



TREK KERALA

INDIA • TREK • ORANGE 1

ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

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, the highest accessible point in southern India, where 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.

TREK KERALA FOR PAUL SARTORI • 10 DAYS

Day 1: Depart London for Kochi

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, 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 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 – London

Transfer to the airport in time for our flight home.

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Flight Information

Group flights leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick on scheduled airlines and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your journey may involve a transit en route, details of route and flight times will be confirmed several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Roomshare Arrangements

Accommodation is usually on a twin-share basis in hotels or camp. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation. Please tell us if you know somebody else on the trip that you would like to share with and we will try our best to accommodate your request. If you don't know anyone else in the group don't worry, we always pair you up with someone of the same gender, and a similar age where possible. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

Accommodation

We camp in two-man tents; these are usually expedition-style (ie sleeping room only). Camps are usually simple, in remote locations with great views! We have communal dining areas (usually with tables and chairs/stools) and toilet tents, and the local crew look after us very well. We stay in hotels (of a 2-3* standard or equivalent) at the start and end of the trip; standards may vary between different hotels, but they are generally clean and comfortable with good facilities.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten in camp or at the hotel, depending on accommodation. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas and among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in

very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any incidents. They help the leaders to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but at Discover Adventure we pride ourselves on our high leader: participant ratio and believe it leads to greater trip enjoyment as well as excellent trip safety.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Not all support crew will speak English well, but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in many countries we travel to is far below what you would spend on a normal night out.

Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the destination and terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 20-30 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by post or email. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration fees, amendment fees and insurance premiums are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Clothing

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, as well as details on useful discounts you are entitled to as a Discover Adventure customer. We are always available if you need advice.

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your

fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on our challenges; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed. Should you need to cancel on medical grounds, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

You should also ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation.

You can obtain a quote with Insure to Travel from our website [here](#), or you may choose to take out your own travel insurance, just remember to let us know the policy number and emergency phone number!

For more information about travel insurance, please click [here](#).

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. To find out if you need a visa you can check your requirements using our partner, Visa Machine, website [here](#); please ensure you allow plenty of time.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check [Fit For Travel](#) for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Cultural Differences

For most people, the main attraction of travelling to a different country is to see new sights and enjoy new experiences. Sometimes those new experiences can make life harder or more inconvenient than you may like, such as toilet hygiene or different food, or simply a different attitude to solving problems. This is all part of the challenge you are signing up for! We are very privileged to live in a country with a high standard of living, and travelling exposes us to different challenges – all of which help broaden our horizons. We can guarantee that coming face-to-face with experiences outside your normal 'comfort zone' will help you bond with your fellow participants and provide you with plenty of things to laugh about! A sense of humour and sense of adventure are two of the most important things to bring with you!

CHALLENGE EXTENSIONS



KERALA BEACHES

Enjoy the views and relaxed coastal culture, explore the fishing village, take a sunset cruise or treat yourself to a rejuvenating Ayurvedic massage or some yoga! The beaches are great for swimming, surfing and other water sports.

This quiet paradise is only 20 minutes from Alleppey, so why not treat yourself to some well-deserved luxury on the beautiful palm-fringed beach at Mararikulam, a fishing village with white sandy beaches. This secluded spot is the perfect coastal hideaway, where you can catch up on some rest and relaxation in a hammock under a palm tree or take advantage of a wide range of activities.

Once in resort, this extension does not have an organised itinerary. You are free to spend your time as you wish.

PRICES

2019	£649
2020	£699



GOLDEN TRIANGLE EXTENSION (FOLLOWING KERALA TREK)

The famous Golden Triangle of Delhi, Jaipur and Agra in northwest India is home to some of the most iconic buildings in India, with ornate palaces and ancient forts contrasted by modern buildings and busy street scenes. These cities are the most-visited places in India for a reason!

Trip highlights include the iconic Taj Mahal – without doubt the most famous and recognisable monument in India – and Jaipur’s magnificent Amber Fort, but there are plenty of other incredible sights and experiences as we travel between these wonderful cities. Visiting these monuments allows a wonderful insight into the rich history and culture of India, and a greater understanding of this fascinating country.

Min 3 pax – £50 supplement for 2 pax

PRICES

2019	£599
2020	£649

TREK TRAINING WEEKEND

£170 Special Offer – Only when you book at the same time as registering for your main challenge

Discover Adventure Trek Training Weekends take place in Snowdonia National Park, Wales. This training weekend is designed to put you through your paces to enable you to gauge fitness levels and gain advice from our experienced leaders.

GRADE | ORANGE

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)



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

Please note: This document was downloaded on 20 Nov 2019, and the challenge is subject to change.