

Glimpses of South India 15 Days

Chennai 1nts, Chennai 1nts, Mahabalipuram 1nts, Pondicherry 1nts, Thanjavur 1nts, Madurai 2nts, Thekkady 1nts, Alleppey 1nts, Kovalum 3nts, Kochi 2nts

Itinerary Brief:

Explore the God's own country, experience the unspoilt waterways and the oriental spice land

Daywise Itinerary:

Day 01 FLIGHT TO MUMBAI / DELHI - CHENNAI

Board the flight from UK to Delhi / Mumbai.

[X] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [Y] In flight Dinner

This tour can be conducted on any day of the week. Please enquire office on your preferred dates.

Day 02 CHENNAI

Depending on your connection you will fly from Mumbai /Delhi to Chennai. Upon arrival at Chennai airport, meet & greet your local representative and head towards your hotel (Check in after 3pm). Rest at leisure

[X] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner

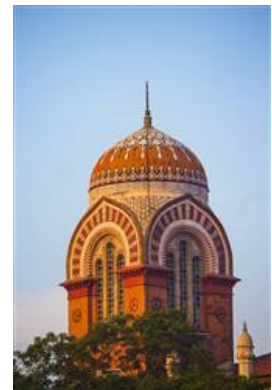
Day 03 CHENNAI - KANCHIPURAM – DAKSHINCHITRA - MAHABALIPURAM

After breakfast you will proceed to Mahabalipuram. En route visit the city of Kanchipuram covering Kailasanatha Temple. This temple is dedicated to Siva, Kailasanatha is one of the earliest temples. It was built by the Pallava king, Rayasimha, in the late 7th century, though its front was added later by his son, King Varman III. It is the only temple at Kanchi which isn't cluttered with the more recent additions of the Cholas and Vijayanagar rulers, and so reflects the freshness and simplicity of early Dravidian architecture. Later we visit the Sri Ekambarnathar Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva and is one of the largest temples in Kanchipuram, covering nine hectares. Its 59m high gopuram and massive outer stone wall were constructed in 1509 by Krishna Devaraja of the Vijayanagar Empire, though construction was originally started by the Pallavas and the temple was later extended by the Cholas. Inside are five separate enclosures and a 1000- pillared hall. The temple's name is said to be a modified form of Eka Amra Nathar -- the Lord of the Mango tree. In one of the enclosure is a very old mango tree with four branches representing the four Vedas. The fruit of each of the four branches is said to have a different taste and a plaque nearby claims that the tree is 3500 years old. Post lunch drive down to Dakshinchitra, 'Picture of South India'. (closed on Tuesday and Public Holidays) It is a depiction of the way of life prevalent in South India. A trip down Dakshinachitra takes you back to traditional home architecture from Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Started with the objective to revive, preserve and promote the arts and crafts of South India, it also serves as heritage education for visitors from outside South India and also for children who have never had the opportunity to experience their culture. Arrive at Mahabalipuram in the evening and check-in at your hotel for overnight stay.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner

Day 04 MAHABALIPURAM - PONDICHERRY

Today morning enjoy the sightseeing of Mahabalipuram. Visit Arjuna's Penance. Carved in relief on the face of a huge rock, Arjuna's Penance is the mythical story of the River Ganges issuing from its source high in the Himalaya. The panel depicts animals, deities and other semi-divine creatures, fable from the Panchatantra, and Arjuna doing a penance to obtain a boon from Siva. Later visit the Shore Temple. This beautiful and romantic temple, ravaged by wind and sea, represents the final phase of Pallavas art and was built in the late 7th century during the reign of Rajasimha. It is believed that at one point in time there were seven such temples, six of them were victims to the natural elements of erosion. This temple has three shrines; one dedicated to Lord Vishnu and the other two to Lord Shiva. The frothy waves form a striking backdrop to the temple, protected by rows of rock-carved bulls. The most unique feature of the temple is that it houses shrines to both Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. Thereafter visit Krishna Mandapam. There are eight mandapams (shallow, rock-cut halls) scattered over the main hill, two of which have been left unfinished. They are mainly of interest for their internal figure sculptures. One of the earliest rock-cut temples is the



Krishna Mandapam. It features carvings of a pastoral scene showing Krishna lifting up the Govardhana mountain to protect his kinsfolk from the wrath of Indra. On the hill rests a dangerously balanced boulder named Krishna's Butterball after his legendary affinity for fresh butter) and Five Rathas (these are the architectural prototypes of all Dravidian temples, demonstrating the imposing gopurams and vimanas, multi pillared halls and sculptured walls which dominate the landscape of Tamil Nadu. Then drive to Pondicherry (which was a French colony at one time but in 1954 it was restored to India by the French). Pondicherry has a beautiful beach & a refreshing sea. On the eastern side of Indian peninsula, Pondicherry is a seaside resort. But at the same time it differs very much from a typical beach resort. Tourist attractions in Pondicherry lie in its ambience. Old French style buildings, churches and museums, tree-lined boulevards along the seashore would remind you of a bygone era. The laid back township, pristine beach and the palm trees swaying in the breeze bring a slice of serenity. The only sound you can hear is the waves crashing against the rocks and the chirping of the birds. But to cap it all, the Auroville Ashram is the biggest of all tourist attractions in Pondicherry. Just because of it, the destination of Pondicherry exudes a spiritual aura. For the weary soul, this is an ideal retreat.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner



