



## **TAMIL NADU - BEST OF TAMIL NADU - 11N / 12D**



### **ITINERARY**

Best Of Tamil Nadu : 11N/12D

Day 01 Arrive Chennai

On arrival you will be met and transferred to hotel. Later proceed for the sightseeing of Chennai, "the gateway of South India".



Visit National Art Gallery and Museum (closed on Fridays) which has a selection of ancient paintings of almost all schools as well as section devoted to modern art, Fort St. George, St. Mary's Church, Drive along Marina Beach (the second longest in the world), San Thome Cathedral, Mylapore Shiva Temple and shopping.

Day 02 Chennai / Mahabalipuram

Breakfast at Hotel. Today you will be doing a full day excursion to Kancheepuram and Mahabalipuram.

KANCHIPURAM, The Golden city 75 km. west of Chennai, is the ancient capital of the Pallavas famous as a city of 1000 Temples and still has 124 shrines. The first temple dedicated to Shiva was built in the 7th and 8th century and has paintings on the walls. Temples of Ekambaswara , Kailasanatha, Sri Kamakshi and Varadarajaswamy are of interest. Kanchipuram is also famous for its silks. Lunch at local restaurant and later drive to Mamallapuram and check in at hotel.

MAHABALIPURAM the only surviving shore temple (a heritage monument) of India is 65 KM south of Chennai, popularly known as the seven Pagodas, is an ancient rock hewn monument, monolithic temples and figures with carvings and sculptures of the 6th and 7th century A.D. In this ancient seaside town , shrines and huge sculptures cut-out of rocks more than 1200 years back during the reign of Pallava Kings in the region can be seen. The rock carvings depicting mythological episodes - of demons, Gods and animals in battle and others - are truly poems in stone. The only shore temple which remains here is the spectacular two - spired shrine, unique because it houses both Lord Shiva and the Lord Vishnu in its sanctum-sanctorum.

Day 03 Mahabalipuram / Pondicherry

After breakfast drive to Pondicherry. Visit Aurobindo Ashram, Auroville, Gandhi Museum, etc.

SHRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, The main ashram building is on Rue De La Marine and is surrounded by other buildings given over to the various educational and cultural activities of the aurobindo Society.

AUROVILLE, The brainchild of The Mother and designed by French Architect Roger Anger, Auroville was conceived as an experiment in international living where men and women could live in peace and progressive harmony with each other above all creeds

Day 04 Pondicherry / Swamimalai

After breakfast drive to Swamimalai.

Swamimalai is a sylvan village, located about five kilometers west of Kumbakonam on the banks of a tributary of river Cauvery. The temple has three 'gopuram' with three 'praharam'. The 'gopuram' on the south side of the temple is decorated with statues and contains five storeys while the other two entrances have no towers above them. Swamimalai is fourth among the six padai veedu or sacred shrines built to offer reverence to Lord Muruga. The presiding deity here expounded the inference of the Pranava mantra OM to his own Father Lord Siva Himself.

Day 05 Swamimalai / Tanjore / Karaikudi

After breakfast drive to Karaikudi enroute visit Tanjore.

**TANJORE** The Big Temple of Brahadeeshwara is a World Heritage Monument and is a remarkable architectural feat similar to Egyptian Pyramids. The temple tower rises to a height of 15 mts from a square base of 29 mts and then tapers off, making a total of 66 mts. Many of the treasures of Tanjore and the surrounding area are housed in Art Gallery and Saraswati Mahal Library within the Palace.

**KARAIKUDI** Chettinadu or the land of Nattukkottai Chettiars, is famous for its fortress like homes and temples that are architectural marvels and lip smacking food. It is a hidden treasure. The palaces and mansions reflect a conglomeration of architecture and building styles. Burma teak motif, handmade tiles, stained glass windows, elaborate chandeliers and intricate carpentry are all unique ingredients of Chettinadu Mansion. Every home is an architectural splendour.

Day 06 Karaikudi / Rameshwaram

After breakfast proceed to Rameshwaram- the most sacred temple town of India is an island hallowed by the epic Ramayana, where Lord Rama is said to have visited before going into battle of Srilanka. Legend has it that Lord Rama sent Hanuman to Mount Kailash to bring a Lingam for worship when he set foot after defeating Ravana. As Hanuman did not return when the auspicious hour was approaching, Sita made a sand Lingam so that worship could be performed in time, which is where the present day Ramanatha Swamy Temple stands close to sea on the eastern side of the island. One of the twelve Jyotirlingam shrines is also well known for its magnificent corridors and the massive sculptured pillars lining them. Lunch at local restaurant. Return to Madurai for dinner.

Day 07 Rameshwaram / Kanyakumari  
After breakfast drive to Kanyakumari.

Once known as the "Alexandria of the East", Kanyakumari is an abode for art, culture, civilization and pilgrimage for years. It was a popular centre for commerce and trade.

Visit the temple, Vivekananda Rock, Valluvar Statue and witness the sunset and sunrise.

Day 08 Kanyakumari / Madurai  
After breakfast drive to Madurai.

Madurai is one of the oldest cities of south India and had originally been designed in a lotus motif. It is an extremely sacred city and here lies the renowned Meenakshi Temple. The vast walled complex of the temple with its shadowy chambers, tank, carved columns, shrines and courtyards built between twelve towering gopurams is considered south India's finest example of Dravidian architecture. In the evening visit Nayatkar Temple for the light and sound show.

Day 09 Madurai / Kodaikanal

Drive to Kodaikanal and check-in to the hotel to relax. Well laid out walking path through picturesque prospects, tumultuous water falls and steep rock out drops are the attractions of Kodai. Later proceed for the sightseeing of Kodaikanal, one of the India's most beautiful hillstation. Visit Bryants Park - famous for its flowers, hybrids and grafts which is housed in a glass house, Green Valley view (earlier known as Suicide Point) Coakers Walk, Silver Cascade Waterfalls, Silent valley. Kodai Lake is a beautiful lake with 24 hectares and a boat ride provides a beautiful view.

Day 10 Kodaikanal / Ooty

Drive to Ooty.

Drive to Ooty, the queen of hillstations. The beautiful hill station established by the British in the early part of the 19th century. A fine retreat from the heat of the plains. Ooty offers scenic beauty and relaxed ambience. The Beautiful Ooty Lake, Set Among Groves Of Eucalyptus Trees Is A Popular Spot With Its Facilities For Boating. Nilgiris is India's first biosphere. It has been declared as one of the 14 "Hotspots" of the world because of its unique biodiversity.

Day 11 Ooty

Full day excursion to Ooty and Coonoor. Visit Botanical Gardens, the Lake, Dodabetta peak, which provides beautiful views of the surrounding hills and plains at Ooty.

Located at a lower altitude, with a warmer climate, Coonoor is a popular hill resort in its own way. You can take a Optional toy train to Coonoor to enjoy the scenic beauties. The well laid-out Sim's park here is a beautiful botanical garden, with many rare flowers, shrubs and trees. Lambs rock and Dolphin's Nose are some of the viewpoints and picnic spots around Coonoor.

Day 12 Departure Transfer

Breakfast at Hotel. By noon check-out of the hotel and transfer to Airport to connect to onward destination.