

# THE ESSENCE OF SOUTH INDIA

15 days / 14 nights

*If you were to look for a definition of South India, it would be found in the smells, sights and sounds; in its distinctive cuisine, people and temples. Women in bright silk saris, their hair threaded with white and orange flowers; the men in white dhoti-kurtas, foreheads smeared with vibhuti. The restaurants smell of curry leaves and coconut, temples of white mongra flowers and sandalwood incense; the rhythmic chanting of prayers reverberates in the atmosphere. High above the Malabar Coast, this magnificent range of hills provides a cool escape from the hot plains below. Designed for nature lovers, this tour captures the natural beauty of Western Ghats and Jungles of Nagarhole, as well as exploring the cultural richness of the land of Tipu Sultan and the sandalwood city of Mysore.*

## ITINERARY

### **Day 1** **Bangalore**

Reception and welcome at Bangalore Airport followed by transfer to your hotel.

### **Day 2** **Bangalore-Mysore** 140 kms – 3 ½ hrs drive

Drive to Mysore; en route visit Somnathpur and Srirangapatna. Somnathpur, a tiny village east of Mysore, has one of the best preserved and only complete Hoysala Temples. At Srirangapatna, you will visit the remains of the fort and the Hindu Temples as well as the summer palace of Tipu Sultan. Overnight at Mysore. B

### **Day 3** **Mysore**

Morning sightseeing tour of Mysore visiting the Maharaja's Palace, also known as Amba Vilas, which harmoniously synthesises the Hindu and the Saracenic styles of architecture. You will also visit Jaganmohan Palace, now converted to an art gallery. This evening walk through the flower market of Mysore. B

### **Day 4** **Mysore-Coonoor** 130 kms - 3 ½ hrs drive

Drive to Coonoor, surrounded by picturesque hills covered with tea and coffee plantations. During the afternoon you can visit vantage points for stunning views. Overnight at Coonoor. B

### **Day 5** **Coonoor**

Enjoy the Toy Train ride uphill to Ooty. This hill station, developed by the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is surrounded by rolling hills and valleys, covered with pine and eucalyptus forests and tea and coffee plantations. After an afternoon tour of Ooty you will be driven back to Coonoor. B

### **Day 6** **Coonoor-Sultan's Battery** 170 kms 4 ½ hrs drive

Drive to Sultan's Battery. This is a beautiful area that encapsulates rural Kerala. Check in at Tranquil Homestay for two nights, a scheduled plantation midway on the Kappamundi Coffee Estate in the Western Ghats, surrounded by rolling hills, tropical jungle and coffee, pepper and cardamom plantations. B

### **Day 7** **Sultan's Battery**

Today enjoy local natural trails on the plantation or visit the caves at Edakkal near Ambalavayal. Stone Age pictorial writings on the walls are the evidence of the civilisations that existed in the regions in prehistoric times. B

### **Day 8** **Sultan's Battery-Nagarhole** 140 kms - 3 hrs drive

Drive to Nagarhole National Park, home to several rare and endangered species including the tiger and leopard. Overnight at Nagarhole. B

### **Day 9** **Nagarhole**

Morning and afternoon game safaris at Nagarhole National Park. B

### **Day 10** **Nagarhole-Coorg** 120 kms - 3 hrs drive

Drive to Coorg with its forests which are still home to wild elephants. The picturesque hills are covered by spice plantations and coffee estates providing good trekking opportunities. Madikeri, the capital, is an

attractive small town in a beautiful hilly setting surrounded by the forested slopes of the western Ghats. Overnight at Coorg. B

**Day 11**

**Coorg**

Today is at leisure to enjoy the nature trails or visit the Golden Tibetan Monastery. B

**Day 12**

**Coorg-Neeleshwar** *145 kms - 3 hrs drive*

This morning drive to Neeleshwar, an oasis of tranquillity set on one of the finest, unspoilt beaches of Kerala with neighbouring fishing villages scattered along the coast. Stay for the next four nights at Neeleshwar Hermitage. B

**Day 13**

**Neeleshwar**

Day at leisure to relax on the beach or enjoy the facilities of the hotel. B

**Day 14**

**Neeleshwar-Mangalore- Bangalore**

Transfer to Mangalore Airport for your flight to Bangalore. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel. B

**Day 15**

**Bangalore**

Free day for shopping; this evening you will be transferred to the international airport for your flight home. B