Day 05 PONDICHERRY - CHIDAMBARAM - THANJORE

In Pondicherry after breakfast the places of attraction are Sri Aurobindo Ashram (where Sri Aurobindo and the Mother lived for the most parts of their lives), The Pondicherry Museum (home to some of the most exquisite collections of architecture and sculpture), the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Pondicherry also has a pleasant beach alongside promenade and historical monuments. Drive to Thanjore via Chidambaram covering The Nataraja Temple. Located in the centre of town, this is one of the most ancient temples of Tamil Nadu. The top roof of the sanctum is covered with gold plates and strings. The presiding deity of the temple is representative of air, one of the five elements of the universe, and is known as 'Akasa Lingam'. There is a shrine known as Chitrakootam dedicated to lord Govindarajan adjacent to the Nataraja shrine. There are five halls in the temples - Nritha Sabha is the Hall of Immortal Dance. This sabha has fifty pillars depicting dancing figures. Here, the stone pulsates with rhythm and life. Deva sabha is the hall of festivals and meeting place of the administrators. The Raja sabha is the 1000 pillars-hall measuring 103 meters and 58 meters wide where the Pandya, the Cholas and others celebrated their victories. The Kali Temple will also be visited. Arrive Thanjavur and check-in at the hotel for overnight stay.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner

Day 06 HANJORE - TRICHY - MADURAI

Today you do a tour of Thanjore City. Visit to the Brihadeeswara Temple. This temple is the main attraction of Thanjore. The massive temple built by Raja Chola reflects the Cholas' contribution to the development of arts in this area. It is also regarded as the Chola dynasty's finest contribution to the Dravidian temple architecture. Listed as a world heritage site, the temple is visited by a large number of people for regular worship. The temple is characterised by its unique structure. Unlike the usual South Indian temples, the Brihadeeswara temple has a soaring vimana and a stunted gopuram. It was constructed from a single piece of granite weighing an estimated 80 tonnes and the dome was hauled into place along a 4-km earthwork ramp in a manner similar to the Egyptian pyramids. A huge Nandi, about 6 m long and 3.7 m high, faces the inner sanctum. The statue of Nandi was created from a single rock piece and weighs 25 tonnes. It is in fact one of the largest statues of Nandi bulls in India. The Palace of Thanjore is also an important tourist destination. The royal Palace near the massive Brihadeeswara temple is characterised by its vast corridors, large halls, shady courtyards and observation and arsenal towers. Built by the Nayaks in the mid-16th century, the palace was completed by the Marathas. The Durbar Hall of the palace still retains the grandeur of the bygone era. The palace also functions as a Royal Museum housing a diverse collection of royal remnants, compilations of the early 19th century, the king's slippers, head dresses and hunting tools. Later drive to Madurai via stop at Trichy to see the spectacular Rock Fort Temple, the landmark of

the city. It is on the shores of the Kaveri. It is perched on a massive rocky outcrop at an altitude of 83 m above sea level. The Thayumanaswamy Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva (the destroyer in the Hindu trinity), is situated halfway to the top. It has a 100-pillar hall and a Vimana covered with gold. On the southern face of the rock are several beautifully carved rock-cut cave temples of the Pallava period), The Jambukeshwara Temple (Dedicated to Lord Shiva), is situated just 2 km east of Srirangam and houses five concentric walls and seven gopurams. Legend has it that an elephant once worshipped the Lord under the holy Jambu tree, and hence the name Jambukeshwara. The principal deity is the Shiva lingam, almost submerged in water, which flows from the subterranean spring in the sanctum. Overnight stay in Madurai.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner



Day 07 MADURAI

After breakfast we proceed for a city tour of Madurai. Meenakshi Temple is nearly 2000 years old placed in the heart of the old town - a splendid example of Dravidian architecture. The present temple was designed in 1560 by Vishwanatha Nayak and subsequently built during the reign of Tirumalai Nayak. There are four entrances to the temple with an area of six hectares. Each of its 12 towers has the height of 45 to 50 meters. The Potrama Raikulam or the Golden Lotus Tank is the place where the Tamil literacy society, called Sangam used to meet to decide the merits of the work presented to them. The temple museum has 985 richly carved pillars and each one surpasses the other in beauty) and Tirumalay Nayak Mahal (This Indo-Saracenic building was constructed in 1523 and was originally four times large). Also enjoy a rickshaw ride during your sightseeing. In the evening, witness aarti ceremony at Meenakshi Temple and then back to hotel for overnight stay.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner

Day 08 MADURAI - PERIYAAR

After breakfast drive to Periyar for a boat ride in Periyar National Park (Thekkady - The very sound of the name conjures up images of elephants, unending chains of hill and spice scented plantations). Here, in the crisp, cool air of the Western Ghats you will experience the most enchanting holiday with the animals of the wild and the simple mountain people. In the Periyar forest of Thekkady is one of the finest wildlife reserves in India, and spread across the entire district are picturesque plantations and hill towns that hold great opportunities for treks and mountain walks. Notable among the denizens of Periyar are the tigers, the majestic Asiatic wild elephants and the distinctive Nilgiri langur with an all-black body and white face. Other creatures include wild boar, wild dog, bison, bear and leopards. Amongst the avifauna, the most profuse are herons, egrets, darters, kingfishers and the great Malabar grey hornbill. Overnight at Pariyaar.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner

