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## TRAVELWIZE SOUTH INDIA YOGA GROUP 2024

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**THEKKADY**



**KUMARAKOM**

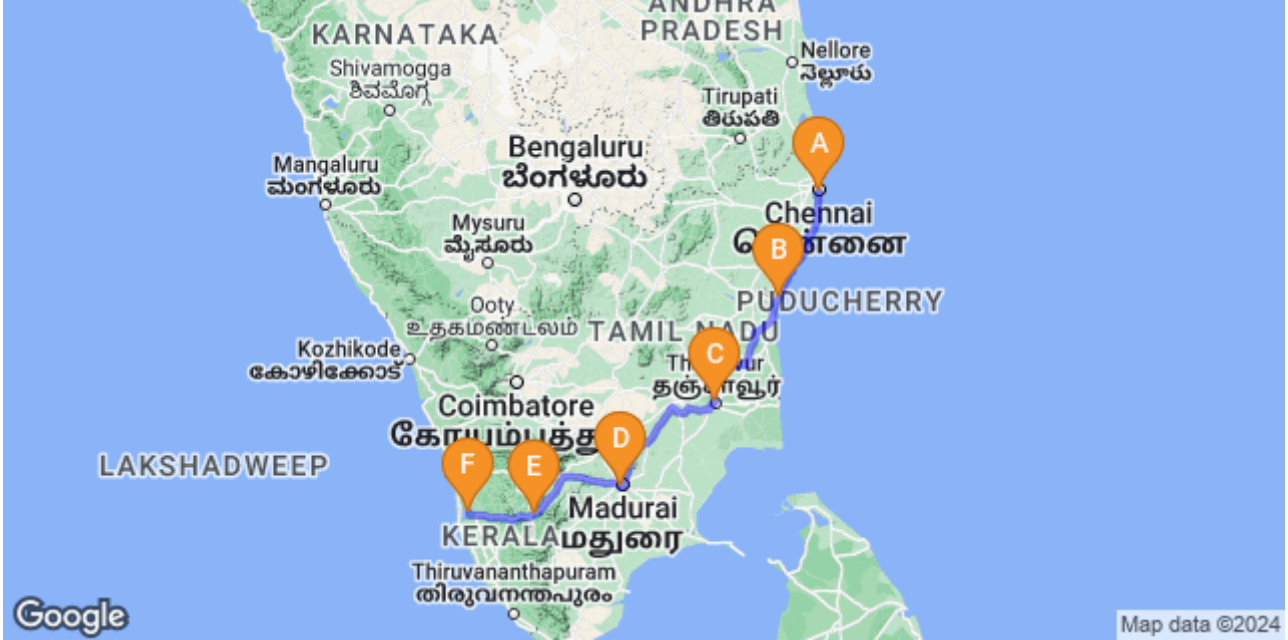


## TRAVELWIZE SOUTH INDIA YOGA GROUP 2024

Chennai - Puducherry - Thanjavur - Madurai - Thekkady - Kumarakom

14 Days / 13 Nights

03 November 2024 - 16 November 2024



[Click here to view your Digital Itinerary](#)

## Introduction

Accommodation	Destination	Start	End	Basis	Duration
Taj Connemara	Chennai	3 Nov	5 Nov	HB	2 Nights
Maison Perumal	Puducherry	5 Nov	7 Nov	HB	2 Nights
Svatma	Thanjavur	7 Nov	8 Nov	HB	1 Night
The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai Madurai	Madurai	8 Nov	10 Nov	HB	2 Nights
Niraamaya Cardamom Club	Thekkady	10 Nov	12 Nov	HB	2 Nights
Kumarakom Lake Resort	Kumarakom	12 Nov	16 Nov	HB	4 Nights

### Key

HB: Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

## Day 1: Arrive Chennai

(Sun, 3 November)

