# SPICEROADS

CYCLING





# INDIA'S MALABAR COAST HERITAGE BY BICYCLE

Tour Code IND-DHB



**Destinations** 

Tour Meets Tour Ends

Fly in to Fly out of

Group Size Minimum Age India

Kochi, India Kochi, India

Cochin International Airport (COK) Cochin International Airport (COK)

2-16 riders

18 (on scheduled departures)

Price Bike Hire (Mountain Bike)

Bike Hire (E-Bike)

**PRICING** 

Single Supplement

US\$ 2,225 to US\$ 2,290 Included

US\$ 75

\*E-bikes are in limited supply, please enquire to reserve one.

#### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- SpiceRoads jersey
- Water bottle
- Support vehicle
- Guide(s)
- Meals (as indicated)
- Airport pick up
- Accommodation
- Bike and helmet
- Snacks and drinks

### US\$ 470 to US\$ 545

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- International flights X
- Domestic flights
- Airport drop off
- Visa fees
- Alcohol
- Tips X

### **ACTIVITY PROFILE**



Cycling days

46km Avg distance / day

Total cycling distance

Avg climbing / day

### **DEPARTURES**



04 January - 11 January 2026 01 February - 08 February 2026 01 March - 08 March 2026 29 March - 05 April 2026

27 September - 04 October 2026

#### TRIP PROFILE

This Malabar Coast cycling tour covers 320 kilometers in 7 cycling days, enjoying the local culture, color, and easy pace of life south-western India. Daily distances are on average 46 kilometres, traversing mostly flat and gently undulating terrain through the lush lowlands. There is one day with 850 metres of climbing (not all in one go!), but overall the riding is of a moderate level, allowing you to enjoy the cultural and local experiences as well as the riding.

Be aware that according to local religious customs, a vegetarian diet is the norm, and meat may not be available during all meals. It's our experience that the vegetarian cuisine is so satisfying that you will not likely miss having meat at those meals. Some of our hotels are "dry" hotels, meaning alcohol will not be readily available. However, you can ask your guide for assistance in obtaining alcohol, and there are always designated areas where you can have a drink. Rest-assured you won't go hungry or thirsty on this trip!

Suitability: This cycling trip is ideal for the recreational rider. While the riding is not too strenuous, heat and humidity in South India can be challenging, so a decent level of fitness will go a long way towards managing each days' ride comfortably. Your guide will let you know what to expect each day, and there is always the option to hop in the van for a spell, tailoring the ride to your ideal length.

**Biking Conditions:** This bike trip is primarily on quiet back roads through farmland and villages in mostly decent condition. However, this is India! There may be sections of rough road and chaotic traffic in and around urban areas, as we sometimes need to use larger roads. Your local cycling guide will brief you on the upcoming sections, and the air-conditioned support vehicle will ride behind the entire way should you need a rest, a water bottle top-up, or an extra slice of fresh fruit

Accommodations: More than just places to stay the night, each property on this tour is unique and integrated with its surroundings, offering cultural experiences that can't be found in a mainstream commercial hotel. Carefully selected to reflect the best of each diverse segment of the tour, they range from a heritage guesthouse, to a temple stay, to an organic farming homestead, to a specialty cuisine cooking school, to beach wellness resorts - all with traditional flair and customary Keralan hospitality.



### Day 1 Kochi - Thodupuzha

This morning, your cycling tour leader and support team will pick you up from Kochi International Airport or your hotel (we recommend staying near the airport). From here, you will take a transfer approximately two hours out of the bustling city to the lush and serene countryside of Southern India, in a small town called Thodupuzha. We'll have the late morning to unwind and explore the surroundings, a charming farmstay where our hosts have maintained a homestead for generations. At noon, your guide will give you a tour briefing and fit you on your bike. After a flavorful lunch of traditional farm-to-table dishes, take a guided stroll through the property, where Kerala's agriculture is on display in the sheer variety of fruits, vegetables, and herbs, all traditionally grown. In the late afternoon, we'll make a short trek to Mundan Mala, a hilltop with views of the surrounding landscape. Along the way, we'll walk through a small village and take tea in the local way, called "chai." In the evening, we'll enjoy another traditional meal at the house and see if we can recognize some of the flavors from our walk through the farm!

