

Kerala Guided Walking Holiday

Tour Style: Worldwide Multi-Centre

Destination: India

Trip code: KRWHW

Trip Walking Grade: 1



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Discover lesser known jewels on a connoisseur's walking tour as you follow trails in the spice-scented hills and tea estates of Kerala, India. Soak up the rich culture of the royal city of Mysore, go in search of elephants, bison and tiger in the beautiful Nagarhole National Park and relax on a houseboat in the lush backwaters. From traditional crafts on display at the bustling Kozhikode markets to colonial bastions like Fort Kochi, the land of Kerala also provides a tantalising look into the past.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- A full programme of guided walks led by a specialist Local Leader
- 'With flight' holidays include return flights from the UK and hotel transfers
- Half Board with en-suite accommodation, including 2 nights tented, 1 night houseboat - 11 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 11 evening meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transport and tips

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience nature at its most magnificent in the wildlife haven of Wayanad
- Discover lush green mountains and spice-scented cardamom hills
- Enchantingly rich culture at historic Mysore and colonial Kochi
- Enjoy an evening on board a luxury houseboat in a labyrinth of lakes and lagoons



ITINERARY

Day 1 - 2: Outward Flight & Bangalore

After your overnight flight, arrive at the garden city of Bangalore. After arriving at your hotel there is an optional walk in Lalbagh Botanical Gardens.

Day 3: Mysore

Our journey heads via the 18th century island fortress of Srirangapatna, to the royal city of Mysore. A walking tour of the city provides an excellent introduction to ancient history and to the wonderfully rich culture of Southern India.

Day 4 - 5: Nagarhole Sanctuary

We have an early morning walking tour of Mysore before we return to the hotel for breakfast; later, we'll visit the spectacular Mysore Palace with a local guide. We drive to the Kabini Reservoir and check into our accommodation; after lunch, we head into the depths of the Nagarhole sanctuary, once the Maharaja's reserve and home to elephant, bison, antelope, monkey and tiger.

The next day we'll have an early start with a walk through nearby villages. We'll return to our accommodation on foot along the banks of the Kabini River, which offers a great opportunity to spot local wildlife. There is an optional boat safari this afternoon on the reservoir: it's a great spot for bird watching, and there's a good chance of spotting animals who come to the water to drink.

Our final evening also features an evening campfire.

Day 6 - 7: Around Wayanad

We head to the magical Kuruva islands on the Kabini River. On arrival, we set off on a guided walk through the picturesque paddy fields near Kuruva. Many of these are owned and tended by the local communities and we'll take this opportunity to meet and interact with them where possible. We continue to walk through a forested landscape, where your guide will help identify the surrounding flora and fauna to enrich your experience. We complete the day with an authentic multi-course Keralan lunch - an *ela sadya* - in a local's home before we continue to our accommodation.

The following day our walk explores the Banasura foothills, giving us a good introduction to Wayanad, the green paradise of the Western Ghats. Here, we'll walk through rural communities, rainforest and coffee and pepper plantations.

Day 8: To Kozhikode

We start with a drive to this morning's walk. As the morning mist rises from the lush forest floor, we begin our plantation walk at the Edom Estates. After our walk through spice plantations, we leave the serenity and greenery of the hills, and begin our journey to the bustling streets of Kozhikode (Calicut). After lunch, we'll visit the ancient boat building yards at Beypore.

Day 9 - 10: Kumarakom Lake Resort

We explore the streets and spice markets of Kozhikode this morning before boarding an afternoon train to Alleppey and our accommodation at the Kumarakom Lake Resort.

The following day we have time to enjoy the stunning setting of our resort. If you are an early bird you can attend an open-air yoga session, which runs daily. Mid morning we take a leisurely walk around and through the nearby fishing communities. Afterwards we have time to relax - an ideal opportunity to enjoy an ayurveda massage - before another short, leisurely walk in the evening as the sun sets.

Day 11: Backwater Cruise

After breakfast we take a short transfer to Alleppey from where we begin a magical cruise through the serene backwaters, a labyrinth of shimmering lagoons and lakes. Our boat is modelled on the traditional Keralan kettuvallum houseboats, once used to ply the backwaters loaded with rice and other staples. This is a great chance to sit back, relax and soak up the sights you'll pass.

Day 12 - 13: Kochi & Return Flight

Our final journey today as we travel the short distance to Kochi. We explore charming Fort Kochi on foot with a guided tour discovering its Portuguese, Dutch and British influences. In the evening we take in a traditional Kathakali performance; the perfect finale before our return flight the following day.

ACCOMMODATION

The Windflower Vythiri, Wayanad - Kerala

Perched on a hill station, surrounded by plantations of coffee, tea, pepper and cardamom, The Windflower is a relaxing and tranquil resort. Enjoy a spa treatment or a refreshing dip in the pool. The en-suite rooms feature air-conditioning, Wi-Fi, safe, TV and toiletries with Ayurvedic ingredients.

