



6-11 November, 2011

India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India

TOUR CODE (CT-5) SPICE COAST (05 NIGHTS / 06 DAYS)

DAY 01: Arrive COCHIN

Meeting and assistance upon arrival in Cochin airport and transfer to the hotel for check in.

Cochin is also known as 'Queen of the Arabian Sea' due to its natural harbor, being one of the finest. Cochin is a city made of islands connected to Ernakulam on the mainland by bridges and ferries. The interesting city of Cochin perfectly reflect the eclecticism of Kerala.. This quaint town has seen historic visits from sea faring traders in the past from Portugal, China etc bringing to it different cultures that make up its fabric.



This evening learn about Kerala's fascinating art form, Kathakali. The Kathakali performers begin to train for their art at a young age, and their study continues for a lifetime. Today you will enjoy a dance performance. Return to your hotel for an overnight stay.

DAY 02: IN COCHIN

Breakfast at the hotel. Later proceed on a full day city tour of Cochin

Today visit the Jewish Synagogue (of 1568) which is the oldest synagogue in the commonwealth. It is an interesting little place with hand painted willow pattern floor tiles brought from Canton in China in the mid 18th century. The synagogue is located in an area called Jew Town which also is one of the centers of the spice trade in the region.



Special note: [Synagogue is closed on Friday and Saturday](#)

Also visit the ancient Mattancherry (Dutch) Palace built by the Portuguese in 1557. This palace was presented to the ruler of Cochin as a gesture of goodwill. The Palace's alternative name "Dutch Palace" resulted from substantial renovations by the Dutch after 1663.. The most important feature of the palace is the astonishing murals that adorn some of the palace rooms, depicting scenes from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranic legends connected with Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna, Kumara and Durga.

Another stop is made at the St. Francis Church, the oldest European built church in India. Constructed in 1503 by the Portuguese Franciscan Friars who accompanied the expedition led by Pedro Alvarez Cabral. The famed Vasco de Gama, the first European to reach India by sailing around Africa, died in Cochin in 1524 and was buried here for 14 years before his remains were transferred to Lisbon. His tombstone can be seen inside the church.

Special note: [St. Francis church will remain closed on Sunday morning](#)

Also pay a visit to the amazing Chinese fishing nets operating on principles of physics advanced for their times.

Conclude the day by enjoying a sunset cruise around Cochin harbour. Return to the hotel for an overnight stay.



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DAY 03: COCHIN – ALLEPPEY

Breakfast at the hotel. Later transfer to Alleppey (approx. 1 & half hours drive). Arrive Alleppey & embark houseboat. Rest of the day is free to enjoy backwaters on board.

The backwaters in Kerala is a network of 1500 kms of canals both manmade and natural, 38 rivers and 5 big lakes extending from one end of Kerala to the other. Before trucks became popular, the main cargo transportation was through backwaters by 'Kettuvalloms'. Kettuvallom means, 'stitched boat'. Kettuvalloms or Houseboats (Riceboats) are country boats that were used in the early days for the transport of goods from the isolated interior villages to the towns. With the advent of roads, bridges and ferry services, gradually the Kettuvalloms went off the scene. Now these kettuvalloms are back again as a major tourist attraction. A ride on a Kettuvallom is a fabulous way to explore the fascinating beauty of the backwaters



They are 70 foot long, 30 tons capacity, made with wooden planks joined and stitched together with coconut ropes and painted with cashew nut oil outside. In earlier days, boatmen rarely stopped along the waterways for meals. Their diet consisted of freshly caught backwater fish, like karimeen (pearlspot) and kalangi (barramundi, an estuarial and fresh water game fish found also in Australia), nonperishable staples such as lentils and local large grain "red" rice, and inexpensive spices - coriander, ginger, dried chillies, turmeric, and black mustard seeds.

