

INDIA
KERALA
Spices and Tea
10 days, 9 nights
Superior Accommodation

Join Pedaltours as we leave the highways behind and cycle through villages where we will share the road with goats and sacred cows – perhaps even an elephant. See local women pumping water at the communal well as we bike through tea plantations, banana, coffee, rubber, spices and so much more.



Kerala, one of India's smaller states, lies to the south west of the sub continent, bordered by the Arabian Sea and the hills of the Western Ghats.

Known as 'God's own country', it is extremely fertile and people are very friendly. There is a huge range of crops and much birdlife, in addition to the occasional elephant, monkeys, deer and elusive tigers.

Our adventure starts in Fort Cochin (Kochi) the site of the first European settlement in India. It is a blend of Portugese, Dutch, British and Chinese influences. We stay in a wonderfully serene part of town. From here we make our way to Thattekad Bird Sanctuary, then climb to Munnar in the highlands, known for its tea plantations. We descend to Kumily and Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary with three nights' stay giving time for a side trip into neighbouring Tamil Nadu and a trek in the park. We then head back to the coast via the backroads of Vagamon to the backwaters of Kumarakom, with an overnight on a house boat. From here it is a flat final day's ride back to Cochin and the end of a fabulous trip.

This tour is fully supported – cycle as little or as much as you wish each day. It will be necessary to drive out of the city of Cochin and the latter part on the day to Kumarakom. On other days a reasonably fit cyclist will be able to cycle the entire distance each day.

Please bring this information with you to the tour start.

Distances are given in kilometres. 1 km = 0.62 miles.

Cycling distances given are entirely optional; cycle as little or as much as you wish each day, the support vehicle will always be close by. Suggested cycling distances are given for each day

Meeting Day / Day 1 Arrive Fort Cochin: 17 November 2010

Namaste! You will be welcomed in the traditional Indian way with hands clapped together and then transferred to your hotel.

Our hotel is in Fort Cochin, close to the harbor, markets and good cafes. After lunch we have a brief tour of the city; it has one of the finest natural harbours in the world. Ancient mariners from Arabia, China, Holland, Britain and Portugal have all left their mark on this attractive island city, often referred to as the Venice of the East. We visit the oldest European Church in India "St. Francis Church". Where Vasco Da Gama was buried before his remains were taken back to Portugal. Cantilevered Chinese fishing nets are a unique feature and there is good shopping in neighboring Princess Street.

Accommodation: B L D

Malabar House (or similar). Some of India's finest heritage hotels are situated in Fort Cochin.

Ph 91 484 221-6666 fax 91 484 221-7777 email info@malabarhouse.com

1/268 – 1/269 Parade Rd Fort Cochin

Features: A very comfortable small hotel in the heart of historical Fort Cochin by the Parade Ground and very close to Princess Street (good shops and cafes)

Facilities: Air conditioned rooms, restaurant, pool, ayurvedic spa, speedboat available

Day 2: Cochin to Thattekad. Cycling distance: 47km/ 29 mi

We drive out of town for about two hours (with no Freeways, driving even on a highway is slow) then cycle on a very minor road to the bird Sanctuary of Thattekad. We will pass rubber, banana, coconut and pineapple plantations and have time for a visit to the bird sanctuary.

Accommodation and meals : B,L,D

Birds Lagoon, Tattakkad. Ph 91 485 257-2444 www.birdslagoon.com

Bird sanctuary with over 253 species of birds.

Facilities: Ensuite but 2 star. Restaurant, Ayurveda spa

Day 3: Thatteked to Munnar: 69 km / 43 mi
with a 1,395 m / 4,600 ft altitude gain

We continue on the minor road until we reach the main highway to Munnar. After just 600 m we turn off the hwy and swoop down through a forest to the Periyer River and the Kallerkutty dam. From here we start the challenging climb to Munnar and its world famous tea plantations. We will also see jacaranda trees and cardamom plantations. With the gain in altitude the temperature will decrease from c.32/ 90 F at the coast to c.25 / 77 at Munnar, with night time temperatures dropping to 10 C / 50F.

Accommodation & Lodging: B,L,D

Windermere Lodge, c.5 km from Munnar at 1,470m / 4,850 ft

Ph 91 486 523-0512 fax 91 486 523-0978 email info@windermeremunnar.com

Features: Very comfortable cottages set on a hill overlooking tea plantations.

Facilities: Air conditioned rooms, restaurant, bar, internet connection available

Day 4: Munnar to Kumily / Periyar / Thekkady. 96 km / 60 mi

A day of descending as we make our way to Kumily, known for its spices and proximity to Periyar Tiger Reserve. The Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary covers 777 sq km of which 360 sq km is thick evergreen forest. The greatest attraction of Periyar is the herds of wild elephants that come down to play in the lake. The day is quite hilly but there is an overall loss in altitude as we descend to 800m / 2,640 ft . The day starts with a spectacular descent through forest and tea plantations, later passing rice fields, coffee and cardamom. There will be excellent views of the Western Ghats.

