

Earthbound Expeditions

Kerala Tour

8 days, from US$987 per person

Duration	Group size	Country
8 days	**Unlimited**	**India**

Kerala Tour Overview

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Kerala tour in India: known as God's own country
Kerala is a narrow state on the southwestern edge of the Indian peninsula, just 650 km long and 120 km at its widest. It lies between the Arabian Sea to the west and a tropical mountain range to the east, and it is where the monsoon, the rainy season for the rest of the Indian subcontinent, begins. Forty-four mountain rivers divide this tropical strip into fertile river deltas, which makes Kerala green, wet and highly fertile, and distinct from the rest of India. This environment has produced rare herbs, spices, fruits and animals that have influenced world history. Today Kerala is well known for Ayurvedic massage and wellness holidays.

Over eight days, this tour explores the southwestern Indian state of Kerala and gives you a real insight into its way of life, culture and nature, including its distinctive natural environment.

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive in Cochin

You arrive in the morning at Cochin International Airport. After customs, immigration and baggage collection, an Earthbound representative meets you as you exit the arrivals terminal building and transfers you to your hotel. After check-in, you have the day to relax. In the evening you join a private one-hour sunset cruise on Kochi Harbour. From the boat you see Fort Kochi and sights such as Bolgatty Island, Willingdon Island, the Kochi shipyard and the Chinese fishing nets. Overnight in Cochin.

Altitude: 5 m On foot: None, arrival day Night: Hotel, Cochin Meals: None

Day 2

Cochin sightseeing

After breakfast, you set out on a half-day sightseeing tour of Cochin. The tour includes the best-preserved synagogue in Asia, the Dutch Palace and St. Francis Church, the oldest European church in India, where Vasco da Gama was originally buried. You also take a walk through the Fort Cochin area to see the large cantilevered Chinese fishing nets in operation. In the evening, you go to a cultural arts centre to see Kathakali, the best-known dance drama of Kerala. A demonstration of the Kathakali make-up begins one hour before the performance. Overnight in Cochin.

Altitude: 5 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Cochin Meals: Breakfast

Day 3

Drive from Cochin to Munnar (130 km, 3 hours)

After breakfast, you check out of the hotel and drive to Munnar, a well-known hill station at an altitude of nearly 6,000 ft. The drive is scenic. The British administration established a summer retreat here many years ago to avoid the summer heat of the coastal regions. On arrival in Munnar, you check in to your hotel or resort and settle in to the cooler climate. Later, you can visit the Tea Museum in Munnar town, which is surrounded by tea gardens. It is the only museum of its kind and shows the traditional method of tea production. You then have free time for shopping. Overnight in Munnar.

Altitude: 1,600 m On foot: None, 3 hr drive Night: Hotel, Munnar Meals: Breakfast

Day 4

Munnar sightseeing

This day is spent sightseeing in and around Munnar. You start with a visit to Eravikulam National Park (Rajamala National Park), about 15 km from Munnar. The park is home to the Nilgiri tahr, an endangered mountain goat, and the Atlas moth, one of the largest moths in the world, as well as many rare plants. You can walk on the trails inside the park. Afterwards, you visit the dam reservoir at Mattupetty, where boating is available. Later, you visit Echo Point, where, as the name suggests, you can hear your own voice echo several times. It is also a good place for nature walks. From Echo Point you continue to Kundala, the site of an artificial dam and catchment area in a scenic setting. In the evening you return to your hotel. Overnight in Munnar.

Altitude: 1,600 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Munnar Meals: Breakfast

Day 5

Munnar to Thekkady (90 km, 2 hours 30 minutes)

You transfer to Thekkady on one of the most scenic hill roads in Kerala. Periyar is one of the world's most notable wildlife reserves, known for its landscape, varied wildlife and scenery. On arrival you check in to your hotel. You then visit spice plantations in the area that grow some of the finest spices in the world. The most common spices are cardamom, pepper, cloves, nutmeg and cinnamon. The plantations have shops where you can buy these spices. Afterwards you take a 1.5-hour boat trip on Periyar Lake, which is the main way to tour the sanctuary without a guided walk. Elephants are easy to see from the boat, as they come to the lake in herds to bathe. Overnight in Thekkady.

Altitude: 900 m On foot: None, 2–3 hr drive Night: Hotel, Thekkady Meals: Breakfast

Day 6

Thekkady to Alleppey and houseboat cruise

After breakfast, you transfer to the houseboat embarkation point. Houseboats were once an essential part of daily life in Kerala. The traditional boat is known locally as a kettuvallom. Your private boat has bedrooms, bathrooms, a living area, a sun deck, a dining area and a corridor. It also has a kitchen, where all your lunch is prepared on board. You travel along the winding Kerala backwaters in a quiet, natural setting. The boat is anchored on the lake for the night.

Altitude: 5 m On foot: None, 4 hr drive Night: Houseboat, Alleppey Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Alleppey to Kumarakom

After breakfast, you transfer to Kumarakom and check in to your pre-booked waterfront resort. Kumarakom is a quiet and unspoilt island area set among the backwaters. You can spend the day by the water and watch the sunset. The resort offers activities such as fishing trips, cycling and water sports. Overnight in Kumarakom.

Altitude: 5 m On foot: None, 1 hr drive Night: Resort, Kumarakom Meals: Breakfast

Day 8

Kumarakom to Cochin Airport and departure (90 km, 2.5 hours)

After breakfast, you check out of the hotel and transfer to Cochin Airport for your flight home.

Altitude: 5 m On foot: None, 2–3 hr drive Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- Arrival and departure assistance
- Accommodation in the hotels mentioned above on a twin-sharing basis for 7 nights and 8 days
- Buffet breakfast throughout your stay
- Overnight deluxe or premium houseboat cruise on the Alleppey backwaters, including all meals
- Sunset cruise, cultural show and guided sightseeing in Cochin
- Spice plantation visit and Periyar boat trip in Thekkady
- Tea Museum visit and Eravikulam National Park visit
- All monument and entrance fees
- All sightseeing mentioned in the itinerary
- Transport throughout the tour, including transfers, sightseeing, excursions and road travel as per the programme, in an air-conditioned Indigo, Innova or Tempo with an English-speaking driver, including fuel, parking, taxes and driver allowance
- Government service tax

Not included

- Airfare (domestic and international)
- Personal expenses such as laundry, tips and camera fees
- Alcoholic beverages

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/kerala-tour-8-days