Today things are a bit more modern, although a lot of effort has been made to keep the tradition touch there. Today's houseboats are converted 'kettuvalloms'. They are designed for comfortable cruise and overnight stay. The boat has one / two bath attached double bedrooms with modern comforts, a living cum dining room, sundeck and a kitchen. The boat has solar lamps and fans.

In the one bedroom boat, the living cum dining room is at the front and bigger in size. This boat can accommodate two persons. In the two bedroom boat, the living cum dining room is at the middle. This boat can accommodate four persons.

The boat is constructed by Eco-friendly materials like bamboo mat, Arecanut trees and coir. A distinctive feature of the kettuvallom is the design suggesting the possible Chinese influence. The canopy's sides can be lifted.

Dining onboard is an experience in itself. Though based on the tradition of fish and vegetables, in keeping with the demands of a cosmopolitan clientele, the cuisine served aboard our houseboats features a far more sophisticated menu than a kettuvallom. The ethnic meals are prepared on board by a personal cook and fish delicacies like white prawns, pearl spotted fish, crabs and mussels are the specialties. The meals include lunch, evening coffee or tea with snacks, dinner and breakfast.

Once on the boat, you will cruise along the backwaters for a couple of hours. Pass small villages and see how the local people live. The lushness of coconut trees will astound you. The boat moves by an out board engine of 25 HP (which do not make much noise), en-route visiting villages to see coir making, tea shops, paddy fields, temples, beaches etc till sunset.

At night the boat is anchored at a beautiful and quiet part of the lake. Overnight on board



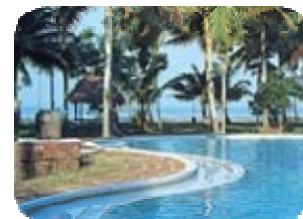
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DAY 04: ALLEPPEY - KUMARAKOM

Breakfast on board. Later Cruise through narrow lakes and canals towards Kumarakom. Upon arrival disembark at Kumarakom and transfer to the Hotel by small boat. Check into the Hotel

The state of Kerala, apart from being the one of the most progressive states in the nation is also known for its numerous canals and waterways and its verdant forests and mangrove swamps. Set in one of the most idyllic locations in Kerala, Kumarakom is a tiny settlement, nestled in the backwaters of Kerala and evokes images of Kashmir.



You will drive to a local village where you will board a country style boat to Kumarakom. An unbelievably beautiful paradise of mangrove forest, emerald green paddy fields and coconut groves interspersed with enchanting waterways and canals adorned with white lilies. Situated on the Vembanad lake, in this small water world you'll come across plenty of traditional country crafts, boats and canoes which will take you into the heart of the scenic lake. The resorts nearby offer comfortable accommodation and exclusive leisure options like an ayurvedic massage, yoga, meditation, boating, fishing, angling and swimming.

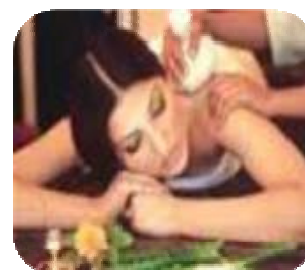
Rest day is free to enjoy backwater or free for Ayurveda Treatment on own cost. Overnight at the Hotel.

DAY 05: IN KUMARAKOM

Breakfast at the hotel. Rest of the day at leisure or free for Ayurveda Treatment (on own cost)

Ayurveda – a natural way of feeling better

Ayurveda is a holistic approach to toning the body. A relaxing massage with herbal oils is highly rejuvenating. Ayurveda is an Indian system of medicine. Ayurveda means the science of life / health and employs naturalistic methods based on the theory of panchabhuta or five elements. Tone up the nervous system with the help of aromatic and medicinal oils used by expert masseurs.



Ayurveda evolved around 600 BC in India. During the 500 - 600 B.C., knowledgeable philosophers such as Agasthya, Charaka, Sushruta, Kashyapa churned from the vedas the references to all illness, diseases, drug-medicines and compiled the samhitas. It is from this samhitas that the physicians later absorbed the knowledge of Ayurveda and applied them for curing illness. Ayurveda is not only the ancient Indian science of preventative health and healing but also a philosophy of living.