Day 09 PERIYAAR

Today morning we drive down to Alleppey - a town in Alappuzha District, full of picturesque canals, backwaters, beaches, and lagoons. Kuttanad, the rice bowl of Kerala with the unending stretch of paddy fields, small streams and canals with lush green coconut palms, was well known even from the early periods of the Sangam age. History says Alappuzha had trade relations with ancient Greece and Rome in B.C and in the middle ages, as well as with other parts of India. Upon arrival, take your house boat for an overnight round cruise of Alleppey. The sweeping network of canals honey-combing the town of Alleppey (Alappuzha) has earned for the place its sobriquet - "The Venice of the East". Small, low-slung country boats are the taxis of this water land. It is a heart-warming sight to see them carry a motley assemblage of cycles, goats, fisher women with cane baskets, school children, toddy-tappers with their knives and pots, duennas in white and gold earrings, Syrain Christian priest and the bare-chested boatman apiece. Do not miss out on a ride into Kuttanad through shimmering, green paddy fields and tail-wagging, head-bobbing groups of ducks. The coir-workers too present an interesting sight as they soak coconut fibre in pool, beat them out and weave the tough brown strands into long ropes on spindles stretched between endless coconut trees. Overnight in house boat

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner

Day 10 ALLEPPEY - KOVALUM

After breakfast drive to Kovalam. A free day to relax along the seaside or the hotel swimming pool.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner

Day 11 KOVALUM

A free day to relax along the seaside or the hotel swimming pool.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner

Day 12 KOVALUM

A free day to relax along the seaside or the hotel swimming pool.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner

Day 13 KOVALUM - KOCHI

After breakfast drive to Cochin. Later in the evening, enjoy a performance of the highly ritualised "Kathakali" dance which tells stories from the ancient Hindu epics - Ramayana and Mahabharata. Performances begin with the application of elaborate makeup which is based in traditional Ayurveda principles. Overnight at the Hotel.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [X] Indian Dinner

Day 14 KOCHI CITY TOUR

Visit St. Francis Church (closed on Sunday). This church was originally named as Santo Antonio. It is the first church to have been built in the new European influenced style and tradition. The original wooden building of 1510 was soon replaced by the present building around 1546. Vasco da Gama died here in 1524 and was originally buried in the church, fourteen years later his body was removed back to Portugal. The church has an impressive façade. Inside the chancel is separated from the nave by a plain arch. The use of the arch is in sharp contrast to traditional Indian use of flat overlapping slabs or corbelling, a bit like Trinity Church, Bangalore. The church, originally a Catholic Church was taken over by the Dutch after they captured Cochin (Kochi) in 1663 and converted it into a Protestant Dutch Reformed Church. The Mattancherry Palace or "Dutch Palace" (closed on Friday) with its medieval charm is situated at Palace Road, Mattancherry, 10km from Ernakulam city, Kochi, Kerala. Built by the Portuguese and presented to the Raja of Kochi Veera Kerala Varma (1537-65) in 1555 AD, it took on its present popular name 'Dutch Palace' (closed on Friday) after 1663, when the Dutch carried out some extensions and renovations in the palace) and the amazing Chinese Fishing Nets. You also see the Jew City with the Jewish Synagogue (closed on Friday afternoon, Saturday and Jewish Holidays), constructed in 1568, with hand-painted, willow-pattern floor tiles brought from Canton in the mid-18th century by a Rabbi, who had trading interest in that city.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [Y] Indian Dinner

Day 15 KOCHI - MUMBAI / DELHI - UK

After breakfast, depending on your time of your return flight, you will be transferred to the airport for your return flight.

[Y] Breakfast [X] Indian Lunch [Y] Indian Dinner

Return with the Happy Memories of the Tour!!!

Departures:

2024 Tour Departures:	
June	18
July	16
August	06
September	03, 17
October	08, 22
November	05, 19
December	03, 10, 24, 31
2025 Tour Departures:	
January	14, 28
February	11, 25
March	11, 18

Tour Cost:

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Call: +44 (0) 2089510111

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Departures: 18/06/2024, 16/07/2024, 06/08/2024

Title: From Delhi (India)

Passengers	Rates			Sharing
	Without Flight 1-2 pax	Without Flight 3-4 pax	Without Flight 5-8 pax	
	GBP	GBP	GBP	
Per Adult	1,985.00	1,595.00	1,555.00	Twin Room
Per Adult	1,985.00	1,595.00	1,555.00	Double Room
Per Adult	1,985.00	1,595.00	1,555.00	Triple Room
Child 2-11 yrs	1,390.00	1,115.00	1,090.00	1st Child(with Bed) when 2 adults paying
Per Adult	2,780.00	2,390.00	2,350.00	Single Room

Departures: 03/09/2024, 17/09/2024, 08/10/2024, 22/10/2024, 05/11/2024, 19/11/2024, 03/12/2024, 10/12/2024, 14/01/2025, 28/01/2025, 11/02/2025, 25/02/2025, 11/03/2025, 18/03/2025

Title: From Delhi (India)