### Day Itinerary

Welcome to India! Upon arrival, you will be met by our representative at the airport, who will escort you to the hotel and will assist you with the check in formalities. Please note standard check-in time at the hotel is 14:00

### Chennai

Chennai is Tamil Nadu's coastal capital and one of India's financial, cultural and tourism hubs. Attractions include the city's beaches, museums, shopping areas and historical sites, particularly the centrally located Kapaleeshwar Temple – a historical shrine to the goddess Shiva, featuring gaudily decorative gopurams (towers) covered with colourful carvings – and the group of ancient rock-carved temples at Mahabalipuram, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located roughly 60 kilometres from the city centre. Also of interest is the Guindy National Park, which occupies nearly three-square kilometres of greenery in the city centre and is home to an array of birds, reptiles and (mainly smallish) mammals.

### Overnight: Taj Connemara

Ideally located within the vibrant area of Chennai, Taj Connemara is a heritage hotel first established in 1854. The beautifully appointed hotel places guests nearby Chennai's most famed attractions including the Click Art Museum, the Mandras Crocodile Bank and the spectacular Shiva Kapleeshwarar Temple.

Reminiscent of an English mansion, each room and suite relive its glorious past while boasting contemporary touches including neutral shades contrasted with dark wood accent and modern amenities. Guests can indulge in local cuisine at the Raintree Restaurant, multi-cuisine at the Verandah restaurant or unwind with a drink the Lady Connemara Bar and Lounge. Experiences include treatments at the Jiva Spa, a traditional afternoon tea and colonial-inspired cocktails.




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### Basis

Half Board – Bed and Dinner

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**Day 2: In Chennai**

**(Mon, 4 November)**

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### Day Itinerary

This morning enjoy a half day private sightseeing tour of Chennai. Start with a visit to the imposing San Thome Cathedral, founded by the Portuguese in the 16th Century and rebuilt in 1896. The cathedral is said to house the remains of St Thomas the Apostle who supposedly brought Christianity to India around 52 AD. Continue on to St Thomas Mount where it's believed the apostle was killed, followed by a visit to his shrine.

Later head to historic Fort St George, built in 1640. It now houses the Tamil Nadu's Legislative Assembly and Secretariat. Next visit St Mary's Church – dating back to 1678, it is the oldest surviving British Church in India. Finish at the Fort Museum which showcases the history of Chennai alongside a fascinating collection of objects from the tenure of the East India Company.

### Basis

Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

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**Day 3: Drive Chennai - Pondicherry**

**(Tue, 5 November)**

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### Day Itinerary

Today you will drive to Pondicherry (150km/approx. 3hrs), stopping en route at Mahabalipuram.

Mahabalipuram was the major seaport of the ancient Pallava Kingdom. The Pallavas mastered the art of construction without using bricks or mortar, carving large and exquisite sculptures straight out of rock between the 7th & 9th Centuries. The town's cave temples, monolithic rathas (chariots) and sculpted reliefs have been classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is also an ideal place to purchase intricately shaped and skilfully carved statues.

Spend time exploring Mahabalipuram's marvellous temples including the Shore Temple as well as visiting the curious Krishna's Butterball, a colossal rock boulder precariously perched on a steep smooth slope. Scientists cannot quite agree how it got there or how it manages to not roll down the slope – apparently the Governor of Madras tried to

move the boulder in 1908, but even with the force of 7 elephants it could not be budged! Today you'll often find a herd of goats sheltering in the shade under the rock, making a great photo opportunity.

Later continue onto the temple city of Kanchipuram, the 'religious capital of the South'. Visit the Kailasanatha Temple - one of the most impressive structures surviving from ancient India, beautiful Kamakshi Amman Temple - dedicated to the goddess Parvati and the vast Ekambareshwar Temple, one of the largest in the city.

Later continue the drive to Pondicherry and upon arrival check into your hotel.