This new system of medicine stressed on the prevention of body ailments in addition to curing them. Followed by the Dravidians and Aryans alike, Ayurveda has been practiced ever since. Today, it's a unique, indispensable branch of medicine - a complete naturalistic system that depends on the diagnosis of your body's vata, pitta and kapha - to achieve the right balance.



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Ayurveda believes in the treatment of not just the affected part, but the individual as a whole. Making it the natural way to refresh yourself, eliminate all toxic imbalances from the body and thus regain resistance and good health.

Ayurveda is the knowledge that indicates the appropriate and inappropriate, happy or sorrowful conditions of living, what is auspicious or inauspicious for longevity, as well as the measure of life itself. Ayur means life and Veda means knowledge, so Ayurveda means the knowledge about science of life. Ayurveda was derived from the most cherished scriptures known as Vedas. They are Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharvana Vedas.

Ayurveda removes the cause of disease and re-establishes balance to our system. According to Ayurveda, we are composed of three bodies physical, astral, causal ie. body, mind and soul.

The earth existed billions of years before our arrival, which is mere three and a half million years ago. As our planet ages and we grow in universal wisdom & come to know the beauty of cosmic magnetism among all life forms.

The Ayurvedic system does not circumscribe its focus to the ailment alone, but extends to include the composite individual. It is believed that the constant reaction of the body to the maelstrom of changing stimuli in the external environment can give rise to imbalances that lead, in turn, to disease. In Ayurveda, the mind and spirit are accorded the same importance as the body, and meticulous attention is paid to the interaction of psychological, dietary, behavioral, lifestyle and environmental variables that comprise the human organism.

More specifically, each human being is treated as a unique entity with idiosyncratic personality traits and distinctive psychosomatic features. Thus, the system is not premised on the mutual exclusivity of patient and physician. Instead, the patient becomes a dynamic collaborator, rather than a passive consumer, of the healing process.

The ultimate mission is not merely a temporary 'cure' of a physical disorder but a prevention of its recurrence. The gentleness and long-term perspective of the system is surely what makes it so attractive to patients, for although it takes time for the gains to become manifest, when they do, they are accompanied by no unpleasant side-effects whatsoever. However, instructors are at pains to emphasis that Ayurveda is a 'way of life' rather than a mechanical technique, and must be integrated, along with yoga and meditation, into one's lifestyle in order to yield enduring benefits.

Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 06: KUMARAKOM – COCHIN - DEPART COCHIN

Breakfast at the hotel. Morning is free to relax in the hotel. Afternoon in time transfer to Cochin (approx. 3 hrs drive) straight to the airport to board the flight.

===== Tour ends =====

The above tour includes:

- Accommodation on bed and breakfast basis in Cochin & Kumarakom while during Alleppy on board – accommodation will be provided on full board basis
- English speaking local guide during the sightseeing
- Kathakali dances show in local theatre



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- One bottle of mineral water per person per day
- Basic portorage at the airport and Hotels (not tips)
- All transfers, sightseeing's and excursions using air - conditioned vehicle

The above tour does not include:

- Accommodation in any hotel in Delhi
- Any expenses of personal nature like drinks, laundry, telephone calls, mineral water etc.
- Any airfare (Extra at INR 17,000 (approx.) per person for sector Delhi – Cochin – Delhi)
- Any insurance
- Any camera or video fee at the monuments (guest can pay directly for this at the monuments)
- Any spa /massage package
- Any meals other than specified
- Service tax @2.57%
- Any other services not mentioned above

Special note:

Prices are subject to change due to hike in fuel / Govt. Taxes. / State Road Tax if any in near future.
Rates includes only those Items as specified in the above Itinerary.