

Backroads of Kerala



Days:	13
Price from:	2555 USD International flight not included
Comfort:	★★★★★
Difficult:	★★★☆☆
🚲 Cycling	

BUSTLING MARKETS, TRANQUIL WATERWAYS

Get close to the real Kerala with an off-the beaten-track exploration along its back lanes and byways, and glorious beaches. Enjoy the freedom of a carefully designed itinerary that lets you stop at will, interact with local villagers and get a real taste of the region, known for its tropical greenery, quiet backwaters, spectacular wildlife reserves and endless tea and spice plantations.

We begin in Kovalam with its sandy beaches and lively markets, and then set off up the coast towards picturesque hills, biking through the fishing villages of Varkala. It's a gentle ride on to Kollam, the southern gateway to the Kerala backwaters – mile after mile of stunningly beautiful, palm-lined inland waterways. We navigate this quiet and green world aboard wooden canoes from our base in the village of Mancombu, and then head inland, past spice, tea and rubber plantations, to reach the charming destination of Erattupetta. Revel in some challenging hill cycling before stopping by Periyar National Park to catch a glimpse of wild elephants, leopards and other rare wildlife, before returning to the coast via hill station of Kuttikkanam. Delight in the thriving port city of Kochi over the last two days, with its colonial architecture and rich cultural heritage.

HIGHLIGHTS * Cycle along the Kerala coastline beside magnificent tropical beaches * Relax on the beaches of Kovalam * Explore Varkala, an unspoiled village with a lovely beach * Explore the magical backwaters, savour delightful south Indian culture and cuisine. * Glimpse wildlife at Periyar National Park

Day 1. Arrival at Kovalam



Kovalam 📍

- Upon arrival at Thiruvananthapuram airport, we will be greeted by representative of our agency and then transfer to **Kovalam**, we are transferred to the hotel of Kovalam. Before we start experiencing our cycle tour, will relax and get comfortable with the surroundings. Kovalam has beautiful beaches with many cafes around which overlooking the sandy beaches. Overnight stay at the hotel.

🏠 Accommodation | Soma Palmshore

Day 2. Cycle ride in Morning, relax in the afternoon at Arabian cost -(Cycling 10 Kms/2.5 hrs)



Kovalam 📍

- We start our day with **1 hour morning Yoga session** outside the hotel.
- Later, after making necessary adjustments of our bikes, we will start a short and relaxing ride by passing through **Local fisherman's villages** in Kovalam. Explore the local area in the afternoon or can relax at **sandy beaches of Arabian Sea**. We can sit in beach side cafe in the evening and enjoy the boats sailing with the backdrop of the setting sun. Kerala is very popular for herbal care, and so you can **opt for an Ayurvedic massage** (Optional). Number of ailments can be cured through Ayurvedic massage by using different types of oils and herbs. We can extend our today ride up to 35 kms by passing fishing villages and stunning coastal road.

🍽 Breakfast | Soma Palmshore

Day 3. Drive to Veli Lagoon; and visiting Anjengo Fort and cycle till Varkala (Cycling - 36Kms)



Kovalam 📍
🚗 20km - ⌚ 45m
Veli 📍
🚲 36km
Varkala 📍

Kovalam - Veli

- Today, after the breakfast we drive to **Veli** by vehicle.

Veli - Varkala

- And from here, we continue our cycling to estuary. The Lagoon is a shallow body of water separated from the larger body of ocean and we can see fisherman working on their boats and nets. We will visit fishing village of **Anjuthengu** and stop at **Anjengo Fort**, which was built in 17th century by British East India Company and was the first British trading post on the **Malabar Coast**. Later, we will head towards Varkala, a coastal and temple town and famous as a pilgrimage centre for thousands of Hindu followers come for the worship at **Janardhana swamy temple**. Varkala has become famous for backpacker hangout and people around the world get attracted towards its naturally beautiful clifftop and relaxed vibe. Upon arriving at Varkala, now it's a time to relax at the beautiful sandy beaches of Arabian coast and enjoy the stunning sunset followed by delicious dinner arranged at local restaurant. Today we will cover up around 36 kms distance.

