

11 March - 03 April 2025

**ESCORTED
TOUR**

Sri Lanka South India Kerala



Sri Lanka and South India share their history with the Arab traders, the Portuguese, Dutch and British colonialists. Reminders of past rulers sit side-by-side with Buddhist temples that depict Hindu images.

Cricket unites both countries, men, women, old and young.

Marco Polo dubbed Sri Lanka as the finest island in the world. See endless rich, green foliage, swirls of Sinhalese alphabet, a myriad of colourful Buddhist flags, saris, tropical fruit and spices in the market.

Our 6-day Kerala cruise on the RV Vaikundam will explore the dynamic Kerala waterways.

Meander along visiting village communities, see the production of coir, fishermen at work – all in the comfort of our own charter boat.

Add in the IT city of Bangaluru, Mysore, the game park at Kabini and Kochi and you will return home with this part of the world holding a special place in your heart.



March 2025

Tuesday 11 Auckland – Singapore – Colombo, Sri Lanka

Depart Auckland on Singapore Airlines. Change planes in Singapore, arriving in Colombo late evening and transfer to city hotel.

Wednesday 12 Colombo B D

After breakfast, enjoy a city tour of Colombo's harbour and Fort area – home to the country's administration and banking sector. The multi-ethnic population is reflected in the various religions and cultures. Explore the unique Red Mosque and the Gangaramaya Temple complex before a Welcome dinner tonight.

Thursday 13 Colombo – Dambulla B D

Our journey takes us north-east, through countryside, to Dambulla. Here, we visit the impressive Dambulla Rock Cave Temple, a World Heritage site. This five-cave temple is one of the largest and best-preserved temple complexes in the country. Housing over 150 Buddha statues and exquisite murals, all nestled within a series of caves carved into a massive granite outcrop.

Friday 14 Dambulla – Matale – Kandy B D

An early morning visit to Sigiriya Rock, the UNESCO Heritage Site rock fortress. If you are not up to climbing the rock for spectacular views, the ancient landscaped gardens (SAD) and frescoes are worth seeing. Continue to Matale to explore a spice garden before continuing to Kandy.

Saturday 15 Kandy B D

Today we visit the Temple of the Tooth Relic, another World Heritage site. We proceed to the spectacular botanical gardens before an afternoon of leisure and take in a tuk-tuk ride to experience the sights and sounds of Kandy.

Sunday 16 Kandy – Nuwara Eliya (by train) B D

After breakfast, transfer to Kandy railway station for a scenic train journey through tea plantations and scenic waterfalls to Nana Oya. Continue by coach to your hotel in Nuwara Eliya.

Monday 17 Nuwara Eliya – Yala B D

This morning, visit a tea plantation and tea factory. Learn how tea is graded and of course enjoy a cup of pure Ceylon tea. This afternoon we travel onto Yala National Park.

Tuesday 18 Yala B D

A day to enjoy Yala National Park where we enjoy a jeep safari to spot elephants, crocodile, the elusive leopard and a myriad of birds are special.

Wednesday 19 Yala – Galle B D

Coach to UNESCO-listed Galle Fortress built by the Portuguese in 1588 and later extended by the Dutch. See the lighthouse on the southernmost tip and the car free streets which reflect Portuguese, Dutch and British rule

Thursday 20 Galle – Colombo – Bengaluru, India

A morning to relax, swim or take a walk on the beach. This afternoon transfer to Colombo airport for the early evening flight to Bengaluru and transfer to a central hotel for a two night stay. Bengaluru, is a modern cosmopolitan city, considered to be one of the big IT centres of India. This forward-thinking city with a mix of new shopping malls is sometimes referred to as the Garden City of India.

Friday 21 Bengaluru – Mysore Drive B L

Following a leisurely breakfast, visit the Lalbagh Botanical Gardens - home of the largest collection of tropical plants in India. It's also home to a wide range of bird species – parakeets, herons and owls.

Saturday 22 Mysore B

Visit the river island town of Srirangapatna, with its celebrated and impressive 9th century temple. Later journey to Chamundi Hills, site of the 12th century Chamundeshwari Temple with its 1,008 ancient steps leading to the summit. Finally,

visit the Palace of Mysore, a blend of Hindu, Muslim, Rajput and Gothic styles that remains one of India's most popular attractions.

