

Specialized - Customized - Personalized Journeys to India & Beyond

Our expertise is your advantage

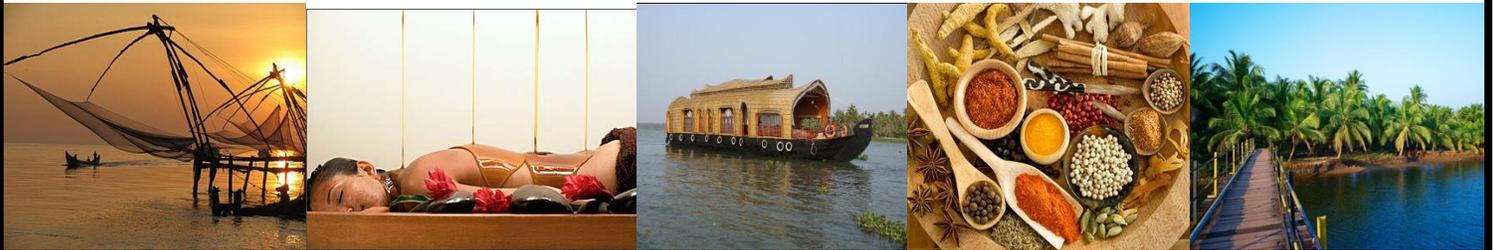
CST 209-9942-40



Escorted by
Tara Gupta, CTIE
President

MEMBER
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NATIONAL SPEAKERS ASSOCIATION


india by design



Highlights of Kerala

An Insider's Perspective (limited to 15 guests)

Day by Day Itinerary – 6 Nights

Begins in Kochi (Cochin) on Tuesday 6th November 2012

Ends in Kovalam (Trivandrum) on Monday 12th November 2012

Note: Combine this itinerary with "Quintessential North India" Oct 23rd – Nov 4th 2012

On a Journey with Tara, the Possibilities are Endless & the Discoveries Magical!



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Pre-tour days in Kochi - When you arrive in Kochi, we will gladly provide a private transfer to your hotel in the city center. Day/s at leisure to recover from jet lag, enjoy the several amenities of your hotel, the dining options of this fast growing metropolis or to explore the city on your own or with Tara.

Meals: Breakfast **Hotel:** The Fort Heritage (S) or Old Lighthouse Bristow (F)

Day 1 Kochi – Tuesday, 6th November 2012:

Our representative awaits your group arrival at the airport to escort you to your hotel in the city center of Cochin, popularly known as the Queen of the Arabian Sea. Cochin is the oldest European settlement in India. Filled with backwaters and rich with old world charm, this city has lured many a great voyager to its shores. From time immemorial, Arabs, Chinese, Dutch, British & Portuguese seafarers followed the sea route to Kochi & left their impression on the town. Modern Kochi is thus a splendid mosaic of these myriad influences.

Day/s at leisure to recover from jet lag, enjoy the several amenities of your hotel, to explore the city on your own or with Tara.

This evening, as dinner guests you will experience traditional Indian hospitality in the home of a local family. You will meet your hosts' extended family and friends who are eager to share their culture with you as you feast on some home-cooked food typical Kerala cuisine.

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner **Hotel:** The Fort Heritage (S) or Old Lighthouse Bristow (F)

Day 2 Kochi – Wednesday, 7th November 2012

This morning we explore the bustling port city of Cochin. Starting with **Fort Kochi**, the oldest European settlement in India, we will visit **St. Francis Church**, the oldest church constructed by the Europeans in India. Built by the Portuguese 1510, Vasco da Gama, the first European to reach India was buried here in 1524 before his remains were transferred to Lisbon 14 years later. His tombstone can be seen inside the church. **Mattancherry Palace**, built by the Portuguese in 1555 was presented to the Raja of Cochin as a gesture of goodwill. Also known as the **Dutch Palace**, due to the substantial renovation by the Dutch after 1663, the central hall was the Coronation Hall of the Rajas where their dresses, turbans, palanquins and murals from Hindu mythology can be seen. The **Jewish Synagogue** built in 1568, houses the scrolls of the Old Testament and a number of copper plates inscribed in Hebrew script are preserved. We end our tour in Jew town where we can browse through the numerous antique shops by the waterfront before returning to our hotel.



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This evening, we attend a Kathakali Dance performance at a local Theater followed by dinner at a local restaurant. Kathakali typically tells of epic battles of gods and demons and is as dynamic and dramatic as Bharatnatyam is austere and expressive. The colorful costumes, extremely beautiful makeup and facial expressions from the great epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata will keep you spellbound.

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner **Hotel:** The Fort Heritage (S) or Old Lighthouse Bristow (F)

Day 3 Kochi to Periyar (5 ½ hours) – Thursday, 8th November 2012

After breakfast we enjoy a scenic drive to Periyar, enjoying the view of the mountain ranges where a tropical rain forest still holds its own in the Periyar National Park. Enroute we stop at a Kanjirappally Plantation Bungalow for lunch. After lunch we will explore this rubber plantation at work as we watch rubber being tapped.

This evening is at leisure at your hotel. Perhaps relax and rejuvenate with an Ayurvedic massage or explore the town of Kumily as you shop for spices, tea and coffee for which it is well known.

Meals: Breakfast and Lunch **Hotel:** Treetop Cottages (S) or Elephant Court (F)

Day 4 Periyar - Tuesday 9th November 2012

Your day is at leisure to select from the numerous activities offered at your resort. Alternatively, you can accompany Tara on a Jungle walk, or visit the Spice plantations and browse the spice markets in the town of Kumily.

- Boatrides on lake Periyar for viewing wildlife
- Jungle walking tours
- Bamboo Rafting
- Border Hiking
- Plantation Tours (spices, tea or coffee)
- Elephant Rides
- Bullock Cart drives
- Kalaripayattu & Kathakali Performances



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This evening we visit the Spice Village Resort for a cooking demonstration of a few typical Kerala dishes followed by a delicious dinner that we helped create.

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner **Hotel:** Treetop Cottages(S) or Elephant Court (F)

Day 5 Periyar – Kumarkom - (4 hours) – Saturday 10th November 2012

After breakfast we drive to Kumarakom to board our houseboat in time for lunch. After lunch, we cruise along the backwaters crossing shallow lakes and calling in at settlements along the route. We sail past the numerous canals passing extensive paddy fields and villages. Our journey offers us a glimpse of people whose lives center on the water. After dusk the motors of the boat are turned off and our personal crew anchors in a serene location for dinner prepared on the boat to our taste. We anchor overnight for a restful sleep amidst the silence of nature in its purest form.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner **Hotel:** House Boat

Day 6 Alleppey – Kovalam (4 hours) – Saturday 11th November 2012

After a leisurely breakfast, we disembark at Alleppey and drive to Kovalam where we check-into our hotel for a day of rest and relaxation by the beach. Rest of the day is at leisure to enjoy the amenities of the resort, with its white sand beach, various dining options and its numerous Ayurvedic Spa treatments.

Meals: Breakfast **Hotel:** Uday Samudra (S) or Turtle Beach (F)

Day 7 Kovalam/Trivandrum (40 min) – End of Journey – Monday 12th November 2012

If you're departing today, your transfer to Trivandrum airport is included.

If you want to extend your stay, there are plenty of options for exploring this beautiful coastal town well known for its pristine beaches, its glorious sunsets and its Ayurvedic Spa treatments.