

# Backwaters and Beaches of Kerala Cycle Tour

Trip Code: KLMB

Version: KLMB Backwaters and Beaches of Kerala Cycle Tour



CYCLE



GUIDED GROUP



LEISURELY



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Take a sunset cruise amongst the islands at Kochi
- Sample the varied and delicious South Indian cuisine
- Free day at the chilled-out resort of Kovalam beside the Arabian Sea

- Spot monkeys, giant squirrels and lots of birds at Thattekad Bird Sanctuary

#### AT A GLANCE

- 9 days biking
- 270 kilometres
- 95% surfaced road
- 5% dirt road
- 100% vehicle supported
- Max altitude - 500 metres
- Join at Kochi, depart Trivandrum

#### ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- All meals included
- 4 nights Homestay
- 7 nights Hotel

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

## Introduction

At the southern tip of India, the sun-kissed and spice-flavoured state of Kerala encapsulates everything that is magical about this colourful tropical region. Our easy-paced cycling holiday will allow us to get beneath Kerala's skin and to experience some of the highlights; the traditional towns, timeless fishing villages, friendly people and stunning mix of landscape, ranging from the jungle and tea plantations on the slopes of the Western Ghats to the endless white-sand beaches of the Arabian Sea coastline.

Starting out from the old Portuguese-founded trading post of Kochi and ending up with a free day in the laid-back resort of Kovalam, we travel by bike in manageable daily stages, with a number of short support vehicle transfers and a fun 3-hour ride through the famous 'backwaters' in a water taxi. Cycling on backroads amongst a maze of palm-fringed waterways and alongside the sea, there's lots of time to stop to admire the scenery, take photos and to interact with the cheerful Keralan people. We spend time in downtown Kochi, enjoy a Kathakali dance show, take a sunset cruise, visit temples and churches, walk on forest trails at Thattekad Bird Sanctuary and stay 4 nights at comfortable and characterful homestays. With all meals included, the rich, varied and delicious cuisine of Kerala is another major highlight. Kerala is one India's special places; a little corner of paradise and this leisurely cycling tour is a great way to make the most of it.

### Is this holiday for you?

**LEISURE CYCLING.** This is a cycling and sightseeing tour on surfaced backroads with some rough sections. Over 9 days of cycling, we average little more than 30 kilometres a day with never more than about 300 metres of accumulated ascent and descent. There is plenty of time off the bikes and the support vehicle is always available. This is a suitable holiday for anyone who includes cycling amongst their leisure activities. **BIKES ARE PROVIDED LOCALLY WITHIN THE COST OF THE HOLIDAY.**

# Itinerary

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## DAY 1

**Meet at the group hotel in Kochi. A group transfer from Kochi Airport is provided. Free time and evening Kathakali dance show.**

Your holiday starts at the hotel in Kochi. A group transfer is provided from Kochi Airport. After a traditional welcome 'Swagat' we transfer to the hotel and have a few hours to rest before meeting the tour leader for a pre-trip briefing and lunch at the hotel. After lunch you will also meet the group's mechanic and will be given your bikes. The guide and mechanic will make sure the bike is fitted to your satisfaction and there is the option to go for a short test ride in the Fort Cochin area. In the early evening the group will go to a small family-run theatre to experience a traditional Kathakali dance show. The dances usually portray events from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, great Indian epics. Finally, we will have dinner with the guide at a restaurant or at the hotel.

