



PROJECT DOSSIER

GOA & SOUTH INDIA

MUMBAI to MADRAS

OR

MADRAS to MUMBAI

23 days

2,600kms

India

Itinerary Guideline

MUMBAI to MADRAS (CHENNAI)

Days 1 & 2: Drive south through tropical coastal forests of Maharashtra to Goa.

Days 3 to 5: In Goa: old city & beaches.

Day 6: Karnataka State, shores & estuaries along Arabian Sea to Mangalore.

Day 7: Drive inland to Coorg Hills & India's central Deccan plateau, to Mysore.

Days 8 & 9: In Mysore: Maharajahs palace.

Day 10: Somnathpur temple, markets - incense & intricate woodwork.

Day 11 & 12: Drive via Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary to Udhagamandalam (formerly Ootacamund or Ooti).

Day 13: Through Nilgiri Hills to Palghat & the Malabar Coast at Kochi (formerly Cochin).

Day 14: In Ernakulum - beaches, islands of Kochi, old port & city.

Day 15: Alleppey. To Cardamon Hills & Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary. By boat along lake & waterways - elephant, bison, (rare tiger).



Day 16: Return to coast at Kollam (formerly Quilon) to Thiruvananthapuram (formerly Trivandrum) & Varkala beach.

Day 17: South to the beach at Kovalam.

Day 18: Kovalam to Cape Comorin southern tip of India to south of Madurai.

Day 19: Madurai and rural Tamil Nadu to Tiruchiruppali - Rock Fort Temple, to Pondicherry & Indian Ocean.

Days 20 to 22: Auroville & Mamallapuram (formerly Mahabalipuram) - Pallava shrines & shore temples.

Day 23: To Madras - In Madras City. End arrangements a.m.

N.B.

(Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary: seasonal conditions can affect frequency of animal sightings. Therefore the itinerary may be occasionally adjusted to substitute an alternative wildlife reserve).

MADRAS to MUMBAI

- Days 1 & 2:** Leave Madras a.m. Day 1. To Auroville and Mamallapuram - Pallava shrines & shore temples along the Indian Ocean.
- Day 3:** To Pondicherry.
- Day 4:** Drive south through rural Tamil Nadu to Tiruchirupali - Rock Fort Temple.
- Day 5:** Tiruchirupali through Dindigul to Cape Comorin & southern tip of India.
- Day 6:** To Kovalam beach on the Malabar Coast south of Thiruvananthapuram.
- Days 7 & 8:** Thiruvananthapuram & Varkala beach.
- Day 9:** Via Kollam to Cardamom Hills & Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Day 10:** Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary: by boat along lake & waterways - elephant, bison, (rare tiger). To Kochi.
- Days 11 & 12:** In Kochi - beaches, islands of old port & city.
- Day 13:** Kochi inland to Palghat, the central Deccan plateau & Nilgiri Hills to Udthagamandalam.
- Day 14:** Drive via Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary to Mysore.
- Days 15 & 16:** In Mysore: Maharajahs palace, temple of Somnathpur, markets - incense & intricate woodwork.
- Day 17:** The Coorg Hills to coast & Mangalore.
- Day 18:** Through Karnataka State, shores & estuaries along the Arabian Sea to Goa.
- Days 19 & 20:** In Goa: old city & beaches.
- Days 21 & 22:** North through tropical coastal forests of Maharashtra to Mumbai.
- Day 23:** Mumbai. End arrangements a.m.

N.B.

(Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary: seasonal conditions can affect frequency of animal sightings. Therefore the itinerary may be occasionally adjusted to an alternative wildlife reserve).

Please note that Madras is in the process of being renamed Chennai.

Highlights & Route

South from Mumbai (formerly Bombay) through tropical forests lying between the coast & India's central Deccan Plateau; rivers & towns of Maharashtra to Goa. The history of this port & fishing town goes back to the 3rd century BC, but it was the arrival of the Portuguese in 1510 that shaped its character today. Intending to take control the spice trade, they made it their capital in India then the seat of Catholicism in the East. Independence came in 1961 and Goa maintains its laid back atmosphere and easy going ways. Narrow streets, small cafes & bars, Cathedrals & red-tiled Portuguese houses of the old city - and Goa's 100 kms of beaches where coconut palms & sparkling sands meet the warm clear Arabian Sea. Follow the coast to Mangalore, 18th century shipbuilding port of Hyder Ali's Karnataka kingdom and now a centre for India's coffee exports.

Inland to the Coorg Hills (1,000m) & Mysore.

Most of India's incense is produced here by small family enterprises, the aromas of sandalwood, jasmine, musk & rose linger in the air. The city was the seat of the Maharajahs of Mysore who earned a reputation for hospitality & spectacle, political stability and progress. The Amber Villas walled palace is grandly flamboyant in its domes & turrets, in mirrors and stained glass of peacocks & flowers, avenues of carved pillars, huge carved and inlaid wooden doors, cool mosaic and marble floors. The city is also known for its beautifully crafted & inlaid teak, sandalwood & rosewood furniture & carvings.