Passengers	Rates			Sharing
	Without Flight 1-2 pax	Without Flight 3-4 pax	Without Flight 5-8 pax	
	GBP	GBP	GBP	
Per Adult	2,190.00	1,755.00	1,740.00	Twin Room
Per Adult	2,190.00	1,755.00	1,740.00	Double Room
Per Adult	2,190.00	1,755.00	1,740.00	Triple Room
Child 2-11 yrs	1,535.00	1,230.00	1,220.00	1st Child(with Bed) when 2 adults paying
Per Adult	3,075.00	2,640.00	2,625.00	Single Room

Departures: 24/12/2024, 31/12/2024

Title: From Delhi (India)

Passengers	Rates			Sharing
	Without Flight 1-2 pax	Without Flight 3-4 pax	Without Flight 5-8 pax	
	GBP	GBP	GBP	
Per Adult	2,365.00	1,895.00	1,885.00	Twin Room
Per Adult	2,365.00	1,895.00	1,885.00	Double Room
Per Adult	2,365.00	1,895.00	1,885.00	Triple Room
Child 2-11 yrs	1,655.00	1,330.00	1,320.00	1st Child(with Bed) when 2 adults paying
Per Adult	3,285.00	2,815.00	2,805.00	Single Room

Travel Mode:

From	Via	To	By
UK	Mumbai / Delhi	Chennai	Flight
Chennai	Dakshinchitra	Mahabalipuram	Coach
Mahabalipuram	Pondicherry	Chidambaram	Coach
Chidambaram	Thanjavur	Trichy	Coach
Trichy		Madurai	Coach
Madurai		Alleppey	Houseboat
Alleppey	Kovalum	Kochi	Coach



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Kochi	Mumbai / Delhi	UK	Flight
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Inclusions:

- * All nights in a 4* / 5* star hotels with breakfast
- * Meal plans as indicated in the itinerary
- * Entrances to sightseeing's and excursions as per the itinerary
- * Services of local tour guides
- * Transportation: AC Sedan Car for 1-2 Pax / Innova Crysta (or similar) for 3-4 Pax/ Tempo Traveller (or similar) for 5-8 Passengers

Exclusions:

- * Travel insurance
- * Visa charges
- * Items of personal nature viz. telephone calls, drinks (beverages), laundry, other meals, potter service, other personal expenses, etc..
- * Any cost of beverages, alcohols with the set meals.
- * Other services not listed in inclusive item & the itinerary
- * Driver & Guide tips
- * Return flights to and from

Cancellation Policy:

- * More than 91 days prior to departure date 50% of Total Holiday Cost for Cruise Tours
- * 55 - 42 days prior to departure date 75% of Total Holiday Cost for International Flight Tours
- * 41 - 0 days prior to departure date 100% of Total Holiday Cost for International Flight Tours





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Services:

Q: What essentials do I need to carry with me on the journey?

A: Passports with relevant visas, travel insurance policy, appropriate currencies. Long journeys are unavoidable, and we recommend you wear comfortable clothing and carry essentials such as a jacket or jumper, tissues etc., as access to the luggage hold may not be possible until a comfort stop or arrival at your destination.

Q: Do I need to carry a passport, apply for Visa and what vaccinations?

A: All passengers require a passport for travel outside your country of residence. Please ensure you have a passport that is valid for 6 months from the date of completing the tour. Always advisable to have passport copy in your main luggage.

We request you to see the following websites for the latest updates on travel to your destinations.

For UK Residents: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

For USA Residents: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>

You are responsible for ensuring that you have correct visa prior to travel. Sona Tours is not responsible or liable in any way should you be denied travel due to incorrect documentation.

For further information on vaccinations please check the above websites or <https://www.iamat.org> or contact your medical doctor for recent updates.

Q: What happens to me if stopped at customs & Immigrations?

A: Sona Tours cannot be held responsible if passengers are stopped or held by any government departments, e.g. Police, Customs, Immigration or any other authorities. We are sorry to say that the tour will continue and no financial or any other kind of responsibility will be accepted by Sona Tours.

Q: Should I bring all my medicaments with me?

A: Please note, that in airport your luggage will be checked. You should keep only minimum amount of medicament on you. In case, please bring report from your doctor, confirming the need of medicaments.

Q: What clothes shall I wear or pack?

A: During the lovely summer months, it is advisable to wear light garments during the day, but keep a light jacket or sweater in your hand luggage as evenings can get chilly. Also, highly recommended are a family sized umbrella, rain wear, pair of sunglasses, pair of trainers or comfortable walking shoes. Smart clothes will be required if you wish to go to a Casino or Nightclub. You may also be required to be 'covered' up when visiting certain countries or religious places.

Q: What are the luggage requirements on the aeroplane and private car / coach?

A: Different airlines will have different requirements on the weight allowance. It can range from 20 - 30kg for your main luggage and 5kg for hand luggage. We do advise you to travel light. This information will be on your e-ticket once the tickets been issued. Local and domestic flights in India will have only luggage allowances of 15- 20kg, this information will be sent on your final confirmation document.

In the private car / coach once you arrive at your first destination, maximum weight allowed for luggage of each passenger occupying a seat is 20 kg. Please make sure that you can carry your luggage from the private car / coach to your rooms as porter service is not provided on the holidays. Some tours you may have to pack a small bag for overnight stay for logistics purpose.

