

FOOTSTEPS of FOUR FORMER WESTERN COLONIES

Chennai, Pondicherry, Thanjavur, Madurai, Munnar, Kochi, Goa - 14 days

Departure: March 17, 2018

Return: March 30, 2018



Footsteps of four former western colonies Experience four cities, which were former western footholds in India. Madras where the East India Trading Company's long history, started in India. Pondicherry, the unmistakable French connection, with tree lined boulevards, the quaint colonial heritage buildings, the spiritual sceneries, the endless stretches of un spoilt virgin beaches and backwaters and a surprising choice of restaurants serving a mélange of cuisines. Cochin, its strategic importance over the centuries is underlined by the sobriquet Queen of the Arabian Sea. Informally, Cochin is also referred to as the Gateway to Kerala. And Goa, Portuguese conquerors called it the 'Golden Goa', the El Dorado, the 'Rome of the East'. Some travelers remarked: 'Whoever has seen Goa, need not visit Lisboa(Lisbon).

Highlights

Visit of UNESCO world heritage sites

Mahabalipuram - Rock cut shore temples

Tanjauver - Brideswara temple

Goa - Churches and Convents of Goa

Besides the above other unique experiences

English, French, Dutch and Portuges former colonies

Meenakshi temple



Tea Gardens of Munnar
Spice markets in Cochin
Oldest Synagogue in Cochin

Saturday, March 17. (D)* UNITED STATES – CHENNAI

Depart this evening on the airline of your choice to Mumbai, India. Dinner and light breakfast served on the plane.

Sunday, March 18. (B,L,D)* CHENNAI

Continue flying on your airline to Chennai. Lunch and Dinner on the plane. We arrive late night at the Chennai International Airport. We meet you outside the customs and transfer you to the hotel, where we stay two nights.

Monday, March 19. (B). CHENNAI

Morning sightseeing of India's fourth largest city, begins with a visit to St. Mary's church where Elihu Yale, who later founded Yale University, was married in 1670. San Thome Cathedral where the apostle Doubting Thomas is sightseeing by visiting Dakshin Chitra. It is a picture of southern small village. It has been recreated using replicas of traditional South Indian homes. Evening at leisure, overnight at the hotel.

Chennai (previously known as Madras), renowned for its spices has had contact with Europe, going back to the Phoenician and Greeks, followed by the Apositle St. Thomas who came here to initiate the spread of Christianity. Marco Polo came through here, on his way back from China in 1292. In 1639, the first English settlement was built here. This was the start of East India Trading Company's foothold in India, eventually spreading the British influence through for trade first, then military might, all through the subcontinent.

Tuesday, March 20. (B). CHENNAI – MAHABALIPURAM – PONDICHERRY

Today, we start our tour with a view of the 2000 years old city of Kanchipuram. We continue our drive to Mahabalipuram, an ancient historic town, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is believed to have once been a learning tool for teachers to instruct young students the art of carving.



We will start a visit to see the most photographed monuments, the Shore temple, manmade caves and chariot structured temples (the Five Rathas, a monolithic temple complex, each carved from a single piece of pink granite). Visit the 8th century Shore Temple and its mandapams (carved pillars) and watch locals pay their respects to the deity Shiva. Later in the afternoon continue the drive to Pondicherry, where we will stay two nights at Palais de Mahe.

Pondicherry, the city was once the largest French colony in India, and still retains much of its colonial elegance. The Old Quarters are lined with Mediterranean-style houses and bakeries, though this “French Riviera of the East” is still true to its Indian roots.

Wednesday, March 21. (B). PONDICHERRY

Today you will visit Auroville, which sits just outside Pondicherry. It was founded in 1968 by Mirra Alfassa, also known as ‘The Mother’, Auroville is an experimental township or a universal town. Designed by famous architect Roger Anger, Auroville is a must visit attraction of Pondicherry where people of different nationalities, cultures and beliefs live together in harmony. Auroville is also home to the world’s largest solid crystal, which you can examine. We will continue to Eglise de Notre Dame de la Conception Immaculee is one of the oldest churches in Pondicherry, was established in the year 1686. The French Quarter and spiritual community of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, one of the affluent and most popular ashrams for tourists and ex-pats alike. You will see evidence of French colonial influence in Pondicherry’s architecture, sprawling town squares and even in the police uniform. Overnight at the hotel.

Thursday, March 22. (B). PONDICHERRY- CHIDAMBARAM -THANJAUVER

Today, we drive to Thanjauver, it is known as ‘Tice Bowl of Tamilnadu’. En route we will stop at Chidambaram to visit one of the famous Hindu pilgrim palace, which is famous for the Natraj temple. It is one of the oldest temple of Tamilnadu. We will continue our drive to reach to Thanjauver. It is well known for its exquisite art work such as: painting, bronze icons and classical music instruments. Later we visit Brideswara temple. We will stay at hotel Sangam for one night.