Meals: **L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

## DAY 2

**Coastal cycling through fishing villages and afternoon Kochi sightseeing tour and sunset cruise.**

After breakfast, we'll meet outside the hotel in our cycling gear. The tour guide will lead the way as we set off on a scenic ride along the Kochi coast with glimpses through the coconut palms of the sparkling waters of the backwaters on one side and the Indian Ocean on the other. We'll pass through several fishing villages and see colourful boats pulled up on the sand and fishermen mending their nets. During this easy and very pleasant morning's ride there's at least one point where we have to take a small ferry boat between the islands of this maze of coastal waterways. Cycling past dockyards and large spice warehouses, we are already fully immersed in the distinctive landscape of this part of the Keralan coast. We'll take a break in one of the small villages before returning to Kochi for lunch. In the afternoon, there's a half day sightseeing tour on foot with the guide. Kochi was founded by the Portuguese in 1503 and was the earliest European settlement in India. There are brightly coloured warehouses filled with the smell of tea and spices, rickety old bikes and hand-painted trucks piled high with goods, while food stalls stand on every corner. There is plenty of opportunity too for souvenir buying today. We can visit Mattancherry Palace, the 16th century Jewish Synagogue and St. Francis Church - the resting place of the famous Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama. Close by we can watch the Chinese fishing nets in action from the waterfront Vasco da Gama Square. Made of teak and bamboo, these picturesque fishing 'engines' are

believed to have been erected here as early as the 14th century. To finish off, we'll have a short sunset cruise amongst the islands in the harbour area.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Hotel		<b>Ascent</b> 150M		<b>Descent</b> 150M		<b>Time</b> 2 hrs cycling		<b>Distance</b> 25KM
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### DAY 3

#### Transfer inland to Cherukunnam and cycle to Thattekad. Afternoon village visit.

Today we board our support vehicle and head inland through a strikingly green patchwork of jungle and farmland interspersed with waterways. It takes around 90 minutes to get to the start of our cycle ride at the tiny hamlet of Cherukunnam beside the Periyar Valley Canal. From here, we ride alongside the canal which is overhung by lush vegetation; palms and banana trees rich in birdlife. This is a great opportunity to see something of the way of life of the Keralan backwaters, with boats of all sizes including fishermen in flimsy craft, as well as colourfully painted houses at the water's edge. Cycling eastwards on a good, quiet road, we can catch glimpses of some higher land ahead of us; the foothills of the Western Ghats. Mid-afternoon we reach our hotel accommodation in Thattekad set amongst evergreen lowland forest. In the late afternoon we can go out to explore the local village with the guide either on foot or on our bikes.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Hotel		<b>Ascent</b> 200M		<b>Descent</b> 200M		<b>Time</b> 3 - 4 hrs cycling		<b>Distance</b> 40KM
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### DAY 4

#### Morning visit to the Thattekad Bird Sanctuary then transfer and cycle to a homestay near Erattupetta.

Thattekad's claim to fame is that the first bird sanctuary in Kerala was established here in 1983. After breakfast at our hotel we will take a guided walk on the forest trails of this compact reserve beside the Periyar River which has been described by the eminent ornithologist Salim Ali as "the richest bird habitat on peninsular India." As well as an array of striking birds including several species of cuckoo, we are likely to spot monkeys and maybe even the giant squirrel. After our visit, it's back aboard the bus for a 2-hour drive southwards through the rich Keralan countryside, passing towns and villages, churches and shrines en-route to the regional capital of Thodupuzha. Beyond this small town, it's back on the bikes for a 2 to 3-hour ride on quiet roads, winding amongst rubber plantations and spice gardens, to Erattupetta where we stay at Planters Homestay which is a 50-year old mansion house on 2 storeys, with twin-share guest rooms and en suite-facilities. The house is set in a tropical garden with fruit trees, palms and rich bird life. There may be time in the evening for further exploration on our bikes.

Meals: **B L D**

 <b>Accommodation</b> Homestay	 <b>Ascent</b> 200M	 <b>Descent</b> 200M	 <b>Time</b> 2 - 3 hrs cycling	 <b>Distance</b> 35KM
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**DAY 5****Explore by bike around Erattupetta and Vagamon. Afternoon spice garden visit.**

Today is a day for exploration from the homestay and we will spend a second night at this same accommodation. Above Erattupetta, the lower slopes of the Western Ghats leading up to the 'hill-station' of Vagamon are cloaked in plantations of rubber and tea. We will cycle between the well-ordered lines of emerald-green tea bushes and see the colourful pickers at work. There is also a good swimming place on the Meemachil River that we can visit, before cycling on to the Poonjar Palace, a 900 year-old former residency of the local Maharaja and his family. This morning's ride can be extended by cycling back to the homestay or we can use the support vehicle. In the afternoon the tour leader will organise a walk into the surrounding plantation farmland and point out some of the key species of trees and plants that are used by the local people, from coffee to cardamom. There is also the option today to take a walk into Erattupetti with its colourful market street and impressive, pure-white Catholic church. Back at the homestay we can expect to be treated to more sumptuous and colourful Keralan cuisine.

