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## **Southern India & East Coast by Rail**

14 days, Kochi to Calcutta

Trip code AHER

### **What's included**

- Your Welcome Moment: Meet Your CEO and Group
- Backwaters canal ride

- Vivekananda Rock and Ramkrishna Ashram visit
- Meenakshi Temple visit
- Cycle tour to Shore Temple and Mamallapuram Beach
- Chennai city tour
- Charminar and Golconda Fort visit
- Jagannath Temple visit
- Raghuraj Pur village visit
- Internal flight
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

**VALIDITY:** Valid for all trips departing July 27th, 2016 and onwards

# Itinerary

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## Itinerary Notes

Want to experience the sights and sounds of Holi? Make sure you're in India on March 10, 2020 or March 29, 2021 for the nation's most colourful festival.

**NOTE:** Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

Day 1

## Kochi

Arrive at any time.

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## Today's Activities

### ACTIVITY

Your opportunity to meet your CEO and fellow travellers, and learn more about your tour. Opt to join the group for a local meal afterwards. Don't forget to see the notice in the lobby (or ask reception) for the official time and place to meet up with the group.

Day 2

## Kochi/Alleppey

Take the early train to Alleppey to explore the Kerala backwaters. Walk in the paddy fields and take a canoe ride through the canals the region is famous for.

This evening enjoy a taste of local life with a homestay.

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### Meals included

Dinner

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### Today's Activities

Train

Kochi - Alleppey

1h-1h30m

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

Tuk-Tuk

Alleppey - Kerala Backwaters

30m

Scoot quickly around the big cities inside a three-wheeled mini-taxi.

Kerala Boat Tour

Alleppey

1h

Enjoy a boat ride through the beautiful backwaters of Kerala. Take in the lush, green scenery and the multitude of coconut trees.

Day 3

## Alleppey/Kanyakumari

Enjoy some more time in Kerala before an evening train to Kanyakumari for a full day exploring the area.

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### Meals included

Breakfast

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### Today's Activities

Free Time

Alleppey

Enjoy more time here.

Train

Alleppey - Nāgercoil

4h30m

Meals are available for purchase on board.

Private Vehicle

Nāgercoil - Kanyakumari

30m

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Spend the day in Kanyakumari. Drive to the southernmost tip of India and take a ferry across to Vivekananda Rock and the Ramkrishna Ashram. Take an evening Kanyakumari Express train to Madurai.



## Today's Activities

Ferry

Kanyakumari – Vivekananda Rock Memorial

30m

Get to the next spot on your route aboard a convenient and efficient ferry boat.

Ferry

Vivekananda Rock Memorial – Kanyakumari

30m

Get to the next spot on your route aboard a convenient and efficient ferry boat.

Vivekananda Rock and Ramkrishna Ashram Visit

2h-3h

Take an enjoyable ferry ride to Vivekananda Rock, a small island about 100m from the mainland. Mix with the many pilgrims going to visit this holy site—it honours the Hindu poet and philosopher, Swami Vivekananda. Learn about Hinduism at the peaceful Ramakrishna Ashram, an ashram maintained by the Ramakrishna Mission, which is a Hindu movement named after the late philosopher, Swami Ramakrishna.

Train

Kanyakumari – Madurai

4h30m

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

Day 5

## Madurai

Explore the Meenakshi Temple and colourful markets of Madurai.

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### Today's Activities

Meenakshi Temple Visit

Madurai

2h-3h

Visit the gorgeous Meenakshi Temple, considered to be the finest in South Indian religious architecture. This enormous temple complex is dedicated to Shiva and his consort Parvati, or Meenakshi. Even before you pass through the massive stone walls of the temple, the nine striking gopurams (monumental gateways covered with stucco figures of deities, mythical animals, and monsters all painted in vivid colours) loom high above.

Free Time

Madurai

Enjoy some free time exploring the bustling markets and gorgeous temples of this holy city.

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### Optional Activities - Day 5

Gandhi Museum

Madurai

Learn about India's struggle for independence at this museum devoted to the great man famous the world over, Mahatma Gandhi.

Thirumalai Nayak Palace Visit

Madurai

50INR

Visit what remains of the 17th century palace of the ruler Thirumalai Nayak -- he contributed extensively to the gorgeous Meenakshi Temple, which is located less than 2km away.

Cycle-Rickshaw Tour

Madurai

350INR

Sit back and relax during this eco-friendly tour -- you'll be pulled along by a bicyclist! See the sights at a slower pace and from street level. Check out the fruit and vegetable market, watch the pressing of oil by bullocks, and the famous Gandhi museum and palace.

