SPICE ROADS
CYCLING

TOURING

CYCLING KERALA'S BACKROADS

Tour Code
IND-DKE

14 DAYS
13 NIGHTS

Destinations	India
Tour Meets	Kochi
Tour Ends	Kochi
Fly in to	Cochin International Airport (COK)
Fly out of	Cochin International Airport (COK)
Group Size	2-16 riders
Minimum Age	18 (on scheduled departures)

ACTIVITY PROFILE

10 Cycling days	**539** km Total cycling distance
54 km Avg distance / day	**655** m Avg climbing / day

PRICING

Price	US$ 3,665 to US$ 3,765
Bike Hire (Mountain Bike)	US$ 385
Single Supplement	US$ 1,175 to US$ 1,350

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ SpiceRoads jersey
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Support vehicle
- ✓ Guide(s)
- ✓ Meals (as indicated)
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Snacks and drinks
- ✓ Entrance fees

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Domestic flights
- ✗ Airport pick up
- ✗ Airport drop off
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tips

DEPARTURES

15 Nov - 28 Nov 2026
13 Dec - 26 Dec 2026
10 Jan - 23 Jan 2027
07 Feb - 20 Feb 2027
21 Mar - 03 Apr 2027
15 Aug - 28 Aug 2027
14 Nov - 27 Nov 2027
05 Dec - 18 Dec 2027