Meals: **B L D**

 <b>Accommodation</b> Homestay	 <b>Ascent</b> 250M	 <b>Descent</b> 250M	 <b>Time</b> 2 - 3 hrs cycling	 <b>Distance</b> 25KM
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**DAY 6****Cycle and transfer from Erattupetta to Mancombu.**

Today we head back towards the coast, covering a total distance of 80 kilometres by a mix of bus transfer and cycling. After breakfast at our accommodation, we set off cycling on backroads, leaving behind the rubber plantation estates and traversing a pretty patchwork of forest and farmland and small villages. After a stop for lunch, we transfer to our homestay close to the small settlement of Mancombu surrounded by backwaters and not far from the coastal town of Alleppey. Here, we have a 2-night stay at the Gaaby World Homestay, a community-based facility set in lush countryside. This is another opportunity to fully experience the typical lifestyle and cuisine of Kerala. The accommodation here may be divided between different community houses and the rooms are simply furnished, with twin or double beds and en-suite facilities.

Meals: **B L D**

 <b>Accommodation</b> Homestay	 <b>Ascent</b> 250M	 <b>Descent</b> 350M	 <b>Time</b> 3 hrs cycling	 <b>Distance</b> 35KM
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## DAY 7

**Backwaters cycling from Mancombu and late afternoon canoe trip.**

In the morning we set off cycling on a network of trails that run alongside and between the waterways of this distinctive backwaters landscape. Crossing bridges, stopping off to chat with the local people, visiting churches and local shrines, this is a great opportunity to get a feel for the real Kerala. The Keralan people have a real affinity for water and make their livings half in and half out of the water. They grow vegetables and keep livestock including water buffalo and chickens on tiny strips of land beside the canals and fish for their suppers with nets. Coconuts are an important food staple and the husks are processed to extract a fibre called coir which is used to make everything from rope to rough fabric and matting. We will see examples of these simple manufacturing processes today. In the afternoon we will return to our accommodation and go out on the backwaters in traditional wooden canoes paddled by local fishermen. As the sun begins to set, this is a great way to experience the backwaters.

Meals: **B L D**

 <b>Accommodation</b> Homestay	 <b>Ascent</b> 200M	 <b>Descent</b> 200M	 <b>Time</b> 3 hrs cycling	 <b>Distance</b> 35KM
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## DAY 8

**Take the local ferry (river-taxi) to Thotopally and cycle to Kollam.**

In this water-world it can sometimes be easier to travel by boat than overland and water taxis provide a vital lifeline for the local people. This morning we will hop aboard one of these motor-boats and head south to Thotopally, a journey which will take approximately 3 hours and once again provide us with a different perspective on the backwaters. Disembarking, we have a short transfer to the weird and wonderful Mannarasala Temple which is a centre of pilgrimage for devotees of the serpent god Nagaraja. We can have a quick look-around before setting off on our bikes on the first stage of our ride to Kollam. Cycling through lots of small villages, after a couple of hours we cross a river-mouth by ferry and then continue for another hour or so, before a short final transfer takes us to our hotel close to the sea and just to the north of Kollam. This small coastal city on the southern edge of Ashtamudi Lake is known for its beaches and for the fact that it is the centre of the cashew-nut trade.

Meals: **B L D**

 <b>Accommodation</b> Hotel	 <b>Ascent</b> 200M	 <b>Descent</b> 200M	 <b>Time</b> 3 - 4 hrs cycling	 <b>Distance</b> 40KM
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## DAY 9

**Cycling along the palm-fringed Keralan coast to Varkala.**

We may have a transfer this morning to avoid the busiest part of Kollam, before continuing our cycle ride

southwards alongside the Arabian Sea. There are palm-groves, blue lagoons and stretches of beach where we can stop off for a swim. We will pass through fishing villages with colourful boats pulled up on the sand and fishermen mending their nets. Our overnight stop is at a hotel in Varkala, a centre of Hindu pilgrimage and nowadays one of Kerala's most popular backpacker hangouts. We will aim to get here early in the day, with plenty of time to enjoy the special appeal of this cliff-top town, perched above its beach. Sunsets can be spectacular here as we sit down to dinner in one of the local restaurants.