We also recommend that children or family members not sharing a room have separate luggage as rooms cannot be guaranteed adjoining or nearby. It is advisable to put your name and address on each piece of luggage as many passengers have similar bags to avoid delays and confusion. Should there be any reasons your baggage or personal valuable is lost or stolen, you must report it to the tour guide, or in the absence of a tour guide to the local police or hotel. Sona Tours cannot accept any responsibility for your personal belongings.





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Q: Will I travel with people from other countries?

A: As this been a private tour you will have your party members in this tour.

Q: Will I have free time?

A: Each itinerary offers the perfect balance of downtime and discoveries. We also give you the opportunity to tailor your trip with optional experiences.

If you decide to venture on your own during your free time, preferably you go in a group, keep the guide contact and the hotel address handy. Please do inform the tour director. We recommend you download an offline map too.

Q: What type of private car will I be travelling in?

A: We pride ourselves on having the finest fleet of fuel-efficient, most will have armrests & fully air-conditioned or air-cooled cars. There are no on-board restrooms (W.C.), we will try and make sufficient stops to ensure comfort for passengers.

For 1 to 2 passengers we generally provide Medium Sedan car like Maruti Swift Dizire or Toyota Etois. For 3 to 4 passengers, SUV Toyota Innova and for 4 to 9 passengers - Tempo traveller (Micro Van). 9+ a Deluxe coach.

On a touring holiday there are some long journeys which are unavoidable especially when travelling from city to city.

Q: Can I join India tours from other pick up point or destination?

A: Yes, you can fly over to our first point of destination of the tour preferably a day earlier. Please do enquire the office to arrange your logistics for both your arrival and departure.

Kindly note that there will be no reduction to the cost of your holiday in this case.

Q: Can I select my seats on the aeroplane?

A: Yes, you have the option to select the seat number when making a booking with an additional cost and provided there is availability. Flight bookings are on a group basis and the airlines will allocate the seats. Should you have a specific request it will be forwarded to the airline but cannot be guaranteed.

Q: What time do I need to be at my point?

A: It is imperative that you are at the pick-up point at least 15 minutes before the departure time. Also, for those who are arriving at the pick-up via taxi, we recommend that you book the taxi the night prior to departure day as trying to get one on the day may be difficult. In the event that you miss the pick up at the appointed time, you would need to get to the next destination on your itinerary at your expense. We will not be able to provide any refunds in any circumstances if you do not continue with the tour.

All flight tours require that you be at the airport for your flight at least 3 hours prior to your flight time. Your final itinerary confirmation will confirm the time you need to be at the airport. Should you miss your flight Sona Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred for you to join the tour. The office will make every effort to assist you in such circumstances.

Please be on time as we cannot be held responsible or liable for any loss or expense suffered if you miss the flight.

Q: When does my day start?

A: The day usually starts between 8 & 9am. Further instructions you will be given the night before. However, this may differ when having an early flight.

Q: Can I travel with my child or infant?

A: Sona Tours welcomes children and infants. The rates for children and infants for all the tours are available in the brochure and on the website. If your child requires a booster/child seat, please carry one.

Q: Do hotels have hot water for my baby?





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A: Please also note that not all hotels provide a kettle so if hot water is required for warming milk etc. in the hotel then it is advisable to carry a bottle warmer /kettle (do not forget your adapter).

Q: Are wheelchairs provided?

A: Sona Tours does not provide special tours for the disabled. It is possible to bring along a folding type wheelchair which may be kept in the baggage hold of the private car. The driver will load and unload the wheelchair from the private car for the passenger however they will need to be physically fit enough to be able to embark and disembark the private car on their own. It is also essential that a capable person is accompanying such a passenger on the tour to push their wheelchair. Please note that not all sightseeing's in India will be disable friendly. It is anticipated that we will walk longer distances at certain sightseeing / city tours therefore we request cooperation and team work when walking in a group.

Sona Tours will also request hotels for suitably equipped rooms. However, this is only on a request basis and cannot be guaranteed. Should you require the above please advise at the time of booking to avoid inconvenience.

Q: Is there a tour guide on the tour?

A: As it been a private tour you will be accompanied by driver. English speaking local guide will be provided at certain destination where required. Accompanied guide/escort can be arranged on additional cost.

Q: Where will I stay?

A: The hotels on our tours are carefully selected and of good quality. These can be located either in the city you are visiting or on the outskirts. Facilities vary from hotel to hotel and include en-suite bath or shower and generally a TV and telephone. Some of the rooms may have mini bars and 24-hour room service, use of these facilities will be charged to your account and payable by you on departure (Most hotels may require a credit card to cover your extras or cash deposits). Please remember that some hotels have small rooms unlike many other countries and also not all hotels will have air-conditioning or lift as standard. (If you have difficulty with stairs please advise us so we can try and request a room on a low floor). Rooms are also allocated as 'run of the house' so some guests may get larger or different type of rooms -we do not have control over this.

Sona Tours reserves the right to substitute hotels whilst passengers are on tour to a similar standard due to unforeseen circumstances. Please note that hotel's normal check-in times are from late afternoon, e.g. 3 pm, and check out around 11 am, but it does vary from hotel to hotel.

Q: Should I bring any electric outlet adapter?

A: Electrical currents vary between Britain and India. We suggest you carry a converter for your appliances such as electric shaver, travelling iron, hair dryer and other personal appliances. We recommend that you purchase a universal electrical travel adapter to help prevent accidents and damage to your appliances

Q: What will I eat?

