

RAJASTHAN TO KERALA & TAMIL NADU

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Mon 26 Feb '07 - Be met at either Melbourne, Sydney or Delhi airport depending on group numbers. Upon arrival transfer to hotel.

Tue 27 – DELHI - After a hearty breakfast we tour New & Old Delhi, with evening free to wander around or relax in the hotel's magnificent spa & try some of the delicacies in any of its 12 restaurants.

Wed 28 – DELHI/AGRA/JAIPUR - Early morning transfer to New Delhi railway station to board the Shatabdi Express Train with breakfast onboard. Upon arrival in Agra(0755hrs) our coach will bring us to the ultimate tribute to love; the world's most symmetrical building is our gateway to a journey of countless experiences & unforgettable sights. After taking some more "framed" photos of the Taj Mahal from Agra fort, we stop at the ghost town of Fatehpur Sikri on way to Rajasthan's capital. Enjoy dinner with views from the terrace.

Thu 1 March – JAIPUR – A real treat to wake surrounded by this splendid abode where each meal is an enjoyment. We take a tour of the city in the morning, leaving us ample time for the kind of shopping that would tempt even the most stoic among us.

Fri 2 – JAIPUR - This morning a slow ascent on elephant's back to the state's most famous fort, followed by an afternoon at leisure; there is so much to see & do in this gem-cutting capital; silver, gold, fabrics, precious stones, clothes, wall hangings....

Sat 3 – UDAIPUR -Our early morning flight brings us to Rajasthan's most romantic lake city & host of our celebrations for the next 2 days. After a tour of its Palaces, walk around its tiny winding streets watching locals prepare the pyres for tonight's burning of "evil Holika"; we'll be part of the neighbourhood's festivities – authentic viewing!

Sun 4 – HAPPY HOLI!!! Festival of spring, colour, friendship, a most joyous occasion... Wear something casual and be prepared to play the game, mingle with the happy locals. No one will mind , today is a day for carefree fun, games and laughter!! The most fun you've had in a long time. In the evening you may even like to enjoy a memorable meal among drooping bougainvillea around lily ponds with the sound of a soulful sitar? The Lake palace awaits!

Mon 5 – MUMBAI -Morning transfer to airport for flight to Mumbai(9W3401/0840 -1020) We check-in, among the city's top boutiques surrounding our trendy hotel in Mumbai's most chic neighbourhood, before a city tour.

Tue 6 – KOVALAM- Flight to Kerala (9W336 /1040 – 1240)considered God's own state. After some Trivandrum sightseeing, drive to Kovalam, "Paradise of the south". Who could possibly resist the allure of its Ayurvedic massages, its clear waters, balmy evenings by the sea?...not us!!



Wed 7 – KOVALAM - Ohhh for all the choices...you can either allow yourself to be mesmerised by the Arabian sea, fall under the spell of Kerala's masseurs or take an optional tour to the southern most tip of this sub-continent where the Arabian meets Bay of Bengal, meets Indian ocean. Watch the sun rise over the bay & set in the sea, sample the best paranthas, a full day of seeing sooo much or doing nothing at all... your call!!

Thu 8 – ALLEPEY/KUMARAKOM - - The word "relaxation" will take on another meaning after today's accommodation. Allepey was the busiest port on the Malabar coast once & a short drive to where we board our "ketuvallam" for a backwaters overnight cruise with all meals cooked onboard while you observe myriad of stars you never knew existed. The smell of the tropics & the sound of birds...BLD

Fri 9 – THEKKADY -Disembark your "floating spa" for a scenic drive past tea/spice plantations to the wildlife sanctuary of Peryiar spreading aprox 800sq.klms.We cruise on the lake to observe the wildlife surrounding us; elephants, tigers,birds etc

Sat 10 – MADURAI - It is a good mix of history, culture & relaxation our tour, as we leave Kerala for the most amazing temples of the south. Enjoy the 4hr drive through hanging spice vines, tropical fruit orchards & the rice bowl of India as we come to Madurai. We are here to visit the awe inspiring Meenakshi Temple, one of the wonders of the south.

Sun 11 – CHENNAI/KANCHIPURAM/MAHABALIPURAM – We fly to old Madras this morning for the short drive to the Unesco heritage site of Mahabalipuram, on the way also visiting the "silk capital of India". Kanchi is one of India's 7 sacred cities & also the capital of the historical Pallava dynasty. Our resort is on the beach just like the shore temples here; the heritage-listed site occasionally puts on light & sound productions in the shadow of its famous structures.

Mon 12 – It is oh so enlightening to walk along these shores where history, culture, meet the breeze & waves, take in all the knowledge, enjoy the wonderful fish curries by the beach. Days you'll remember for a long time to come....

Tue 13 – Breakfast under the palms & after a short drive to Chennai we tour the city before our international flight. If wishing to extend visit you may stay a few extra nights right here on this beach, but for most of us it is a farewell this time round

Wed 14 – Arrive in Sydney...I can hardly wait to open my suitcases!!!