Meals: **B L D**

 <b>Accommodation</b> Hotel	 <b>Ascent</b> 150M	 <b>Descent</b> 150M	 <b>Time</b> 3 hrs cycling	 <b>Distance</b> 36KM
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## DAY 10

### Continue our coastal cycle ride via Veli Lagoon to Kovalam.

Setting off directly from the hotel, we cycle alongside the beach to the fishing village of Anchuthengu which is famous for its fort, built by the British East India Company in the 17th century to guard what was the first British trading post on the Malabar Coast. We will have a look around this historic place and then continue our ride for a couple of hours to Veli Lagoon which is separated from the ocean by just a narrow strip of beach. Once again, we are likely to see fishing boats on the beach and pleasure boats on the lake itself which is a popular attraction for local people. At this point we put the bike aboard the support vehicle and transfer to our hotel in Kovalam. The afternoon is free to explore this charming resort, chill out at the hotel, watch the fishermen pulling in their nets or take a swim in the warm waters of the Arabian Sea.

Meals: **B L D**

 <b>Accommodation</b> Hotel	 <b>Ascent</b> 200M	 <b>Descent</b> 200M	 <b>Time</b> 3 hrs cycling	 <b>Distance</b> 37KM
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## DAY 11

### A free day in Kovalam. Optional cycle ride or excursion to Kanyakumari at the southern tip of India.

This is a great place to spend a free day. Kovalam has a picturesque shoreline, dominated by a high rocky promontory. There are 2 main sandy beaches, lined with simple restaurants, bars and stalls selling souvenirs and handicrafts. Each evening, the local fishermen take their boats out and these are pulled up onto the beaches during the day. Meals are provided at the hotel, although you might choose to take your lunch at one of the beach cafes. If you are keen to do some more cycling, the tour guide will be happy to take you on a 20 kilometre loop ride inland from the hotel, through villages and farms to Vellayani Lake. Another option today is to take a day trip by taxi to Kanyakumari at the southernmost tip of India which the tour guide will help you to arrange locally. We spend a second night at our Kovalam

hotel.

Meals: **B L D**

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**Accommodation**  
Hotel

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## DAY 12

**Your holiday ends today. A group transfer to Trivandrum Airport is provided usually in the very early hours of the morning.**

Your holiday ends today. A group transfer to Trivandrum Airport is provided usually in the very early hours of the morning.

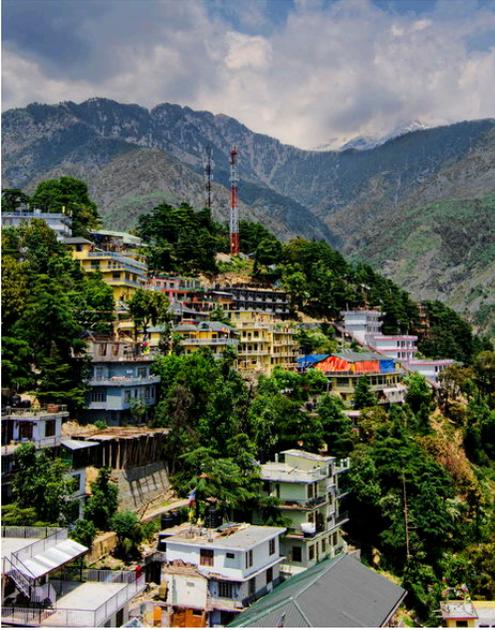
Meals: **B**

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# Extensions

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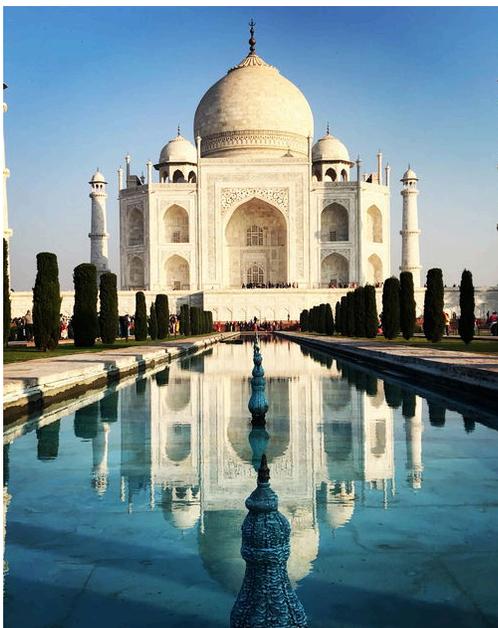
When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



