



14 Days

# India

## Kerala and the Western Ghats

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Kerala, a state in southern India, is famous for its palm-lined beaches, legendary backwaters and rolling hills lined with vibrantly green, tea and spice plantations. Kerala is a tropical symphony of wildlife, pristine hiking trails, glistening canals, hill stations and ancient temples. This expedition brings you into the thick of it, trekking through the Western Ghats and living alongside the locals on project. Let's not forget the cycling, kayaking and river cruises! This is an enchanting expedition in a world away from the frenzy of northern India. An expedition here is sure to stay with you forever.



# Recommended expedition itinerary

Day  
1-2

## Arrive Kerala

On arrival in Kochi, we will be met by our STC Leader and transferred directly to our hotel. After freshening up, we will set out to explore the heritage city, Fort Cochin and see the world famous Kathakali art. In the evening we will have a welcome briefing and enjoy our first meal in Kochi.

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Day  
3

## Kochi to Suryanelli Base Camp

After breakfast we transfer to Suryanelli, a small town near the famous Munnar hill station. This is our gateway into the stunning Western Ghats mountain range, and a rich bio-diversity area. Here we will be surrounded by flocks of birds and rolling hills dotted with tea and cardamom plantations established in the late 19th century.

We will reach Suryanelli by midday and begin our trek, 6km through grassland and pine forest until we reach Kalypto Camp, where we will overnight.

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Day  
4

## Trek to Anaerangal Lakeside

Today we rise for an early morning climb of Phantom's Head, the tallest rock feature nearby. Once we reach the summit, we can watch the spectacular sunrise over the Papathy Shola (butterfly forest). There is a mass migration of butterflies here in October and November. Our trek continues to Papathy Shola Village, through cardamom plantations and on to Muthuvankudy. Finally we reach a settlement on the shores Anaerangal Lake where we camp tonight. Anaerangal is a large, placid lake which forms a source of water for all farmers downstream.

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Day  
5

## Mathikettan Shola Trek

Today we will trek from the village to Shantanpara Camp, approx 14kms. The route begins in grasslands until we reach the boundary of Mathikettan Shola National Park. Here the landscape transforms into dense forests and flora & fauna of giant proportions! The national park is home to a variety of wildlife which we will try to spot including the Malabar Giant Squirrel, gaur, sambar and elephants!

This afternoon our trek weaves through plantations and local settlements where we can meet local farmers and learn more about their daily lifestyles. Tonight we camp at Shantanpara Camp, overlooking the national park.

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Day  
6

## Chaturangapara Trek

After a quick transfer, we begin our climb up to a mountain pass at 2,200m. This is the highest point of our trek and once we reach the top, we are rewarded with beautiful views over the vast plains of Tamil Nadu. This is a more challenging trekking day with increasingly steeper and rocky trails through the Western Ghats, until finally we begin our final and gradual descent back in to elephant territory.

Day  
7

## Chaturangapara to Haripad

Trekking done! This morning we enjoy a relaxing breakfast and then transfer to our project in Haripad (approx. 5hrs). This is an ancient Buddhist town known as the land of art, dance, music and the 'land of snake boats'. There are many schools in need of renovation in Haripad and the group can assist with various restoration projects.

Day  
8-11

## Haripad Project

During our time in Haripad we will assist with a school restoration or construction project. The exact tasks will be confirmed closer to the time of departure and following consultation with the school to find a sustainable solution to their needs. During our project we will stay with the local community and learn about daily life in rural India. In the evenings we can explore the charming temple town of Haripad.

As this is typically a very low-income area, there are two common problems faced by schools. One is inadequate toilet facilities and the other is a lack of an internal water supply. These are projects which are in much need and can be achieved with additional fundraising from the school in the UK. We are likely to work alongside local tradesmen during the day to complete our tasks. There will be plenty of opportunity to interact with the local villages and students.

Day  
12-13

## Alleppey, Cycles, Kayaks & Cruise

We wave farewell to the friends we have made and transfer to Alleppey. Alleppey (or Alappuzha) is best known for houseboat cruises along the rustic Kerala backwaters, a network of tranquil canals and lagoons. Having checked in to our hotel we will freshen up and head out for a cycling tour of the local area.

This morning we will explore these legendary backwaters and beaches by kayak. After lunch we can relax and explore the local markets. Tonight we will step aboard our private houseboat for an unforgettable dinner whilst watching the sunset.

Day  
14

## Fly to London

After an exhilarating trip, we fly take our return flight to the UK.

# Further information

## Look what's included!

- International flights
- All accommodation
- All food
- All transportation and activities
- Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local expedition leader
- Parent and student expedition launch evening
- Comprehensive pre-expedition training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Carbon offsetting of all flights
- Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

## What's excluded?

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Cancellation and personal effects insurance

## Your expedition timeline



## Physical expedition rating:



Moderate physical activities are included in Grade 3 trips. Good health and reasonable fitness are important to get the most out of the trip. Trips of this grading are likely to include some walking at moderate altitude (up to 2,500m) and occasional longer/harder days may be involved, with between five and seven hours of walking on certain days. The trip may contain other activities such as cycling or rafting which also require physical effort and a reasonable level of fitness. Some steady preparation and an increase if your underlying fitness levels would help you get the most from this grade trip.

## Culture shock rating:



Students joining trips at this level will find the comforts of home are more of a rarity – or viewed another way, a welcome luxury. English is unlikely to be widely spoken and the food will be quite different to home, perhaps for extended sections of the trip. You should observe local customs so not to cause offence. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty and accommodation in some locations is likely to be basic. Whilst a challenge, destinations and trips at cultural level 4 are also a fantastic opportunity to see a very different part of the world.



# A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your expedition journey



## 1 Get your tailor-made proposal and further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your expedition itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

## 2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your pre-booking information pack too.

## 3 Arrange an expedition launch evening at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the expedition with a comprehensive information evening with opportunity for questions.



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