Day 6

## Madurai/Māmallapuram

Take the morning Vaigai Express to Chengalpattu before continue by van to Mamallapuram.

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### Today's Activities

Train

Madurai - Chengalpattu

6h30m

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

Private Vehicle

Chengalpattu - Māmallapuram

30m-1h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Day 7

## Māmallapuram

Cycle around and explore the rock-cut Shore Temple and Mamallapuram Beach.

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### Today's Activities

Sunrise Shore Temple Visit

Māmallapuram

Explore this impressive group of monuments that were sculpted during the 7th and 8th century, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, at sunrise. Of these, the Shore Temple stands out for its a marvelous view of the Bay of Bengal's shore. Made of granite, it's actually a twin-temple dedicated both to the Hindu gods, Vishnu and Shiva.

Mamallapuram Beach Visit

Māmallapuram

Kick off your shoes and walk through the soft sand of this stunning beach. Watch fishermen take out their boats and bring in their catch.

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### Optional Activities - Day 7

Mamallapuram Bicycle Tour

Māmallapuram

325INR

1h-3h

Jump on your bike and enjoy a ride around this charming, historical beach town.

Day 8

## Māmallapuram/Chennai

Drive to Chennai and explore Marina Beach and San Thome Basilica. Later, board an overnight train to Hyderabad.

Accommodation on the train tonight will be either in two tier or three tier bunks.

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### Today's Activities

Private Vehicle

Māmallapuram - Chennai

1h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Chennai City Tour

Chennai

Get to know this South Indian cultural hub with a visit to San Thome Basilica and a stroll along the expansive Marina Beach.

Basic Overnight Train (beds)

Chennai - Hyderabad

13h

Experience overnight travel like a local. Sit back and get some well-earned (and likely much-needed) rest en route to your next stop.

Day 9

## Hyderabad

Learn more about the region's history with a visit to the iconic Charminar and historic Golconda Fort.

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### Today's Activities

Charminar Visit

Hyderabad

Visit Hyderabad's most iconic structure, sometimes called the "Arc de Triomphe of the East", and take in the bustling atmosphere. Swing by the nearby Laad Bazaar and browse the stalls.

Golconda Fort Visit

Hyderabad

Explore the remains of this former medieval capital.

Day 10

## Hyderabad/Puri

Enjoy a free morning to continue exploring this state capital before catching an evening flight to Bhubaneswar. Continue by van to reach Puri.

Opt to visit the Salar Jung Museum or the scenic Qutb Shahi Tombs with free time.

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### Today's Activities

Free Time

Hyderabad

Head out and explore.

Plane

Hyderabad - Bhubaneswar

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Private Vehicle

Bhubaneswar - Puri

1h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Day 11

## Puri

Explore Raghuraj Pur village and beautiful Puri beaches.

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### Today's Activities

Raghuraj Pur Village Visit

Puri

2h-3h

24km

Enjoy the varied artistic delights of this heritage crafts village, including Gotipua dance troupes, palm leaf paintings, stone and wood carvings, and toys made of wood, papier-mache, and cow dung (yes, you read that correctly).

Free Time

Puri

Get out and explore.

Day 12

## Puri/Calcutta

Take a morning Shatabdi Express train to Kolkata, with lunch provided on board. Arrive in the afternoon and take an orientation walk with the CEO.

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### Meals included

Lunch

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### Today's Activities

Train

Puri - Calcutta

7h30m-8h

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

Free Time

Calcutta

Start exploring.

Day 13

## Calcutta

Explore the vintage monuments and streets of this former capital of the British Era, also visit Missionaries' of Charity the noble peace prize winner, Mother Teresa's house and final resting place.. Opt to take a ferry ride across the Hooghly River. Opt to join the group for dinner at one of the famed restaurants on Park Street for the final night out.

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### Today's Activities

Free Time

Calcutta

Get out and explore.

Day 14

## Calcutta

Depart at any time.

### What's included

- Your Welcome Moment: Meet Your CEO and Group
- Backwaters canal ride
- Vivekananda Rock and Ramkrishna Ashram visit
- Meenakshi Temple visit
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- Chennai city tour
- Charminar and Golconda Fort visit
- Jagannath Temple visit
- Raghuraj Pur village visit
- Internal flight
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

## **What are the main highlights of this trip?**

Live like a local in the Kerala backwaters, travel to the southern tip of India in Kanyakumari, explore temples and palaces up the east coast, visit bustling Kolkata.

## **Itinerary Notes**

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## **Is there an itinerary Disclaimer?**

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

## **Are there Itinerary notes?**

Want to experience the sights and sounds of Holi? Make sure you're in India on March 10, 2020 or March 29, 2021 for the nation's most colourful festival.