River Banks Madapparamabil or John's Farm



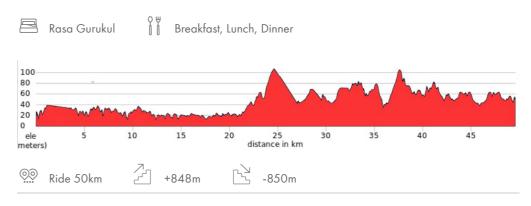
Lunch, Dinner

Browse the vibrant local market and see how the many households of the village do their shopping for the day, choosing from among the exotic and diverse products. We'll then fuel up for our first bike ride of the trip with a traditional breakfast, before bidding goodbye to our lovely hosts and setting out on two wheels. Our ride takes us through green countryside, along small rivers, and through rural villages where we'll get a closer look at local life in Southern India. Along the way, we'll pass through rubber tree plantations and visit a plantation house to learn more about the interesting process by which rubber is made. This industry has been a major part of rural India's economy for over 100 years; today, the country is the world's fourth largest rubber producer. We'll have an authentic lunch at a local restaurant. After lunch, you may choose to ride another 20 km to the hotel, or transfer 30 minutes directly to the resort. Tonight, we will stay across the river from the Sholayar Forest Reserve, home to many of India's most well-known and endangered species, such as the tiger and elephant. If we're lucky we'll spot some of the forests' colorful birds along the edge of the water. Enjoy a free afternoon to escape the heat with a dip in the resort pool or the waters of the nearby Periyar River.



# Day 3 Paniyeli Poru - Chalakudy

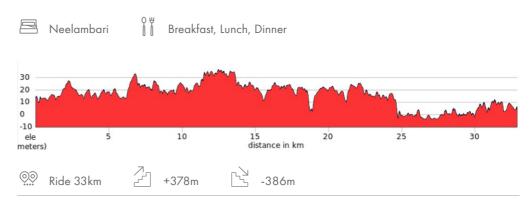
Waking to birdsong, we'll have breakfast, then cycle out of Whispering Waters. It's an easy ride for the first 20 kilometers, but we'll have a few hills once we cross the river and ride into more forested terrain (this is the day with the most climbing on the tour, but it's all manageable with pacing suggested by your guide). Natural beauty is the focus of today's route, as we ride along the edge of the forest reserve. The final 5 km is along one of Kerala's most important waterways, the Chalakudy River. Water from rainfall in the Western Ghat Mountains feeds into the Chalakudy, which sustains 98 species of freshwater fish, along with numerous other fauna. We'll stop to admire the view of the river from a suspension bridge near the end of our ride. Here, we'll enjoy a local lunch before transferring 45 minutes by car to our accommodation for the evening, a vegetarian cooking school and wellness resort set among riverside spice groves. The afternoon is free to enjoy the hotel grounds and gardens, or enjoy traditional ayurvedic spa treatments. Dinner tonight is a one-of-a-kind culinary experience, savoring the work of master chefs specializing in the art of traditional vegetarian Keralan cuisine.



# Day 4 Chalakudy - Thrissur

Enjoy a fantastic breakfast at Rasa Gurukul before cycling out of the property and into another vivid day of cycling and sightseeing. Today, we'll cross into the Thrissur district by bike. Though Kochi is the political capital and most well-known city in Kerala to tourists, Thrissur is known as

the cultural hub of Kerala province. Our ride is easier than yesterday, with gently undulating terrain as we ride though village backroads towards the main town of Thrissur. After our ride, we'll check into our hotel before the day gets too hot and prepare for another show-stopping culinary experience over lunch: traditional Sadhya. Meaning "banquet" in the local language, Sadhya is a cuisine from Kerala traditionally served on a large banana leaf, and featuring an impressive variety of well-spiced, vegetarian dishes, sometimes more than twenty! After lunch, take a break to relax at the hotel in the early afternoon. Later, we'll take a leisurely bike ride to a local temple. After learning more about its unique rituals, we'll then take our time returning to the resort- this time by canoe!