## Dharamsala and the Dalai Lama

Dharamsala is a former British Raj hill-station in the Dhauladhar mountain range and currently home to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in exile. On this four day extension, you will be able to sample a flavour of life in Tibet and enjoy visits to the Dalai Lama's temple complex; the Norbulingka Institute; the Tibetan children's village and visit a local Gaddi Tribal village to experience the life of the people who traditionally inhabit the lower reaches of the Dhauladhar.

**4 days from**  
**US\$1,075** per person



## One day tour of Agra and the Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal needs little introduction. Built by the Moghul emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz, it is widely considered to be the most beautiful building in the world. Nearby is the oft overlooked Agra Fort, itself an awe-inspiring and magnificent complex of palaces and ancient forts. Traveling from Delhi on the express train and returning by private vehicle, our one-day extension to Agra is perfect for those with limited time who wish to complete their India experience with exploring one of the most admired and loved buildings on the planet.

**1 day from**  
**US\$290** per person



## Agra and Jaipur four day extension

The Golden Triangle needs little introduction and is rightly considered a classic trip in its own right. Easily accessible from Delhi, this excursion takes in the wonders of the majestic Agra Fort, the incomparable Taj Mahal, the abandoned ghost-city of Fatehpur Sikri and the architectural jewels of Jaipur and Amber. This four day trip ensures you get the most out of these stunning attractions at a relaxed and unhurried pace.

**4 days from**  
**US\$735** per person



## Agra & the Taj Mahal two day tour

Our two-day extension is for those who wish to explore Agra and the surrounding area at a relaxed pace. We start by exploring the oft overlooked Agra Fort, itself an awe-inspiring and magnificent complex of palaces and ancient forts, before waking before the next day to see the sunrise break over the Taj Mahal. Needing little introduction, the Taj Mahal was built by the Moghul emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz. It is widely considered to be the most beautiful building in the world. This tour also gives us an opportunity to explore the fascinating abandoned ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri.

2 days from  
**US\$470** per person



## Delhi Sightseeing Tour - Full day

Old Delhi is centred on the Red Fort and is a labyrinth of narrow, bustling streets including Chandni Chowk bazaar. Must-sees here include the Red Fort, built by Emperor Shah Jahan; Hummayan's Tomb, constructed in similar style to the Taj Mahal and the towering Qutab Minar minaret. New Delhi was the creation of the British Raj who wanted to show their ascendancy over the former Mogul rulers with many grand buildings designed by the greatest ever British architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens. Exploring this area by vehicle will give a glimpse of this interesting aspect of India.

1 day from  
**US\$170** per person

# Holiday Information

## What's Included

- A professional local English-speaking cycling leader
- Additional cycling guide with groups of 9 or more participants
- Support vehicle with driver and mechanic
- Group airport transfers on Day 1 and Day 12
- Kochi guided sightseeing and Kathakali show and sunset cruise
- Guided morning visit to Thattekad Bird Sanctuary
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- Accommodation as described in the trip dossier
- All meals
- Entrance fees to all attractions listed in the itinerary
- Hire bike

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Indian Visa
- Airport transfers (other than a single group transfer on arrival and departure days)
- Tips for local staff
- Miscellaneous personal expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc
- Bike carriage on flights - please check with your carrier for charges

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Kochi.

A group transfer from Kochi Airport is provided on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary. On the final day of the itinerary a group transfer is provided from Kovalam to Trivandrum Airport.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

All meals are included from lunch on the day of arrival to breakfast on the final day.

