

Mindful India 2023 – The Amazing South

Itinerary

Sunday 29th January – The Adventure Begins

Israeli contingent departs Tel Aviv.

International travelers are en route from their respective points of origin.

Monday 30th January – Arrive Delhi

Connect to flight to Kochi (formerly known as Cochin).

We will have some time to unwind, meet any participants joining us in India as well as our wonderful Indian tour operator, Sanjay Mishra, get oriented and change money.

Introduction to Mindfulness.

Lunch and dinner included.

Overnight: Kochi

Tuesday 31st January–Kochi

We will visit the main section of the town, Fort Cochin: the spice markets, fishing nets, the gorgeous Portuguese palace, India's first European church, and seventeenth-century Dutch homes. We will walk through historic Jew Town and will visit the exquisite Paradiso Synagogue which contains an ornate gold pulpit, intricate, hand-painted floor tiles from Canton, China, and magnificent chandeliers from Belgium.

Lunch and dinner included.

Evening - Kathakali cultural dance performance.

Watch the ancient Hindu epics - the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas - come to life through the magic of a Kathakali performance. In this dramatized presentation, face paint, fantastic costumes, ornamental headpieces and meditation transform the actors into gods, heroes and demons confronting the eternal themes of righteousness and evil, frailty and courage, poverty and prosperity, war and peace.

Overnight: Kochi

Wednesday 1st February – Kochi - Allepey

Leave Kochi and drive approx. 2 hours in private, air-conditioned cars to Allepey, where we will board our houseboats for a unique experience exploring the backwaters of Kerala.

Our luxury houseboats sleep approximately 4-6 people per boat, each with its own private chef!

Drifting through quiet canals lined with coconut palms, eating delicious Keralan food, absorbing the beauty of Kerala villages as you float by them, and sleeping on the water are some of the highlights of a trip to southern India. The houseboat, a modified former rice boat, winds its way along narrow, shady canals through isolated villages as it travels through part of the 900 km. network of waterways that are an integral element in maintaining an ecological balance and creating harmony with nature.

Lunch and dinner - true culinary delights included.

Evening - we will watch a dance performance by local artists.

Overnight: Houseboat

Thursday 2nd February – Allepey - Ayurveda Beach Resort

After a delicious breakfast, we'll bid goodbye to our beautiful houseboats but have no fear - we are headed to even more bliss!

We will drive in our private cars to our Ayurveda Beach Resort (approx. 45 mins.).

Lunch included.

Ayurveda, Sanskrit for “the science of life”, is more than just a system of medicine. It is considered a way of living because it teaches that health is not just a physical phenomenon but a mental, physical and social one as well. Each individual is treated as a whole rather than just targeting an affected part of the body, and emphasis is placed on prevention as well as cure through balancing the three humors, doshas, of the human body: vata, pitta and kapha.

Although Ayurvedic spas can be found all over India, the most famous ones are in Kerala because of its natural abundance of forests with a wealth of herbs and medicinal plants. In the stunning setting of a luxury beach resort, we will enjoy an individual consultation with the Ayurvedic doctor and one treatment (different types of massage and medicated steam or scrub bath).

(The consultation and one treatment during our stay are included).

Dinner included.

Overnight: Ayurveda Beach Resort

Friday 3rd February - Ayurveda Beach Resort

Early morning mindful beach walk along the shores of the Arabian Sea (optional).
We've sometimes been able to watch the local fishermen bring in the day's catch and the women handle the haggling.

Lecture on Ayurveda and continue Ayurveda treatments.

Lunch included.

Kabbalat Shabbat

Shabbat dinner included.

Overnight: Ayurveda Beach Resort

Saturday 4th February – Ayurveda Beach Resort

A day of rest and mindfulness.

Workshop: Introduction to Mindfulness.

Would you like to be able to stay calm and in control even in the midst of chaos and turmoil? Would you like to focus and concentrate better, sleep better, to feel more joyful? This morning's workshop will introduce you to the science and practice of meditation and mindfulness. Dr. Dina Wyshogrod's passion is taking the mystery out of meditation and teaching even the most skeptical how to improve your health and your life in just minutes a day.

Lunch and dinner included.

Overnight: Ayurveda Beach Resort

Sunday 5th February – Ayurveda Beach Resort - Munnar

We will drive in private cars to Munnar (approx. 5 hour)

Stop on the way for lunch included.

Munnar is the center of Kerala's tea-growing region, and the mountain slopes, carpeted with lush tea plantations, make for jaw-dropping, breath-taking scenery.

Dinner included at our hotel

Overnight: Munnar

Monday 6th February - Munnar

Get ready for a spectacular hike through lush tea plantations (easy-moderate level).

Alternative options for those less inclined to hiking.

Lunch included.

Visit a tea factory and learn all you would ever want to know about tea.

You will gain a new appreciation for this popular beverage.

Stock up on tea and spices of all varieties at the spice shops

dotting the town.

Visit a crafts center operated by differently abled people. Observe their skill and talent with a variety of textiles and learn how the center has enriched their lives.

Dinner included – This is a unique, authentic experience where the delicious meal is served on banana leaves.

Overnight: Munnar

Tuesday 7th February - Munnar - Madurai

We will drive in our private cars (approx. 5 hours) to Madurai.

Orientation to this colorful city.

Lunch and dinner included.

Overnight: Madurai

Wednesday 8th February - Madurai

Situated on the banks of the River Vaigai, Madurai is one of the oldest cities in South Asia and is often described as "the Athens of the East". We will explore the stunning MinakshiSundareshvara Temple complex, considered the greatest man-made spectacle of Southern India.

Lunch and dinner included.

Overnight: Madurai

Thursday 9th February – Madurai - Delhi (flight)

Lunch and dinner included.

Friday 10th February –Delhi - Agra

We will drive (approx. 4 hours) to Agra, the home of the iconic Taj Mahal.

Lunch included.

We will visit a factory where beautiful decorative objects are crafted using the same inlay technique that was used in adorning the Taj Mahal.

Kabbalat Shabbat

Shabbat dinner included.

Overnight: Agra

Saturday 11th February –Agra

Our hotel is within walking distance of the Taj Mahal so we will experience Shabbat in a truly unique way by walking to the Taj! The Taj Mahal is widely considered to be the most beautiful building in the world. Nobel Laureate, the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, described it as "a teardrop on the cheek of eternity." We will learn about the history and construction of this iconic building with ample time for each of us appreciate it on our own.

Lunch included.

Afternoon - mindfulness workshop.

Final banquet included:

A chance to reflect on our time together.

Enterprising participants in the past have even created and presented a "Revue" of impressions and memories of the trip.

Sunday 12th February – Agra - Delhi - Tel Aviv/International flights

We will leave Agra for a 4 hour drive back to Delhi.

Lunch included.

Check in at the airport. We'll take our leave of one another and embark on our international flights home.