

Travel Information - Kerala

Visas

Visitors to India must obtain a Visa before departure. Please contact the local Indian Embassy or High Commission for details and an application form. Should you need names of local contacts while filling up the VISA forms, you can use the following addresses:

S Sujithlal (Retired Indian Navy) Chakkanattu House Locality: South Aryad Post: Avalookunnu District: Alappuzha State: Kerala Country: India Postal Code – 688 006 Tel: +91 77690 11261 UID / Aadhaar No. 3379 3165 0103	Francis Antony (Tour Leader) House No. 20/1213A Thattaparambu Road Locality: Palluruthy District: Ernakulam State: Kerala Country: India Postal Code – 682 006 Tel: +91 94460 05227 UID / Aadhaar No. 9644 2620 3199
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Airport taxes

There are **no** airport taxes if you depart from Kochi or Trivandrum International Airport.

Currency

Currency exchange is possible at the Airport, Hotels, and many outlets along the way. You can exchange your money in most major towns. ATMs are found in most towns. Credit cards are accepted only in major cities enroute during this tour.

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Local Mobile

In case you are interested in obtaining a local mobile SIM card for your stay in India, we could help you out by directing you to an authorized agent. Please contact your guide for more information.

Telephone and Internet Access

You would have access to telephone and internet at most of the hotels. In case there is no internet access at the hotels in remote areas, you would be able to access it in the nearest town.

Electricity

For India there are three associated plug types, types C, D and M. Plug type C is the plug which has two round pins, plug type D is the plug which has three round pins in a triangular pattern and plug type M is the plug which also has three round pins. India operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz. It is recommended to carry a universal travel adaptor.

Safety

Friendly children (and adults) wanting to talk to you is normal. Kindly make sure your guide is with you during the interaction!

Insurance

We recommended that you take your insurance that covers Trip cancellation or delay, accidents abroad, illnesses, personal liability, financial risks, loss of luggage, emergency evacuation or any other unforeseen incidents.

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Health and Vaccination

Please be wary of the following

- Dehydration: Due to excessive heat and humidity. Hydrate with lots of water and fluids.
- Heat Exhaustion: Take adequate precaution when outdoors by using sunscreen (At least SPF 30), wearing long-sleeved cotton shirts, and donning a hat/cap and scarf if necessary.

Kindly visit the following websites for information regarding vaccination requirements.

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/india>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/travel-vaccinations/>

First Aid

Our guides have been adequately trained in first aid and always carry a comprehensive first-aid kit. In case of any medical emergency, we have facilities to transfer you to the nearest hospital at the earliest.

Despite this, it is worth carrying a medical kit with basic medicines for upset stomachs, headaches, mosquito bites etc. and mosquito/insect repellent. Persons with medical conditions and allergies are requested to bring the appropriate medicines and inform us early if there are any medical/dietary restrictions.

Climate

The South Indian subcontinent is tropical - warm, humid, and often wet. It is cooler in the highlands and on the coast where there can be a sea breeze. During the main monsoon, (June to September) there is heavy rain, but at other times of the year, it is generally dry except for the odd shower in the evenings. The high season throughout the region (when the rainfall is at its lowest) generally starts in October/November and ends in March/April.

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Season	Months	Temperatures		
		High	Low	Average
Summer	March - June	38 Deg.C	30 Deg C	33 Deg C
Monsoon	July - October	30 Deg C	19 Deg C	24 Deg C
Moderate	October - February	26 Deg C	17 Deg C	22 Deg C

Most of the cycling is in the forenoon when the temperatures are lower.

Languages

As India was a former British colony, English is widely spoken throughout the Kerala State. Malayalam is the state language, and it is nice to learn a few phrases when you arrive. Here are a few to get you started:

Hello - *Namaskaram*

Thank You - *Nanni*

How are you - *Sukhamano*

How much - *Ethra Ayi*

What is your name? - *Peru Enna*

Bye - *Varateey*

Supporting the local economy and culture

The places you stay in and projects you visit are handpicked because they support the local economy and culture. For example, in the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, you will meet the young people (designated as forest guards) of the *Mannan* community (the people indigenous to the region) from the village during the forest activities. The program was developed with the support of the village elders years back and now all remunerations will go back to the community.

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Tipping

Many of our guests have asked us for guidelines on tipping. It is important to get it right (not too much, not too little).

We recommend offering (if your budget allows):

- Guide (if he is with you throughout) INR 750 per day
- Driver – INR 500 per day for the car at disposal & when he is also a guide for the tour. Otherwise Rs 300 per day.
- Houseboat crew – INR 100 – 200 per person per day.
- Bell Boys – INR 20 per bag.
- At some hotels, there is central tipping – try to calculate how much you would have tipped individuals and then round it up if you have enjoyed your stay. If you know that the gardeners and cleaning staff are also getting a share, then it is nice to be generous as you know that your money is helping the lower-paid workers.

