

# EXOTIC KERALA TOUR

## Day 1 ARRIVE COCHIN

Arrive Cochin by international flight. Meeting at the airport and transfer to hotel.

Cochin (Kochi) was born in a storm, nurtured in rivalry, and established as the Crossroads of the Battling Empires of Europe: Portuguese, Dutch and British. In the 1340's torrential rains filled the Periyar River, which broke through to the Arabian Sea and formed Kochi's protected harbor. Trading ships soon sailed in: and out. The much-photographed Chinese fishing nets at the harbour-mouth, best seen at sunset, testify to Cochin's pre-European association with China. In 1502, Portuguese Seafarer Vasco da Gama came to Kochi seeking spices. He found his spices, launched Europe's great Age of Exploration, and prayed in the first European church in Asia and converted many of the locals to Christianity. Unlike the Portuguese, Kochi's kings were very tolerant of other faiths. European Jews, fleeing persecution at home, settled in Jew Town near the Mattancherry Palace of the Hindu king and prosper.

Afternoon: Proceed to city tour of Cochin visiting the synagogue - built in 1568 AD. It contains Grand Scrolls of the Old Testament and the copper plates containing the privileges granted to the Jews by the Cochin rulers. The floor of the Synagogue is paved with exquisite Chinese hand painted tiles. Overlooking the Jewish synagogue is Mattancherry Palace, home of the former Rajas of Cochin. Today it holds royal palanquins, weapons, robes and beautiful murals of ancient Hindu epics painted in vegetable dyes. When the Dutch ousted the Portuguese on January 7, 1663, the people of Cochin renamed Mattancherry Palace as the "Dutch Palace" to honour the Netherlanders. Visit St. Francis Church, built originally by the Portuguese in 1510 AD. It is believed to be the oldest church in India. The building was originally constructed out of timber and later reconstructed in stone masonry during the 16th century. Vasco Da Gama, who died in Cochin in 1524, was buried here before his remains were returned to Portugal 14 years later.

Also visit the Chinese fishing nets at Fort Kochi, located in the Kochi city of Kerala, make up a very popular tourist attraction. They are fixed land installations, which are used for a very unique and unusual method of fishing. Operated from the shore, these nets are set up on bamboo and teak poles and held horizontally by huge mechanisms, which lower them into the sea. They look somewhat like hammocks and are counter-weighted by large stones tied to ropes.

### Overnight in Cochin



## Day 02 COCHIN / MUNNAR

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to Munnar by car (130 Kms / 3-4 hrs drive). Arrive Munnar and check-in at the hotel.

Situated at 1,524 m above sea level, Munnar is the highest town of Kerala, with a cool bracing climate exuding an old world charm. The atmosphere is fragrant with extensive tea and cardamom plantations. There are enchanting high ranges, lakes, streams and beautiful view of low-lying clouds and the mist filled valleys.

### Overnight in Munnar

## Day 03 IN MUNNAR

After leisure breakfast at the hotel, Proceed to explore the town of Munnar visiting here visit to Mattupetty Lake & Dam, Echo Point, Kundale Lake, Blossom Garden, Rajamalai, Tea Plantation and Eravikulam Wildlife Sanctuary. Rest of the day free at leisure.

### Overnight in Munnar





**Day 04** **MUNNAR / THEKKADY**

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to Thekkady by car (160 Kms / 3 ½ -4 hrs drive). Arrive Thekkady & transfer to hotel.

Periyar Tiger Reserve, 777 sq kms in area, is set in a rich, mixed deciduous forest, interspersed with open areas of tall grass. Periyar has a splendid artificial lake dotted with snags of dead wood, which provides a perch for water birds: darter, grey heron, egret and kingfisher. It is one of the finest habitats for the Asiatic elephant. These enormous mammals swim in the waters and streams and usually can be observed during an exciting boat ride. You may view a tiger, leopard, sambar, wild dog, barking deer, the unique Nilgiri langur-the lion tailed macaque and a variety of birds.

Afternoon: Visit Periyar National Park by boat to see the wildlife in their natural habitat and Spice Plantation.

**Overnight in Thekkady**



**Day 05** **THEKKADY / ALLEPPEY (HOUSEBOAT)**

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to Alleppey by car (140 Kms / 3 - 4 Hrs) by car, and later in the afternoon, transfer to boat jetty to embark on the private houseboat and sail through Vembanad Lake to Alleppey. To experience this world of simple pleasures, you'll skim past ancient Chinese fishing nets, water lilies, lush paddy fields, coir villages, rustic homes, temples, churches and coconut groves.

Your houseboat will have a captain besides a cook and few attendants. You will be served delicious lunch & dinner during your stay on the houseboat.

**Overnight on the Houseboat**

**Day 06** **ALLEPPEY / COCHIN**

After leisure breakfast on houseboat, disembark at Alleppey jetty, where your car will be waiting for you to transfer to Cochin. Arrive Cochin and transfer to international airport in time to board flight for onward destination.

**END OF SERVICES**



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