

## Cochin \* Munnar\* Thekkady \* Kumarakom\* Cochin

**DAY 01**

**ARRIVE: COCHIN**

**BY: INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT**

Arrive at Cochin International Airport by Emirates Airlines flight at 0905 Hours. Following customs, immigration formalities and baggage collection, a TWX representative will meet you as you EXIT the ARRIVALS TERMINAL building after which you would be transferred to your hotel.

Kochi, or more familiarly, Cochin is a city of many parts. Around for a long, long time, Kochi played a pivotal role in the development of shipping and trade in the region. Kochi's prime location on the west coast, its fine bay and protected harbour made it popular with seafarers and merchant ships who made frequent stops to stock up on spices, coffee and wood enroute to the rich markets of Europe and West Asia. And so down the ages, Kochi prospered as a busy port city and commercial centre. Its seafront is still extremely relevant to Cochin and to India: it houses a Naval Base and one of India's busiest ports. Its twin city, Ernakulam, is an important railhead and industrial centre.



**Hotel check in time is 1200 Hours Noon.**

Afternoon, you will proceed for a half-day sightseeing tour of Cochin visiting Dutch Palace, Jewish Synagogue, Chinese Fishing net, ST. Francis Church & Museum of Kerala History.

**Dutch Palace** (Closed on Fridays and Jewish Holidays) is also known as Mattancherry Palace built by the Portuguese and presented to the Raja of Cochin in 1555 AD. It acquired the present name after 1663 when the Dutch carried out extensions and repairs in the palace. At no time did the Portuguese or Dutch stay here. Its interiors are

decorated with murals from the Ramayana and there are some lively displays of royal costumes and palanquins. (Closed on Fridays and national holidays)



**Jewish Synagogue** (Closed on Fridays & Saturdays and Jewish Holidays) was built in 1568 AD. The Great Scrolls of the Old Testament, the copper plates in which the grants of privilege made by the Cochin rulers were recorded and the exquisite Chinese hand-painted tiles are of interest

**Chinese Fishing Nets** - The Chinese Fishing net that line the sea-front and exhibit a mechanical method of catching fish by local fishermen in Fort Kochi. Said to have been brought from China by traders of Kubalai Khan's Court, they are used at high tide.

**Chinese Fishing Nets** - The Chinese Fishing net that line the sea-front and

**ST. Francis Church** - the Protestant church was originally built by the Portuguese in 1510 AD and is believed to be the oldest church built by the Europeans in India. It is here the remains of the inveterate traveller, Vasco da Gamma were initially buried and 14 years later, his mortal remains were taken to Portugal.

### Overnight at the hotel

#### Optional: Cooking demonstration followed by dinner at Ms Nimmy Paul's House

Today in time you will be driven to **Ms. Nimmy Paul's House**, for **cooking demonstration** followed by home cooked dinner in a friendly ambience.

Nimmy is a cookery instructor with more than 10 years' experience. Nimmy and Paul enjoy exchanging information about their lifestyle, culture and traditions. Nimmy has taken classes in Indian, Traditional Kerala and what is called Continental cookery in India. She has taught salads, soups, snacks and puddings and also made food for small parties. Nimmy conducts Traditional Kerala Syrian Christian Cookery classes for visiting guests, food writers, chefs and others involved with culinary visual media services. The warm hospitality, the friendly atmosphere and good food they offer has been very well appreciated by their guests. Many of their guests continue to consult Nimmy on Kerala Cookery even after they return to their home countries.



Quite a few culinary writers, food experts and chefs have also visited Nimmy Paul to learn traditional food preparation methods.

## **DAY 02                      COCHIN - MUNNAR**

After buffet breakfast at the hotel, you will be driven from Cochin to Munnar (130 KMS / 4 Hours). Upon arrival Munnar, you will check in at your hotel.

Munnar is the nature-lover's paradise. Snuggling in the green and serene Kannan Devan Hills lies the quite and restful resort of Munnar. Panoramic views of low-flying clouds and mist filled valleys make it a pretty little heaven with a cool bracing climate. It was opened up out of virgin forests a century ago by pioneering planters.



Within its remote and elderly churches - gracious, stone-structures with ancient chandeliers and rosewood pews. A little beyond lies Anaimudi, South India's highest peak. In the vicinity is the Eravikulam National Park, the home of the endangered Nilgiri Thar that roams on a stretch of grassland or is seen climbing the pinnacles of the undulating hills.

Here you can have a glimpse of a Gaur, Langur, Lion-tailed macaque, and Elephants roaming in herds.

Late afternoon, you will go for a stroll in Tea Estates. Meet the local people engaged in tea Industry.

Evening will be at leisure.

Overnight stay at hotel

## **DAY 03                      MUNNAR**

After buffet breakfast at the hotel, day will be at leisure for independent activities to enjoy the wonderful surroundings.

Overnight at the hotel.

## **DAY 04                      MUNNAR - THEKKADY**

After buffet breakfast at the hotel you would be driven from Munnar to Thekkady, which is also known as Periyar (110 KMS / 3.30 Hours).

Upon arrival, proceed for check-in at your hotel.