What to bring

You will need to bring light clothes for most of your time on the tour. Warm sweaters may be necessary for hilly areas (e.g., Munnar and Periyar), where temperatures can get very low at night. For sun and evening mosquito protection, you might require light, full-sleeved shirt and trousers. In temples and other holy sites, you'll need to cover your legs and shoulders (long-sleeved shirts light long-sleeved preferred) and remove your shoes. Even in people's homes, it is polite for women to cover their shoulders (T-shirts are fine) and wear skirts down to their knees.

Light rain gear would be useful. Other useful items to bring with you include comfortable walking shoes or trainers, a swimsuit, insect repellent, sunscreen, a hat, a camera, binoculars (for wildlife lovers) and a torch (for evening strolls). Other than special needs, such as prescribed medicines, almost everything else is locally available.

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Swimming

There will be opportunities for swimming. Best to have appropriate swimwear in the baggage.

Ayurvedic massage

We offer traditional *ayurvedic* massages on our tours at specific destinations. These massages are popular amongst local people and very much part of the culture. Even if you don't usually have massages, you may find it an interesting and relaxing experience.

Food and Water

We strongly recommend that you drink only bottled water during your journey. A crate of bottled water is always catered for in the boot of the car during journeys as an emergency measure.

You will get clean, good-quality food on our tours – with little risk to your health unless you wish to taste the real local food which might not be easy on your stomach. We recommend consuming the local food in very small portions just for the experience.

In general – hot beverages (tea and coffee) are fine – and we recommend an evening stroll to the nearest tea shop. Fruit juices should be avoided unless freshly squeezed (but you would need to feel comfortable about the cleanliness of the glasses). Fresh fruit for eating that has a skin that can be peeled is fine – e.g., bananas, pineapple, oranges. Snacks that are deep fried in oil are usually fine, providing that the oil is fresh. Hence, if you wish to try any food, snacks, or beverages at any time, we recommend that you ask for advice from your guide.

Smoking and Liquor

Some hotels do not serve liquor. So, it is recommended that you tell your guide to procure liquor from Government-owned shops, especially beer. There is no law against consuming liquor.

However, smoking and consumption of liquor in public are prohibited by law in Kerala. Lighted cigarettes are not to be taken inside the tents since the tents & sleeping bags are highly flammable.

Pocket cash

Although we handle most expenses, we recommend you bring some extra money for shopping during the tour. Small wood and metal, leather and basketwork, pottery, rugs, and handloom textiles also make great bargains. Food gifts could include Tea, Spices, Bombay mix, and Cashew nuts etc. Whenever possible, we'll take you directly to the artisans and craftsmen so that your money goes straight to the people who deserves it the most.

Local customs

When entering people's homes and temples, it is polite to remove your shoes. Women will feel most comfortable in T-shirts that cover their shoulders and loose slacks or long skirts that cover their legs (particularly in remote areas). Kerala is a little conservative place and **excessive show of affection in public places is often frowned upon.**

Doing things, the local way

We aim to offer you authenticity, and a relaxed and enjoyable time during your visit. There may be instances of organized anarchy that can be frustrating. An open mind will help you enjoy such situations.

Transportation/Guides/Cycles

Transportation including airport transfers is included in the cost. A vehicle will accompany throughout for passage for backup and support.

We provide a qualified cycling guide for the tour.

You would need to bring your clip-on and respective pedals; we can manage the fitment.

What to bring

You will need to bring light clothes for most of your time on the tour. Warm jacket / sweaters may be necessary for hilly areas (e.g., Munnar and Periyar), where temperatures can get very low at night. For sun during the day or mosquito protection during dusk, you might require a light long-sleeved shirt and trousers.

In temples and other holy sites, you'll need to cover your legs and shoulders (long-sleeved shirts are preferred) and remove your shoes. Even in people's homes, it is polite for women to cover their shoulders (T-shirts are fine) and wear skirts down to their knees.

Light rain gear would be useful. Other useful items to bring with you include comfortable walking shoes or trainers, a swimsuit, insect repellent, sunscreen, a hat, a camera, binoculars (for wildlife lovers) and a torch (for evening strolls). Other than special needs, such as prescribed medicines, almost everything else is locally available.

WHAT TO BRING:

- Day Bag
- Casual Shirts / T-shirts
- Shorts & Trousers
- Cap / Sunglasses

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- Sunscreen lotion (SPF minimum 35)
- Gloves
- Camera (optional)
- Warm clothes
- Waterproof jacket

HAVE A WONDERFUL TRIP



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