



INSIDER-TOURS
re-connecting people, places and culture

SOUTH INDIA TOUR – BIRDING & NATURE – THE INSIDER TOUR

Bird watching and wildlife, indigenous guides and trekkers, home-cooked food, forests and tea gardens, cardamom plantations, waterfalls, bathing, camping, tribal huts, homestays, toy train at Ooty and more...

South India bird watching, wildlife & culture tour - 13 days/12 nights Kerala: (Cochin) Kochi, Thattekkad, Periyar, Munnar, Chinnar, Ooty & Masinagudi

Cost: £1460 per person (based on twin share) for this birding tour in South India, excluding flights. All our tours are private - you won't be part of a group.

The South India tour price quoted is for full board (except at hotels), an English speaking Indian driver, local hosts/guides, other travel costs. If you require a professional birding guide the tour cost will increase.

This is a sample birding tour. All our tours are customized to meet your needs. We can mix and match according to the dates, length of stay and places you would like to visit, although we like to base tours around the key community projects we support.

Day one and two

Your arrival in the City of Kochi. Set on a cluster of islands and narrow peninsulas, Kochi is a city of cultural diversity - winding streets, shady trees, Kathakali dance, modern Indian art, 500-year old Portuguese houses, mosques, a tiny Jewish community with ancient roots - and ferry boats scuttling backwards and forwards.

Once you are settled into your hotel, we can take you on our backstreet tour of the city by foot and three-wheelers, visiting the spice market, the fishing harbour and, in the evening, the city's Kathakali dance show.

Overnight: (2 nights), Killians Boutique Hotel.

Day three, four, five

We will make our way by car to the bird sanctuary at Thattekkad, a lowland forest rich in bird life - over 270 species in a very small area. For those searching for the endemics of the Western Ghats (regarded as one of the most important pristine forest and mountain areas in Asia) - Thattekkad should be rewarding.



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The rare Indian Pitta, the endemic Malabar Parakeet, Malabar Grey Hornbill and the Whitebellied Treepie are common visitors.

Here you can also go lowland forest trek, village walks and look at the rubber plantations.

Overnight: (3 nights). The Hornbill Camp, tented camp (with en-suite toilet) on the banks of the river Periyar. You'll wake to a dawn chorus of birds, and will be cared for a feed by the guide's family and local community members. Large numbers of rare birds and butterflies can be seen just by taking a stroll around the camp.

Day six and seven

From the lowlands, we'll take the spectacular two hour long drive the National Highway 49 - through forests and tea gardens - to the hill station of Munnar, 1500 metres high in the mountains. The combination of crisp mountain air, craggy peaks and tall red wood trees make it a peaceful retreat. Here rare endemic bird species find their home - the White bellied Shortwing, the Broad tailed Grass bird - as well as the endangered NilgiriTahr (primitive cousins of true goats).

The area was once a favourite summer resort of the British Government and still has a colonial air. Our stay at the Olive Brook- built in a Cardamom plantation. Here we can explore the plantations and meet the artisans who work the land. We can also make our way to the enclave of the NilgiriTahr at Rajamala, explore the grasslands at Munnar, and make our way down the BodiGhat to search for the yellow throated bulbul.

Overnight: (2 nights). Olive Brook.

Day eight and nine

We will take the long drive to reach Ooty by afternoon. Ooty (Udhagamandalam) - is a hill station, at about 2,200m in the Nilgiri Hills. The Cairnhill Reserved Forest, 3km from town on the Avalanche road will be our main destination, where the endemic Nilgiri Laughing Thrush, White-bellied Shortwing, and Black-and-rufous, Rusty-tailed and Nilgiri Flycatchers all occur.

Overnight: (2 nights), Taj Savoy.



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Day ten and eleven

We'll make our way by car through the hill town and down through the steep KallattiGhat to Masinagudi at the foothills (5 hours) - another area for excellent birding & wildlife. Here we can visit the elephant refuge and training center, take an elephant safari into the forest, and a jeep safari to look out for birds en-route. We will be able to sight elephants, gaurs and an occasional big cat.

Overnight: (2 nights). Jungle Retreat - cottages skirt the forest, with a view of the mountains from your porch.

Day twelve

We'll finish the South India tour - making our way back to Kochi – through the plains once again, passing through the wetlands for water birds and then to our hotel.

Overnight: (1 night). Airport Hotel

Day thirteen

We'll make our way to the airport for your journey back home at the end of your South India tour.

Seasons for Birding and Nature Tour

The best time to visit is from late October to April. June, July and August are the monsoon months.