# What important notes should I be aware of before the trip?

## 1. CULTURE

India is a country which is very different to anything you will have experienced before. Although this means it is not the easiest place to travel, this is also what makes it so special. Pollution, poverty and the crowds can result in initial culture shock but should be seen as an exciting new challenge. During our time here we have come to love this large and wonderfully different country but we know that we should always expect to encounter some difficulties along the way.

In India there are very different attitudes to time keeping, public cleanliness, privacy and service. Trains will sometimes be late, plumbing can sometimes be temperamental and power will often just vanish. Optimistic menus turn out to have only one dish available and everyone, just everyone, will want to know your name. If you are able to travel with a lot of patience and a healthy sense of humor, then we know that you - like all of us - will be captivated by what India has to offer.

## 2. COMBO TRIP

This trip combines with other G Adventures tours. As such, the CEO and some group members on your tour may have previously been travelling together with G Adventures, prior to Day 1 of your tour. Likewise, the CEO and some group members may continue travelling together on another G Adventures tour after your trip concludes.

## What is the group leader like?

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our Chief Experience Officers (CEO). The aim of the CEO is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

## How large will the group be?

Max 15, avg 12

## What meals are included in this trip?

1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

## What are the meals like on this trip?

Eating is a big part of travelling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. Vegetarians will be able to find a huge range of different foods - India is vegetarian heaven. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

# What are the modes of transportation on my trip?

Train (seats), train (beds), private van, walking, plane.

## What transportation will we take on this trip?

### TRAINS

The best way to see India is at ground level on the railway system. In fact, no visit to India would be complete without the experience of travelling on a train and negotiating the busy railway stations. The chaos in the Indian Railway stations is a replica of the life in India. Indian trains are not merely a conveyance they are an odyssey so sit back relax, be patient and enjoy the show.

G Adventures uses a combination of AC 2 tier, AC 3 tier and sleeper class (for overnight journeys) and AC Chair car or second class seats for day journeys. Indian railways operate with a centralized reservation system. This means that G Adventures cannot control how seats are assigned within a class. Despite our requests to seat the entire group together, often times seats are spread out in the coach or throughout different coaches. This is all part of the adventure that is travelling India by rail. Take advantage of the opportunity to chat with locals and remember you always have the support of your CEO.

There are no restaurant or buffet cars on Indian Railways, but on long distance trains an attendant will appear in your coach and ask you if you would like to order food. Regular stops are made at stations where food is also available and on some trains many vendors board the train selling chai, cold drinks and crisps and biscuits.

Don't expect pristine western standards anywhere in India, but you'll find AC2, AC3 and AC Chair class fairly clean by Indian standards, with both western-style and squat toilets usually in a reasonably sanitary condition. Sleeper Class and 2nd class toilets may be a different matter! Bring your own toilet paper and hand wash soap or antibacterial lotion.

Indian trains are quite safe to travel on, even for families or women travelling alone, and you are unlikely to have any problems. Having said that, theft of luggage, although rare is not unheard of, so just for peace of mind you might like to take along a chain and padlock to secure your bags (readily available at all Indian stations).

Generally, Indian Railways are very efficient, but Indian trains do run late particularly in winter time when fog is heavy, and sometimes it's hours rather than minutes. Make sure you have something to occupy your time – a good book, music, a magazine or photos of your home country and family to show the Indian travellers also waiting for the train. You should also have snacks and water for the journey.

Please note that you **MUST** be comfortable carrying your own luggage, as there will be a lot of up and down stairs on this trip due to the size and layout of train stations in India. Most often, you will not have access to escalators or elevators. You will also be required to carry your luggage short distances between transport start or end points and hotels.

### ROAD

Traveling by road in India is certainly not what people are use to in Western countries. Rules are not always followed, drivers appear to speed, do not stay in their lanes, overtake in seemingly dangerous situations, rarely use their mirrors or driving lights at night time. The horn however is used very frequently and can range from the latest Bollywood tune to Britney Spears! In India, although the government is investing large sums of money improving the road infrastructure, there is a lot more to be done. As a result, in India, some of the roads are poorly maintained, pot holed and uneven. This gets even more pronounced particularly during and after the monsoon. Travel time covering relatively short distances is very long in comparison to Western countries.

## **Is there an extra cost for travelling solo?**

We believe solo travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and solo travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

## **Where will we stay during the trip?**

Hotels/guesthouses (11 nts), homestay (1 nt), sleeper train (1 nt).