Sunday 23 Mysore – Kabini B D

Morning departure for Nagarhole National Park, established in 1955, where abundant wildlife, including tiger, Indian bison, wild dog, deer, antelope, hyena and elephants, make it one of India's finest reserves. After lunch, set out on a boat safari that includes parts of Nagarhole's 640 sq/km. Dine at our lodge tonight.



Monday 24 Kabini B D

Enjoy a morning safari in an open-air 4 wheel drive vehicle through Nagarhole in search of wildlife. After our excursion return to the lodge for breakfast. Free time to relax and enjoy the lodge.

Tuesday 25 Kabini – Calicut B L

Today we make the five-hour drive to Calicut, dubbed the 'City of Spices' in ancient times for its role in the thriving eastern spice trade. Stop at a spice garden for lunch before continuing to Calicut.

Wednesday 26 Calicut – Kochi B L D

This morning we explore the vibrant streets of Calicut by tuk-tuk. After lunch, transfer to the railway station to board the train to Kochi [formerly called Cochin]. On arrival, transport to our hotel.

Thursday 27 Kochi B D

A morning walking tour of Mattancherry, part of Old Fort Cochin and the epicenter of the spice trade for centuries. Today reveals Kochi's multi-layered past, a rich brew of Arab, Portuguese, British and Dutch influences. Begin with the Dutch Palace then see St Francis, India's first European church [1510] and the burial site of Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama, who died in Kochi in 1524. Later visit the picturesque Chinese fishing nets unique to Kochi.

Friday 28 Kochi – Changankari for Kerala Cruise, RV Vaikundam B L D

After breakfast, travel to the serene village of Changankari to embark on your 5-night cruise. The remainder of the day, relax onboard and cruise pass the scenic villages bordering the waterways.

The Kerala backwaters are known as the Green Venice of the East due to the green coconut trees making the water an emerald shade. The waterways are teeming with life as most villages are connected only through wooden boats. Villages, temples, churches, coir handloom, cultural centres, paddy fields, market places, wooden boat building yards, long snake boats, home hosted meals, beaches, beaches and festivals make this a vibrant living destination.

Saturday 29 Changankari – Champakkulam – Mankompu B L D

Drive to the ancient village of Aranmula, home to a family of craftsmen who are skilled at making mirrors out of a special combination of certain metals. Visit Lord Krishna's Hindu temple, Aranmula Sree Parthasarathy, before a traditional lunch will be served at a beautiful local house located on the bank of Pampa River. We return to the boat and cruise to Champakkulam to experience Kerala's old spice trade route and visit St. Mary's Church, one of India's oldest Christian churches. Finish the day with Kerala's classical dance performance.

Sunday 30 Mankompu – Kainakari – Kavalam B L D

Cruise the narrow, yet harmonious, canals to Kainakari, with a stop at Chavara Bhavan - the ancestral home of the first canonised Catholic male saint of Indian origin. Lunch onboard. Cruise the expanses of land reclaimed from the lake for paddy cultivation. These paddy fields are lying below sea level and are protected by building dykes around them. Complete the day learning about "toddy tapping" and take a relaxing walk at sunset.

Monday 31 Kavalam – Kumarakom B L D

This morning, enjoy a special escorted canoe ride to watch the migratory and endemic birds of Kumarakom – a cluster of lake lagoons with a backdrop of mangroves, paddy fields and coconut groves. Lunch at an island farm house where there will be a demonstration on the preparation of traditional Syrian Christian cuisine. Cruise through the Thanneermukkom barrage which divides the lake into two – one half with perennial salty water and the other with fresh water enriched by the rivers.

April 2025

Tuesday 01 Kumarakom – Chenganda – Vaikom B L D

At daybreak, join a professional naturalist on a birding expedition. Then sail to the village of Chenganda to meet the people - the coir weavers, coconut harvesters, mussel and prawn farmers and discuss riparian life over a drink of tender coconut water.

In the cultural centre of Vaikom, explore the ancient town and watch Kathakali - a traditional dance performance with its own unique blend of movement, music, literature and make-up. Farewell dinner on board.

Wednesday 02 Pallippuram – Kochi – Singapore B

Disembark the cruise in Pallippuram and conclude the tour with a Kalaripayattu performance, the martial art form of Kerala. Transfer to Kochi Airport for an evening flight to Singapore.

Thursday 03 Singapore – Auckland

Change planes in Singapore and arrive Auckland late this evening.