🍽️ Breakfast

Soma Palmshore

🏠 Accommodation

Deshadan Cliff & Beach Resort

Day 4. Cycling in Keralan villages to Kollam (Cycling - 36Kms)



Varkala 📍
🚲 36km
Kollam 📍

- Today, we will cycle through beautiful **blue lagoons** alongside palm fringed shores. During our travelling, we will be visiting **few villages** to see traditional Coir-making skills (The fibers from the outer husk of the coconut, which is used to make tope and mats) and Fishing. Kollam is located at Ashtamudi Lake and southwest coast of India, bordering Laccadive Sea in the west and surrounded by coconut palms and cashew tree plantation. Kollam is also known for its Cashew Industry. Kollam houses are typically made of wooden in Keralan style and situated at the Southern end of the backwaters which makes Kollam a perfect place for exploring canals and lagoons.

🍽️ Breakfast

Deshadan Cliff & Beach Resort

🏠 Accommodation

The Quilon Beach Hotel

Day 5. Boat ride in Kollam and cycle to Mankombu (cycling - 38Kms)



Kollam 📍
🚲 38km
ManKombu 📍

- Upon arrival at the Kollam Jetty, we start cycling to the South along coastal roads shaded by palm trees for 16 kms. We will cross a river by boats carrying our cycles on it. Today our cycle ride is about 22kms. Later, we will visit the **Manarasala snake temple** by bus which is close to the settlement of **Thottappally**. After temple visit, we will enjoy our lunch cooked traditionally by a family run restaurant and served on banana leaf. After having lunch we will explore the surrounding by motor launch through the backwaters and heads towards our home stay, it may take few hours and is the perfect way to explore the waterways, which is covering 1900 square kilometers. Boats are like taxis for villagers who perform mail delivery, harvest and other goods through boats and it becomes an integral part of their daily life. Soon our boat rides come to an end and we check in to our accommodation, in the old trading town of Alleppey. Tonight, we will stay in a village style in countryside. It is very unique and lifetime experience to stay with local village families and to know there lifestyle, culture and cuisine very closely. Most of the houses are having guest rooms in the home, also attached is private guest bathroom as well. Rooms are basic and having twin or double bedding.

🍽️ Breakfast

The Quilon Beach Hotel

🍴 Lunch	Gabby World Homestay
🍷 Dinner	Gabby World Homestay
🏠 Accommodation	Gabby World Homestay

Day 6. Cycling thorough backwaters villages and afternoon canoe trip (cycling - 35kms)



ManKombu 📍

- After the breakfast, today we will have an opportunity to cover up our surroundings. During our cycling through the backwaters, we have a chance to meet the local villagers and we will also be visiting churches and temples. Later, we enjoy the **Moonlight Cruise by canoe with the traditional songs sung by the locals**. The Laborious villagers survive on cultivating vegetables, taming cows, pigs and chickens.

☕ Breakfast	Gabby World Homestay
🍴 Lunch	Gabby World Homestay
🍷 Dinner	Gabby World Homestay
🏠 Accommodation	Gabby World Homestay

Day 7. Cycling to Erattupetta & Planters Homestay (cycling - 35Kms)



ManKombu 📍
🚲 35km
Erattupetta 📍

- Today, we will combine the engine and pedal power to reach our destination and leave behind the beautiful backwaters. **Erattupetta** is well known for the rubber plantation way back in 19th century. The weather becomes slightly cooler and we continue cycling in the shade of rubber tree. As we are going to stay with a local family and we will have an opportunity learn the traditional food and curry. We can also opt for a long natural walk by garden or can swim in natural pool. Planter Homestay is fifty years old well spacious and cosy two storey family house. Air conditioning is not available in all rooms but rooms are bright and airy enough. These houses are surrounded by lush greens with rubber trees and lots of bird life can be seen around.