Afternoon, proceed to **Periyar National Park** to view the wildlife **by boats**.

Set in the heart of the Cardamom Hills of Kerala the Periyar National Park and Tiger Reserve, offers a rare opportunity to enjoy South India's wild life and beauty. The park has a picturesque lake at the heart of the sanctuary. Herds of elephant and sambar, gaur and wild pigs and wander down to the lakeside and can be observed from the launches that cruise the lake. Periyar also harbours the leopard, wild dog, barking deer and mouse deer. On the rocky outcrops along the lake, monitor lizards can be seen basking in the sun.



Return to the hotel after your boat ride.

Overnight at the hotel

## DAY 05

## THEKKADY - KUMARAKOM

After buffet breakfast at the hotel, you will be driven from Periyar to Kumarakom (135 KMS / 3 HRS) enroute visiting Spice Plantation.

The spice plantations of Kerala are fascinating farms to wander in, for different sections of each plantation are dedicated to different spices. Some of the spices cultivated in spice plantations are vanilla, oregano, rosemary, thyme, basil, mint, bay leaf and sage. Being in the heartland, it is not bizarre that you will find the best of fenugreek, white and green pepper, rolls of cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg, star anise, coriander, cloves and the list is endless.



Continue your drive to Kumarakom after your visit. En-route you will stop at **Plantation Bungalow, Kanjirappally for lunch.**

Upon arrival in Kumarakom, proceed for check-in at your hotel.



It is a beautiful town situated in the hills and is surrounded by some of the most fertile and beautiful scenery in the state with serene palm-fringed backwaters on the west and the Western Ghats on the east.

Late Afternoon proceed for a **boat ride i.e. Sun set cruise on Vembanad Lake.** You will come across many rare species of birds present in the Kumarakom bird sanctuary, returning to their nests with the sunset.

Overnight at the hotel

## DAY 06

## KUMARAKOM

Enjoy leisurely buffet breakfast at the hotel.

Complete day will be free for relaxation. Lie in a hammock on this lakeshore, and allow your senses to possess you. The great Vembanad Lake, rippling under the vault of an impossibly large sky. Sunlight sparkles on her waters, tearing the reflection of a passing houseboat into crystal shards. Darter birds go about their fishy business. You relax in Peace. Of course there is peace here, but not silence. Silence is not nature's way. And the Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary next door is full of raucous neighbors. You sway a little, and the image changes; to a timber and tile mansion that seems to belong to this earth, but to another time. If you left the comfort of your hammock for a closer look, you'd see that it is authentic reconstruction.

### Optional: Lunch at Philipkutty's Farm



Today in time you will be transferred to Philipkutty's farm by boat for the lunch. The cuisine is predominantly Syrian Christian with a strong backwater influence. Most of the dishes served are centred around fish, farm vegetables and fruits, duck, chicken and occasionally other meats, supplemented with rice and rice based local breads like appam, string hoppers etc. Some of our specialities are

karimeen (pearlspot fish) fry, fish molee, prawn and scampi preparations, duck roast and curry, and red hot Kerala fish curry to name a few.

### **Overnight at hotel**

#### **DAY 07 KUMARAKOM - ALLEPPEY - COCHIN**

Morning leisurely buffet breakfast in hotel. Rest of the morning free. In the afternoon check - out from the hotel and proceed to embankment point for boat cruises on an unforgettable journey to Alleppey (approx 2.5 hrs), passing through the coconut-palmed canals.

Disembark at Alleppey Jetty and you would be received by your chauffer who will then driving you to Cochin (60 Km/ 2 Hrs).

Upon arrival in Cochin you will check in at the hotel.

In the evening, you will be taken to a **Kathakali dance** center where you will witness the most elaborate of the dance forms in southern India. Here you will witness the artists readying themselves up with the make up for the final performance.

Kerala owes its transnational fame to this nearly 300 years old classical dance form, which combines facets of ballet, opera, masque and the pantomime. It is said to have evolved from other performing arts like *Kootiyattam*, *Krishnanattam* and *Kalarippayattu*. *Kathakali* explicates ideas and stories from the Indian epics and Puranas. Presented in

the temple precincts after dusk falls *Kathakali* is heralded by the *Kelikottu* or the beating of drums in accompaniment of the *Chengila* (gong). The riches of a happy blending of color, expressions, music, drama and dance are unparalleled in any other art form.

Costume is elaborate with the face painted up. Great importance is laid on the *Vesham* or make-up, which are of five types - *Pacha*, *Kathi*, *Thadi*, *Kari* and *Minukku*. The pomp and magnificence of *Kathakali* is partly due to its decor part of which is the *kireetam* or huge headgear and the *kanchukam* the over sized jackets, and a long skirt worn over a thick padding of cushions. The identity of the actor is completely mutilated to create a super human being of larger-than-life proportion.

Overnight at the hotel

## **DAY 08                    DEPARTURE COCHIN**

Early this morning in time you will be met by a TWX representative and transferred to the International airport to board flight for onward destination



**\*\*\*\*\*END OF THE TOUR\*\*\*\*\***