



Architecture of South India 14 Days/13 Nights

	Activities	Overnight
Day 1	Fly U.S. to Mumbai	Mumbai
Day 2	Morning flight from Mumbai to Kochi. Afternoon visit to the Kerala Folklore Theatre and Museum, which houses an excellent collection of local musical instruments, costumes and woodcarvings. Sunset cruise through Kochi's main harbor and waterways, where we will view Dutch, Portuguese and British-style buildings alongside traditional Chinese fishing nets and sea vessels from around the world. Dinner at Brunton Boatyard.	Kochi
Day 3	Morning walking tour through Fort Kochi. Highlights include St. Francis Church, where Vasco de Gama was buried in 1524, as well as the Dutch cemetery and Santa Cruz Cathedral. Afternoon visit to Mattancherry Palace, constructed by the Portuguese in the 1550's. This small museum contains a rare collection of 17 th century murals and artifacts belonging to Kochi's ruling class. Our next stop is Jew Town, home to Paradesi Synagogue, India's oldest synagogue. The current building, which dates to 1664, features a floor made entirely out of hand-painted Chinese tiles, no two of which are alike. The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure to browse through the many craft and antique shops found in Jew Town.	Kochi
Day 4	Drive Kochi to Trivandrum, stopping en route for a short cruise and lunch aboard a traditional Kerala houseboat. Afternoon visit to Mannarsala temple, which is dedicated to Nagaraja and is surrounded by thousands of stone serpents. If time permits, we will also visit nearby Parumala Church, reconstructed in the 1990s under the direction of Charles Correa.	Trivandrum
Day 5	Morning tour of Padmanabhapuram Palace, one of the finest examples of Kerala wooden architecture in India. The palace has richly carved ceilings and pillars, and features a two-story dining hall that could seat 2,000 guests. This afternoon we will visit a number of buildings designed by Trivandrum-based architect Laurie Baker. His low-cost, energy-efficient buildings are known for their curved walls, irregular roofs and perforated brick facades. Sites to be visited include the Centre for Development Studies, the Chapel at Loyola College of Social Sciences, the Chengalchoola Slum Colony and The Indian Coffee House. If time permits, we will also visit the Government Arts and Crafts (Napier) Museum, a beautiful Indo-Saracenic structure designed by Robert Fellowes Chisholm in the 19 th century.	Trivandrum

Day 6	Drive Trivandrum to Madurai. Afternoon visit to the Minakshi Sundareshvara Temple, one of the most vibrant living temples in South India. This complex features 12 gigantic gopuras, or towers, covered with brightly-colored deities, animals and monsters.	Madurai
Day 7	Drive Madurai to Chettinad, home to a community of prosperous bankers and merchants. In the early 20 th century, the Chettiars utilized their substantial wealth to build elaborate mansions that blend local architectural styles with European and Art Deco influences. Afternoon visit to several Chettiar mansions, including the spectacular Chettinad Palace, which features Italian marble, Burmese teak, Indonesian crockery, European crystal and wall-to-wall mirrors from Belgium. We will also hunt for treasure in the local antique markets of Karaikudi.	Chettinad
Day 8	Morning drive from Chettinad to Tanjore, which served as the capital of three powerful dynasties between the 9 th and 19 th centuries - the Chola, the Nayaka and the Maratha. After lunch, we will visit the 11 th century Brihadishvara Temple. This complex is one of the finest examples of Chola architecture in India, and features an 80 ton octagonal cupola carved out of a single block of golden granite. We will also visit the library and administrative blocks of Tamil University, designed by V. Ganapati Sthapati, a long-time proponent of the Vastu Shastra system of design.	Tanjore
Day 9	Morning drive from Tanjore to Pondicherry, stopping en route in Chidambaram. This town is home to a very active Hindu community and features a number of beautiful temples. One of these, the Nataraja Temple, was built by the Cholas in the 9 th century and has a gold-plated roof covering the entire inner sanctum. If time permits, we will also visit a small bronze statue workshop in which icons for local temples are made.	Pondicherry
Day 10	Full day tour of Pondicherry, the former capital of French territories in India, established in 1674 by the French East India Company. We will visit Government Square, the French Quarter, the 18 th -century house of Ananda Rangapillai and the Church of Our Lady of Angels. We will also visit the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, which was founded in 1926 by Bengali poet, philosopher and freedom-fighter Sri Aurobindo Ghose. This afternoon you will have time for shopping or strolling along Pondicherry's European-style promenade. Dinner in a local French restaurant.	Pondicherry
Day 11	Full day tour of Auroville, which was conceived in 1968 by "The Mother," a spiritual collaborator of Sri Aurobindo. Auroville was designed as a community where men and women of all countries could live together peacefully in spite of their different beliefs and backgrounds. The first settlements of Auroville were designed by architect Roger Anger, and today the town's buildings feature a variety of architectural styles. A focal point is the Matri Mandir, a spherical meditation center covered by golden discs and containing the largest optically-perfect glass globe in the world.	Pondicherry
Day 12	Morning drive to Chennai, stopping en route to visit the temples of Mahabalipuram. This World Heritage site was built in the 7 th century by a Pallava king and includes rock-cut caves, shrines, temples and massive bas reliefs. Afternoon visit to the Gothic Basilica of San Thomé, which was built	Chennai

in 1898 over the tomb of St. Thomas who, according to legend, died here in 72 A.D. This will be followed by a stop at Kapaleshvara Temple, the largest in Hindu temple in Chennai. Dinner at Taj Mount Road (Hafeez Contractor).

Day 13 Full day tour of Chennai. We will first visit Fort St. George, which was built in 1640 and was the East India Company's principal settlement in India until the seat of government was moved to Kolkata in 1774. Next we will visit St. Andrews Kirk, a Neo-Classical church consecrated in 1821 and inspired by St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Other historic buildings to be viewed include Egmore Railway Station, the Government College of Arts and Crafts, the General Post Office, the Senate House and Presidency College (Chisholm), the National Art Gallery and High Court (Henry Irwin), the Ice House, Chepauk Palace (Paul Benfield) and the Rippon Building. Modern structures to be viewed include MRF headquarters and Sundaram Finance (Correa), Arihant Trade Center, Arihant-Nitco and Virtusa Software (Deepak Mehta) and Valluvar Kottam (V. Ganapati Sthapati). Dinner at Annalakshmi restaurant.

Chennai

Day 14 Depart Chennai for U.S.

Suggested Extensions: Three Days in Dhaka

Trip Timing - This trip can be taken anytime between September and March, with the best weather conditions in November through March. In all of our tours, we concentrate our sightseeing in the morning and afternoon hours, avoiding the hot mid-day sun as much as possible.

Note: Not all of the sites mentioned in these itineraries can be viewed from the inside, as some of them are in protected government compounds, while others are private businesses or residences or heritage sites that only permit visitor access within certain areas. If there are certain buildings in particular that you would like to view from the inside, please let us know and we will make best efforts to secure the required access if we have not already done so.