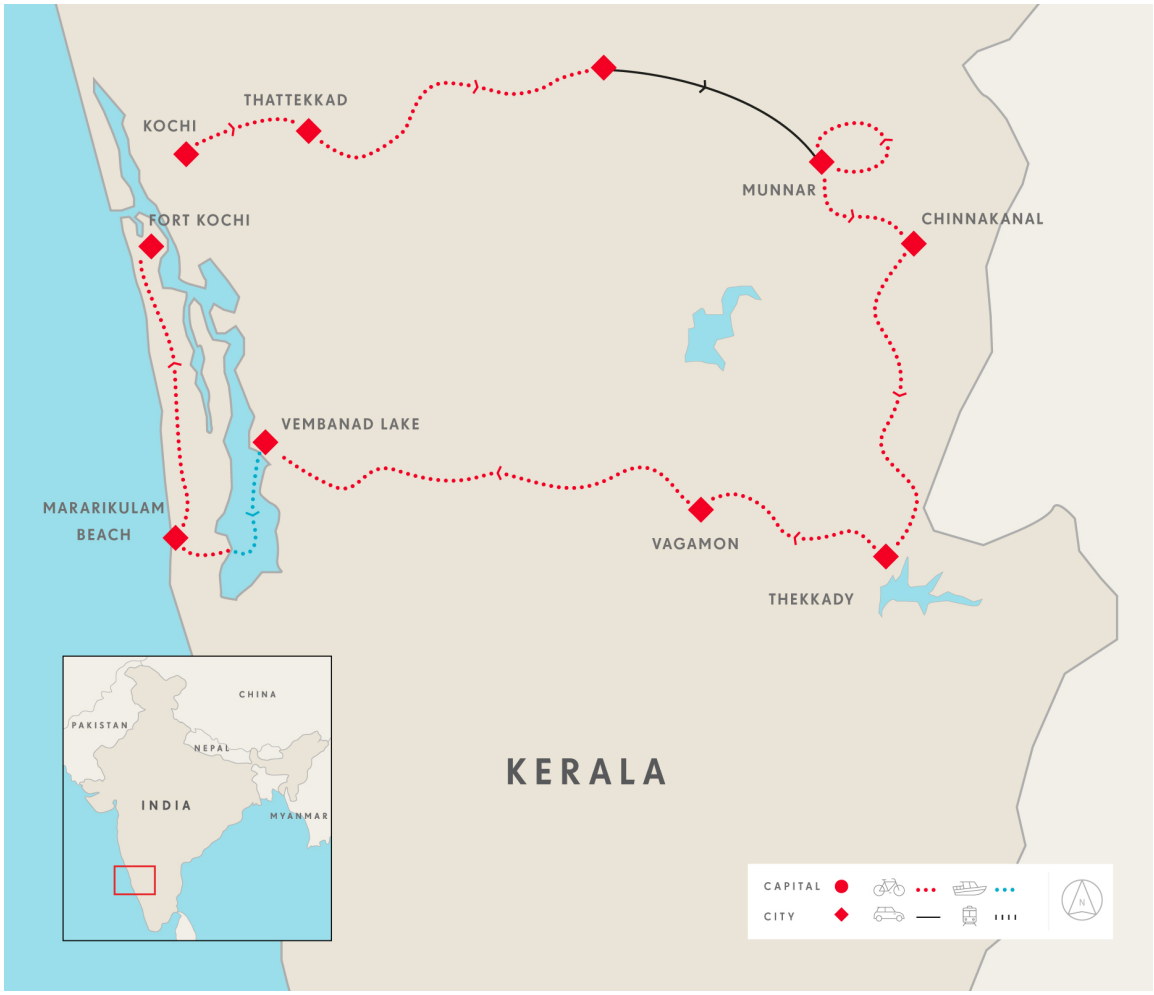
TRIP PROFILE

We ride a total of 539 km over 10 cycling days. We begin near Kochi airport, saving us lengthy transfers to and from the city center, before riding inland. With the exception of a short transfer after cycling on day 3, all of the rides are from hotel to hotel. Days 3 - 7 are in the highlands of the Western Ghats with stunning scenery and some challenging, but manageable, climbs. We have a rest day in Periyar National Park and, after a final ascent to Vagamon it is downhill and flat back to Kochi. We designed the route to take in the best of Kerala's culture, countryside, and nature, all while enjoying an active holiday. A unique, non-cycling, highlight of this tour is a houseboat cruise in the backwaters of Vembanad Lake.

The trip is fully supported, and your guide's expert knowledge of the area and terrain means that you always know what is coming up in terms of distance and difficulty. This makes a tremendous difference, as does the constant supply of water and refreshments along the way.

Suitability: This is an active level tour and riders can expect to be challenged by the route and terrain in a variety of ways. The first half of the tour is in the highlands with a few days of more than 1,000 meter gains with some steep gradients. But the downhills are just as prominent. Daily distances vary, with longer days between 50 - 90 km and some shorter days to leave more room for non-cycling activities. The roads are mostly paved so there is no technical riding involved, but good handling skills to maneuver through traffic and some rough sections are helpful. While riders with less experience are welcome to join, a good level of physical fitness, comfort on a mountain bike, and adept handling skills enhance the enjoyment of the tour. A support vehicle is available at all times to provide refuge for weary riders.

Biking Conditions: This trip is on paved roads which are mostly in good condition, though broken asphalt, road debris, and potholes do present themselves. While much of the route is on quiet, countryside roads with minimal traffic, we will be regularly sharing the roads with other vehicles, including cars, motorbikes, and buses. This is India, after all – a country constantly on the move! There are some unavoidable sections along the shoulders of provincial main roads. We generally ride rain or shine, but based on the guide's discretion or your level of comfort, modifications to the planned route can be made. It's all part of the adventure!



Day 1: Meet in Kochi

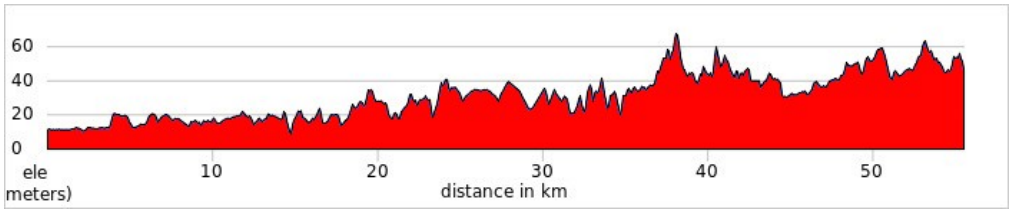
Welcome to Kochi, Kerala's vibrant commercial and cultural hub. This afternoon, we'll gather at our tour hotel near the airport for a bike fitting, trip briefing, and a welcome dinner. Staying near the airport allows us to start cycling directly from the hotel the following day, avoiding lengthy transfers to and from the city center. Don't worry — we'll return to Kochi on days 12 and 13 for a deeper exploration!