A: Breakfast is normally either continental or buffet and is taken at the hotel that you will be staying in. All other pre-booked meals will be either in the hotel's own restaurant or at an outside restaurant and is not changeable. Available meal options are vegetarian, Jain or non-vegetarian (where possible Halal). Please let us know the time of your booking what your dietary requirements are.

The meals are pre-set buffet and a choice of menu is not available. The meals will only include the food; all extras i.e. alcohol, beverages or any extra items requested by you will need to be settled by you directly with the proprietor. Any meals not taken will not be reimbursed.

Note: We endeavour to book Indian meals for dinner wherever possible, however due to local constraints if we are unable to do so, we will offer local cuisines. This will give you an opportunity to try their local cuisine. If you have any specific dietary needs or allergies you must inform us at time of booking, so we can inform the caterer. Passengers with severe food allergies are advised to make appropriate arrangements prior to commencing their tour. Sona Tours reserve the right to change meal arrangement in circumstances which are beyond our control.

Q: Can I have a special request?

A: Sona Tours works at times with intermediary agents (Airlines, Hotels, Transport Companies, Other Suppliers, etc.) to arrange your holiday. If passengers have special requirements with regards to the service provided by the intermediaries such as a rooming request, seating request or a special meal request etc., then they should advise Sona Tours at the time of booking and we will endeavour to ensure the intermediary is advised of the request. It is important to note that we cannot guarantee the request and that Sona Tours are not liable in case the request cannot be fulfilled.



Q: What do I do if I have left something in the hotel?

A: Every effort is made for your safety. Please note that you are responsible for looking after your valuables and property when on vacation. If an item has been left in a hotel you will need to call the hotel and arrange with them directly for the return of your item.

Q: What happens if something is lost or stolen?

A: In case of theft you will need to advise your Tour Director immediately and report the theft to the nearest police personnel who will provide you with a police report or crime reference number. You are advised not to carry unnecessary valuables and to be vigilant at all times as tourist spots are well known targets for pickpockets.

Q: How does tipping work?

A: Tips are not included in India tours and it is at your discretion. However, as a guideline it is INR600 per day.

Q: What about porter service?

A: Since there is no porter service provided on any of our holidays, passengers will be required to carry their own luggage throughout their entire holiday. If local porter service is available and you use this service, then tips for this will need to be settled directly by yourself.

Q: Should I take a credit card with me?

A: We recommend that you take a credit or debit card on holiday with you, as it provides extra financial flexibility. Major international credit cards, such as Visa or MasterCard are accepted by many restaurants, shops and hotels. It is also possible to draw cash with your credit or debit card at some banks and cash machines, though this will incur a fee charged by your card provider.

Advise your bank which countries you are visiting prior to travel so that you don't run the risk of your card being refused and subsequent expensive phone calls to unlock it.

Q: What about local currency?

A: Currency varies to which country you travel to, but all countries do accept all major currencies (US\$, EUR€, GBP£). It is advisable to carry some small change of local currency especially when you intend to shop in the market / small shops. If you need assistance in identifying what currencies you would need whilst travelling, please feel free to ask us. If you need more local currency when abroad, we recommend that you exchange money at a bank rather than at hotels as they will charge high commission rates. You may also need your passport for identification as you would for traveller's cheques. Even though in India credit and debit cards are widely accepted, keep in mind the exchange rate may be poor and commission will be charged.

Q: How can I check the local weather?

A: You can check the local weather to your destinations here: <http://www.accuweather.com>

Q: What if I arrive late and miss a part of the trip?

A: We regret that no refunds can be made for absences from a trip, including experiences such as missed meals or sightseeing.

Q: What if I become ill on my trip and am unable to continue?

A: We regret that no refunds can be made for absences from a trip, including experiences such as missed meals or sightseeing.

Q: Can I drink the water in the countries I visit?

A: In most of India countries it is advisable to ask the hotel reception or the local guide. Else advisable to drink bottled water. Make sure you avoid tap water and if bottled water is not available stick to soft drinks. Many foreign tourists while drinking only bottled water get careless when they add ice to their drinks. Ice is usually not made from bottled water. Be selective also as to where you buy your bottled water as people have been known to refill bottles and sell them to unsuspecting travellers. Check the seal on the water bottle and buy water from reputable stores.

Q: Can I smoke on the car?

A: There is a strict policy of "no smoking, no alcohol and no smelly food" on all of our cars. We do, however, make plenty of comfort stops.

Q: What if I need to cancel my tour?

A: Please note that if you for any reason need to cancel your tour, please let us know as soon as possible, this will help reduce the amount of cancellation charges you may have to pay. Cancellation charges will be as per the terms and conditions which you can find on our website.

Terms & Conditions :

* Please refer to the full Terms and Conditions on our website

FAQ :

Can I join the tour from any part of the world?

A: Yes, you can fly to Kochi (India), our first point in the tour preferably a day earlier. Please do inquire in the office to arrange your logistics for both arrival and departure.

Weather & Essential to carry

Q. How can I check the local weather?

A: You can check the local weather to your destinations here: www.accuweather.com

Q. What is the best time to travel?

A: Every effort has been made to select date where the weather is moderate to ensure your best experience of Golden Triangle, India. (Kindly note due to changing weather conditions globally, Sonatours is not liable for weather variations).

