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7 D ENCHANTING KERALA TOUR – GOD’S OWN COUNTRY

Day 01 : Kuala Lumpur - Cochin

Arrive, **Cochin**, after a traditional '**Swagat**' (Welcome) our representative would assist you at the airport & transfer to hotel for check in. **Cochin** always had a very popular & historical sea trade connection with Middle East, Mediterranean Europe & Dutch. It has one of the finest natural harbours on the Arabian coastline. Its cosmopolitan character is reflected in the buildings & structures representing different regions of the world. **Half Day Tour** Later we visit **Jew Town, synagogue**, built in the year 1568, is magnificently decorated by Chinese tiles & Belgian chandeliers. Giant scrolls of the Old Testament can be found here. Also visit the **spice market**, where the air is filled with the pungent smell of spices & history that brought the world to its doorstep. **Chinese fishing nets**, (*Cheenavala*) are distinctly unique to Cochin. It is believed that traders from the court of the Chinese ruler Kublai Khan introduced these nets here. Evening see Kerala's most popular **classical dance, Kathakali Overnight Hotel – Cochin**

Day 02 : Cochin - Alleppey (70 km - 01½ hr), Alleppey- Kumarakom (Overnight Houseboat) (BLD)

Today we drive to **Alleppey, Alappuzha**, also known as **Alleppey**, is a town in Kerala. A town with picturesque canals, backwaters & lagoons, it was described as the Venice of the East. It has a wonderful past, it owes its existence to the sagacious Diwan Raja Kesavadas in the second half of 18th century. Kuttanad, the rice bowl of Kerala with the unending stretch of paddy fields, small streams & canals with lush green coconut palms, was well known even from the early periods of the Sangam age. History says Alappuzha had trade relations with ancient Greece & Rome in BC & in the middle Ages. Alleppey now is the hub for backwaters tourism in Kerala. On arrival we board the **houseboat**, locally called **Kettuvallam**, cruise around backwaters of **Alleppey to Kumarakom** to observe & experience the daily life of the villagers along the backwaters. **Overnight Houseboat**

Day 03 : Arrive Kumarakom (B)

Morning after breakfast we disembark the houseboat in **Kumarakom**. It is a cluster of little islands, on the Vembanad Lake in Kerala. Kuttanad, the 'Wonder Land' believed to have been lying below the sea level, sprang out into the marshes when the sea receded later. **The land of lakes, canals & paddy fields, Kumarakom transports you to sheer ecstasy**. Holiday on the houseboats, traditional Kettuvallam, are an out-of-this-world experience. Furthermore Vembanad Lake is home to several types of marine life exclusively the Karimeen (Pearl Spotted Fish), Chemeen (Prawns) & Konju (Tiger Prawns). Later we visit **Kumarakom Bird sanctuary**. There are two seasons for birds: between October & February there are cormorants, teals, & other ducks & from February to July there are darters (snake birds), night herons, egrets, & Siberian storks. It also has golden backed woodpecker, crow pheasant, white-breasted water hen, tree pie etc. **Overnight Hotel – Kumarakom**

Day 04 : Kumarakom - Periyar (135 km - 04 hr) (B)

Today we drive to **Periyar (Thekkady)**, one of India's most fascinating natural wildlife sanctuaries, where one can watch wildlife at close range. The vegetation, the flora & fauna & the birds are uniquely rich, vast & varied that it does not bear semblance to any other wildlife sanctuaries in the world. Even a casual visitor to this place will not fail to observe the special ecological pattern. The very sound of the name conjures up images of elephants, unending chains of hill & spice scented plantations. The sanctuary is one of the best in the country for watching & photographing wild life. Notable among the inhabitants are the **tigers, majestic Asiatic wild elephants & distinctive Nilgiri Langur**. A cruise through the waters of Periyar lake around which the wild -life sanctuary is situated, offers a soul stirring pleasant experience. Later we explore the sanctuary to experience the beauty & ecological pattern. **Option Tour – Spice Plantation Overnight Hotel – Periyar**

Day 05 : Periyar – Kovalam (250 Km - 06hr)**(B)**

Early morning before breakfast leave for a wildlife viewing to the sanctuary on **Lake Periyar** by **boat cruise**. After two hours of wildlife viewing get back to the hotel for breakfast. Later we drive to **Kovalam**, South of Trivandrum. There are two main beaches at Kovalam, separated by a high cliff. It is finding a new significance in the light of several Ayurvedic salons, & recuperation & regeneration resorts which provide a slew of Ayurvedic. **Overnight Hotel – Kovalam**

Day 06 : Kovalam**(B)**

Day at leisure, Explore water sports / Ayurvedic salons on own **Overnight Hotel – Kovalam**

Day 07 : Kovalam – Cochin airport (16 Km - 30 mins) – Kuala lumpur**(B)**

Today we take an excursion **Trivandrum** (Thiruvananthapuram), an ancient city with trading traditions dating back to 1000 BC. It was a trading post for spices like the rest of ancient Kerala. However the ancient political & cultural history of the city was almost entirely independent from that of the rest of Kerala. The early rulers of the city were the Ays. With their fall in the 10th century, the city was taken over by the rulers of Venad. Thiru-v-anantha-puram is a three syllable name meaning the abode of the sacred snake god "Anantha". Lord Vishnu of the ancient Indian mythology rests on this huge serpent.

Here we visit the **Padmanabha Swami Temple**, dedicated to Lord Vishnu is held sacred by the Hindus from antiquity. The temple has a large complex with a huge Gopuram. It has a tank beside it for ritual bathing. Next we visit It is situated north of the city, at Museum road & 400m east of Indian airlines. It displays an eclectic assortment of historical & contemporary ornaments, temple carts, ivory carvings & life-size figures of Kathakali dances in full costume. It has a famous collection of 8th-18th century south Indian bronze. **Sri Chittira Art Gallery**, an excellent collection of Indian art with examples from early to modern schools. Paintings by Raja Ravi Varma & works from Mughal & Rajput miniature paintings & Tanjore paintings embellished with semi- precious stones are displayed. Evening we take a flight to onward destination.