

## Kerala Trek



**Activity: Trek**    **Grade:**  **(Demanding)**    **Duration: 10 days**

Kerala in southern India is renowned for its wonderful palm-fringed beaches and the rich tropical landscape of its interior. Our trek takes in the lush green forests, cardamom-scented hills and photogenic tea plantations of the Western Ghats.

From the beautiful colonial hill station of Munnar, we trek over forested hills and open ridges, passing plantations of coffee and mango as well as the famous tea. En route we take in Meesapulimala Peak, India's second-highest point south of the Himalayas; the views over this beautiful area are breath-taking.

The cool mountain air is perfect for trekking these wonderful hills; afterwards we head down to the beautiful lagoons and rice paddies of the coastal backwaters, where we discover the local way of life on a relaxing houseboat cruise.

### DETAILED ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Depart London

#### Day 2: Arrive Kochi

On arrival we transfer to our hotel. After time to freshen up, we are free to explore this lovely old city, also known as Cochin. Founded by the Portuguese in 1503, it is India's earliest European settlement. The brightly-painted buildings, narrow streets and food stalls are very atmospheric, and the bazaars and old harbour area are fascinating. In the evening there is an optional visit to see a Kathakali display, a dance unique to Kerala. Night hotel.

*(Lunch not included)*

#### Day 3: Kochi – Munnar

Leaving the coast behind, we drive up into the hills to Munnar (1600m). A beautiful hill station on the Western Ghats, Munnar was the British summer resort of southern India. It is surrounded by tea plantations and still retains its colonial charm. We spend the afternoon exploring the town and its markets, and enjoying the views over the sprawling hills and valleys. Night hotel.

**Drive approx. 4-5 hours**

#### Day 4: Munnar Acclimatisation Walk

After an early breakfast we drive out of Munnar to the tiny village of Nagarmundi, where we start our trek. We ascend gradually through the tea plantations, our trail climbing up into the Seven Malai hills. Our surroundings are spectacular, with hill-slopes covered in verdant plantations and forests, sparkling waterfalls, and tiny villages set among the rolling valleys. We pass through cardamom and coffee plantations before reaching the hilltop, where we can soak up the wonderful views over Annamudi Peak,



## DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

Changulan Lake and back down to Munnar. We descend on the same path, and return to Munnar. Time permitting, you can visit the tea museum if you wish (optional). Night hotel (1600m).

**Trek approx 4-5 hours**

### Day 5: Munnar – Meesapulimala Peak – Camp Malai

After yesterday's taster, we should be raring to go! We drive past tea estates to the Silent Valley plateau, a haven to the rare goat-like nilgiri thar, as well as many bird species. We start our trek from around 2000m, initially on wide jeep tracks which ascend steadily through forest into natural, grassy wilderness with wonderful views down over the tea estates. We continue over rougher grassland to open ridges, our way becoming steeper as we near the top. Meesapulimala Peak (2630m) is the second-highest peak in South India; the highest is in a restricted area. Afternoon cloud often obscures the summit, but when the views are clear they are breath-taking, reaching across Kerala and Tamil Nadu. After time to enjoy the views and the sense of achievement, we descend to our camp. Night camp.

**Drive approx 2 hours; trek approx 7-9 hours**

### Day 6: Camp Malai – Top Station

Today's trek takes us across the plateau of the Western Ghats into neighbouring Tamil Nadu, with magnificent scenery. We pass a stunning waterfall as we walk through hills thick with red rhododendron and many endemic plants; wildlife includes wild goats, deer and wild boar. Our morning takes us gently uphill, though it's predominantly downhill in the afternoon. Coming to the higher reaches of the tea estates, we walk through friendly traditional villages where we can see the local way of life. Night camp.

**Trek approx. 6-8 hours**

### Day 7: Top Station – Mundhan – Thekkedy

We descend from Top Station – named for its location in the shipment system for tea and other goods in the early twentieth century – through dense forests and plantations of coffee and cotton, reaching Centre Station amid rich, fertile land. We continue to the village of Kotakuddi, which acted as the bottom station; from here tea could be taken by cart. Now at lower



## CHALLENGE GRADING

Our trips are graded from Challenging (Grade 1) to Extreme (Grade 5).

This trek is graded **Demanding (2)**. Main challenges lie in the undulating terrain, and long ascents in remote hills.

Many factors influence the Challenge Grading, such as terrain, distances, climate, altitude, living conditions, etc. The grade reflects the overall trip; some sections will feel more challenging than others. Unusual weather conditions also have a significant impact, and not all people are tested by the same aspects.

Our grading levels are intended as a guide, but span a broad spectrum; trips within the same grade will still vary in the level of challenge provided.



## DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

elevations, the landscape gives way to stretches of paddy fields and more tropical vegetation. Now on flatter terrain, we trek through coconut and mango plantations to our finish point. We jump into the waiting vehicles and take a beautiful drive on winding roads through the hills to the bustling village of Thekkedy. This area is known for its spice-growing. Night hotel.

**Trek approx 6-7 hours; drive approx 1.5 hours**

### Day 8: Thekkedy – Alleppey Houseboats

We say farewell to the beautiful Western Ghats as we wend our way back down to the coast, the temperatures increasing as we leave the hills. Coming to Alleppey, we board our houseboat and can relax as we cruise the serene backwaters, a network of lagoons, rivers and canals, lined with coconut palms and dazzling green rice paddies. Watching the beautiful scenery and villages glide by is a wonderful way to relax and contemplate our achievements! We spend the night on our houseboat.

**Drive approx 4-5 hours**

### Day 9: Alleppey

We leave our houseboat and the tranquillity of the backwaters and transfer to our hotel in Alleppey; here we gather for an evening to celebrate our big achievements.

*(Lunch not included)*

### Day 10: Fly Kochi to London

Transfer to the airport in time for our flight home.

*Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.*

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### Marari Beach Extension Available – Adds 3 Extra Days

Round off your experience with a relaxing break at the beautiful palm-fringed Marari Beach. See website for further information.

### Golden Triangle Extension Available – Adds 3 Extra Days

As you're making the journey all the way to Kerala, why not make a stop to experience the famous Golden Triangle of Delhi, Jaipur and Agra and take in some of the most iconic buildings in India. See website for further information.

