



# KERALA & THE SOUTHERN HIGHLIGHTS & KOVALAM BEACH

Tour & Beach | 22 Days | Physical Level 2

Chennai – Mamallapuram – Bangalore – Mysore – Ooty – Coimbatore – Munnar – Thekkady – Kochi –  
Kumarakom – Kovalam

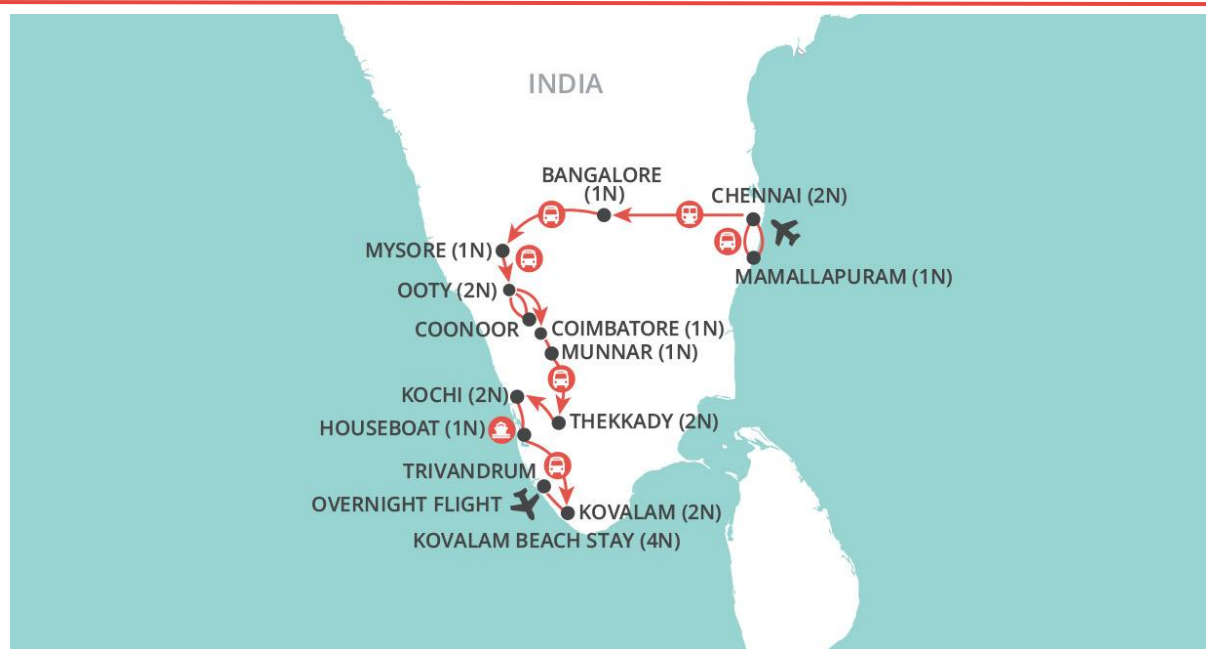
Southern India offers an intensely tropical and laidback experience compared to the north. Travel from the stunning hill stations to the tranquil backwaters on this in-depth journey. Round off your journey with a peaceful beach stay in Kovalam, where crescent-shaped beaches, swaying palms and the soothing sounds of the Arabian Sea offer the perfect setting to relax and unwind.

- Discover Chennai
- Ride Ooty's Toy train
- Experience Mysore
- Cruise Kerala's backwaters
- Unwind on Kovalam's golden sands

To book call **1300 727 998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit [wendywutours.com.au](http://wendywutours.com.au)

## TOUR MAP



## KERALA & THE SOUTHERN HIGHLIGHTS & KOVALAM BEACH TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders (please see visa section below for further information)
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

## TOUR & BEACH:

These tours are designed for those wishing to explore the cultural highlights and diverse landscapes of India on an excellent value group tour, whilst travelling with like-minded people. You will be accompanied by our dedicated National Escorts and local guides throughout the touring section (Days 1–16), whose expert knowledge will enhance your experience. The beach segment (Days 17–21) will be on a private basis with Bed & Breakfast in Kovalam, with local representation available if required. This balanced itinerary combines India's iconic sights with the relaxed charm of the coast, offering the perfect mix of exploration and relaxation.