The Paul, Bangalore - Kerala

This 5-star hotel, located in the heart of Bangalore, is the ideal place for us to enjoy a bit of rest and relaxation after our flight.

Hotel Metropole, Mysore - Kerala

This is a Heritage Hotel, centrally located in Mysore, which was built as a royal residence of the Maharaja of Mysore. The colonial charm and elegance here give us an insight into days gone by. Its stunning architecture, historical charm, spacious rooms and great service, make our stay here memorable. After our day exploring, we've plenty of time to enjoy a drink in the gardens, or take a dip in the pool before dinner.

The Bison, Nagarhole - Kerala

This is unlike any camping you've ever done before! All facilities and comforts of hotel accommodation are found here in this peaceful setting. Perfect wildlife watching opportunities present themselves without any searching. Listening to our hosts tell wildlife tales in the evening around the campfire will be one of many highlights of your holiday.

Plantation Experiences, Wayanad - Kerala

Located in the lush green hills of Wayanad, your accommodation here is set inside a 4,000 acre working tea estate at approx 3,000 ft above sea level. You'll be surrounded by lush tropical forests and mist-clad hills. Rooms are inside two colonial bungalows. This is an opportunity to experience the greenery of the Ghats away from the towns.

Raviz, Calicut - Kerala

This contemporary 5-star hotel sits in the bustling township of Kozhikode. Combining comfort and convenience, it's the perfect base for exploring the city's historic and cultural sites.

Kumarakom Lake Resort, Vembanad Lake - Kerala

Here we're treated again; this time our accommodation is a luxury heritage resort in Kerala. With views overlooking Vembanad lake, you'll not want to leave here. Rooms are airy and air-conditioned, with plenty of space. The beach is only a short stroll across the gardens, which provide the perfect place for spotting butterflies.

Houseboat, Kerala Backwaters - Kerala

These rice boats ruled the backwaters of Kerala, transporting rice and coconuts. There are widely varying standards of houseboat, but ours is a higher standard than many others. You'll enjoy comfortable en-suite rooms, simply on-board rather than in a hotel. This is a unique Kerala experience.

The Trident, Kochi - Kerala

Located on Willingdon Island, the hotel is conveniently situated to visit the many famous sites of Kochi. Blending 5-star facilities with classic charm, the hotel is set amidst a picturesque central courtyard and landscaped gardens.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Weather & Seasonality

Although Kerala lies closer to the equator than most Indian states, it is protected by the mountains of the Western Ghats, which keep out the hot, dry winds from the north. Its lush vegetation is helped by plenty of rain each year, and the Highlands of Kerala enjoy a cool climate during the months we have chosen to travel.

Joining Instructions (With Flights)

For those travelling on our HF Holidays' group flight, please proceed to the arrivals hall once you have passed through passport control, customs and baggage reclaim, when you arrive at your destination. Your leader or local leader will assemble the group in the arrivals hall. Look out for the HF Holidays' sign.

Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

If you are arriving ahead of the group, and are meeting them at the first hotel, please leave a message at the hotel reception for the HF Holidays' leader or local leader, detailing your room number, and a mobile telephone number if possible. The leader will contact you once the group arrives. If you are arriving after the group, a message will be left for you at the hotel reception, welcoming you and giving details of the time and place to meet the group. If your flight arrives before the group flight and you would like to join the transfer to the first hotel, please contact our Abroad Administration team on (0)20 8732 1261. They will have a list of the relevant transfer costs.

What To Bring

Essential Equipment

As you'll be carrying your own luggage at airports and between your transport and hotels we recommend you try to keep your luggage to a minimum. These items are a general suggestion of what to pack for an active outdoor and walking holiday; depending on your destination, you may need more of some things and less – or none! – of others. You'll know best what you prefer to wear when out walking or while taking part in other outdoor activities.

- Walking boots – (worn in) with good ankle support and spare bootlaces
- Lightweight waterproof trousers and jacket
- Comfortable outdoor/ walking clothing e.g. Long trousers and long-sleeved light-coloured shirts with collars to protect from the sun
- Lightweight fleece
- Shorts

We recommend wearing walking boots on all our walks, as these provide the best ankle support and grip. Modern 'approach shoes' offer appropriate levels of grip and may be worn on some low-level walks, but users should be aware that they offer less ankle support. Lightweight trainers are not recommended for any walks.

Your clothing should ideally be pre-treated with insect repellent and in-built sun protection (available from specialist clothing stores such as Rohan, Cotswold Outdoor).

- Comfortable clothes and shoes for evenings and sightseeing
- Sun protection – sunglasses, high factor sunscreen and sun hat
- Water bottle – at least 2 litre capacity
- Small/medium rucksack (30 litre) – a bin liner will keep contents dry if it rains
- Insect repellent
- Lightweight survival bag
- Soap and hand sanitizer gel
- Personal first aid kit including: personal medication, tissues, plasters, blister kit, painkillers, antiseptic wipes, Imodium, rehydration sachets

Essential: Passport (and copies); booking confirmation; insurance cover note; HF Holidays' registration form.