Flora Airport Hotel Dinner

Day 2: Kochi - Thattekkad

We begin the adventure by riding out from our airport hotel. The first 5 km along the main road can get busy, introducing you to one of India's unofficial national languages: honking! After crossing the Periyar River by bridge, we'll transition to backcountry roads, where the ride becomes much quieter as we delve into rural Kerala. Initially, the route is fairly flat as we follow the course of the Periyar River. Around the 30 km mark, we'll reach the foothills of the Western Ghats, where the terrain becomes more undulating. Along the way, we'll witness scenes of local life in the paddy fields, plantations, and towns, and encounter Kerala's two dominant faiths, Hinduism and Christianity, as we pass by temples and churches. Our destination is the Thattekad Bird Sanctuary, where we'll stay overnight at a riverside tented camp. This afternoon, you have the option of kayaking on the Periyar River, paddling through gentle waters surrounded by lush jungle foliage.

Birds Murmur Camp Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

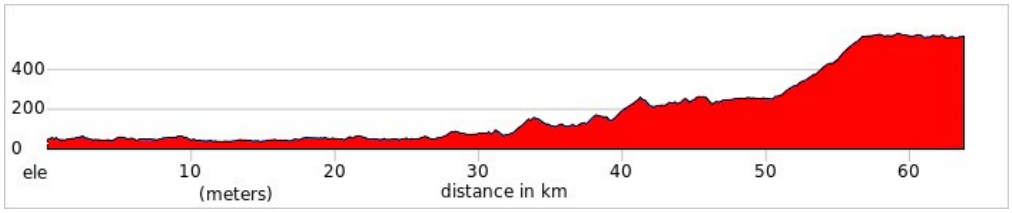


Ride 56km +479m -443m

Day 3: Thattekkad - Munnar

Bird watchers will want to rise early to spot some of the 300+ bird species in the Thattekad Bird Sanctuary. After breakfast, we'll ride east, continuing to follow the course of the Periyar River. The first 30 km are flat, taking us through quiet roads lined with plantations and dense forests. As we enter the rolling hills of the Western Ghats, the terrain becomes more challenging, culminating in a roughly 5 km climb to the Kallarkutty Dam. The final stretch follows a busier provincial road, and we'll stop for lunch in the town of Adimali. From there, we'll transfer about 1.5 hours to our hotel in Munnar, a hill station surrounded by picturesque hills and tea estates, where we'll stay for the next two nights.

Tea County Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



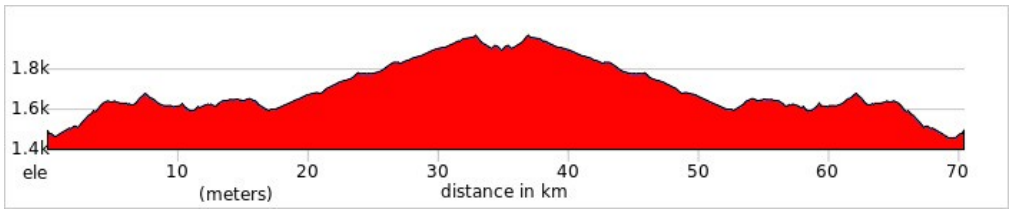
Ride 64km +1072m -552m

Day 4: Munnar Exploration

Today is dedicated to exploring Munnar's iconic landscape, with its rolling hills draped in sprawling tea fields set against the backdrop of the Western Ghats mountains. The first 10 km will take us to the shores of Mattupetty Reservoir, which we'll skirt along for a few kilometers before beginning today's main feat, a roughly 15 km climb. We'll ascend gradually, winding up the

narrow, twisting road through tea terraces and forests. By 35 km, we'll reach Top Station, a stunning viewpoint at approximately 1,880 meters elevation. Here, we'll rest and soak in the panoramic views of the Western Ghats and the Theni Valley (on a clear day!). We then retrace our route back to Munnar, enjoying a refreshing descent. The afternoon is free to relax or explore Munnar's lively markets.