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## PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

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All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. Kerala & The Southern Highlights and Kovalam is rated 2 on the physical level scale. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps, often without handrails
- You will be required to get on and off various sizes of boats and rickshaws throughout the tour

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

## JOINING YOUR TOUR:

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The tour is 22 days in duration including international flights or 21 days in duration based on 'Land Only'. Join the tour on Day 1 in Chennai and end the tour on Day 21 in Kovalam.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with us.

## ITINERARY CHANGES:

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It's our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we'll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

**DETAILED ITINERARY****Day 1: Arrive in Chennai**

Meals: D

Fly to Chennai. Your National Escort or Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours will meet you at the in the Arrivals Hall. Together with other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer 45 minutes to your hotel in Chennai.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

**Destination Information**

**Chennai** – The capital of Tamil Nadu state. This city is amongst one of the most visited cities in India and is rich in religion and culinary traditions.

**Day 2: Mamallapuram**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning a tour introduction will be held in the hotel before setting off for Mamallapuram, which is an hour and a half drive away.

Explore the costal temple town of Mamallapuram to see the rock carvings which date from the 7th and 8th centuries. This afternoon there will be some time to relax and recover from the jetlag.

**Destination Information**

**Mamallapuram** – Once the major seaport for the ancient Pallava kingdom, Mamallapuram was named after the cruel mythical King Mahabali who was slayed by Lord Vishnu. Mamallapuram is well-known for its UNESCO World Heritage listed temples and carvings.

**Rock Carvings** – An Archaeologists dream, Mamallapuram boasts a large number of stone carvings made on uncut rocks dating from the 7th and 8th centuries. Visit the Shore Temple, the Panch Pandava Rathas and Varaha Cave.



**Day 3: Mamallapuram to Chennai**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning after breakfast, drive back to Chennai. On arrival, commence your tour of Chennai city, starting with a visit to Marina Beach, which stretches for over 13km. Head to Fort St. George, and later visit the Shiva Kapaleeswarar Temple.

Today's sightseeing involves approximately 4 to 5 hours on foot.

**Destination Information**

**Fort St. George** - Built by the British East India Company in 1653, Fort St. George was one of the first bastions of British power in India. The fort is presently used as the offices of the Tamil Nadu Secretariat and the Legislative Assembly. Also visit St. Mary's Church, often described as the Westminster Abbey of the East and India's oldest surviving British church, built in 1680.

**Kapaleeswarar Temple** - Dedicated to Lord Shiva, the most powerful god of the Hindu religion. Situated at Mylapore, it is over 350 years old and is considered by Hindus to be one of the most sacred sites in southern India.

**Day 4: Chennai to Bangalore**

Meals: B, L, D

Rise early this morning to catch the Shatabdi Express train to Bangalore, your journey will be approximately 4 and half hours. You will be given a simple, light breakfast as well as beverages while on the train. If you require additional food, please purchase it the day before. Upon arrival, proceed to your hotel to check in. This afternoon, tour the city, beginning with the Bull Temple, before continuing to Tipu Sultan's Palace and Vidhana Soudha.



Sightseeing today involves approximately 3 – 3.5 hours on foot climbing some stairs.

Please note - Your train is a day train and our seats will be in an air-conditioned chair car. The train carriages are shared so at all times please be aware of your belongings.

**Destination Information**

**Bangalore** - The capital of the state of Karnataka, Bangalore is known as the 'Garden City' because of its countless parks and avenues of Jacaranda, Gulmohur and Cassia. It is also home to an expanding IT industry.

**Bull Temple** - One of Bangalore's oldest temples, the Bull Temple is dedicated to Nandi Bull, the vehicle of Lord Shiva. Located inside the temple is a huge idol of Nandi Bull, said to be cut from a single rock.

**Tipu Sultan's Palace** - Construction began on the summer residence of the Mysorean ruler Tipu Sultan in 1781 by Hyder Ali and was completed in 1791 during the reign of Tipur Sultan. Made almost entirely of teak, the palace is finely embellished with balconies, pillars and arches.

**Vidhana Soudha** - Located over Cubbon Park, Vishana Soudha is a magnificent white granite building which houses the State Legislature and the Secretariat of Karnataka.

