
- Explore a plantation known for its medicinal plants and herbal medicines. Guided tours offer insights into the cultivation and uses of medicinal plants.
- Overnight stay in Thekkady.

Day 11: Thekkady - Alleppey (135kms)

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Enjoy a houseboat cruise on the backwaters of Alleppey, also known as Alappuzha. The houseboats offer a luxurious experience with traditional Kerala cuisine served on board.
- Experience traditional Kerala cuisine served on board, including freshly prepared seafood and local delicacies.
- Visit Alleppey Beach, known for its natural beauty and scenic views of the Arabian Sea. The beach is ideal for sunbathing and enjoying the sunset.
- Visit Marari Beach, also known for its natural beauty and tranquil environment. The beach is less crowded and offers a peaceful retreat amidst palm-fringed shores.
- Visit Chettikulangara Temple, known for its architectural beauty and religious significance. The temple hosts colorful festivals and rituals dedicated to Goddess Bhagavathy.
- Overnight stay on the houseboat in Alleppey.

Day 12: Alleppey - Cochin (60kms)

- Breakfast on the houseboat.
- Visit Mattancherry Palace, a Portuguese palace featuring Kerala murals and historical exhibits. The palace's murals depict scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics.
- Explore the Jewish Synagogue and Jew Town, a historic area with antique shops and a synagogue dating back to the 16th century. The area reflects Cochin's multicultural heritage.
- Visit St. Francis Church, known for its historical significance as the oldest European church in India. The church houses the tombstone of Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese explorer.

- See the Chinese Fishing Nets, unique to Cochin, known for their innovative fishing technique. The nets offer scenic views of Cochin's waterfront and fishing activities.
- Visit Fort Kochi Beach, known for its natural beauty and colonial history. The beach is a popular spot for evening walks and watching traditional fishing activities.
- Explore the colonial buildings and Chinese fishing nets of Fort Kochi, which reflect the region's maritime history and European influences.
- Attend a traditional Kathakali dance performance, a classical dance form known for its elaborate costumes, facial expressions, and storytelling through dance.
- Overnight stay in Cochin.

Day 13: Cochin - Kovalam (200kms)

- After breakfast at the hotel in Cochin, embark on a scenic 200-kilometer drive to Kovalam.
- Check in at the hotel upon arrival.
- Relax and unwind at the serene beaches of Kovalam, including Lighthouse Beach and Hawa Beach.
- Explore local markets for souvenirs and handicrafts.
- Indulge in traditional Kerala cuisine at beachside cafes.
- Overnight stay in Kovalam, enjoying the tranquil coastal ambiance.

Day 14: Kovalam

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Enjoy leisure time on the beaches of Kovalam, such as Lighthouse Beach and Hawa Beach. The beaches offer opportunities for swimming, sunbathing, and beachside activities.
- Visit the iconic Padmanabhaswamy Temple, known for its Dravidian-style architecture and dedication to Lord Vishnu. The temple's sanctum sanctorum is adorned with intricate carvings and murals.
- Visit the Napier Museum, known for its collection of cultural artifacts, bronze sculptures, and ancient ornaments. The museum's exhibits offer insights into Kerala's art and history.

AGORA VOYAGES (OPC) PVT. LTD.

Approved by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India | Member – IATO

- Visit Shanghumukham Beach, known for its serene environment and scenic beauty. The beach is ideal for evening strolls and enjoying panoramic views of the Arabian Sea.
- Visit Vizhinjam Marine Aquarium, showcasing a variety of marine life found in Kerala's coastal waters. The aquarium's exhibits include colorful fish, coral reefs, and aquatic species.
- Visit Halcyon Castle, a historic mansion with Indo-Saracenic architecture. The castle's interiors feature period furniture, royal artifacts, and artwork depicting Kerala's cultural heritage.
- Visit Vellayani Lake, a freshwater lake surrounded by lush greenery and hills. The lake is known for its tranquil ambiance and is a popular spot for boating and picnicking.
- Visit Karamana River, a scenic river originating from the Agasthyamalai hills. The river's banks offer opportunities for nature walks, birdwatching, and river cruises.
- Overnight stay in Kovalam.

