

Undiscovered South India

A JOURNEY THROUGH SOUTH INDIA'S WESTERN GHATS AND BEYOND

22nd January - 3rd February 2019



Lotus Retreat

Join us on a journey that traces India's Western Ghats from Kerala to Goa. On a trip of a life time, experience the luscious beauty of north Kerala's backwaters, sleep in a tree house in the remote Wayanad Highlands, wander amongst the ruins in the lost kingdom of Hampi, and stay in a bamboo cottage on one of south India's most beautiful beaches. Your tour starts in north Kerala, where we spend a night on a houseboat cruising through Kerala's most unspoiled backwaters and stay at an eco homestay in the Wayanad Highlands surrounded by spice and coffee plantations, rice paddies and dense emerald forests. We then head north, via Mysore, to the fascinating town of Hampi with its World Heritage monuments and magical boulder strewn landscape, here we take three days to explore the ancient Vijayanagar kingdom's temples before heading back to the Arabian Sea. Your journey ends in south Goa on the tranquil Talpona Beach, famous for its nesting turtles and deserted palm fringed sands where we stay in charming wooden cottages just yards from the sea. This tour will be lead by holistic therapist and India enthusiast Carrie Rossiter and Hari Lambani. They also run the Lotus Retreat - a holistic centre and India boutique in Oxfordshire.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

DAY ONE

Late morning you are met at Calicut's International Airport and transferred to the luxurious Ravi's Resort and Spa. Set amidst 9 acres of garden and coconut palms, on the banks of the Chaliyar River, this stunning hotel makes the perfect place to rest and acclimatise after your flight. After an afternoon to enjoy the pool, Ayurvedic spa and yoga facilities, we watch sunset at the nearby Kadalundi bird sanctuary before dinner at the hotel's fabulous riverside restaurant.

DAYS TWO & THREE

We head east by minibus for the beautiful highlands of Wayanad. This glorious, unspoilt region is dotted with emerald rice paddies, spice and coffee plantations, forested hills and nature reserves. After a stunning journey through the Western Ghats, we arrive at the Amaryllis Homestay - a family-run boutique hotel with panoramic views, cozy cottages and tree houses, a pool and small spice farm.

After an afternoon coffee plantation tour we enjoy home-cooked Keralan food on the terrace. Day three starts with a gentle trek to the Edakkal caves - famous for their neolithic carvings - followed by a picnic lunch. The afternoon is spent on a jeep safari through Muthanga Wildlife Park - expect to spot elephant, leopard, bison, bear, sambhar, deer, peacock and even the elusive tiger.

DAY FOUR

Enjoy some fabulous scenery as we travel to the unspoiled coast of northern Kerala where we check into Kannur Beach House - a heritage property overlooking the Malabar sea. After lunch there is river swimming and a village performance of the enthralling Theyyam possession ritual for which this region is renowned. Dinner is on the beach, expect fresh sea food and a stunning sunset.

DAY FIVE

After breakfast and a final dip in the sea we depart late morning for the remote north Keralan backwaters. We board our houseboat after lunch and spend the afternoon cruising through this magical ecosystem, watching the bird-life and riverside villages drift past. We have a chance to go canoeing before watching sunset and enjoying drinks and dinner on board.

DAYS SIX - NINE

We leave our houseboat and travel east to Mysore where we have an afternoon to discover its fabulous palace and wander through its markets famous for sandalwood, spices and silk. Early evening we board the Hampi Express night train and travel north (in the comfort of 2 tier AC) to Hari's home town - the ancient kingdom of Hampi.

This makes the perfect location to stop for three nights and take time to explore at leisure. Hampi - once the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire and a World Heritage Site - is one of India's highlights. Our hotel - Hampi Boulders - is located on the banks of the river Tungabhadra, it has a natural swimming pool, acres of grounds and morning yoga. This beautiful eco resort will make a perfect platform to explore the rich culture, wildlife and history of Hampi. The day of our arrival is spent bird-spotting before sunset and panoramic views at the nearby Monkey Temple.

The following two days are at leisure to explore the ancient town of Hampi and its beautiful surroundings by foot, bicycle or rickshaw. Visit the majestic Virupaksha Temple and Hampi Bazaar - a great place for a chai and a little retail therapy, wander the ancient ruins, or relax at the hotel.

DAYS TEN - TWELVE

We leave early, wending our way through luscious jungle and stunning mountainous roads to south Goa in time for an afternoon swim in the Arabian Sea before dinner sunset drinks and dinner. Here we stay at the Peace Garden on secluded Talpona Beach. Expect deserted palm-fringed beaches, fresh sea food and charming, rustic accommodation overlooking the ocean. The Peace Garden is also well known for its excellent yoga and massage facilities. Take time at the end of your journey to relax at the Peace Garden and explore the abundance of waterfalls, wildlife sanctuaries and beautiful beaches in this area. Choose from the nearby deserted Turtle Beach or Patnem and Palolem Beach with their relaxed beach bars and colourful markets.

DAY THIRTEEN

We get you back to Goa's airport in plenty of time for your return flights home.



Highlights of Our Itinerary

Communing with nature in the Wayanad hills.

Wandering the ancient kingdom of Hampi.

Enjoying an Ayurvedic treatment at Ravis Spa and Resort.

Watching the sunset at Monkey Temple, Hampi.

Exploring the rock temples of Edakkal.

A night on a houseboat cruising through the Keralan backwaters.

Relaxing on the golden sands of south Goa.

Cost & What's Included

£1650 (flights not included)

Airport transfers.

All transport between destinations.

All breakfasts, 8 dinners and 9 lunches.

Guided tours of Hampi and Mysore.

Jeep safari, plantation and cave visit in Wayanad.

Houseboat trip in Kerala.

For more information

Contact Carrie 07940 542 181

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"We were all left with the feeling we had experienced India in a way that would be impossible on a normal package tour. We met local people in their home environment. We stayed in a variety of individual hotels. I recommend Lotus Retreats to anyone prepared to step outside their normal comfort zone to try a more exciting and varied holiday with a small group of different ages and interests who become good friends by the time of the flight home"
- Jenny King, Faringdon

Lotus India Tours

Lotus India Tours offers a wide range of unique tours of India, we aim to show you the real India in a way that supports and sustains India's culture and environment and introduces you to the sacred heart of this deeply spiritual nation. We keep group sizes small and prefer 'off the beaten track' destinations.

Whether you are on a tour through the jungles of Madhya Pradesh, a yoga retreat in the deserts of Rajasthan or a tour designed just for you, Lotus India Tours will take you on an unforgettable adventure. Hari and Carrie, who will be guiding this tour, have been exploring India for many years. They also run the Lotus Retreat - a holistic therapy centre and Indian boutique in Oxfordshire.

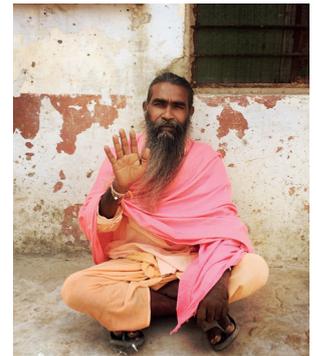


Lotus Tours Programme

October 2018 - Hidden Rajasthan
The Aravelli Hills and beyond.

October 2019 - Madhya Pradesh
A journey through India's luscious heartland.

To book your space please contact
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