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**Day 5: Bangalore to Mysore**

Meals: B, L, D

Drive approximately 4 hours south to Mysore today, stopping to view Srirangapatnam Fort en route. This afternoon, explore the Maharaja's Palace, the Art Gallery and drive to Chamundi Hills to see the Sri Chamundeshwari Temple.

Today's sightseeing involves approximately 3 hours of easy walking, there is a temple and mosque inside the complex.



Return to your hotel stopping to discover the Nandi Bull statue, carved out of solid rock in 1659.

**Destination Information**

**Srirangapatnam Fort** – This fort was the stronghold of Tipu Sultan, son of Hyder Ali. Here at the fort, Tipu made a last-minute ditch defence against the British in 1799 before surrendering his Kingdom upon his death. Among the many fort buildings still intact are Tipu's airy summer palace and his tomb at the Darya Daulat Bagh (a garden). Also located here is the celebrated Sri Ranganathswamy Temple.

**Mysore** – Mysore, known as the 'City of Palaces', is well known for its splendid royal history and the magnificent buildings. Once the administrative capital of the Wodeyar Dynasty, Mysore still retains old world charm with its small alleys, temples, glorious palaces and sprawling gardens.

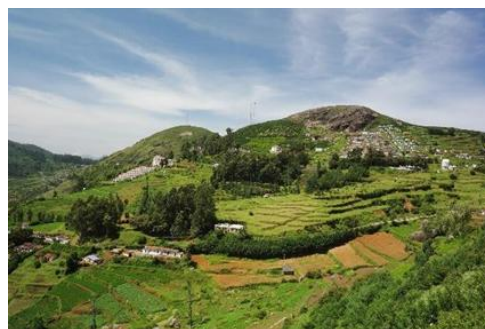
**Maharaja's Palace** – Located in the heart of the city, Maharaja's Palace is one of the grandest of India's royal buildings. The original palace was destroyed by fire in 1897, the current palace now standing was built between 1911 and 1912 in Indo-Saracenic style and blends together Hindu, Muslim, Rajput, and Gothic styles of architecture.

**Day 6: Mysore to Ooty**

Meals: B, L, D

Today you will journey approximately 4.5 – 5 hours to the hill station of Ooty, one of three Nilgiris stations, popularly known as Queen of Hill Stations. The estimated four-hour drive takes you to a beautiful scenery and cooler climate.

Later there is an optional short walk to a local village, situated above the botanical gardens, where you can gain an insight into the lives of the local people while enjoying the amazing view over Ooty.

**Destination Information**

**Ooty** - Known as the 'Queen of Hill Stations', Ooty sits at an altitude of 2,240m and was established by the British in the early 19th century to serve as the summer headquarters of the Madras (now Chennai) Government. Until about two decades ago, Ooty resembled an unlikely combination of southern England and Australia, with single-storey stone cottages, fenced flower gardens, leafy, winding lanes and tall eucalyptus trees.

**Day 7: Ooty - Coonoor**

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer a short distance to the station this morning to catch the miniature, narrow gauge Toy Train from Ooty to Coonoor, another Nilgiri hill station which takes approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes. Return to Ooty by coach.

Go on to visit the terraced botanical garden.

Please note that the train timetable is subject to change - your National Escort or Local Guide will inform you of changes as they are made aware of them. Please be aware that the train journey may be cancelled by the authorities in the event of bad weather. Should this occur, an alternative experience will be arranged for the group.

**Destination Information**

**Coonoor** - Located on the Western Ghats at the height of 1,839m, Coonoor is the second largest hill station in the Nilgiri hills in the state of Tamil Nadu and is famous for its tea plantations and the variety of wildflowers and birds.

**Botanical Gardens** - Created in 1847, the botanical gardens are home to many species of trees species, including a 20 million-year-old fossilized tree.

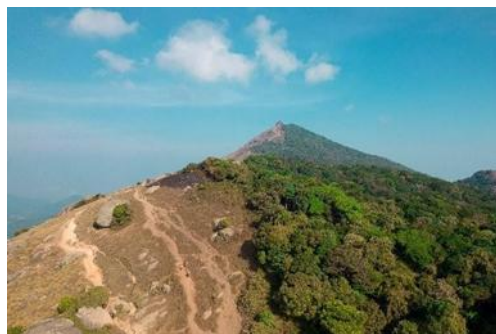
**Day 8: Ooty - Coimbatore**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning drive through the hilly roads for 3 and half hours to Coimbatore.

