

Day 01 – Arrive Madras (Chennai)

Arrive Madras – meeting and assistance on arrival and after another hours drive to Covelong – a beautiful stretch of beach near Madras, check-in at hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure at the beach and for use of the hotel Spa.

Day 02 – Covelong



Full day excursion to Mahabalipuram and Kanchipuram. Kanchipuram - is the Golden City of thousand temples and one of the seven sacred cities of India. It was successively the capital of the Pallavas, the Cholas and the Rayas of Vijaynagar, during the 6th and 07th centuries. The

Pallavas built some of the best temples in the city, which was also considered a great seat of learning. Sri Sankaracharya, Appar, Siruthonder and the great Buddhist Bhikku lived and worked here. The famous temples here are Sakkiswarar Temple (built by the Cholas, the temple is situated near the Kamakshi Amman temple) and Vaikuntha Perumal Temple (an important Vishnu temple built by the Pallava king Nandivarman Pallavamma in the 17th century AD). Numerous inscriptions are found in this temple relating to the wars between the Pallavas and the Chalukyas). The others worth a visit are the Kailasanatha Temple (built by Rajasimha and his son Mahendra III in the 18th century AD) and Ekambareswarar Temple (another ancient temple, renovated by the Pallavas, the Cholas and the Vijaynagara Kings). Its 57 metres high Rajagopuram (tower), is one of the tallest in South India. Kanchipuram is also known for its famous silks and embroidery.

Mahabalipuram was once a port city of the Pallava rulers. The temples and rock cut sculptures of that period create a unique blend of history and natural beauty. To be seen here are the Rock Cut Caves - nine of them with carvings from Indian mythology. Arjuna's Penance - the world's largest stone bas relief on a huge rock facing the sea with sculptures depicting scenes from the Mahabharata is a



sheer beauty. The Rathas are five monolithic temples dedicated to Hindu gods, each created in a different style. Finally, a must is the Shore Temple - built in the 08th century and one of the oldest temples in South India; the best example of the first phase

of temples constructed in the unique Dravidian style. In fact, the whole of Mahabalipuram lies under the open sky and is often referred to as the world's largest Open Air Art Gallery! All monuments are floodlit at night and so it is possible to enjoy their beauty after sunset also.

Day 03 – Covelong-Pondicherry

Today, drive to Pondicherry; the town has a rich French cultural heritage, having been the capital of the French colonies in India since the 17th century. It was transferred to the Indian union in 1954. This French legacy is visible in the well-planned town, neatly laid roads, wide and vibrant beaches, beautiful promenades, architecturally imposing churches. Visit the



"Aurbindo Ashram" - Shri Aurbindo, the great seer, poet and prophet of the twentieth century made Pondicherry his home from 1910 till his death in 1950. His vision and ideal's continue to draw people from all over the world.

Day 04 – Pondicherry-Tanjore



In the morning visit "Auroville" - Located 10 kms north of Pondicherry town, Auroville is envisioned as a Universal town, where people of different nationalities, faiths and beliefs, can live in peace and harmony. The construction of this town was started in 1968 under the guidance of The Mother, a Paris-born painter-musician who became Sri Aurbindo's disciple and close companion. Later drive for Tanjore (200 Kms approximately 6 hours drive) - Via Chidambaram (Famous for its Natraja temple), Gangaikondacholapuram (Famous for its Chola Temple) and Kumbakonam (known for its Ramaswamy, Nageshwara, Sarangpani, Kumbeswarar temples). Overnight at Tanjore.