☕ Breakfast	Gabby World Homestay
🍴 Lunch	Planters Homestay
🍷 Dinner	Planters Homestay
🏠 Accommodation	Planters Homestay

Day 8. Day at own leisure in Erattupetta (Cycle ride optional)



Erattupetta 📍

- In the morning, we will walk around through plantation and try to learn about different types of Fruits and Medical plants. And in the afternoon, we can go for the bath in natural Rock pool and later can opt for visiting **Poonjar palace (residence of Maharaja and his family)** which was abandoned 900 Years ago by them. We can also have a chance to visit the local town. (cycling-35kms)

☕ Breakfast	Planters Homestay
🍴 Lunch	Planters Homestay
🍷 Dinner	Planters Homestay

Day 9. Drive and cycling Thekkady (Visiting plantation and tea factory) (cycling - 32Kms)



Erattupetta 📍
 🚲 32km
 Periyar (Thekkady) 📍

- Today, we will be driving few steep roads before we actually start cycling to **Thekkady**. Our cycling route is through **Wagamon** and we enjoy the cool weather, tea plantation and rolling hills. Our cycling routes include many rubber plantation and through spice gardens. Later, we will get a chance to meet local tea pickers in the plantation and get the feel of the beauty of the region. Thekkady has many spice shops and people around the world come to this place and shop for spices, that is the reason Thekkady is called spice hub of Kerala. Anybody can feel the fragrance of Aroma in the air and Thekkady is also known as Cardamom hills. Later, we will visit the **Connemara tea factory**.

🍽️ Breakfast

Planters Homestay

🏠 Accommodation

Grand Thekkady

Day 10. Explore Thekkady with forest walks (Periyar National Park)



Periyar (Thekkady) 📍

- Today morning, we will go for a **Forest walk** in search of wildlife animals like Elephants **Indian Bison, Flying squirrel, Tortoise, Porcupine and many types of Bird species**. Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary is also known as the Periyar Tiger Reserve, and it's having almost 40 Tigers living in 925 sq. km. Visiting the park is like exploring the nature around and we get fascinated with the peaceful atmosphere around and get relaxed from our busy schedules. **Periyar wildlife** is well known for its rich flora and fauna and one can see teak, rosewoods, sandalwoods, mangos, tamarinds, banyans, bamboo etc. (No cycling today).

🍽️ Breakfast

Grand Thekkady

🏠 Accommodation

Grand Thekkady

Day 11. Cycle to Kuttikkanam and drive to Kochi (cycling - 32Kms)



Periyar (Thekkady) 📍
 🚲 32km
 Kuttikkanam 📍
 🚗 120km - ⌚ 3h 20m
 Cochin (Kochi) 📍

Periyar (Thekkady) - Kuttikkanam

- Today morning, we will enjoy the free wheel ride around 30 kms. We will cycle in a very beautiful route down to **Kuttikkanam**.

Kuttikkanam - Cochin (Kochi)

- And we will continue our trip by bus to the Kochi port (Kochi port is one of the largest port in India). From the British era Kochi has the influence of Portuguese, Dutch and English, and it is famous for its kathakali dancers. One can find many kathakali dance centers in the region. And these dances take around 3-4 hours to paint their faces. These dancers depict the events from Ramayana and Mahabharata, an Indian epic.

🍽️ Breakfast

Grand Thekkady

🏠 Accommodation

Fort Queen

Day 12. Kochi tour by cycle with an evening boat cruise



Cochin (Kochi) 📍

- Today, we will cover up old Kochi town through Cycling. Kochi was a fishing village in the pre- colonial Kerala. Due to the arrival of the Chinese, Arabs and Phoenicians in the second millennium BC, the European links was strengthens in 16th century and Portuguese, Dutch and English arrival begun. After visiting the Old Kochi, we will enjoy the **Sunset Cruise** around the Island. There is an option for an early morning cycle ride of 25Kms and later we can come to **Fort Kochi** to continue the sightseeing on cycle.

