

## Detailed Itinerary:

**DAY 1:** Arrive in Bangaluru (formerly Bangalore), the capital of Indian's southern Karnataka state and the third most populated city in India. You'll be met at the airport and taken to the lovely Vivanta by Taj - MG Road hotel to relax, dine, and sleep.

**DAY 2:** After breakfast and a morning welcome session with Dorene Petersen, we will board our comfy tour bus and venture out. Our first stop is the famous Lalbagh Botanical Garden, home to India's largest collection of tropical plants and trees over 100 years old. Next, we'll see historic Cubbon Park, located in the heart of the city, for an additional preview of the flora and fauna we'll be seeing in our travels. After lunch we'll spend the afternoon touring the Sandalwood Soap Factory, and will return to the hotel for the evening.

**DAY 3:** Today we head out early (6 a.m.) for Mysuru (formerly Mysore). A light breakfast will be prepared and packed for the road. Our destination is the Mysuru Cocoon Market, where we'll experience silk cocoon trading in full swing, followed by the opportunity to learn about hand weaving in Melkote. A late lunch will be served at the Amblee Resort, Srirangapattina. We'll then visit a jaggery house to learn about traditional cane sugar before checking into the Fortune JP Palace for dinner and sleep.

**DAY 4:** Our first stop is the Prajna Kuteera Ayurveda Centre, where we will spend the morning learning about Ayurveda, culminating in an Ayurvedic lunch. We then will venture to the Mysore Silks factory and see how silk transforms from the cocoon into an elegant sari. On the way back, we'll stop and see the famous Big Banyan Tree and visit the market at Chamundi Hills, home to the Chamundeshwari Temple.

**DAY 5:** On our last day in Mysuru, we'll have optional morning visits to Mysore Palace, the Agarbatti Manufacturing Incense Factory, and the local salt caves. After lunch at Oyster Bay, on Hebbal Lake, we'll visit the Sandalwood Distillery Museum, and will end the day with dinner at the beautiful Lalith Mahal Palace, built in the 1930s by the Maharaja of Mysore.

**DAY 6:** Today we head up into the mountains to Ooty to visit the Hope Foundation. Here you'll get your first chance to "give back" by gifting the women who operate this herbal research center with any pens, paper, and warm hats you have brought with you. We will tour the herbarium and the eucalyptus essential oil distillery, where you can purchase the small batch distilled oil. We end the day enjoying dinner together at the Fortune Resort Sullivan Court, a former colonial estate with lush lawns and relaxing gardens.

**DAY 7 and 8:** Here, half way through our trip, we'll leave in the morning and head to rural Palakkad in Karala. Beautiful as the Garden of Eden, Palakkad is known as the "rice bowl" of Kerala and produces the largest quantity of rice in the state. It is also the largest producer of turmeric, banana, and tamarind. Here we

will stay 2 nights in the beautiful Kairali Ayurvedic Village, where you will get a massage or treatment, visit an Ayurvedic factory in Pollachi, and enjoy the opportunity to pause, relax, and experience Ayurvedic medicine.

**DAY 9:** Refreshed, we will head out to Madurai and the Heritage Madurai Hotel, where we will check in for late lunch. In the evening, we head back out for a special adventure at Jasmine Concrete, where we will experience jasmine essential oil production.

**DAY 10:** If you're an early riser, you may choose to join us at 5 a.m. to help the women harvest jasmine in the fields. We then explore the local flower market and see how the jasmine and other aromatics are traded. The rest of the day is open for you to relax at the hotel or join us for a visit to the colorful Meenakshi Amman Temple, an historic, Hindu temple dedicated to Parvati (known as Meenakshi) and her consort, Shiva.

**DAY 11:** This morning we wind our way up into the breathtaking Western Ghats (mountains) to Munnar. We'll stop along the way to see bricks being made by hand, and will lunch at the Green Kitchen Family Restaurant. After lunch, we'll head up to the amazing government-protected sandalwood forest before checking into the scenic hillside Tea Country Hill Resort.

**DAY 12:** Our day starts with a morning visit to the Srishti School for the Disadvantaged. Here we'll meet the school Principal and have the opportunity to provide the children with much-needed materials. We'll also see a demonstration of natural dyeing at Aranya Naturals, next door to the school, where they employ graduates to make exquisite hand-dyed scarfs, wraps, natural papers, and other crafts. You will get a chance to support their endeavors and shop at the gift shop. After lunch, you'll have an open evening to rest and relax or join us for shopping in the village.

**DAY 13:** Today we're bound for Cochin, starting with the Kerala Farm Organic Spices Village on the way, where we'll learn about the local spice culture from world-class processors and exporters of pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, and turmeric, among others. Next, we'll head to Deepa Spice World for a plantation tour. After lunch we're bound for DEO Industries to tour a small family distillery and experience a small-batch soap making demonstration before arriving in Cochin and settling into the Brunton Boatyard, on Cochin's famous harbor, our final hotel.

**DAY 14:** On our last full day, we'll spend the morning touring the Kancor Factory specializing in spice and floral extracts, essential oils, and organic products. The afternoon will be spent at Wellness Solutions, an Ayurvedic center, where we'll be treated to a talk on mind/body health by Dr. Sreekumar. Our farewell dinner will include an authentic Indian dance show.

**DAY 15:** Tearful but joyous goodbyes and on-time transfers to Cochin Airport!