Please ensure you have access to emergency funds should you need them; carrying a credit card is probably the most convenient method.

Optional: walking ('approach') trainers, trekking poles, camera, umbrella, binoculars, swimming costume, and towel.

Please note that your HF Holidays' leader reserves the right to refuse to take any guest on a walk should they consider that a lack of suitable clothing/footwear may affect safety.

Safety On Your Holiday

Insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number. We have negotiated special holiday insurance and full details of this cover can be found in our brochure or at www.hfholidays.co.uk.

If you would like to purchase insurance from us, please call us on 020 8732 1220 or email holidayservices@hfholidays.co.uk.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: www.dh.gov.uk/travellers.

If you are arranging your own travel insurance, please ensure it is adequate for your specific itinerary. Generally, this should include cover for walking at altitudes over 2,000m, which will cover you for a wide range of our holidays.

Once you have made your booking, you will receive a pre-holiday questionnaire where we ask for details of next of kin and insurance details. You must complete and return this to us - we need to have this from you at least 10 weeks before travel.

Please also inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders have to consider both group and individual safety at all times.

Whilst out with the group, we respectfully request that you:

- Please listen to any safety instructions from the leader
- Keep group members in view, especially if weather or visibility is poor
- Please stay where you are if you become separated from the group. The leader will retrace their steps to find you.

Each leader carries a first aid kit but is not allowed to supply any medication including aspirin, paracetamol, antihistamines and antiseptic cream. You may wish to bring these items with you in your own kit (see Suggested Kit List).

In the unlikely event that your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call emergency services on 911. Please then call our emergency number and let us know there is a problem.

Hikes and treks will be through a mix of rain forest, bamboo thickets and high altitude grassland. Leeches and leech bites are likely. Leech socks will be provided, but these are only a deterrent and do not guarantee protection.

Dietary Requirements

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements and we will do our best to meet your needs.

If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

Passports & Visas

Passports

Your passport must be machine readable, with 2 blank pages for your visa and valid for a minimum of 180 days at the time of your visa application. India's Bureau of Immigration has announced that with immediate effect, foreign nationals who arrive at an Indian port holding nonmachine-readable passports will be denied entry.

Visas

British, Australian, Canadian and US citizens require an e-visa to enter India. This can be done online. Please visit the following website for further information: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>
Current cost is \$100 (UK citizens; fee is non-refundable) plus a 2.5% credit card charge. You will need to upload a photo and complete the application form online; you may also be required to upload a PDF your passport photo page. You can apply for the e-visa a minimum 4 days in advance of your travel date, and as early as 120 days before you travel. The e-visa should be granted and emailed to you within 4 days.

You must confirm that the e-visa is granted before travelling and take a printed copy of the e-visa with you. Please ensure that you keep your passport and visa on you always, except when out walking

Luggage

Luggage Allowance

1 piece checked-in luggage (max 30kg)

Please check details of your airline's baggage allowance, as shown on your e-ticket. Remember to also check any connecting flights you may have booked.

Lost or Damaged Luggage

If your bag or its contents are damaged or lost while in the airline's care, this should be reported to the baggage service agents at the airport on arrival. They will assess the damage; in some cases, the airline may decide to settle your claim immediately.

You will be given a reference to quote to your insurance company if an immediate settlement is not possible - in many cases, baggage claims can only be accepted in writing. A baggage claim form must be obtained from the airport.

Local Currency

Rupee (Rs). Debit/credit cards are accepted in major cities. In smaller towns, cash or Mastercard/Visa are accepted. The import and export of local currency is prohibited. US\$ and GBP£ are the easiest currencies to exchange. Please carry some small rupee notes for shopping (

Local Time

GMT/UTC +5.5 hrs

Electricity

220V, round 3 pin plugs (larger top pin)

Suggested Reading & Maps

Southern India & Kerala, Lonely Planet, 2017
The Rough Guide to Kerala, David Abram, 2010
The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy, 2011
The Last Jews of Kerala, Edna Fernandes, 2011
Portrait of Kerala, Melissa Shales, 2007
Pictorial blog of HF Kerala trip by Steve Pardoe <http://www.pardoe.net/kerala/>

Maps

Although you won't need them, if you'd like any maps of the destination, you can obtain some in advance

from The Map Shop: www.themapshop.co.uk

Tipping

Tips have been included in your holiday price for key services such as local guides/ driver and restaurants where your meal is included in the cost of the holiday.

You will need to tip for any meals not included, and any additional tips you may wish to give are at your own discretion.

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday & Sunday: 9am – 1pm Bank Holiday Monday: 9am – 1pm

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

ASSOCIATE'S FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying an Associate's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full life membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them

on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

Document produced: 23-10-2019