☕ Breakfast	Fort Queen
🏠 Accommodation	Fort Queen

Day 13. Depart Cochin

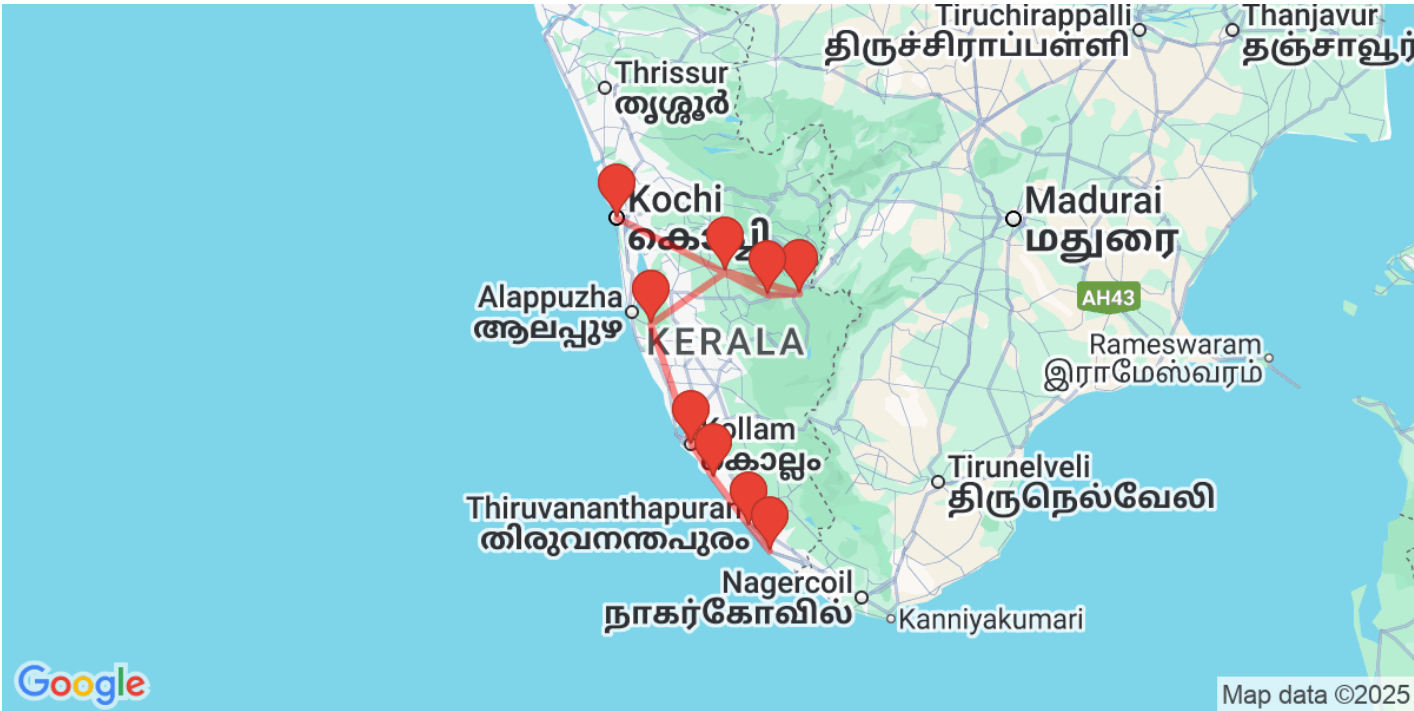


Cochin (Kochi) 📍

- Today morning, our tour gets ended here at Kochi and we may have breakfast at hotel depending upon our onward flight timings.

☕ Breakfast	Fort Queen
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Itinerary map



Individual price per person

2-3	4-5	6-8
3975 USD	3005 USD	2555 USD

Included

- Accommodation for 08 nights in a double room in the hotels mentioned or equivalent on breakfast basis
- 04 nights on Full board in Mankombu and Erattupetta
- Support Vehicle and back-up equipment
- All ground transportation included in the program using private air-conditioned vehicle with English speaking driver
- 01 hour Yoga session in Kovalam
- Boat Ride (Transfer) from Thottappally till Mankombu
- Moonlight Cruise by Canoe in Mankombu
- Sunset Cruise in Cochin (Kochi)
- Kathakali Dance show in Cochin (Kochi)
- Forest guided walk in Periyar (Thekkady)
- Entrance fees to the park and monuments as described in the program
- Professional English speaking Cycling tour leader throughout the trip
- Govt. Taxes

Not included

- International flight tickets
- Ayurvedic massage in Kovalam
- These rates will not be valid for peak season from 20 December 2019 to 10 January 2020 , Christmas and New Year's extra supplement cost will be charged during this period
- Lunch and Dinner through out the trip except Full board in Mankombu and Erattupetta
- Miscellaneous Expenses - drinks, souvenir, personal expenses etc.
- Tips for driver and other local staff
- Charges for Camera in the monuments and Parks
- The cancellation and baggage insurance, assistance and repatriation
- Indian Visa
- All services not mentioned in "Inclusion"