

# Backwaters and Beaches of Kerala Cycle Tour

Trip Code: KLMB

Version:



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

[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.**

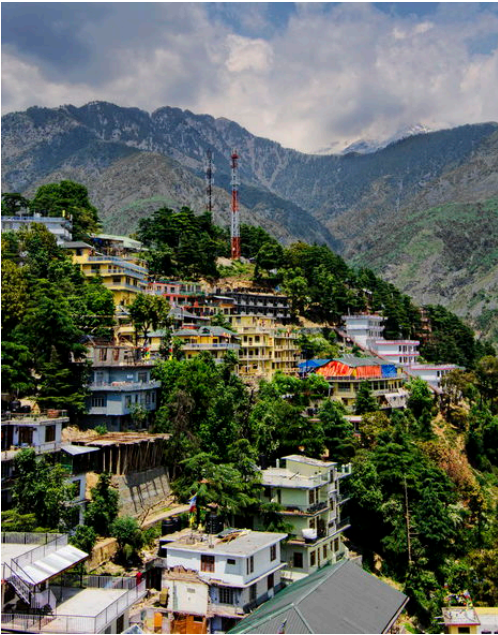
# Itinerary

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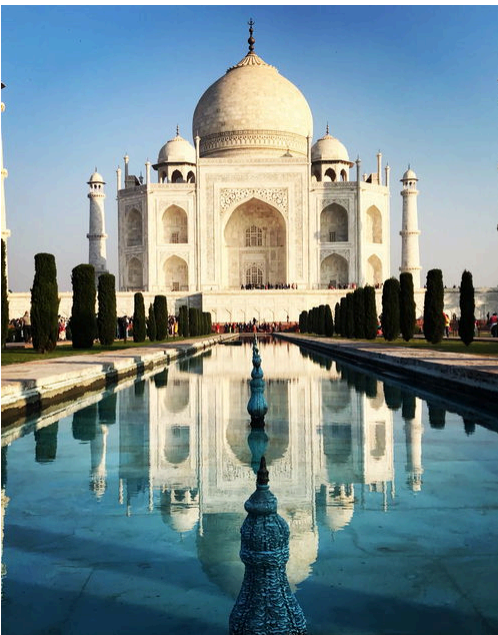
# Extensions

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.



## 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.



### **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.



### **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.



## 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.

# 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

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 Keralan 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 Keralan 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.

## 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.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## 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](#)

## Health & Vaccinations

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.

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 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>

## Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. 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.

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.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

## 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.

## Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

## 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

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

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## 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 24/11/2024 and the trip is subject to change