### **Puducherry**

Puducherry – previously known as Pondicherry – is made up of four entirely separate enclaves along the Indian coast, all of which were colonised by the French in the 18th century. Named after the largest of these enclaves, this union territory has retained a strong European culture that makes it unlike any other place in India. Nowhere is this more evident than in Puducherry district, dubbed the 'French Riviera of the East', where antiquated colonial buildings line the quiet cobbled streets and tree-lined avenues of the old town, and many people still speak French as their first language.

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### **Overnight: Maison Perumal**

Maison Perumal has 10 rooms offering accommodation - 2 of which are twin rooms. All rooms are air-conditioned and has a quiet elegant atmosphere.

The hotel serves local and international dishes. Local produce is used to prepare dishes. Guests staying at the Maison Perumal can explore the town on foot or by cycling. Pondicherry has beautiful heritage buildings, restaurants, shopping centres and a beach.




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### **Basis**

Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

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**Day 4: In Pondicherry**

**(Wed, 6 November)**

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### **Day Itinerary**

Today enjoy a half day private sightseeing tour of Pondicherry which includes a visit to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. This place of spiritual retreat, founded in 1926, has today over 1, 200 members. A highlight includes a tour of its paper factory which specialises in delicate, individually handcrafted paper goods and is just one of the ashram's successful commercial enterprises.

Later visit the Pondicherry Museum which displays a fantastic collection of rare bronzes from the Chola dynasty, along with items from the French colonial period. Finish your tour at Auroville, an international 'township' on the outskirts of the city dedicated to peace, harmony and sustainable living. Envisioned as a type of utopia and hand built by the flower-power generation of the 1960s, this unique and fascinating township is now protected by UNESCO.

### **Basis**

Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

## **Day 5: Drive Pondicherry - Thanjavur**

**(Thu, 7 November)**

### **Day Itinerary**

This morning you'll drive to Tanjore (200km/approx. 5hrs). Upon arrival check into your hotel.

Later you'll embark on a private half day sightseeing tour of Tanjore. Join the throngs of pilgrims who worship every day at the 1000 year old Brihadeeswara Temple, one of India's most prized architectural wonders and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Marvel at its 60m high 'vimana' (temple tower) which is beautifully and intricately carved. Don't miss the huge statue of Nandi, the sacred bull, at the entrance which weighs over 20 tonnes and was carved from a single piece of rock! The rest of your tour takes in many of Tanjore's main attractions including the Saraswathi Mahal Library museum with its collection of rare ancient books and manuscripts, the former Sadar Mahal Palace, housing a small collection of thrones and weaponry and Our Lady of Sorrows Church which dates back to 1740.

### **Thanjavur**

Situated between Trichy and the coast of Tamil Nadu, Thanjavur is an important centre of South Indian religion, art, and architecture. It is also an agricultural hub, fondly known as the 'rice bowl of Tamil Nadu'. It's most visited monument, the exquisite Brihadeeswara Temple, is located at the centre of the city and a style of painting, called Tanjore, which is unique to the region, can be seen here. The temple is one of the Great Living Chola Temples, which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites located in and around Thanjavur. Thousands of people still worship at the Cholas' grand Brihadishwara Temple every day.

### **Overnight: Svatma**

Svatma is a luxury heritage hotel in a quiet lane in Tanjore, Tamil Nadu and raises the bar for hotels in this area. Surrounded by beautifully landscaped grounds, Svatma has been lovingly designed and restored as a testament to Tamilan art and culture.

Each of Svatma's 38 rooms and suites are individually appointed. An unparalleled luxury option in Tanjore. There's three restaurants serving Tamil cuisine to choose from in different areas of the hotel. It also features a gym, yoga center and luxury spa.






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### Basis

Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

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**Day 6: Drive Thanjavur - Madurai**

**(Fri, 8 November)**

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### Day Itinerary

Today you will drive to Madurai (180km/approx. 4 hrs), stopping at Trichy en route.