This afternoon, enjoy half a day of sightseeing of Coimbatore including visits to the Sri Svetambra Vimalanthar Jain Temple, St. Michael Xavier Church at big Bazaar and Athar Jamid Mosque at Oppamalara Street.

Sightseeing will be approximately 1.5 – 2 hours today.

**Destination Information**

**Coimbatore** - Long known for its textile production, Coimbatore now stands as a trade and processing centre for agricultural produce. The city also boasts a wealth of natural beauty and is home to many place of worship.

**Day 9: Coimbatore to Munnar**

Meals: B, L, D

Today you will be driving for approximately 6 – 6.5 hours as you continue the descent from the highlands and head to Munnar. As you drive to Munnar, you cross the border into Kerala, one of the smallest states in the Republic of India. Upon arrival proceed to the hotel and check in for overnight stay.

Located on the side of a mountain, you can enjoy breathtaking views over the valley. Visit a local tea plantation and the Tata Tea Museum to learn about the timeless cultivation of tea.

**Destination Information**

**Munnar** - A hillstation with vast expanses of tea plantations, sitting at an altitude of 1,524m. Once a favoured summer resort for the British, Munnar features beautiful lush green hills and extensive tea estates.

**The Tata Tea Museum** - The museum houses photographs and machinery, each depict a turning point that contributed to the flourishing tea industry that is evident today.



**Day 10: Munnar to Thekkady**

Meals: B, L, D

Depending on the time of year, you may enjoy a walking tour in Eravikulam National Park where you will have the opportunity to spot the local wildlife.

*Please note, this day is at altitude. (Eravikulam National Park stands at 2,700m)*

*Please note: Eravikulam National Park is closed from February to April for Nilgiri Tahr mating season. If the park is closed during your visit, touring will be substituted with a walking tour of Munnar.*



Depart Munnar and journey 5 hours to Thekkady, home of the Periyar National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Destination Information**

**Eravikulam National Park** - Situated along the crest of the Western Ghats in the high ranges of Idukki district, the park is approximately 97sq km in size. The park holds the largest viable population of the endangered Nilgiri Tahr, a small stocky goat. Apart from the Nilgiri Tahrs, the national park is home to other animals such as Nilgiri Marten, ruddy mongoose, small-clawed otter and dusky striped squirrel.

**Day 11: Thekkady**

Meals: B, L, D

Rise early this morning to walk through the park, searching for wildlife such as elephants, wild dog, barking deer, mouse deer and the rarely seen spotted tiger. If you do not wish to join the walk, please notify your National Escort or Local Guide for alternative arrangements. Enjoy the afternoon at leisure before viewing a Kalaripayattu Martial Arts performance this evening.



Please note that trousers and long sleeves are needed for your nature walk through the wildlife sanctuary.

**Destination Information**

**Wildlife in Periyar** - Periyar is home to 62 species of mammals, 320 species of birds, 45 species of reptiles, 27 species of amphibians, 38 species of fish and 160 butterfly species.

**Kalaripayattu Performance** - A traditional form of martial arts that started in southern India. Kalaripayattu martial arts incorporate kicks, strikes, grappling and weaponry in their movements.

**Day 12: Thekaddy to Kochi**

Meals: B, L, D

Depart Thekkady and drive for 5 - 6 hours to Kochi, upon arrival check into your hotel for a two-night stay.

This evening enjoy a Kathakali dance performance.

**Destination Information**

**Kochi** - Also known as Cochin. Kochi is Kerala's most cosmopolitan city and its main trading centre for spices and seafood. Built around a saltwater lagoon of the Arabian Sea, Kochi is a collection of narrow islands and peninsulas.

**Day 13: Kochi**

Meals: B, L, D

Today tour the sites of Kochi, visiting the St. Francis Church and the Santa Cruz Basilica. From the basilica view the unique cantilevered Chinese fishing nets, the only place outside China that they are used. Explore the Jewish synagogue, located in the heart of the Jewish Quarter.

Today's sightseeing will involve about 2 to 3 hours on foot.

Later, enjoy a traditional cooking demonstration followed by dinner.

**Destination Information**

**St. Francis Church** - St. Francis Church is thought to be the first European church built in India, constructed by the Portuguese in 1503. The history of this church reflects the colonial struggle of European powers in India from the 15th to 20th centuries. It is said that the Portuguese trader, Vasco da Gama, was originally buried in St. Francis Church before being taken back to Portugal.