Tea County Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

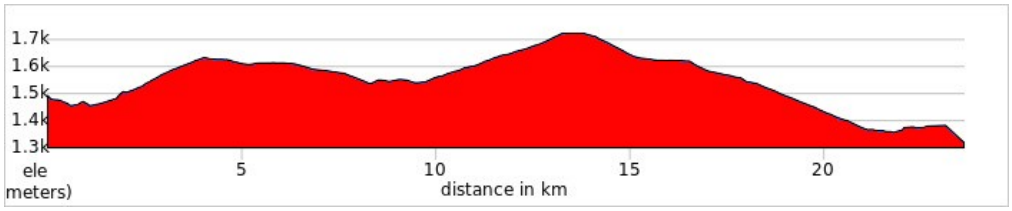


Ride 71km +1189m -1187m

Day 5: Munnar - Chinnakanal

Today's ride is short and sweet as we head further southeast through the Munnar Hills. We follow a well-paved provincial throughway with many curves, hairpins, and viewpoints making for a fun and scenic journey. A highlight is passing by the so-called Powerhouse Waterfalls which cascade dramatically down a cliff face directly next to the road (water levels depend on the season). Saddling-off in the village of Chinnakanal we have lunch and prepare ourselves for a special treat this afternoon: a visit to the world's highest tea plantation by jeep! Located at 2,170 meters in the Western Ghats, Kolukkumalai Tea Estate offers fabulous views and a look into the time-honored tea processing methods of South India. After our jeep safari we return to Chinnakanal for the night.

The Sienna Village Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

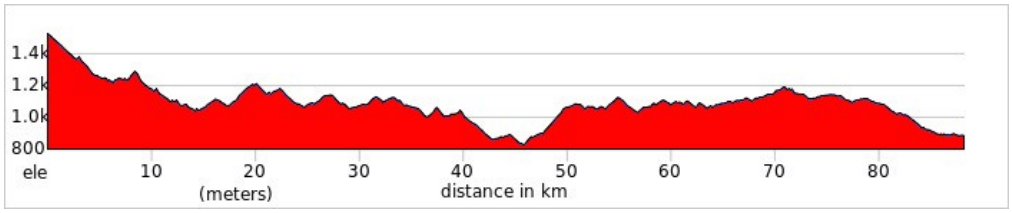


Ride 21km +403m -457m

Day 6: Chinnakanal - Thekkady

Get ready for a challenging yet scenic ride along the eastern fringes of Kerala, known as the "Cardamom Hills." The high elevation and cool climate create perfect conditions for spice cultivation, especially cardamom — though you probably guessed that! We'll cover nearly 90 km on paved, undulating provincial roads surrounded by dense forests, spice farms, lively towns, and small villages. The first 45 km trend downhill as we ride towards the Kallar River valley, though there are enough climbs to keep our legs busy. After reaching the valley floor, the second half of the route includes a series of hills through the wooded hills before a final descent brings us to the edge of Periyar National Park, one of the largest wildlife sanctuaries in the Western Ghats. We spend two nights at a lovely resort in the town of Thekkady, the gateway to Periyar National Park

Wild Avenue Resort Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 90km +1622m -2169m

Day 7: Thekkady Rest Day

Today is a well-deserved break from cycling. Based in Thekkady, the wilds of Periyar National Park lie at our doorstep, offering several options for exploration. A popular choice is a boat ride on the park's large lake, where you might spot elephants, tigers, leopards, and other elusive wildlife along the shores. For a more intimate exploration of the forests and tiger reserve beyond the lake, consider a jeep safari. Your guide will provide details on available activities, which can be booked in advance of arriving. Lunch is on your own, and we'll gather for dinner at the hotel in the evening.