Lodging: B,L,D

Spice Village, 4 star

Ph 91 4869 222-314 fax 91 4869 222-317

Thekkady – Kumaly Road

Features: Peaceful, natural resort with superb individual, tribal-styled thatch-roof cottages with verandahs in spacious grounds.

Facilities: Impressive colonial style bar, cooking school, paper making and ayurvedic massage. Swimming pool, badminton, tennis, ayurveda, yoga, meditation centre and good souvenir shop.

Day 5: Kumily – Theni return: 70 km of biking on backroads, return by mini bus.

We take an excursion into neighbouring Tamil Nadu, a poorer state where you will see many bullock carts and perhaps a working elephant or two. We start with a fabulous descent into a wide fertile valley and continue gently descending till the town of Theni. Here we have lunch then return on the highway in the mini bus.

Time to relax in the afternoon by the pool or do a little shopping

Accommodation (B,L, Dinner on your own)

Spice Village, 4 star

Ph 91 4869 222-314 fax 91 4869 222-317

Thekkady – Kumaly Road

Cycling distances given are entirely optional: the support vehicle will be available at all times

Day 6: Kumily. Rest day

Options include an early morning three hour gentle hike in the Park accompanied by a guide, who will identify plants, birds and other wildlife. There will be a late breakfast on return. Then a visit to a tea plantation and factory and a late afternoon trip on Lake Periyar where you are likely to see wildlife, most likely deer, buffalo and elephants, by the lake side. Take binoculars.

Accommodation : B. (Lunch and Dinner on your own)
Spice Village, 4 star
Ph 91 4869 222-314 fax 91 4869 222-317

Day 7: Kumily to Kumarakom: Cycling distance 88 km / 55 mi

We start the day with a climb as we make our way to the grasslands of Vagamon. We finish with a fabulous 24 km descent. On reaching the highway we board the mini bus to drive (1¾ hrs) to Kumarakom. A spectacular day's biking. Kumarakom is a paradise of mangrove forests, emerald green paddy fields and coconut groves interspersed with enchanting waterways and canals adorned with white lilies. The Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary, on the banks of the Vembanad Lake, is a favourite haunt of migratory birds like the Siberian stork, egret, darter, heron and teal.

Accommodation and Meals B,L,D
Coconut Lagoon, 4 star

Ph 91 481 252-4491 fax 91 481 252-4495

Features: Set on the edge of Lake Vembanad, interspersed by many canals, the resort can only be reached by a ten minute boat ride.

Facilities: Restaurant, bar, swimming pool, ayurvedic massage, yoga and meditation center, boating and fishing.

Day 8: Overnight on a House Boat. Rest day

After a late start we drive just 25 km to board our house boat, modeled on a traditional rice boat ("ketuvallam"), for lunch and a delightful lazy day cruising on the picturesque lake and canals.

Accommodation: Twin share ensuite cabins – a maximum of three cabins per boat.
Breakfast at Golden Waters, Lunch and dinner on your houseboat

Cycling distances given are entirely optional: the support vehicle will be available at all times

Day 9: Alleppey to Cochin

After breakfast on the house boat we bike around 55 km on a flat road, parallel with the coast, back to Cochin; there will be time for some last minute shopping before our farewell dinner.

Meals: - (B,L, D)

Malabar House (or similar).

Ph 91 484 221-6666 fax 91 484 221-7777 email info@malabarhouse.com

1/268 – 1/269 Parade Rd Fort Cochin

Day 10. Depart

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We wish you 'bon voyage' and hope to see you again. An airport transfer is included.

Cycling distances given are entirely optional: the support vehicle will be available at all times

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INDIA
RAJASTHAN and KERALA
19 Days / 18 Nights tour
Superior Accommodation

Day	Date	Location	Accommodation	Phone
01	17 Nov.'10	Fort Cochin	Malabar House	91 484 221-6666
02	18 "	Thattekad	Birds Lagoon	91 485 257-2444
03	19 "	Munnar	Windermere Lodge	91 486 523-0512
04	20 "	Thekkady	Spice Village	91 4869 222-314
05	21 "	Thekkady	Spice Village	91 4869 222-314
06	22 "	Thekkady	Spice Village	91 4869 222-314
07	23 "	Kumarakom	Coconut Lagoon	91 481 252-4491
08	24 "	Lake Vembanad	House boat (superior)	
09	25 "	Fort Cochin	Malabar House	91 484 221-6666
10	26 Nov.'10	Return to Cochin and Depart for home		