## **Will I get my own room?**

Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops

## **Do any exceptions apply to Rooming or “My Own Room” on my tour?**

Night 2 homestay; Night 8 overnight train

## **What kind of accommodation can I expect on this trip?**

A variety of styles of hotels/guest houses are used in India. These can vary in terms of service, efficiency and cleanliness. In many instances they might not be like what you are used to back home. Power cuts can and are a regular occurrence in many places, especially throughout North and Central India. Although a number of hotels have generators there may be times when these won't work. It is also recommended when you are in your room to lock the door, as staff will sometime enter without reason.

## **What is the joining hotel?**

For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

## **What are the joining instructions?**

When arriving at Kochi Airport you will need to get a taxi to take you to the hotel as public buses are not reliable and the airport is located some 30kms outside the city. The drive should take between 45-60 minutes depending on the traffic and the time of day. Please order your taxi from the prepaid taxi booth in the arrivals hall. The cost is about INR550-600. The taxi booth will give you a receipt that you need to give to the driver but not until you arrive at the hotel.

Be aware too, that touts at the airports, even at hotel-reservation counters, may try to trick you into booking a hotel room by claiming that your prior reservation is invalid. Ignore them.

If you have paid in advance for an arrival transfer, a G Adventures representative will be at the airport to meet you. If for any reason you are not met at the airport, please call our local support line. If you are unable to make contact for whatever reason, please make your way to the joining point hotel via taxi.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned for that day other than your welcome meeting in the evening, so you can arrive at any time.

A G Adventures Representative will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip. A welcome note will be left for you in the hotel so you have all the necessary information regarding the meeting time. If you arrive late, s/he will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning.

## **What happens if I experience problems when arriving?**

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier and contact us as soon as possible. If you have a pre-booked transfer, and you have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

## Who should I contact in case of an emergency?

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

### AIRPORT TRANSFER

If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

If your call is specifically concerning airport transfer complications at Cochin International Airport, please call our local G Adventures Transfer providers directly at:

Mr Prajeesh Kumar: 09633033680

Mr Aravind: 096330 33 561

### EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Local Office (South India)

During office hours, Mon-Fri 9am-5pm:

From outside of India: +91 9633033680

From within India: 09633033680

G Adventures South Asia Manager, Sorab (Delhi, India)

>From outside of India: +91 88 5180 6614

>From within Delhi: 88 5180 6614

>From within India, but outside Delhi: 088 5180 6614

G Adventures Office Bangkok, Thailand

During Office hours (Weekdays, 9am-5pm Local Time): +66-02-3815574

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below which will connect you directly with our Sales team who will happily assist you. Hours of operation by region can be found [here](#).

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100

Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000

Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

## **What should I take on my trip?**

You will be on the move a lot, so our advice is to pack as lightly as possible. We highly recommend using a backpack or whatever you find easiest to carry, plus a small daypack. Remember that luggage space on public transport is limited. You must be prepared to carry your own bags and be comfortable carrying them between transport and hotels, hopping on and off trains and public transportation, and up and down stairs.

Standard luggage allowance for internal flights is 15kg (33lb) for checked luggage, and is 7kg (15lb) for carry-on luggage. Any charges for additional luggage or weight is the responsibility of the passenger.

# What should be on my packing list?

## Cold Weather:

- Long-sleeved shirts or sweater
- Scarf
- Warm gloves
- Warm hat
- Warm layers
- Warm waterproof jacket

## Conservative Dress:

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

## Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

### Essentials:

- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Headphones (Noise-cancelling recommended)
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

### Health & Safety:

- Face masks (Clients will be only be required to wear a face mask where it is mandated by local regulations.)
- Hand sanitizer
- Pen (Please bring your own pen for filling out documents.)

### Light Hiking:

- Hiking boots/sturdy walking shoes
- Hiking pants (Convertible/Zip-off and quick dry recommended)
- Walking poles

**Train Travel (Optional):**

- Slip-on shoes
- Small container with lid
- Travel cutlery
- Travel or camp cup

**Warm Weather:**

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sturdy water shoes/sandals
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear Note: During the colder months (Oct-Apr) the mountains can be cold, so please make sure you pack warm clothes. During the months of Jul-Sep is the rainy season, so please make sure to pack waterproof clothes.

## When can I do my laundry on this trip?

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

## What the visas and entry requirements for my trip?

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check the information yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Visa information specific to your destination and nationality can be found in our Important Pre-Departure Information page [here](#)

All travellers must have a valid Indian visa prior to the start of their tour. Please note that visas for India are the responsibility of the individual traveller.

To obtain a visa for India, you may either apply for an e-Visa using the link below, or alternately visit the Indian embassy or consulate nearest you to apply for a physical visa on your passport.