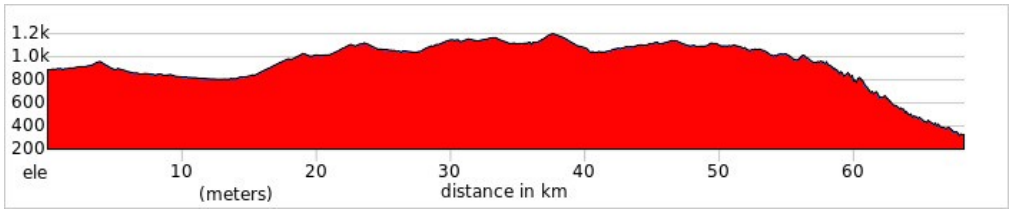
Wild Avenue Resort Breakfast, Dinner

Day 8: Thekkady – Vagamon

We're back in the saddle for another fabulous day of Kerala highland riding! Departing from Thekkady, we start with 30 km on a provincial throughway before transitioning to a winding, single-lane secondary road along a mountain ridge. This stretch offers some of the best cycling in Kerala: a tranquil road with tea and spice plantations seemingly within arm's reach blanketing the hillsides. For the final 20 km, we join the main road leading to Vagamon, a picturesque hill station perched 1,100 meters above sea level. From here, we'll savor a thrilling 18 km downhill to our vintage boutique hotel nestled in the Mavady Hills. If our group is large, we'll stay at a bigger hotel near Vagamon town and save the downhill ride for the following morning.

Vanilla County/ Adrak Summer Sand Hill Resort Vagamon

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

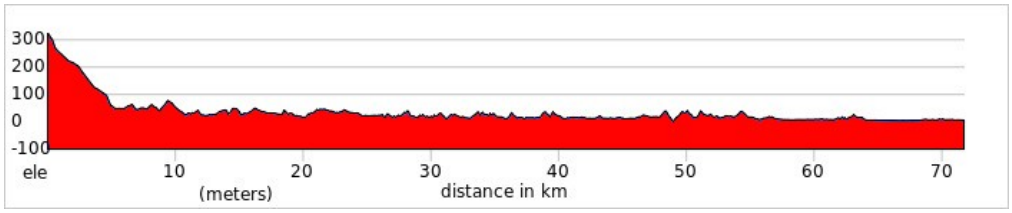


Ride 68km +970m -1531m

Day 9: Vagamon - Vembanad Lake

A final 5 km downhill completes our descent out of the Western Ghats and into the lowlands of Kerala's lush backwater region. The ride is predominantly flat, following small country roads that crisscross the fertile plains of the Meenachil River. A unique feature of this area is the presence of Syrian Christians, a prominent community with historical roots linked to St. Thomas the Apostle, who arrived on the shores of Kerala in the 1st century AD. We'll pass many churches with their distinctive whitewashed facades and intricate designs. After lunch, we'll visit the particularly pretty St. Thomas Church and then complete our ride to Vembanad Lake, Kerala's largest body of water. We spend the night at a lovely resort on the shores of this tranquil lake.

Abad Whispering Palms Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 71km +586m -901m

Day 10: Kerala Backwater Cruise

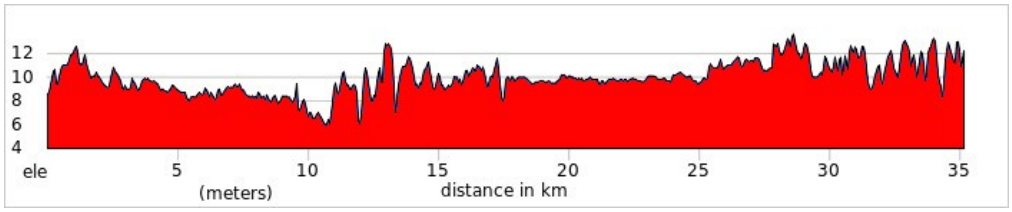
This morning is free to relax at the lakeside hotel. If you're eager for a ride, we can offer a leisurely 10 km loop around the charming villages of Kumarakom. Before noon, we embark on an unmissable Keralite experience: a day and night cruise on Lake Vembanad and its expansive network of canals aboard a converted rice barge. These vintage "houseboats" feature bedrooms, lounging areas, and come with a captain, cook, and crew. We'll simply sit back, sip drinks, and watch the world pass by in the blue lagoons of Kerala's backwaters. Enjoy scenes of coconut groves, paddy fields, village life, churches, temples, fishing boats, and flocks of birds skimming the waters. Meals including lunch, afternoon tea, dinner, and breakfast the following morning will all be served on board.

Houseboat Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11: Vembanad Lake– Mararikulam Beach

This morning, we enjoy an al fresco breakfast aboard the houseboat as we glide across Vembanad Lake. After disembarking, we hop on our bikes for a leisurely, flat ride towards the palm-fringed Mararikulam Beach. We plan to arrive in time for lunch, leaving the afternoon for you to dip your toes in the Arabian Sea. Unlike the more crowded beach destinations of Southern India, Mararikulam offers a laid-back vibe ideal for relaxing on the soft sands or taking a casual stroll along the waterfront and through local fishing villages. Or how about treating yourself to a relaxing Ayurvedic massage (a Kerala wellness specialty)?