# Day 5 Thrissur - Ottapalam

To start the day, we'll transfer to Cheruthuruthy, a small village about 45 kilometres north of Thrissur town, on the banks of the Chalakudy river. Our destination is the Kerala Kalamandalam, the premier educational center for traditional Keralan art forms, especially dance. We'll visit the school where many of the art forms are taught and watch a performance of traditional temple theater, a truly unique experience, and one seldom seen outside of the South India. We'll have lunch near the school and then begin our ride to our accommodation for the evening- a traditional Hindu homestay, over 300 years old! Though the rooms and facilities are more basic than others along our trip, the cultural significance of our stay is worth it. In the evening, we'll witness another unique and sacred art form, found only in Kerala- Kalamezuthupattu. In characteristically colorful and intricate Keralan style, Hindu deities are drawn on the temple floor with colorful powders derived from natural materials like charcoal, turmeric and lime leaves. While the artist carefully deposits the powder onto the temple floor, the priest recites a specific prayer to imbue the drawing with spiritual significance, and ritual songs are performed once the work is completed. After the full ritual is complete, the drawing is erased in stages and the powders are distributed to temple-goers as a talisman.



### Day 6 Ottapalam - Guruvayur

After a 30-minute transfer to the town of Vallapuzha, we cycle out of town along roads flanked by temples, churches and mosques, then cross the Bharathapuzha River, another major aquatic artery flowing from the Western Ghats. Settlements along this river gave rise to some of India's greatest writers, astronomers, and other scholars over the centuries. After rising along the banks of the Bharathapuzha for a few kilometres, we turn south through a series of small settlements and head for Guruvayur, the temple town that is our destination for this evening. According to legend, a sage ('guru') and the wind deity ('Vayu') saved an idol of the god Krishna and placed it here for safe-keeping, hence the name 'Guruvayur'. The town's temple is known as the earthly home of Vishnu. Our hotel for this evening is just steps from this sacred site, giving us plenty of time to explore the temple and its surroundings.



# Day 7 Guruvayoor - Cherai

Riding from our hotel this morning, our first stop is the St. Thomas Archiepiscopal Church, the site where the first Christian church in India was constructed by the apostle Thomas in the 1st century CE. While historians dispute the specific details, there is no doubt that this region was where the Christian faith first took root in India around that time, first entering via trade with the Malabar Jewish community. From here, we'll cycle leafy sideroads past small houses and gardens, riding along a large lagoon, then reaching the impressive coast itself. A long series of sandy beaches gives us the chance for a refreshing plunge in the Arabian Sea. Eventually turning inland, we cross the mouth of the Periyar River, the longest river in Kerala, a major source of fresh water and home to a great diversity of wildlife. We finish the ride on a narrow strip of land between the sea and the wide mouth of the Cherai River, where we will find our welcoming resort for the night. Unwind by the pool, watch the sunset, and enjoy a great dinner at the restaurant.



# Day 8 Cherai - Kochi

Our final ride is along coastal backwaters on a winding route that will take you to hidden villages, docks, and all manner of interesting local sights to truly get in touch with the Kochi region! Traditional fishing nets and beautifully-crafted wooden boats recall ages past, with methods handed down for countless generations. Your guides will skilfully lead you through the mindboggling maze of paths amid rivers, canals, and islets that lead you to historic Fort Kochi. Fort Kochi (formerly known as Cochin) was the former seat of colonial administration in this region under the Portuguese, Dutch, and British. It has an eclectic architectural and culinary mix of all these, in addition to the indigenous culture of the region that is on full display in the wares for sale, such as silk, spices, and handicrafts. These walkable, pleasant streets are the perfect place to draw our cycling journey to a close. with a final lunch together. From here, you may choose to stay longer in Kochi at one of the many nearby hotels, or you might head to the airport (approximately 90 minutes by car) for your onward travels.



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**

We provide well known brands of mountain bikes for this tour.

If you bring your own bike, please make sure it is a mountain bike or a hybrid in good mechanical order, and bring along any spare parts and accessories you may need for your particular bike, as these may be difficult to source locally.

#### **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 <a href="here">here</a> to apply and for the full list of eligible countries. For citizens of countries not specified a visa must be acquired <a href="here">before</a> arriving in India. Please contact your local Indian embassy to receive a standard tourist visa. Locations on embassies worldwide are available <a href="here">here</a>.

#### 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 <u>Booking Conditions</u> in full before you make your payment and should you require further clarifications of any of the conditions below, please <u>email us</u> 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 <a href="mailto:em

#### **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 <a href="travel">travel</a> insurance that you acquired when you booked your holiday.

#### Newsletter

Our adventure travel <u>e-newsletter</u> 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.

### **CONTACT US**

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