Cost Per Person*

	Twin	Single
Cabin with private facilities	\$14,984	\$20,235
Superior (1 Cabin only)	\$15,564	N/A
Premium Economy [Auckland – Singapore Return Only] [Singapore Airlines flights only]	On Request Only	
Business Class Supplement [Singapore Airlines flights only]	+\$5,595	
Early Booking Discount [If deposit paid by 02 August 2024]	\$150 per person	
Previous International Tour Client Discount	\$100	

* This is a cash or internet banking price. Credit cards will incur a 1.5% fee * Price is subject to currency fluctuations, airline surcharges and utilising the flights on the dates of the tour

Inclusions

- Return economy airfares Auckland – Singapore – Colombo – Bangalore // Cochin – Singapore – Auckland
- Travel in air conditioned coaches
- Accommodation in 4 star hotels with private facilities
- Breakfasts daily, lunches and dinners as specified
- Entrance fees at monuments as outlined
- Boat safari in Nagarhole National Park
- Vehicle safari in Nagarhole National Park
- Transfers as outlined
- Coracle ride in Kabin
- Plantation visit including lunch
- Train fare Calicut to Cochin
- Five night / Six day river boat cruise including meals
- Excursions off the boat
- Mineral water per person, per day
- Government Service Tax
- English speaking guide for the 10 days prior to the cruise
- Services of English speaking guides during all the included boat excursions
- Pukekohe Travel tour escort (subject to 15 people travelling)

Exclusions

- Airport and security taxes (approx. \$220 per person)
- Items of a personal nature
- Camera / video fees at monuments
- Sri Lanka Visa [NZD70 per person] for NZ Passport holders
- Indian visa (approx. NZD100 per person) for NZ Passport holders
- Travel Insurance (Please ask us for a quote)
- Gratuities and tips

Booking Conditions

- A non-refundable deposit of \$1000 per person will secure a place on the tour
- Full payment due no later than 13 December 2024

Cancellations and Refunds

- From the date of booking until 13 December 2024 – loss of deposit
- After 13 December 2024 – no refund

Documentation

- A current New Zealand passport is required valid six months beyond the date of travel.
- New Zealand passport holders require a visa for India (approx. NZD100 per person) And Sri Lanka Visa (approx. NZD70 per person)
- All other passport holders please ask

Health and Mobility

- There are no obligatory inoculations required
- The tour stays in 4 Star hotels and included meals will be at recommended restaurants which will minimise health risks
- Hepatitis should not be an issue but precautionary measures are your personal choice
- Update your tetanus and polio
- Malaria prevention varies considerably. Check with your medical professional
- The streets of India are busy and pavements crowded and rough. A good standard of health and mobility are required with the ability to climb steps and walk up hills

Temperatures °c	Max	Min
Colombo	30	25
Calicut	32	24
Bangalore	33	19
Cochin	31	26

Clothing

Comfortable clothes are the order of the day – the laundry service in the hotels is inexpensive and efficient. Hats, sunglasses and comfortable sandals are a must. A scarf or pareu is handy for temples etc or for sun protection.

A small umbrella is great for rain showers or sunshade.

Photographic opportunities are plentiful – respect the local people and ask before taking photos.

Currency / Money

- Sri Lanka – Sri Lanka Rupee
- India – Indian Rupee
- Cash is king in both India and Sri Lanka. Take USD, Euro or Pounds Sterling to change into Rupees
- ATMs are available in the cities and it is advisable to use ones located inside a bank – this can be time-consuming!
- Credit Cards, Visa and Mastercard are accepted in all the hotels we will be staying in and larger more up market restaurants and shops

Terms and Conditions

- For full terms and conditions please visit our website www.pukekohetravel.co.nz/termsandconditions or please ask our tour consultant for a copy

Travel Insurance

- Travel insurance is essential – please ask for a quote.



RV Vaikundam

3 Star traditional Indian standard. The river cruise boats of today are modified versions of the traditional rice barges of the past which were used for transporting produce and goods from the interior farms to the markets.

RV Vaikundam has nine lower deck cabins with attached bathrooms and kitchen, air-conditioned dining hall and an open lounge on the top deck. The wooden hull of the boat is made by joining planks of local wood [Aanjili], using strong coir rope on the section above the waterline, while below the waterline, copper tacking is done to keep the hull strong and traditional.

The wood is coated with caustic, black resin made by boiling cashew kernel and fish oil. The wood is periodically treated with the Neem oil and Fish oil.

Crew: 10

Guests: 18

Length: 36m

Speed: 11 knots / 20 km/h

Note Pukekohe Travel reserves the right to correct errors and omissions contained within this brochure without recourse.

May 2024



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