Q. What clothes shall I wear or pack?

A: During the lovely summer months, it is advisable to wear light garments during the day but keep a light jacket or sweater in your hand luggage as evenings can get chilly.

A: We suggest waterproof jacket and a pair of sunglasses.

A: During the holiday most of the dressing is casual attire. Should you independently wish to visit Casino or Nightclub, evening wear is required.

Q. What kind of footwear will I need on the trip?

A: We suggest trainers, walking shoes, sandals, chappals or similar.

Passport; Immigration & Visa

Q. Do I need to carry a passport?

A: Yes, all passengers must travel with their passport if traveling outside the country you live in. We request you to see the following websites for the latest updates on travel to your destinations.

For UK Residents: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

For USA Resident: travel.state.gov/content/travel.html

Q. How long should the passport be valid?

A: Please ensure you have a passport that is valid for at least 6 months from the date of starting your tour.

Q. What are the Visa Requirements?

A: You are responsible to ensure that you have correct documentation.

British passport holders: Require an ETA (Electronic Travel Authority) prior to arrival in India (ETA updates to follow) or contact the office.

Please see the link for further information: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>

Non British passport holders: Please do check with the India Embassy or High Commission in country of your residence.

Sonatours is not responsible or liable in any way should you be denied travel due to incorrect documentation.

Q. What happens to me if I am stopped at custom and immigration?

A: Sonatours cannot be held responsible if passengers are stopped or held by any government departments, e.g. Police, Customs, Immigration or any other authorities. We are sorry to say that the tour will continue and no financial or any other kind of responsibility will be accepted by Sonatours.

Money Matters

Q. What is the currency used?

A: The currency in India is Indian Rupee (INR). American Dollars (USD) is widely used throughout the country.

Q. Can I use my Credit/Debit cards there?

A: We recommend that you take a credit or debit card on holiday with you, as it provides extra financial flexibility. Major international credit cards, such as Visa or MasterCard are accepted by many restaurants, shops and hotels. Most countries are using chip and pin. In cases where chip and pin not used, please be cautious when handing your debit/credit card.

Q. Are ATM machines available?

A: Major cities will have cash/ATM machines where cash can be withdrawn with your credit or debit card, though this might incur a fee charged by your card provider. Advise your bank which countries you are visiting prior to travel so that you don't run the risk of your card being refused and subsequent expensive phone calls to unlock it.

Q. Where can I exchange my money?

A: Money can be exchanged at Airports, Banks, Exchange Bureaus and at the hotels. You may also need your passport for identification, please be aware that locally exchange rate may vary.

Health (Medication); Welfare & Travel Insurance

Q. Do I need any vaccinations?

A: For further information on vaccinations please check with your medical doctor for recent updates or go on the following website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/ or contact your medical doctor for recent updates.

Q. Should I bring all my medication with me?

A: Please travel with all your necessary medication for the duration of your trip including your prescription/doctors report confirming the medication.

Q. Do I need to declare any special medical condition and requirements prior to booking the tour?

A: Should you have pre - existing medical conditions or requirements (e.g. oxygen during flight or sleeping, colostomy bags, etc). Kindly advise the office at the time of booking.

Q. What happens if I am unwell during the tour?

A: Should you feel unwell during the trip, kindly contact the Hotel Reception, Tour Manager/Local Guide. We regret that no refunds can be made for absences from a trip, including experiences such as missed meals or sightseeing. Strongly recommend to have personal travel insurance to cover these mishaps.

Q. What happens if an accident occurs while on the tour?

A: Should you be involved in an accident (minor or major), please contact your Tour Manager/Local Guide. Unfortunately, no refunds can be made for absences from a trip, including experiences such as missed meals or sightseeing.

Q. What should I do if there is an incident?

A: Sonatours makes every effort to keep your health and safety in mind. However, should an unforeseen incident occur please contact your tour manager/local guide/hotel reception for immediate assistance.

Q. Do you facilitate clients with disability?

A: Sonatours does not provide special tours for the disabled. Our coaches do not have wheelchair excess. It is possible to bring along a folding type wheelchair which may be kept in the baggage hold of the coach. The driver will load and unload the wheelchair from the coach for the passenger however they will need to be physically fit enough to be able to embark and disembark the coach on their own. On the tour it is also essential that a capable person is accompanying such a passenger on the tour to push their wheelchair.

Q. What happens if I have lost or left something in the hotel?

A: Kindly note that you are responsible for looking after your valuables and property when on vacation. If an item has been left in a hotel you will need to call the hotel and arrange with them directly for the return of your item, there might be charges involved.

A: You are advised not to carry unnecessary valuables and to be vigilant, as tourist spots are well known targets for pickpockets. In case of theft, you will need to advise your Tour Director immediately and report the theft to the police. This should provide you with a police report or crime reference number.

Q. Do I need travel insurance?

A: We strongly recommend you travel with Travel/Medical Insurance from your country of residence. Kindly ensure you get the correct insurance for the tour.

Q. Can Sonatours provide travel insurance?

A: There are various travel insurance providers in the market, however Sonatours does not provide Travel Insurance.

Accommodation & Transport

Q. How are rooms allocated?

A: Each hotel checks their bookings and room inventory in the morning and pre-assigned the rooms. Sonatours have no control over room allocations.

Q. Can you guarantee rooms together?

A: Room allocation is done by the hotels. Rooms together only be requested but not guaranteed.

