



TAMIL NADU - HOLIDAYS - 8N / 9D

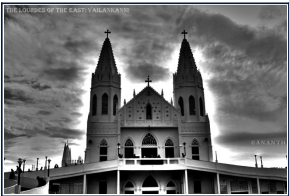


ITINERARY

Tamil Nadu Holidays : 8N/9D

Day01 Arrive Chennai

On arrival, you will be met by our representative and transferred to the hotel. In the afternoon proceed for a half-day sightseeing of Chennai. Visit National Art Gallery, Fort Museum, San Thome Cathedral and drive past Marina Beach.



Day 02 Chennai / Mahabalipuram

Drive to Mahabalipuram enroute visit Dakshina Chithra, where you can see reconstructions of traditional houses and other handicrafts from rural Tamil Nadu and the rest of South India. It provides an insight into the lifestyle of the four southern states. Visit the Shore Temple, Arjuna's Penance, Five Rathas, Krishna Mandapam, Tiger Cave, Mahishasuramardihini Cave, Krishna's Butter Ball. Later in the evening relax on the beach.

Day 03 Mahabalipuram / Pondicherry

Drive to Pondicherry, the French Town. Visit Auroville, Aurobindo Ashram, Government Museum and the beach that runs along the city. If interested one can go for a boat ride in Chunambar.

Day 04 Pondicherry / Chidambaram / Vailankanni

After breakfast drive to Vailankanni enroute visit Chidambaram.

CHIDAMBARAM, This pilgrim centre famous for the Nataraja Temple where Lord Shiva is seen as the cosmic dancer. The temple is spread over 40 acres, has the golden roof over sanctum sanctorum. The gopurams show in detailed sculptures 108 postures of the Bharata Natyam Dance.

VAILANKANNI The famous Roman Catholic Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health. Many come seeking cures for various ailments - some place models of 'cured body parts' at the shrine. The Museum situated opposite to the Basilica has a very rich variety of exhibits. The precious offerings made by the devotees are on display here.

Day 05 Vailankanni / Tanjore / Swamimalai

TANJORE Tanjore is rich in its architecture, exquisite handicrafts, paintings, bronzes and South Indian Musical instruments. Visit the magnificent Brahadeeswara temple, where the shade of the tower (gopuram or vimanam) will not fall on the ground. The second largest monolithic sculpture, Nandi (Bull) can be found in the portal of the shrine. The Royal palace complex houses in important library and museums, including a superb collection of Chola bronzes.

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 abords 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 06 Trichy

Drive to Trichy and check-in to the hotel.

TRICHY Trichy was the citadel of the Chola dynasty in the medieval period. In the 18th century it witnessed the Carnatic wars fought between the French and the English. Lord Robert Clive's house is still there to see and so is the Danish Church. The Rock-Fort is the landmark of Trichy. A climb of 434 steps leads to the ancient temple of Ganapati on top and a further climb to a Shiva temple Visit Srirangam temple and Rockfort temple.

If time permits we can explore some rarely visited ancient sites near Trichy including Moovar Koil Temple at Kodumbalur, ancient cave temples of the Jains at Sittannaval and Pudukottai where a museum houses a wide range of sculptures.

Day 07 Trichy / Karaikudi / Madurai

Today you will proceed for the day excursion to karaikudi and then drive back to Madurai

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 an 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 08 Madurai

Full day sightseeing of Madurai visiting Mariamman Teppakulam, a tank with an island temple, 1000 pillared Meenakshiamman temple. built in 1560 A.D and visit to the temple to witness the famous night ceremony when the Temple bronze of Lord Siva is carried to the bed chamber of Goddess Parvathy to the accompaniment of religious prayers and music. Also visit Thirumalai Nayak's Palace, an example of Saracenic influence on Hindu architecture. Its curved dome which soars without any visible support is a great architectural feat and Gandhi Museum.

Day 09 Madurai / Chennai

Transfer to the Airport to connect flight to Chennai.