## Food & Water

### Drinking Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

The food in Kerala is terrific. Rice, vegetables, fruit, seafood and a range of delicious spices are the main staples of Kerala cuisine, sometimes served on a banana leaf. Whilst at hotels, we will have the opportunity to try the local fare, although other options with a more western flavour will usually be available also. On those nights at homestays we will be able to sample Kerala food at its traditional and best. Breakfasts include cereals, bread, possibly in the form of local 'rotis', eggs, hard-boiled or omelette, often one or two delicious, spicy Indian breakfast options, fruit, juice, hot water for tea or coffee. Lunches will usually be at a roadside restaurant where you can choose what you want - the guide will help with this.

### Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

### Accommodation

The group will use a mix of hotel and homestay accommodation on 11 nights. All accommodation is allocated on a twin-sharing basis and if you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Depending upon availability it may also be possible to pre-book single room occupancy. All accommodation is en-suite.

### Group Leader & Support Staff

The trip will be led by an experienced local English-speaking biking leader. In addition the group will be accompanied by one or more support vehicles and a designated mechanic.

## Spending Money

We recommend that £150 - £200 (or the equivalent in US dollars or euros) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including approximately £50 to £60 for tips for the tour guide(s), driver and mechanic, as well as for hotel staff. This will also allow you plenty of money for soft drinks and/or beer. If you are intending to buy expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly (credit cards can be useful in this respect). We recommend that you carry your travel money in the form of currency rather than travellers cheques, since you will exchange the majority of this on the day of your arrival in India, either at Kochi Airport or in the city. Sterling and US dollars are equally acceptable for exchange. India's unit of currency is the Indian rupee.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is an accepted and expected part of Indian culture, although you should only tip for services which are well done. The total amount that you can expect to pay in tips for your local guide(s), driver and mechanic, as well as for hotel staff, is approximately £50 to £60. Your local guide will help to coordinate these payments and he will choose an appropriate time for the group to get together to present them. He might also ask you for a few rupees from time to time to pay tips to a sightseeing guide or a forest reserve employee who is with the group for just a short time. It is also a good idea if the group asks the local guide to look after the day to day tipping of hotel staff. This will do away with the need for you to be finding small numbers of rupees on a daily basis. The group will then reimburse the guide on account of these miscellaneous tips at the end of the trip.

## Bike Hire

Bikes are provided locally within the cost of the holiday. These are Merida (Matts 40 and Matts 20) hardtail mountain bikes with Shimano components, Tektro Disc Brakes, 100mm front suspension and 26 inch diameter wheels. They are available in a range of frame sizes - from 13 to 21 inches. The bikes are fitted with flat pedals, but we can fit your own pedals if you normally ride clipped-in. Please provide us with your height when you book, so we can reserve a suitable bike for you.

## Vehicle Support

Throughout this trip we have the back up of a support vehicle. Each morning our main baggage will be loaded onto the support vehicle which will follow the group on the day's ride. The local biking leader and the support vehicle driver will watch over the group and will be contactable by mobile phone at all times. This is a leisurely paced cycling holiday and the group will stay together to a great extent. There will be regular stops to regroup and the support vehicle can, at any time, pick up group members who wish to take a break from cycling. The support vehicle will carry water, fruit, chocolate and biscuits for consumption during the cycling.

## Baggage Allowance

We recommend that you travel with one main item of luggage, such as a KE Trek Bag or similar holdall, as well as a small day pack or mountain bike-specific hydration pack. The day pack can be used to carry valuable items such as cameras and GPS devices whilst travelling and will also carry your day-ride essentials during the rides.

## **Group Size & Holiday Status**

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

**The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.**

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates** (see *Health & Vaccinations below*), **and visas for your holiday**. Please ensure that you check the [FCDO](#) for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

## Visa India

Most nationalities, including travellers from the UK, the USA and many European countries can apply for their Indian Visa online through the **E-Visa Application** process. You must make your application at least four days prior to departure. Please download the detailed information document for details of how to apply for your visa: [Visa India PDF](#)

## Sikkim

If you are joining one of our Sikkim Beneath Kangchenjunga (SIK) groups, we will ask you to complete a Sikkim Permit form approximately 20 days before you travel. You will need your Indian Visa details for this form. A 30-day E-Tourist Visa can be applied for within 30 days of travel and will usually be processed within a couple of days. As an alternative you can apply for a 1-Year E-Tourist Visa within 180 days of travel. **DO NOT MENTION SIKKIM** in 'Places to be visited' when you make your application.