Q. What facilities are there in the room?

A: Facilities vary from Hotel to Hotel and include en-suite bathrooms, generally TV, safe box, telephone, mini bar, room service (use of some of the services are chargeable and to be settled by yourself at the time of checkout). Hotels may require your credit card to cover your extras or cash deposits.

Q. Will the room have walk in shower?

A: Not all hotel rooms have walking showers.

Q. Does my room have Tea & Coffee making facilities?

A: Please note that not all hotels provide tea/coffee in the room. If hot water is required, kindly request the hotel reception for assistance.

Q. Is smoking allowed in the hotels/rooms?

A: Hotels do not allow smoking in the rooms. However, designated smoking areas are provided. Please check with the hotel reception.

Q. Is WIFI freely available?

A: Most hotels will have WIFI available in the public areas. Please check with hotel reception for WIFI information in the rooms.

Q. Do all rooms have air-condition?

A: Most hotels rooms in Sri Lanka offer air-conditioners or fans.

Q. Will all hotels have lifts?

A: Most of the hotels worldwide will have lifts. However, at some places Heritage Hotels or Resorts are used In such cases lifts cannot be guaranteed.

Q. What time do I need to be at the airport?

A: All flight tours originating in the UK require that you be at the airport for your flight at least 3 hours prior to your flight time. Your final itinerary confirmation will confirm the time you need to be at the airport. Should you miss your flight Sonatours will not be liable for any costs incurred for you to join the tour. The office will make every effort to assist you in such circumstances.

If you have booked the tour without flights, please meet the group at the hotel. Details will be sent to you at a later date. Please do check with the office as you might need to book a hotel before the tour starts and after it finishes.

Please be on time as we cannot be held responsible or liable for any loss or expense suffered if you miss the flight or coach.

Q. Are flights upgrades available?

A: On long haul flight tours upgrade to your flights is possible. Please advise the office at the time of booking to get the best possible price.

Q. Can I select my seats on the airplane?

A: International and Internal flight booking are booked as a group and the airlines will allocate the seats. Should you have a specific request it will be forwarded to the airline but cannot be guaranteed.

Q. What are the luggage requirements on the airplane?

A: International Flights: Different airlines will have different requirements on the weight allowance. It can range 20-30kgs for your main luggage and 5kg for hand luggage.

We do advise you to travel light. This information will be on your e-ticket once the tickets have been issued.

Q. What type of car will I be travelling in?

A: We use the finest fleet cars. AC Sedan car for 2 passengers, Innova Cysta for 4 passengers & Tempo Traveler for 6 -8 passengers. On a touring holiday there are some long journeys which are unavoidable especially what travelling from city to city.

Q. What is the smoking and alcohol policy while travelling by car?

A: There is a strict policy of "no smoking, no alcohol and no smelly food" on all our coaches. We do, however, make plenty of comfort stops.



sonatours
more choice • more quality • more fun



UNITED KINGDOM 718 KENTON ROAD, KINGSBURY CIRCLE, HARROW, MIDDLESEX, HA3 9QX, UK

Call: +44 (0) 2089510111

Email: info@sonatours.co.uk

Food Matters

Q. Can I request my flight meal and is it guaranteed?

A: Meal request should be advised at the time of your booking; Sonatours will request on your behalf, but we cannot guarantee the request. Sonatours are not liable in case the requested flight meal cannot be fulfilled. Please be advised that complimentary meals are not available on the internal flights.

Q. What meal options are available to me while on tour?

A: Sonatours can cater for a range of Asian Vegetarian (e.g. Jain, Swaminarayan) as well as Asian Non-Vegetarian (Halal). Kindly advise your meal preference/allergies at the time of your booking. In areas where Indian is not available local cuisine will be provided.

Q. Where will I have my daily meals?

A: On all tours breakfast is at the hotel and dinners is at various restaurants or hotels.

Q. Should I carry dry snacks?

A: Dry snacks can be carried, provided they are pre-packed, and all the ingredients are clearly listed on the packaging.

Q. What is the cost of a local meal?

A: On an average local meal costs about £15-£20 per person per meal. This estimated price varies from city to city and country to country.

Miscellaneous

Q. Are tips included?

A: Driver and guide are not included in this tour.

Q. When does my day start?

A: The day usually starts between 8 & 9am. Further instructions you will be given the night before. However, this may differ depending on the activity of the day or when having an early flight.

Q. How much walking is involved per day for the duration of the tour?

A: This tour involves a substantial amount of walking (normally 6 to 7 hours a day, not all at one stretch).

Q. Will I have free time?

A: Each itinerary offers the perfect balance of downtime and discoveries. We also give you the opportunity to tailor your trip with optional experiences. If you decide to venture on your own during your free time, preferably you go in a group, keep the guide contact and the hotel address handy. Please do inform the tour director. We recommend you download an offline map too.

Q. Do I need to get a local SIM card?

A: Usually it is not necessary, should you require one kindly speak to your Tour manager/Local guide for assistance.

Q. Should I bring any electric outlet adapter and charger for my electronics?

A: Electrical currents vary Globally. We recommend that you carry a universal adapter and your electronic charges for your convenience and comfort.

India: Electricity supply is 220 and 240 Volts; uses the type G- 3 rectangular pins in a triangular pattern. Like in the UK

