

Incredible Southern India

with Kerala Backwaters Cruise

Departs 20th November, 2023

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different



Itinerary correct as at 28 Jun 2022, but subject to change. ALL flights to be confirmed. www.bluedottravel.com.au



\$9,900 pp

Twin-share. Excludes
international flights
Single supp \$2,400

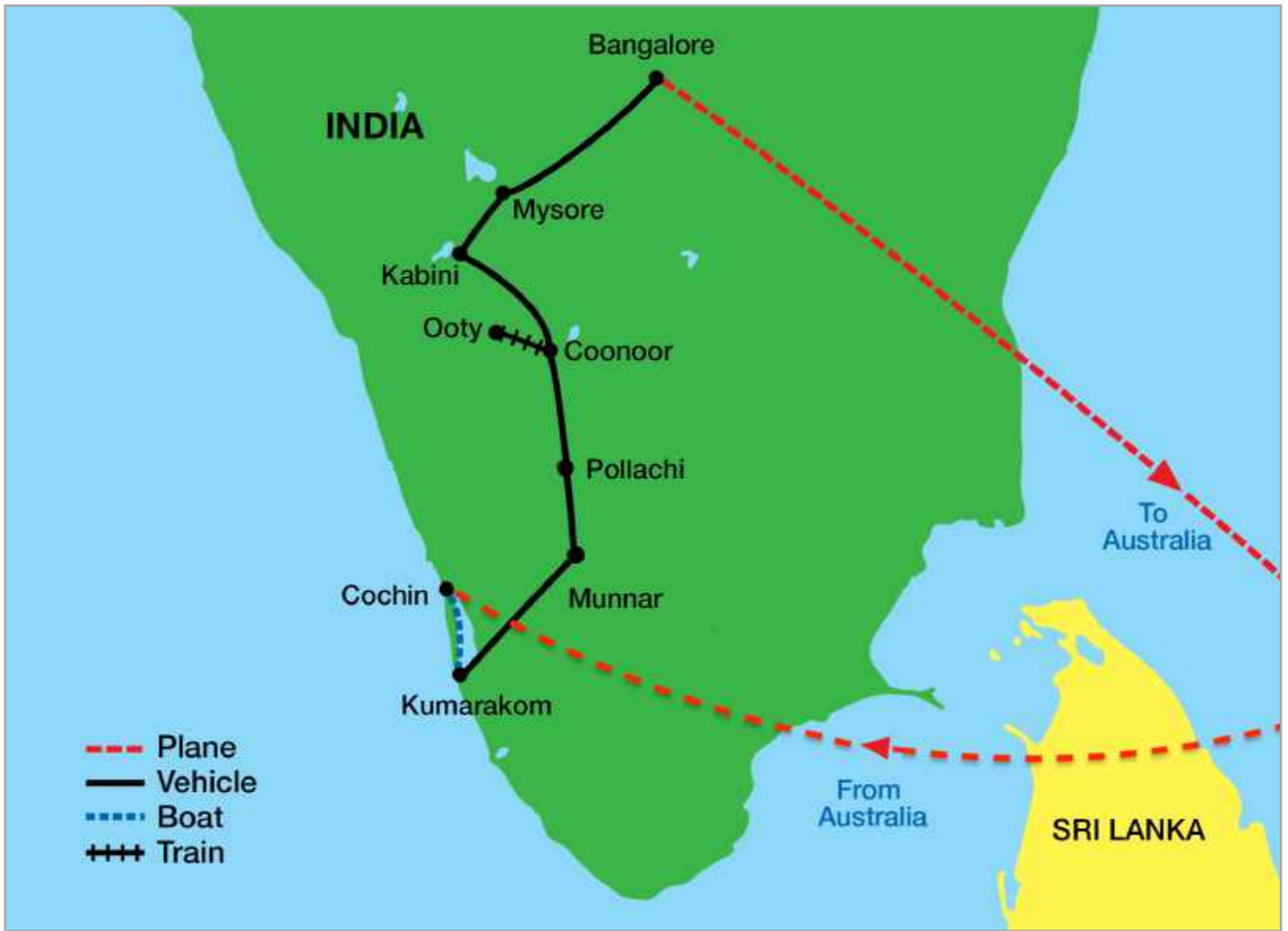
SOUTHERN INDIA WITH KERALA BACKWATERS CRUISE

Welcome to Southern India - dramatically different to its counterpart in the north. Its wide-open spaces make for a verdant and fertile backdrop to the region's diverse history, landscapes and people. Be immersed in the South's ancient, medieval and more recent colonial history; visit small villages, larger townships and even larger cities. Observe locals as they go about their day and welcome you with a wide smile. See a plethora of wildlife in world-class Nagarhole National Park, de-stress while cruising the tranquil backwaters of Kerala on a slow but majestic houseboat. If you appreciate your food, the dishes from this part of the world are outstanding, comprised of many different cuisines from the various areas of Southern India.