**Santa Cruz Basilica** - One of the eight basilicas in India. The Santa Cruz Basilica has an eventful history, which originates back to the arrival of the Portuguese in 1500.

**Cantilevered Chinese fishing nets** - A relic from the 14th century traders, the Chinese fishing nets are still in use today. Locally known as Cheenavala, they are used for a unique and unusual method of fishing and many fishermen earn a living by using these massive nets.

**Jewish Synagogue** - The prosperous Jewish trading community built the Jewish synagogue in 1568. It is the oldest synagogue in India but was partially destroyed in the war of 1662 and was rebuilt by the Dutch.

**Day 14: Backwaters Cruising**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning visit Kumbalangi fishing village before travelling to Alleppey, where you will board your overnight houseboat, a converted rice barge known as a 'Kettuvallam'.



As you cruise along the backwaters, you will witness the village life of those that live along the banks. What is truly magical about a houseboat ride is the breathtaking view of the untouched and otherwise inaccessible rural Kerala. An unhurried backwater cruise on a traditional houseboat is the best way to discover Kerala's exceptional scenic beauty. Enjoy dinner onboard.

*Please note that whilst the accommodation on these houseboats is simple, the experience is truly unique and incomparable to any other on this trip. Should you require hot water during your stay, please ask a member of the crew for assistance.*

**Destination Information**

**Kumbalangi Fishing Village** - Located 20km outside Kochi, Kumbalangi is a unique program which transformed a tiny island into model fishing village where you can learn about local crafts.

**Kerala Backwaters** – A stretch of waters parallel to the coast of the Arabian Sea traditionally used for transportation; nowadays the backwaters attract tourists to a unique experience travelling along a mixture of manmade and natural canals, lakes and rivers.

**Day 15: Houseboat to Kovalam**Meals: **B**

After breakfast on board, disembark your houseboat and drive 5 – 5.5 hours to Kovalam. Enjoy a couple of hours' sightseeing in Trivandrum on the way. Tour the Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple from the outside (as non-Hindus are not allowed to enter the Temple) before continuing to the Zoological Gardens and Museum.



Later visit the Observatory, the Kanakakunnu Palace and Sree Moolamthirunal Shastri Purthi Memorial. On arrival in Kovalam check into your hotel.

**Destination Information**

**Kovalam** - Until the 1960s, Kovalam was just a sleepy fishing village with narrow lanes and thatched dwellings with wide courtyards for drying fish. Now Kovalam is a charming resort town with a popular beach.

**Day 16: Kovalam**

Meals: B, L, D

Take a walking tour of the town this morning visiting the seafront and Kovalam's lighthouse.

Spend the remainder of today at leisure.

*Please note, all guided touring ends on this day.*

**Day 17 – 20: Relax in Kovalam**

Meals: B

Today, you will be transferred to your beach stay in Kovalam.

*On arrival to your beach resort, the remainder of your time in Kovalam Beach will be at leisure with no escorted touring included. Should you need any further assistance, an English-speaking representative will be contactable.*

*Please note, not all customers travelling on the group tour will be travelling onwards to the beach.*



Set along Kerala's lush, tropical coastline, Kovalam is centred around three crescent-shaped beaches – Lighthouse, Hawah and Samudra – separated by rocky headlands. Each offers soft sands and the warm waters of the Arabian Sea, and watersports options like surfing and paddleboarding. Between your resort and these beautiful beaches, you have plenty of options of places to sit back and soak up the sun.

Beyond the beaches, Kovalam is an ideal spot to soak up Kerala's slower, more authentic feel, with small fishing villages and local markets to explore and traditional Ayurvedic treatments to experience, if you can drag yourself away from the beach, that is. Evenings in Kovalam are when the beachfront begins to bustle, as cafés and restaurants open to serve fresh seafood, fragrant curries and international favourites.

**Day 21 - 22: Depart Trivandrum**

Meals: B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

*Late check-out is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.*





## INDIA TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

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Entry visas are required by all visitors to India and Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

All guests travelling to India must complete a mandatory digital e-Arrival card 72 hours prior to their arrival. The form can be completed and submitted online at [indianvisaonline.gov.in/earrival/](https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/earrival/). Once completed, Travellers will receive a QR code to display upon arrival.