The Hoysala Kings rose from hill marauders to rule Karnataka & the plains from 1006 to 1310. Extracting rich revenues from their conquests they developed artistic learning and new achievements in architecture. The most perfect of their temples, at Somnathpur, has been called one of the most beautiful and interesting buildings in the world. Set in a cloister courtyard the star shaped temple survives complete and finely proportioned. Built from grey soapstone that is soft when quarried but hardens with age, every surface is carved in beautiful statues. Horizontal friezes of guardian elephants, geese & winged monsters flank carvings that depict stories from the Hindu epics and lives of the Hoysala kings.

The Nilgiri foothills are rich in Indian wildlife. Even close to the villages & park headquarters it is possible to see herds of chital spotted deer, elephant, wild pig & gaur (Indian bison). There are sloth and langur monkeys, crocodiles in the

Moyar River and, if we're lucky, tiger, panther & leopard in the forests. (Option of elephant back trek into forest/jungle from Theppakadu village, approx. US\$ 10 - 15). To Kerala State, the Malabar Coast and a cluster of islands & peninsulas, winding streets & buildings of 16th century Kochi. Kerala's Jews may have arrived here from Jerusalem when it fell to Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. Christian communities of the Syrian orthodox church came to Kochi around the 6th century BC. Vasco da Gama & the Portuguese arrived in 1500 and threw them out. The Dutch took over in 1663 and kicked out the Portuguese. The British followed and did likewise. All were hungry for spices & trade, all left their mark on what is today one of India's most interesting cities.

Complex Chinese fishing net systems, introduced by emissaries & traders from the court of Kublai Khan, are strung along the channel at the tip of Fort Kochi. Murals in the Mattancherry palace depict legends of the Hindu Gods and are among the best in India. Unlikely houses & squares in old Kochi seem like transplanted village greens from around Europe. Merchants traded in pepper, spices, ivory & coir coconut fibre (most of those 'Welcome' door mats still come from Kochi).

In the far south India's great central plateau narrows to become the Cardamom Hills. The 700 sq. kms of Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary lie in the forested hilltops, centred round a vast artificial irrigation lake created in 1875. This is one of the largest and oldest sanctuaries in India and is known for its wild elephant. Wild pig, dhole (wild dogs), gaur bison & tiger come down to the lake to drink. The banks are home to otter & freshwater tortoise, herons, kingfishers, egrets & fish owls. Early morning or evening are the best times to travel by boat along the lake shores and twisting waterways in search of the animals. (Note: Periyar is usually best visited between October & March but seasonal fluctuations & conditions can still affect the density of wildlife near the lake. We may sometimes adjust our itinerary to substitute a better wildlife reserve in the area of the Cardamom hills).

Thiruvananthapuram (Abode of the Serpent) is the capital of Kerala State, a pleasant city of winding streets, red-tiled roofs and tropical green hills. When not engrossed in the strikes and political rhetoric of its powerful communist party, Thiruvananthapuram revels in its own slow and easy-going pace. Nearby on the Malabar Coast are the beautiful beaches of Kovalam. Small palm-fringed bays of white sands & surf are

separated by rock islands & promontories; village life, traditional fishing and cultivation are little affected by development & commerce. Cape Comorin is the southernmost tip of India where the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean & Bay of Bengal meet & mingle. Sunrise & sunset are spectacular, to bathe here is of special significance to Hindus and is to be fully cleansed since the goddess Parvati did penance here in order to marry Shiva. Low lying Tamil Nadu to the east is a green land of tea, rubber and pepper plantations. In the centre of Tiruchirappali, on a massive rock outcrop and visible for miles around, is the Rock Fort Temple. There are magnificent views from the top which is reached by a tunnel of 437 steps.

Below on an island in the Cauvery River is the Sri Rangam temple. Dedicated to Shiva it is the biggest & one of the most important temple complexes in India. Inside the seven concentric walls are 21 gopura with painted ceilings and remarkable carvings, of delicate female figures, animals, rearing horses & tigers. North through rice paddies and riverside villages to Kanchipuram, one of the seven sacred cities of India, and renowned for its fine hand woven silks. Broad streets are crowded & crammed with temples of the Pallava, Chola & Vijayanagar dynasties (5th-16th centuries) whose rulers believed in their divine right as direct descendants of Brahma, the first of the Hindu trinity. Their temples are full of life & colour, walls are topped by crowds of multi-limbed gods, interiors are covered in a confusion of leaping, writhing & dancing deities. Mamallapuram on the Coromandel Coast was the great sea port of the Pallava kings. Already a port in the 1st century, it was known to Greek traders; today it is a small village sitting quietly among its fabulous rock-cut shore temples, lapped by eternal tides along the miles of empty beaches.

GROUP SIZE

24 max. including Encounter staff. Local guides will be employed at certain places of interest where their knowledge is advantageous to our visit.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

An easy project with no physical demands other than the camping lifestyle. Tropical heat and high temperatures can be expected at all times of year in southern India.