Each and every day brings its own magic but the "highlights" include:

- The surreal houseboat experience on the tranquil backwaters of Kerala where the sunsets will blow your mind!
- The tranquillity of Kumarakom, home to deliciously relaxing treatments and therapies
- Kochin's Chinese fishing port and the overall buzz of this wonderful colonial city – such a great place to stroll and soak up the atmosphere
- Nagarhole National Park with its abundance and variety of wildlife – you may think you are in Africa!
- Mysore's colourful markets and opulent palaces

Enough said - come and see it for yourself!



Day 1, Monday 20 November
Arrive Cochin

Welcome to Cochin! After a late arrival at the international airport, you will be transferred to your hotel for a good night's sleep. Accommodation at Forte Kochi for two nights. *Meals in flight*



Day 2, Tuesday 21 November
Cochin

Our day begins with a guided tour of Fort Cochin which bears a marked

European influence from the British and Dutch colonial era. Fort Cochin is distinguished by its long line of cantilevered Chinese fishing nets which, according to local legend, were introduced to the Malabar Coast by emissaries of Kublai Khan. Explore the historic area with its enigmatic mix of Christian, Jewish and local religions. Our included lunch is a traditional banana leaf meal, the authentic method of serving dishes in South Indian

cuisine. After lunch, enjoy a Kathakali dance performance, the classical storytelling dance style of India. Conclude our day with a harbour cruise along Cochin's coastline; a thriving port with barges and boats coming and going, the lagoon opening into the Arabian Sea; the eye-catching Chinese fishing nets, all set against the backdrop of a splendid sunset. Tonight our official welcome dinner is at a local seafood restaurant. *B/L/D*

Day 3, Wednesday 22 November
Cruising Kerala Waters

The morning is free in Cochin before driving to Alleppey to board our houseboat for a most memorable boat journey of the backwaters of Kerala. These huge, slow-moving former barges have been dressed only with natural products such as wood and plaited palm. Reworked kettulvallums of bygone days, they used to carry tonnes of rice and spices through this labyrinth of waterways but now feature all the creature comforts for relaxing cruises. The lakes



and canals are lined with such dense vegetation as to make you feel completely cut off from the rest of the world while cruising the rice bowl of Kerala with its lush wealth of paddy crops. Overnight on a luxury houseboat. **B/L/D**



**Day 4,
Thursday 23
November
To
Kumarakom**

Wake up to the sounds of the Kerala backwaters onboard your

houseboat. Savour the morning along the waterways before disembarking the houseboat at Kumarakom. Kerala's backwaters are a world away from the frenetic buzz of other parts of India, and our hotel in Kumarakom is nestled into the banks of Vembanad Lake. This afternoon is all yours; an opportunity to rejuvenate. The resort offers many relaxing treatments and therapies from yoga to meditation and massage. Your hotel is the Kumarakom Lake Resort or 2 nights. **B/D**



**Day 5, Friday
24 November
Kumarakom**

Your morning is free to enjoy the calm and tranquility of this tropical delight of blue

skies, palm trees, luscious fruits and flowers. Southern India is famed for its fragrant flavours and today we experience this first hand with a cooking demonstration and visit a local farm by speed boat. Enjoy the Kerala hospitality at this family run island farm, before returning by boat to your hotel. **B/L/D**



**Day 6,
Saturday 25
November
To Munnar**

Enjoy a scenic drive inland to Munnar, a picturesque town nestled in the sprawling tea

estates and verdant forests that were once the summer retreat of the British government. On arrival to our hotel, stretch your legs and explore the beauty of this region on a short trek to the pre-historic dolmans. Accommodation is at Windemere Hotel for 2 nights. **B/D**

**Day 7 – Sunday
26 November
Munnar**

Set amongst India's largest tea-growing region, Munnar is surrounded by rolling hills and varying shades of green. This morning we explore the tea trail, enjoying a local tasting and tea plantation walk. High tea is a gentle nod to the colonial pasts that are part of India's history, and a truly memorable experience when enjoyed at the beautiful heritage hotels of the region. **B/D**