Day 15: Kovalam - Departure

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Transfer to Trivandrum Airport for departure, concluding your enriching journey through South India's great temples, picturesque landscapes, and cultural heritage.

AGORA VOYAGES (OPC) PVT. LTD.

Approved by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India | Member – IATO

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	4,196	2,293	2,033	2,076	1,868	1,833	1,719	1,634
4★ Deluxe	5,125	2,709	2,449	2,492	2,284	2,249	2,136	2,050
5★ Luxury	6,782	3,782	3,284	3,327	3,120	3,085	2,971	2,886

Valid for Travel: 16 April 2027 – 20 September 2027

Persons	Solo	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3★ Standard	4,025	2,154	1,893	1,936	1,729	1,693	1,580	1,495
4★ Deluxe	4,695	2,486	2,225	2,268	2,061	2,026	1,912	1,827
5★ Luxury	5,800	3,292	2,795	2,838	2,630	2,595	2,481	2,396

Single Room Supplement**3★ Standard: USD 648 | 4★ Deluxe: USD 1,160 | 5★ Luxury: USD 1,981****Triple Sharing Discount (Per Person)****3★ Standard: USD 93 | 4★ Deluxe: USD 172 | 5★ Luxury: USD 313****Price Includes:**

- Assistance on arrival at airport.
- 14 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:

- Any flight tickets.
- 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 14 nights' accommodation

3 Star Hotels

- Chennai x 1 night: ZONE By the Park/ Raj Park
- Mahabalipuram x 1 night: INDeco Hotels/ Ideal Beach Resort
- Pondicherry x 1 night: 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
- Munnar x 2 nights: Abad Copper Castle/ Elysium Garden Hill Resort
- Pariyar (Thekkady) x 2 nights: Abad Green Forest/ Hotel Treetop
- Alleppey x 1 night: Deluxe Houseboat (AC During Night Only)
- Cochin x 1 night: The Tower House/ The Killians
- Kovalam x 2 nights: Abad Harmonia Beach Resort/ Uday Suites Shanghumugham Beach

4 Star Hotels

- Chennai x 1 night: Accord Metropolitan/ The Park Chennai
- Mahabalipuram x 1 night: Chariot Beach Resort/ Confluence the Banquet & Resort
- Pondicherry x 1 night: Le Pondy/ Accord Puducherry

AGORA VOYAGES (OPC) PVT. LTD.

Approved by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India | Member – IATO

- 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
- Munnar x 2 nights: Elixir Hills Resort/ Tea County Munnar
- Pariyar (Thekkady) x 2 nights: Amritara Shalimar Spice Garden/ The Elephant Court
- Alleppey x 1 night: Premium Houseboat (Full Time AC)
- Cochin x 1 night: Casino Hotel/ Le Maritime
- Kovalam x 2 nights: Estuary Sarovar Portico / Uday Samudra Leisure Beach Hotel

5 Star Hotels

- Chennai x 1 night: Radisson Blu Hotel GRT Chennai/ Hilton Chennai
- Mahabalipuram x 1 night: Radisson Blu Resort & Spa
- Pondicherry x 1 night: 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
- Munnar x 2 nights: Chandys Windy Woods/ Blanket Hotel & Spa
- Pariyar (Thekkady) x 2 nights: Spice Village/ Hills & Hues
- Alleppey x 1 night: Luxury Houseboat (Full Time AC)
- Cochin x 1 night: Kochi Marriott Hotel/ Xandari Harbour
- Kovalam x 2 nights: Raviz Kovalam/ Vivanta by Taj - Green Cove

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.

AGORA VOYAGES (OPC) PVT. LTD.

Approved by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India | Member – IATO

- **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.