## Health & Vaccinations

### Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. In addition you should check whether any specific vaccinations are needed to the regions that you are travelling to. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

### Malaria

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

### Dengue Fever

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

### Zika Virus

Zika virus has been confirmed as active in this country. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The mosquitoes that transmit ZIKV are unlikely to be found above 2,000m altitude. For more information, visit the website of the National Travel Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) at <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk>.

### Severe Allergies

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

### Currency

The currency of India is the Indian Rupee.

### Preparing for your Holiday

This is intended to be a fairly leisurely holiday and you do not need to be in top physical shape to take part. However, if you are reasonably fit you will enjoy your trip more. We suggest that you adopt a sensible weekly exercise regime and fit in a number of cycle rides ahead of this holiday.

## Climate

The most important influence on the annual climate of the south Indian state of Kerala is the monsoon, which brings a great deal of rain during the period from May to mid October. Outside of these months, during the period that we run this holiday, there is relatively little rain and the maximum daytime temperature is likely to be between 25 and 32 degrees centigrade, falling to around 20 degrees centigrade at night.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travellaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travellaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

- South India. Lonely Planet
- South India. Rough Guides
- India Guide. Footprint Guides
- India. Fodor's Travel Publications

## Maps

### **Kerala & Lakshadweep Map-Guide - International Publications (Delhi). Available from Stanfords**

Indian state of Kerala, including the Lakshadweep Islands, on road map showing many small towns and villages, with a 32-page booklet describing the state and its sights. Additional features include street plans of Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi-Ernakulam, both annotated with facilities and sights; a physical map of the state; a distance chart; plus a facts & figures table. The booklet includes notes on beaches, hill stations, etc.

### **India South Adventure Map - National Geographic Maps - 1:1,400,000 Scale. Available from Stanfords**

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

For this holiday you will need normal cycling clothing, including suitable shoes, cycling gloves and a helmet (which you must wear at all times when on the bike).

## Bike Gear

- Cycling helmet
  
- Trainers or similar cycling shoes
  
- Base-layer - short sleeve cycling top (x 2)
  
- Mid-layer - long sleeved cycling top (x 1)
  
- Lightweight windproof/waterproof jacket
  
- Light fleece jacket or jumper (for evenings)
  
- Regular biking gloves
  
- Padded (baggy) cycling shorts
  
- Sunglasses
  
- Sun cream (inc. total bloc for lips/nose)

## Other Stuff

- Travel and off-the-bike clothing and footwear
- Wash bag, towel, toiletries, including anti-bacterial handwash
- Swimwear
- Basic First Aid kit and personal medication
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

## Spares and Repairs

You do not need to take any tools or spares. The local guide will take care of any and all issues. Please contact us if you have any questions about your equipment.

## Land Only Information

Please refer to the 'Joining Arrangements & Transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Flights and other transport to your destination should not be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

## Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the hotel in Kochi. A group transfer from Kochi Airport is included on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary. The holiday ends in Kovalam and a group transfer to Trivandrum Airport is included on the final day of the itinerary.

## Flight Inclusive Information

Limited seats are available at the advertised flight price, please book as early as you can. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures and/or upgrades, we will provide you with an alternative quote. It is likely that flight payment will be in advance of your final holiday balance. Booking a flight inclusive package means you will benefit from full financial protection, eases your holiday planning, and leaves us to deal with airlines and schedule changes. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will [offset the carbon of your flight](#).

Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Kochi (and returning from Trivandrum). Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the morning, arriving in the morning of the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart from Trivandrum Airport in the early morning of the final day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

ALL MEALS INCLUDED Valued at £200 (\$260) Food in Kerala is a revelation and this is an aspect of your holiday that we want you to enjoy to the full. We include ALL MEALS in the holiday price because we don't want you to worry about where you are going to be eating or what it might cost.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 09/07/2025 and the trip is subject to change