Thanjauver is one of the ancient cities in India. The town was founded by Mutharayar king Swaran Maran. Thanjauver is an important city of southern Indian art and architecture. The famous Brideswara temple is one of the examples of the best architecture. The famous Brideswara temple is one of the best examples of the south Indian architecture which is UNESCO world heritage site.



Friday, March 23. (B). THANJAVUR – MADURAI

Today, we drive to Madurai, a rich cultural heritage city of Tamilnadu. En route we stop at Trichy which has historical monuments, one of the oldest dams in the world, temples, and the famous landmark Rock Fort. Most amazing thing about this rock is one of the oldest in the world approximately 3800 million years. This evening we visit Meenakshi Temple to see the sacred ceremonies in which an image of the god Shiva is carried through the immense colorful halls, accompanied by musicians playing Alto- clarinet and Tablas. We will stay one night at the Taj Gateway Hotel Pasumalai.

Saturday, March 24. (B). MADURAI - MUNNAR

Today we will drive to Munnar, where we will stay two nights at Munnar Tea Country Resort. Afternoon at leisure. Overnight at the hotel.

Sunday, March 25. (B). MUNNAR

Today we will visit Echo point, a very beautiful place to visit in Munnar, which is situated at the confluence of three mountain streams Mudrapuzha, Nallathanni and Kundala. TATA tea or KDHP Museum, showcases a variety of antiquities of the tea trade. Pothamedu View Point, one can witness the spectacular wide views of tea, coffee and cardamom plantations of the area. Evening at the leisure, overnight at the hotel.

Monday, March 26. (B). MUNNAR – KOCHI

This morning we drive west through the Cardamom Hills with landscapes dotted with many tea, coffee, rubber and spice plantation. Lunch en route. We arrive this afternoon to Kochi, where we stay two nights at the Taj Malabar.

Cochin formally known as (Aka Kochi) was founded in 1341, when a flood created a natural safe port, attracting Chinese, Christians, Jewish and Arab settlers. The Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama looking for trade route for Indian spices sailed around the continent of Africa and landed nearby in 1498. He was followed by the Dutch and the British, all wanting to control the port and lucrative spice trade.

Tuesday, March 27. (B). KOCHI

Today you start sightseeing tour of Fort Cochin includes the Dutch Palace, the Pardesi Synagogue built in 1568, St. Francis Church, built by Portuguese in 1510. This evening we will



see a performance of the Kathakali Dance, it is a spectacular combination of drama, dance, music and ritual.

Wednesday, March 28. (B). KOCHI – GOA

This morning, we will fly to Goa. We will drive to Grand Hyatt hotel, where we will stay two nights. Afternoon at the leisure.

Goa was established into India in 1961, when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, he gave up trying to negotiate with the Portuguese director Salazar and sent in the army. It was Portugal's first toe-hold in Asia in 1511. Unlike the stiff upper-lipped British, the Portuguese people enjoyed the laid-back feel of the good things in life, which is still carried on today, attracting a vast variety of tourist.

Thursday, March 29. (B). GOA

Today we will have sightseeing of Old Goa, designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. It includes the Basilica of Bom Jesus, where the body of St. Xavier lies in a silver casket, the church St. Francis of Assisi, built in 1521, and the Cathedral of St. Catherine of built between 1562 and 1623. Afternoon is free for spa or swim at your leisure. Overnight at the hotel.

Friday, March 30. (B). GOA – MUMBAI – BACK HOME

Today morning will be leisure at the beach. In the afternoon, we will take a domestic airline flight to Mumbai. We transfer you to the Mumbai International Airport for the flight on airline of your choice back to home.

* B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner



LAND COST

DOUBLE: \$6,550 PER PERSON

SINGLE: \$7,600 IN DOUBLE ROOM

TOUR INCLUDES

- Hotel accommodations in 5-star deluxe hotels
 - Buffet breakfast daily
 - Domestic airfare as per the itinerary
 - Private air conditioned vehicle with chauffeur throughout the tour
 - Experienced English speaking local tour guides
 - Entrance fees to World heritage sites and museums
 - Private sightseeing in each city
 - Kathakkali dance performance
 - Kettuvalam Boat ride with lunch
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H.A.T. Tours

Address: PO Box 46876, St. Petersburg, Florida, 33741, USA

Phone: (727) 367 3973

Fax: (727) 360-8459

Toll free: (800) 472-4448

E-mail: india@hattours.com

Website: www.Hattours.com