**Day 8 – Monday 27 November
To Pollachi**

Drive north today towards the charming village of Pollachi and tour the village known for its handloom weaving before stopping overnight. Overnight stay is at the Great Mount Coco Lagoon Resort for 1 night. **B/L/D**

**Day 9, Tuesday 28 November
Pollachi — Coonoor — Ooty**

Continue our journey north to Coonoor, one of three Nilgiri hill stations set above the Southern Plains. Today we drive to scenic Ooty (short for Udhagamandalam) to enjoy its beautiful mountain lake, expansive flora and fauna and wonderful botanic garden. Built by the British, some colonial buildings and architecture remain. Soak up the glimpse into local life, savour the cooler climate and enjoy the location nestled amongst the hills. Our accommodation is at Taj Savoy, Ooty for 2 nights. **B/D**

**Day 10,
Wednesday 29
November
Ooty**

Today's highlight is the return to Coonoor via the historic and World Heritage



Listed train on its 46km down-hill journey through steep curves and tunnels. It's not only fun for all ages, but it also offers fabulous views along the way as it climbs from 100m to 2,200m. **B/L/D**

**Day 11, Thursday 30 November
To Kabini (4-5 hours)**

After breakfast, depart for Kabini. The Kabini River is one of the major tributaries of the river Cauvery in southern India. Kabini is one of the famous rivers in South India. It originates in Kerala, flows into the state of Karnataka, and feeds the most beautiful reservoir and backwaters. On the banks of these

backwaters is the Kabini Forest Reserve. Relax in the afternoon at our lovely lodge The Serai for 3 nights. **B/D**



**Day 12, Friday 1 December
Nagarhole National Park**

Nagarhole National Park is a former game reserve. Its dry deciduous

habitat offers a refuge for a great variety of wildlife with a rich mammal and bird population. Renowned for the Royal Bengal Tiger, Asian elephant, leopard and dhole (wild dogs), Kabini has earned a spot on the world's Top 5 destinations for viewing wildlife. Enjoy a jeep safari in the morning and a boat safari in the afternoon, accompanied by a nature guide. The scenery is stunning; the wildlife in abundance. Keep a tab of the hopefully dozens of species of birds and animals you spot. All in all, a magic day!
B/L/D



**Day 13, Saturday 2 December
Nagarhole National Park**

Today is a relaxing day where you can choose what you

would like to do whilst staying at this beautiful location. There are many options including a trip along the backwaters, cycling through the local villages and a nature walk. You decide. **B/L/D**

**Day 14, Sunday 3 December
To Mysore**

After breakfast we set off for Mysore, the city of spice, silk and sandalwood. This marvellous city is awash with the charm of old-world royalty and religion. During our stay we will balance free time to explore at leisure with up half-day guided visits to some of



the local highlights. Learn about the colourful art form of Indian silk, on today's silk tour. Watch the creation of a saree from thread to fabric, and learn about the significance of both silk and the saree in India's culture. In the afternoon visit Chamundi Hill, an 11th Century temple about 10 kms out of the city, along with the opulent Maharaja's Palace, a treasure-house of exquisite carvings and works of

art from all over the world. This afternoon we visit the ancient and diverse Devaraja market where the high-heaped piles of brightly coloured powders used for dyeing fabrics must be seen to be believed. In the evening we'll drive to Mysore Palace for a photo of the fully illuminated building. Our accommodation is at Radison Blu Plaza for 2 nights. **B/D**

**Day 15, Monday 4 December
Mysore**

This morning we visit Somnathpur, with its collection of temples featuring beautifully carved rows of elephants, mythical birds and beasts. Continue to Nandi Temple, which features an impressive sculpture of a bull carved from stone. After resting for lunch we continue to explore the special cuisines of Mysore and the history associated with food in the city with an included culinary experience and dinner. **B/D**



**Day 16, Tuesday 5 December
To Bangalore**

Leaving the splendour of Mysore behind, we'll drive to Bangalore. Stop enroute at Srirangapatna before continuing to our hotel near the airport. Relax before joining in the restaurant for our farewell dinner. Accommodation at Hotel Taj Airport Bangalore. **B/D**



**Day 17, Wednesday 6 December
Departure**

After breakfast, we transfer to the airport for your overnight flight home to Australia. **B/meals in flight**