Azure Tides Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

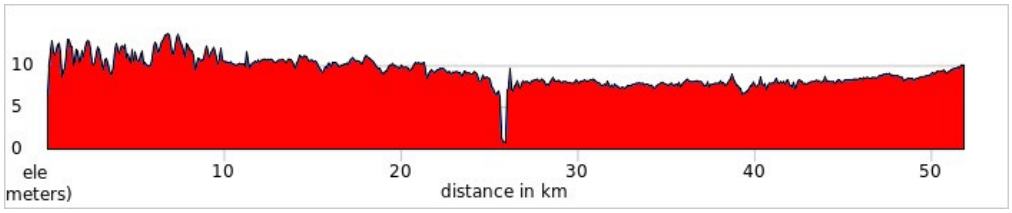


Ride 35km +94m -91m

Day 12: Mararikulam Beach – Fort Kochi

Our tour comes full circle as we ride to Kochi. Our route takes us through a narrow stretch of coastal Kerala, nestled between the Arabian Sea to the west and the backwater lagoons to the east. We traverse country roads winding through coconut groves, farms, fishing villages, and roadside markets. While the ride is mostly inland, we'll swing by a beach or two along the way to cool down with some refreshments and the ocean breeze. After about 40 km, traffic begins to pick up as we approach Fort Kochi, the city's historic heart, where we conclude the ride and spend the final two nights.

Abad Dutch Bungalow Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

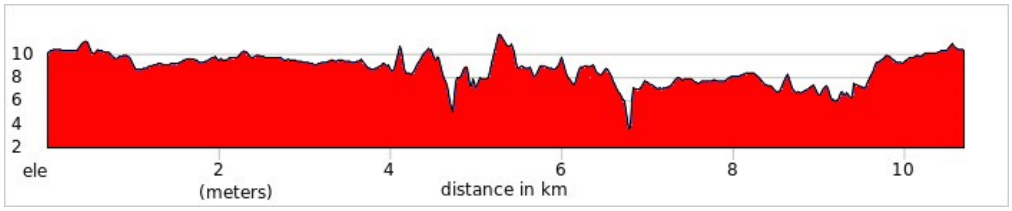


Ride 52km +96m -93m

Day 13: Fort Kochi by Bike

This morning, we'll explore the backstreets of Fort Kochi on a heritage-focused biking loop. As a bustling maritime port since ancient times, Fort Kochi's townscape reflects a rich cosmopolitan history, showcasing influences from Chinese, Arab, Portuguese, Dutch, and British cultures. With much to see, today's route is designed to be flexible, with possible stops at the old harbor area, St. Francis Church (the oldest European church in India), the Dutch Palace, Santa Cruz Basilica, Vasco House, and the ornate Paradesi Synagogue. We'll also visit the massive and iconic Chinese fishing nets. The afternoon is free to relax at the hotel, poke around the antique and curio shops, or visit one of Fort Kochi's many museums. In the evening, we'll meet for a farewell dinner.

Abad Dutch Bungalow Hotel Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 11km +34m -34m

Day 14: Kochi Departure

Feel free to extend your stay in Kochi or travel onwards to discover more of incredible India. If you need assistance with post-tour hotel bookings in Kochi or airport transfers please let us know.

Breakfast

Disclaimer: The adventure cycling tours we operate often go beyond the beaten track, and the countries where we ride are not always predictable. Due to these reasons, it is occasionally necessary to reroute or update itineraries. Our guarantee is that we will not change a trip unless for safety or to improve it. Our listed hotels are always accurate at the time of writing, but should we have to change any hotel, it will always be for a similar or better one.

NUTS & BOLTS

Bikes

Because some people can't imagine going on a trip without their own beloved bicycle, we do not provide them as part of this tour. However, you can hire bikes locally for the price listed in the tour pricing section. If you bring your own bike, please make sure it is either a mountain, hybrid, or gravel bike in good mechanical order.