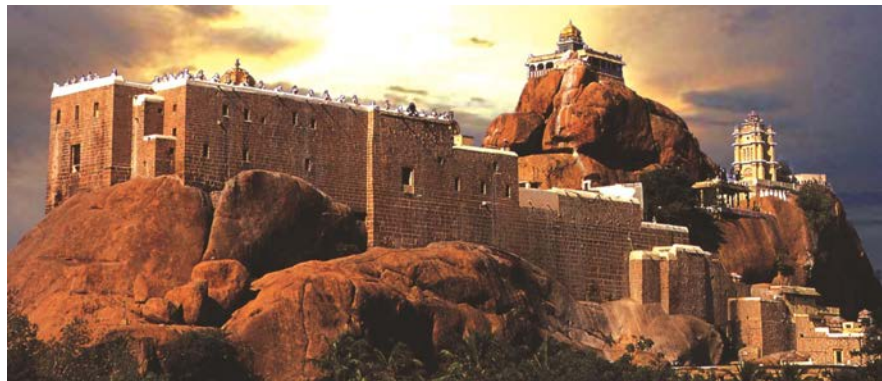
Day 05 – Tanjore-Trichy-Tanjore



Tanjore rose to glory during the late Chola dynasty reign between 10th and 14th centuries and became a centre of learning and culture. It is also known as the rice bowl of Tamil Nadu and is also known for its exquisite handicrafts, bronzes and Indian Musical instruments. Visit the "Brihadeeswara Temple", which is Tanjore's crowning glory . On top of the apex of the 65 metre high temple is an enormous

monolithic granite block that forms a cupola on the top. It weighs 81 tonnes, reflecting the architectural prowess of the Cholas. This dome was hauled into place by a 6 kms long ramp in a manner similar to that used for the Egyptians Pyramids. Also visit the Palace and the Museum.

After lunch, excursion to Trichy; situated on the banks of River Cauvery, Trichy provides a perfect blend of history and religion. Trichy's landscape is dominated by



the Rock Fort perched on a massive rock that soars 83 metres high from the surrounding plains. Once the citadel of the Chola King, the fort has seen passing of various dynasties. Visit the "Rock Fort" - Trichy's most famed landmark on a 83 metres high rock. The most amazing fact about the rock is that it is one of the oldest in the world - approximately 3,800 million years, which makes it as old as rocks of Greenland and older than Himalayas. 334 steps lead to the temple of "Uchipillaiyar Kolli or The Ganesha Vinayaka & Shiva Temple at the top of the Fort. Later visit, "Srirangam" (a temple town close to Trichy famous for its temple complex, dedicated to Lord Ranganathaswamy) and "Tiruvanaikkal" (famous for its Jambukeswara temple dedicated to Lord Shiva).

Day 06 – Tanjore-Chettinad

Later, drive for Chettinad – 2+ hours' drive - and on arrival check in at Hotel. Rest for the day and in the evening cooking-demo followed by dinner.

Day 07 – Chettinad



Today, get ready with walking shoes to explore the ancient area of Chettiar. Walking about the narrow streets of Kanadukathan - one of 9 villages of the prominent Chettiar community of these parts - you could be forgiven for having fallen back in time

to a past that still looms large and casts its shadow upon the daily lives of people here ; where majestic villas, imposing colonial-style bungalows and other stately ruins of a bygone era trying to impress onlookers with



their stature and grandeur. The marketplace is abuzz with activities that have not changed in a long time - crafts, jewelry, sculpture and woodwork - all of which form the economic, social and cultural leitmotif of this dynamic and ingenious merchant community. Shoppers can make some great buys and bargains here! And for those of you drawn to religion and want to explore the sacred in the lives of these people, Kanadukathan abounds in many temples known for their unique history, most notably the ancient 1800 years old Pallayiar Patti temple a short ride away.

Day 08 – Karaikudi-Madurai

Today you have a day trip to Madurai – 2+ hours' drive.



Madurai is celebrated for its Meenakshi Temple and is one of India's oldest cities with a history dating back to the 6th century BC. Madurai's trade with the ancient Greeks and Romans is well known. It was the capital of the Pandayan Empire till the 14th century and is now an important commercial centre of South India. Visit "Meenakshi Temple" - which is a superb example of Dravidian architecture and sculpture. The temple has two sanctra ,

one dedicated to Shiva and the other to his spouse Meenakshi. The highlight of Meenakshi temple is the "Hall of Thousand Pillars" - all of which are elaborately sculpted. A set of musical pillars carved out of a single block of granite that emit melodic notes when tapped, splendid mandapas and a large temple tank are all part of the huge complex. The temple attracts pilgrims from all over and it is estimated that there are over 10,000 visitors everyday. Also visit the "Tirumalai Nayakar Palace", which was built in Indo-Sarcanic style by Nayak rulers of Madurai in 1636 A.D. Overnight at Madurai.

Day 09 – Madurai/Mumbai & Departure

In time transfer to airport to connect flight to either Chennai or Mumbai to further connect your onward flight. Flight to Mumbai might be via Chennai as sometime direct flights are not available/withdrawn.

To book, please contact your travel agent as we work only with Travel Agents and Tour Operators.

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