

Eco & Culture Tours



Trip Highlights

- Wildlife viewing
- Tea Gardens of Munnar
- Stay in varied type of accommodation
- Exquisite local cuisine
- Riceboat cruise
- The historic town of Fort Kochi
- Stay at a spice plantation villa



At a Glance

An eco and cultural journey through Kerala featuring Fort Kochi, the mountains and tea plantations of Munnar, the wilderness at Periyar and the spectacular backwaters of Alleppey.

Kerala Naturally

Eco & Culture Tours

Detailed Itinerary:

Day 1, 2: Kochi

The ancient seaport of Kochi is one of Kerala's most delightful cities. Here you may either relax or stroll through the old town's maze of small streets and experience Fort Kochi's colonial flair. In the evening we would recommend you to go for a little walk along the coastal path where you can enjoy an amazing sunset at the famous Chinese fishing nets. The St. Francis Church, India's oldest European church, the impressive Santa Cruz Basilica as well as the Mattancherry Palace and the synagogue are all worth a visit on your walks through the narrow roads. In the evening we will attend a traditional *Kathakali* dance performance, a mixture of dance and theatre. O/N: Heritaha Hotel in Fort Kochi (B)

Day 3, 4, 5: Munnar

A 4-hour drive will take you to the cool hill station of Munnar. On an easy walk of 1 to 2 hours we will walk through the lush tea plantations while watching the local tea leaf pickers doing their work. The area offers good chances of watching wildlife. Spotting different kinds of rare birds and animals, some of them being endemic to the region, will certainly be a very rewarding experience. There is also a fascinating full day walk through the higher reaches of the Munnar mountains to experience the *shola*-grassland eco-system that is so prevalent here. A visit to the local tribal village will give you a chance to interact with these indigenous people and learn about them, including manufacture of raw sugar, aromatic oils and their methods of cultivation. There is also a chance to visit and walk through the to the nearby wildlife sanctuary at Chinnar. O/N: Plantation Resort (B, L, D)

Day 6, 7: Periyar

We leave the highlands of Munnar behind us and head to the Periyar Tiger Reserve. The closest you can get to the forest and its wildlife is exploring the area on foot. On our day-walks which are organised by the local communities, we will have very good chances of spotting different kinds of wildlife. We will hike through dense forest, enchanting valleys and hills. Be on the lookout for wild animals such as Nilgiri Langurs, Lion-tailed Macaques, Elephants or maybe even the elusive Tiger! O/N: Eco Lodge (B, L, D)

Day 8, 9, 10:

We will now make our way to the foothills of the mountains and will be greeted by the sprawling rubber estates, spice gardens, paddy fields and the greenery of the Kerala plains. Our

destination is a organic spice plantation villa set upon the banks of the Kannadi river. Here in this organic farm, spices and ayurvedic herbs are grown besides fruit trees like papaya, mangoes, jackfruits and numerous other tropical delights. Here we visit the local farms, meet the farmers & interact with them, go to the local school & maybe even try some Kerala cooking learning from the friendly chef. O/N: Organic Plantation Villa (B, L, D)

Day 11: Alleppey

Our next destination is travel to Alleppey to embark on one of Kerala's most special forms of accommodation - the house boat. Silently cruising through the enchanting canals and lagoons that make up the beautiful backwaters of Kerala. Passing remote villages we can relax and take in the beauty of the backwaters, so special to Kerala ! O/N: Houseboat (B, L, D)

Day 12, 13: the Backwaters

Today we will disembark the houseboat and transfer the short distance to a villa set on the banks of the backwaters – a heritage villa replete with its own rich history of the place and people. One can see the magnificent century old wood work on the walls, the ancient granary – now converted to a beautiful suite - and the tropical garden that surrounds the villa. Here we take it easy with Ayurvedic massages or if the mood takes you visit the local villages on foot or cycles. O/N: Heritage Villa (B, L, D)

Day 14 : Depart

End of tour

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

Inclusions

- Accommodation in Boutique hotels, resorts, Forest Lodges & home stays
- Most meals
- All transfers by A/c vehicle
- All visits, walks & safaris

Exclusions

- Insurance –please take your own insurance
- Tips
- Beverages
- Laundry
- Expenses of a personal nature