Bike Repairs

Basic spares and tools are carried by the guide and on the support vehicle, though we cannot guarantee having spares for every conceivable problem. Carrying a basic tool kit, a spare tube and a pump while riding is recommended.

Safety

Wearing a helmet is required on all our biking adventures and is non negotiable. If you do not wear a helmet you will not be allowed to cycle. Your tour leader is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

Guides

You will be led by a local English-speaking guide and if the group is 9 people or more we will add another guide to the tour. All our guides are well informed in the history, culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your guide is also medically trained and an experienced cyclist, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

THE NITTY GRITTY

Passports and Visas

Please make sure that your passport is still valid for at least six months at the end of the tour. An electronic visa (e-visa) is available for passport holders of 150 countries including Australia, New Zealand, UK, USA and citizens of EU countries, with the application and the fee submitted at least 4 days before date of arrival. Fees vary depending on nationality. The visa is valid up to 60 days from the date of arrival. Visit here to apply and for the full list of eligible countries. For citizens of countries not specified a visa must be acquired *before* arriving in India. Please contact your local Indian embassy to receive a standard tourist visa. Locations on embassies worldwide are available here.

Health

There are no compulsory vaccinations although it is strongly recommended that you are vaccinated against Typhoid, and Hepatitis A and B. Tetanus and polio vaccinations should also be up to date at the time of travel. Please speak to your doctor/physician for the most recent information.

Weather

As India is such a large country, the climate and weather conditions vary across the vast region. However, the country is divided into six main climatic zones ranging from arid desert in the west, alpine tundra and glaciers in the north, and humid tropical in the southwest and the island territories.

We have tours in the following regions

Rajasthan: weather can be divided into four seasons - summer, monsoon, post-monsoon, and winter. Summer from April to June is the hottest season with temperatures ranging from 32C to 45C. Monsoon extends from July to September with a slight drop in temperature but plenty of rain. The post-monsoon period is from October to November where the lowest temperatures can reach as low as 18C. From December to March is the cold season and the best time to visit Rajasthan. Temperatures range from 15C-18C with little or no humidity.

Kerala: mostly has a tropical wet climate, which can be divided into three seasons. Summer is from February to May and is generally hot and humid. Monsoon season begins in June till around October or November. December to January holds the best weather for travel as it is cooler and the rains have subsided.

Tamil Nadu: Tamil Nadu has a tropical climate with hot weather year-round and an average annual temperature of 24 to 32 degrees Celsius. Summers from April to June are very hot, often above 40 degrees inland. The months from October to March usually have daytime temperatures between 20 and 28 degrees, making this the most pleasant season to visit.

Leh/Ladakh has a cold desert like climate with somewhat extreme conditions. summers bring in harsh direct sunlight at such high altitudes while winters can get as cold as below freezing point. Lowest ever recorded was -23C. May to August is the best time for tourists to enjoy the weather and everything it has to offer.

Sikkim: has a very temperate climate with enjoyable 5 seasons. Depending on the location and altitude, the weather can vary. In Summer, the lowest temperatures reach 13C up to 28°C while in winter Temperature between 0C to 13C. The monsoon season hits around June to September.

Food

Meals are included in the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, and D = dinner. Any special dietary requirements can also be catered for as well. Please let us know at the time of booking.

Drink

Keeping you completely hydrated is a job we take very seriously. Cold water and energy-restoring drinks are included in the tour price while riding. Soft drinks and other beverages during meals are not included. Beer and alcohol are available, but NOT included in the price.

Solo Travelers

SpiceRoads does not require you to pay a surcharge for traveling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveler of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

Extra Expenses

We recommend that you tuck away a few extra dollars a day for incidentals. Included entrance fees are those for the listed sites and national parks that are part of the itinerary. Any other site fees are not included.

Money

The currency is the Indian rupee (Rs) and there are ATMs in major cities and most towns that take international cards. However, we suggest that you withdraw money at the airport at the start of your tour. During the tour, our guide will inform you of the ATM locations in different cities.