THE LOCAL PAYMENT (as in the brochure)

This is the payment made to the Project Leader at the point of departure. This payment must be made paid in US\$ dollars, either in cash notes or recognised Travellers Cheques. This payment completes the total inclusive price of the project. This amount will be utilised by the Project Leader to cover a proportion but not all of the 'on the ground' running costs of this project. There are no hidden extra payments.

INCLUDED IN PROJECT COST

All transport, food (except very occasional lunches as noted under Meals, Cooking & Food below), camping equipment & supplies, camping fees, local guides; wildlife reserve, museum, site entrance fees & activities as noted in the Itinerary Guideline from Day 1 until arrival in Madras or Mumbai on Day 23. There are no kitties or similar en route payments or funds.

PROJECT COST DOES NOT COVER

International flights to/from Mumbai & Madras, transfers to/from airports and airport taxes. Vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, malaria prophylaxis, laundry, snacks, drinks, occasional lunches whilst sightseeing in centres (minimal cost), personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Some individual entry fees to museums/sights (minimal cost) and optional elephant back trek US\$ 10 - 15.

Accommodation & evening meal in Madras or Mumbai on Day 23.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard Encounter truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables & stools, light, cooking equipment & utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit etc.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A sleeping bag (3 seasons), a medium sized bag or backpack and a daypack. A recommended list of what to bring is supplied in the Pre-departure information pack at the time of booking.

TRANSPORT

Encounter expedition truck, with boats on the waterways.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is divided between camping and simple resthouses that offer multishare facilities. Basic campground facilities in cities and main centres usually extend to simple

washing/showering and toilet arrangements only. Otherwise open 'bush' camping in rural areas with no facilities other than standard Encounter truck equipment. Your involvement is needed in camp set-up, domestic & day to day routines etc. Accommodation on night 23 in Madras or Mumbai is not included.

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfasts & evening meals, picnic lunches. Local fresh vegetables, fruit, fish, eggs, cereals, bread, cheese, preserves & spices; occasional canned & dried goods if fresh supplies insufficient for our needs. Fresh meat when available, but southern India is mainly vegetarian. Your assistance is needed in shopping, cooking & meal preparation. In larger towns (such as Kochi) where a day is spent away from the truck in individual sightseeing or activities, lunch will sometimes be at your own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is minimal.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than **6 months** after the end of the project, and which contains not less than **2 blank pages**. All nationalities require a visa for India which must be obtained before you leave home. Visa costs vary according to your nationality. Encounter or your agent can advise you of the consular visa cost applicable to you. We can also help you in obtaining a visa.

INSURANCE

You must have personal Travel Insurance to cover Adventure Travel and it must cover all the aspects described on p.60 of the brochure. Please bring a copy of your policy with you to the pre-departure meeting.

MEDICAL & VACCINATIONS

All vaccination requirements and medical recommendations are detailed in the pre-departure information pack at the time of booking.

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

You should budget an additional US\$40 per day that you spend in Mumbai & Madras before & after the project to cover hotels, meals & incidentals. As a guideline we suggest that you budget approx. US\$100 per week to cover personal day to day expenditure - drinks, snacks, occasional lunches in major centres, some

souvenirs, optional activities, individual museum entry fees not mentioned in the itinerary. Good buys can include Hindu & Buddhist bronzes, statues & religious items, inlaid woodworks & carvings, jewellery, textiles & skills. Many small & interesting 'treasures' need not cost much at all, but if you think you might be severely & frequently tempted, we suggest budgeting extra into your spending money even if you don't end up using it all. Credit cards are occasionally accepted by well established outlets in the major cities. Other than the above, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money.

ARRIVING AT START OF THE PROJECT

If you have time we suggest you arrive in Madras or Mumbai a couple of days before departure to allow yourself time to acclimatise and get over intercontinental flights. There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Mumbai or Madras hotel at 18.00 hrs on the evening before Day 1. This meeting is also your latest arrival time.

LEAVING AT END OF THE PROJECT

In Madras: Arrangements end at our Madras campsite after breakfast on Day 23. Any onward flight connections could be made for this day.

In Mumbai: Arrangements at our Mumbai campsite/hotel after breakfast on Day 23. Any onward flight connections could be made this day.

COMBINATIONS & CONNECTING PROJECTS

'Goa & South India' connects in Mumbai with the 'Nepal, the Ganges & Rajasthan' project (Mumbai to Kathmandu or v.v.) which travels to the desert fortress-cities & palaces of the Maharajahs in Rajasthan, by camel into the Thar Desert, to the Taj Mahal, the tiger reserves & ancient sites of northern India, and across the Ganges to Nepal & the Himalayas. Put together these two projects form the 'All India' project (Kathmandu to Madras v.v). On Madras departures you may therefore be travelling with some group members who are continuing their travels into northern India & Nepal. On Mumbai departures you may be joining some group members who have already been travelling for 28 days from Kathmandu.

INTERESTING READING

Chasing the Monsoon (Alexander Frater), A Tiger for Malgudi (R.K. Narayan), On a Shoe-String to Coorg (Devla Murphy). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Local Payment
Return flights.....
Visas.....
Vaccinations.....
Insurance.....
Personal spending money.....
Total _____	_____

The information in this dossier 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 Encounter Overland Ltd.