India is now offering e-Visas for some nationalities. Please visit this link for further information, and to check if your nationality is eligible for an e-Visa: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>

As there are many fake websites, please only use the link above to apply for your e-Visa and for any additional information.

Please use the start hotel of your tour as a reference for your visa application. Contact us or your travel agent if you need further information.

## How much spending money do I need for my trip?

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

## What should I know about currency, credit cards, and exchanging money while on this tour?

As currency exchange rates in Asia fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) As of Feb 2012 the exchange rate for INDIA was 1 USD = 49.00 INR (Indian Rupees). There are many ATM machines that accept both Visa and Mastercard but these are limited to major cities. Major credit cards are accepted in most shops but they may charge a 2-4% transaction fee.

## How much emergency money should I bring on this trip?

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

## Do I need to pay a departure tax?

All departure taxes should be included in your international flight ticket.

## Should I be tipping on my trip?

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. You may do this individually, or your CEO will offer to collect the money and tip as a group.

Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from USD1-2 per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture.

Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures CEO did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference; however as a guideline USD20-30 per person, per week can be used.

## What activities are optional on this trip?

### Madurai

- Gandhi Museum
- Thirumalai Nayak Palace Visit  
(50INR per person, 1200INR per group)
- Cycle-Rickshaw Tour (350INR per person)

### Māmallapuram

- Mamallapuram Bicycle Tour  
(325INR per person, 1000INR per group)

## Are there any health considerations I should know before travelling?

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that sometimes we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. In Asia pharmacies tend to stock the same western drugs as you get at home but they are usually produced locally so please bring the full drug name with you when trying to purchase a prescription drug. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our CEO they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

## What do I need to know to about safety and security on my trip?

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it deemed necessary, due to safety concerns. Your Chief Experience Officer (CEO) will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy and explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards), have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk. [Read more about travel safety](#) for ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling.

## What are the trip specific safety considerations?

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage

## What rules should I know before joining this trip?

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of people in the sex trade is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they utilize the services of paid sex workers, in any capacity.

## Is travel insurance required for my trip?

Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your leader, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy we require that at a minimum you are covered for medical expenses including emergency evacuation and repatriation. A minimum coverage of USD200,000 is required. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. Some tours include adventure activities that require extra coverage (e.g. crampon use); please review your itinerary and make sure that you are covered for all included activities. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

## What is Planeterra?

Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.

G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with [Planeterra Foundation](#).

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating \$1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

## How should I dress to respect local customs during the tour?

In Asia the dress standard is more conservative than it is back home. When packing try to pick loose, lightweight, long clothing that will keep you cool in the usually hot and humid climate of Asian summers. In predominately Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim countries we ask that you dress respectfully and avoid very short shorts/skirts and singlets/tanktops when visiting small rural communities or visiting temples or mosques or other holy sites as this may restrict your entry.

India is very conservative and you should dress accordingly. As a general guideline shoulders and knees should be covered at all times. The wearing of shorts is not allowed as it will restrict your entry into buildings of a religious nature and family homes. A light water and windproof jacket is useful and a hat essential.

NB: WE STRESS THAT IT CAN BE VERY COLD IN THE HILLS DURING THE MONTHS FROM DECEMBER TO FEBRUARY.

NB: During our trip there will be many opportunities for you to meet and "talk" with locals. One way to start any conversation is with pictures. We recommend that you bring some photos/postcards of your family, home, city or country where you live, animals peculiar to your country etc.

## How can I share feedback about my trip experience?

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at [customersolutions@gadventures.com](mailto:customersolutions@gadventures.com) and we will send it on to you.

## Does G Adventures have an email newsletter I can subscribe to?

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at [www.gadventures.com/newsletters/](http://www.gadventures.com/newsletters/)

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

## How old must I be to join this trip?

You must be 18 to travel unaccompanied on a G Adventures tour. For minors travelling with a guardian over 21 years old, the minimum age is 12.

## **Are international flights included in this trip?**

No, international flights are generally not included in the price of your tour.

However, on some combo tours travelling between two different countries, international flights are included as part of the itinerary and price of the tour. Please speak to your GCO or booking agent for further details.

In addition, check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.

## **What should LGBTQ+ travellers know about safety and travel considerations on this trip?**

The safety and well-being of all of our travelers is a priority at G Adventures and that includes our travelers who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. We recognize that there are specific concerns and questions you may have about your adventure in terms of safety and security. We encourage you to visit our [LGBTQ+ page](#) for useful resources to ensure you feel safe and comfortable throughout the duration of your trip. The Equaldex tool linked on this page can be of particular help when deciding where you may want to visit next.

## Dossier Disclaimer

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and the operator. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

## Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.