A mandatory Health self-declaration form must be completed up to 24 hours before arrival in India (SDF form). You can access the declaration here: <https://airsuvidha.civilaviation.gov.in/>

For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

Please note, the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate, Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa. Wendy Wu Tours does not accept responsibility for lost or undelivered items.

### INSURANCE:

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It is a condition of your booking that you are insured for the duration of your trip. We recommend comprehensive travel insurance to cover cancellation, medical requirements, luggage, repatriations and additional expenses. At a minimum, the policy is required to cover medical requirements including medical evacuations / repatriations. The choice of insurer is yours.

We strongly suggest you purchase insurance at the time you pay your deposit. This is because cancellation fees and charges are payable from that time. We may request you to provide evidence that you have taken out and paid for a policy to comply with this condition. If you fail to provide a certificate of currency of insurance within a reasonable time after our request, then this will be deemed a cancellation by you and standard cancellation fees will apply.

### GROUP SIZE:

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Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. On our Tour & Beach Tours, there will be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 10 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

## EATING IN INDIA:

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Indian cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world. Indian dishes incorporate many spices and seasoning to create an explosion of flavours. Though Indian cuisine can vary greatly from the Indian food we get in Australia, it is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our classic group tours, from dinner on the arrival day until breakfast on the day of departure. Please be aware that dishes selected for your meals reflect the cooking styles and signature dishes of the local area you are in.

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. When eating meals on group tours, you will usually be seated around a large table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional ‘family style’; meaning that various dishes will be laid out in the centre of the table. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody.

Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in India. We recommend that when it comes to Indian food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

## ACCOMMODATION:

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Your accommodation is chosen for its convenience, comfort, or character. Hotels are generally of a four-star standard in major cities, though there is no international classification system, so facilities and quality may differ from Australia. In remote areas, standards may be lower, and some Western amenities may be unavailable.

All group tour hotels include private Western-style bathrooms, air conditioning\*, TV, and a telephone. Due to environmental regulations, toiletries may not always be provided. Plumbing and electricity can be inconsistent, and power in rooms is often switched off when unoccupied. If you encounter any issues, please speak to your National Escort or Local Guide. Rest assured, all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected to ensure they meet our standards.

*\*Please note that regional energy conservation and environmental regulations may restrict air-conditioning and heating use during certain months, with minimum and maximum temperature limits in place.*

## THE RAVIZ LEELA RESORT INFORMATION:

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Perched on a dramatic clifftop overlooking the Arabian Sea, The Raviz Leela Beach Resort offers a luxurious coastal retreat surrounded by lush greenery and sweeping ocean views. Spread across expansive grounds between two beaches, the resort combines traditional Kerala architecture with modern elegance, creating a peaceful and scenic setting for a relaxing stay.

The resort features spacious, well-appointed rooms and villas, many with private sun decks and views over the coastline. Facilities include multiple infinity swimming pools, a range of restaurants and bars, and a full-service Ayurvedic spa alongside a fitness centre and wellness facilities.

Kovalam is known for its crescent-shaped beaches and tranquil atmosphere, and from the resort you can easily explore nearby cultural attractions, temples and backwaters. With its spectacular setting and extensive facilities, The Raviz Leela Beach Resort is an ideal choice for those looking to combine luxury with relaxation on Kerala's coast.

### LUGGAGE:

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All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. This is a requirement on internal trains and flights. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. In general, we recommend packing only as much as you can lift as you will need to carry your own luggage on and off trains.

### TRANSPORT:

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**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner city roads in India have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in India have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections above are approximations only.

### TIPPING POLICY:

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Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and India is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognise that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

### DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA:

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Although India is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

### SOUVENIRS:

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We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions that demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places that hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

### APPROPRIATE DRESS:

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When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in conservative, non-revealing clothing. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and trousers or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women. Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their backpack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads to feel more comfortable while sightseeing at mosques. When visiting Jain temples, you must not wear or take in any leather items such as belts, watches, camera straps, purses and shoes.

Religious sites and homes throughout India – for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside.

We recommend shoes that easily slip on and off, and carry a pair of thick, old socks in your backpack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces.

### VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

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We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au)



### BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

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We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

### AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

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Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

Updated July 2026