GENERAL BOOKING INFO

If this is the tour for you here's what you need to do to confirm your place:

FLEXIBLE BOOKING CONDITIONS

Booking a SpiceRoads cycling adventure is easy and we try to do everything possible to make sure you have full flexibility and peace of mind. We do not require a deposit to hold your place on a tour and once full payment has been made your money is protected in our client account and you have the flexibility to cancel or change your booking if needed.

CONFIRMING YOUR BOOKING

Just complete our online booking form or send your booking details offline (email or post), and we will confirm your participation. No deposit is needed to confirm your place on a SpiceRoads tour.

You are advised to read our Booking Conditions in full before you make your payment and should you require further clarifications of any of the conditions below, please email us or call our office.

TRIP STATUS

There is a minimum number of participants (usually 2) required to enable the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to Depart'. Once a trip is guaranteed to depart you are free to book your flights and make other travel arrangements. If the trip status is 'Limited' will mean we have only a small number of spaces available for booking. If you are unsure about the trip status, please email us or call our office.

BOOKING ONLINE

From the tour page, click the 'Book Now' link. All departures for this tour will appear, just select the date you'd like to travel. For the next steps, you'll need to know the names of the people travelling. If you wish you can also provide extra details such as passport numbers, height (for bike hire), or you can add that later by logging into Manage My Trip (we'll set up an account for you automatically if you don't already have one). Our system will contact you from time to time to fill in the missing information, as it will be required before departure. However, if the trip that you are booking offers a child discount, you will have to fill out the date of birth of each rider (so we can calculate the appropriate discount).

If you are having any problems please send us an email, or give us a call (+66 026 3295) and one of our travel specialists will assist you with your booking.

BOOKING OFFLINE

Just call us or send an email indicating which trip you want to join and we will happily send you a list of questions and process your booking for you.

DEPOSITS AND PAYMENTS

We do not require a deposit or full payment to book a place for you on a tour.

The balance of the tour's cost (final invoice) will need to be paid 60 days before the departure date with fees for any bicycle rental(s), single supplement(s) and extra hotel nights.

In the case where a booking is made when there are less than 60 days until the tour departure date, the tour's cost should be paid in full within 72 hours of receiving an invoice from SpiceRoads. Payment can be made by credit card using our online payment gateway or by bank transfer. When making payment online you will need to confirm that you have read these booking conditions during the "checkout" process, which equates to agreeing to the terms of services and stipulations as indicated in this document.

In all cases, tour fees need to be paid "in full" before participation in a tour. No person(s) will be allowed to join a tour without fully settling their invoice and receiving a confirmation number from SpiceRoads.

The exception can be made for last-minute miscellaneous fees that can be paid locally (visas, additional local hotel bookings, etc.) can be settled on the day of arrival.

FULL FLEXIBILITY FOR TOUR CANCELATIONS

If the tour is cancelled or postponed by SpiceRoads because we didn't make the trip numbers and the tour can't run, we will make a full cash refund (by bank transfer or on your credit card).

If the tour is cancelled for any other reason, including due to Covid related travel restrictions, we will give you a full credit (with no deductions for admin or any other small-print item) to use on any SpiceRoads tour with no time limit. (Exceptions being flights, special permits and other non-refundable items and these will be advised when booking the trip).

Before paying for your tour, you can cancel your booking with no charge and up until 40 days before departure, you can change your booking to another travel date or move your booking onto another SpiceRoads tour with no charges.

If you need to cancel after you have made full payment, please see our cancellation policy.

Loyalty Riders Club

For those who have been on several long tours with us, we reward customer loyalty by offering repeat customers a special discount off the tour price (excludes single supplement and bike rental). If this is your fourth scheduled tour or more you will receive a 5% discount. If this is your eighth scheduled tour or more we will extend a 10% discount. The discount will be reflected in your online booking, but please contact us if any questions. Loyalty discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Note: Only tours of 7 days or more will be applicable for a loyalty discount.

International Flights

International flights, to and from the start and finish points are not included in the tour price. Once your tour is Guaranteed to Depart you can book your flight. Please contact us for advice before arranging flights for the best arrival and departure times. We would only cancel a trip for an extreme circumstance, but in that case, where we cancel your trip, we cannot be liable for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made. Please claim any losses from your travel insurance that you acquired when you booked your holiday.

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from SpiceRoads, be sure to subscribe.

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