Tiruchirappalli, more commonly known as Trichy, is situated on the banks of the river Cauvery and is the fourth largest city in Tamil Nadu. It was a citadel of the early Cholas which later fell to the Pallava Kingdom and today the city, which was built around Rock Fort, perched high on a rocky outcrop with the city sprawling below, is a fine blend of tradition and modernity.

Your stop in Trichy includes a visit to the impressive Rock Fort historic fort and temple complex, perched on a massive outcrop 80m above the town. In the 18th Century, the British famously fought and defeated the French at Trichy for possession of this strategic position. Later head to the spectacular Sri Ranganathswamy Temple which is one of the most revered shrines to Lord Vishnu in South India. This enormous temple complex has 21 gateway towers - the tallest reaches a height of over 70m, making it the tallest tower temple in Asia.

After visiting Trichy continue the drive to Madurai and upon arrival check into your hotel.

### Madurai

Located in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, Madurai is the oldest existing city on the Indian peninsula, and one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, with a recorded history spanning more than 2500 years. It is known as 'the city of temples' due to its countless ancient Hindu shrines, including the great Meenakshi-Sundareswar Temple, spread over 6 hectares and featuring a series of 50-metre-high gateway towers that can be seen from afar. The best time to visit Madurai is between October and March, when temperatures are between 20-35 degrees.

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### Overnight: The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai Madurai

Chennai may be the capital of Tamil Nadu but Madurai claims its soul. And The Gateway Hotel, Madurai is located right at the heart of it. A short distance from Madurai's IT corridor, The Gateway Hotel sits at the top of the



Pasumalai hill, surrounded by 62 acres of scenic gardens, serving as a perfect vantage point to take in the picturesque views of the temple town and the Kodai hills.

Being at the heart and soul of Tamil Nadu, a trip to Madurai is incomplete without sampling the lip-smacking local delicacies. Look no further than the regional home-style food offered by The Gateway Hotel Pasumalai Madurai, deliciously prepared with your health and taste in mind. There is also the hotel's thoughtfully designed spa to help you relax, rejuvenate and restore your inner harmony.




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#### **Basis**

Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

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**Day 7: In Madurai**

**(Sat, 9 November)**

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#### **Day Itinerary**

This morning enjoy a half day private sightseeing tour of Madurai which includes a visit to the magnificent 17th Century Sri Meenakshi Temple complex - a splendid example of Dravidian architecture. There are 4 entrances to the temple and the complex covers an area of over 6 hectares. Each of its impressive 12 gopurams (monumental towers) rise up over 50m and are encrusted with a staggering array of gaily painted celestial figures.

Later visit the Tirumala Nayak Palace - a gracious Indo-Saracenic styled building, famous for the stucco work on its domes and arches. Finally head out to Alagar Koil, a temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu at the foot of the beautiful Alagar Hills.

#### **Basis**

Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

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**Day 8: Drive Madurai – Periyar**

**(Sun, 10 November)**

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#### **Day Itinerary**

Today you'll be transferred to Periyar (150km/approx. 4hrs). Upon arrival check into your hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure with the car & driver at your disposal. Standard check-in time is 14:00.

## Thekkady

A tourist attraction in Kerala, Thekkady is a district located at the Periyar National Park. Thekkady comprises evergreen forests and savanna grasslands and is known for its natural spices such as black pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and clove. Elephants, tigers, sambar and many other species inhabit the park. Top attractions include the exquisite ancient Mangla Devi Temple, the aromatic Abraham's spice garden, and the massive waterfall at the sleepy, picturesque village of Chellarkovil. Take in panoramic views of the extraordinary landscape from the Chellarkovil viewpoint, and picnic on the rolling, lush green lawns at Pandikuzhi. Don't miss the opportunity to visit the Kadathanadan Kalari Centre, to see demonstrations of the best traditional martial arts. Thekkady also has a rich living tribal culture.

### Overnight: Niraamaya Cardamom Club

Niraamaya Retreats Cardamom Club Thekkady is an exclusive experience of living in a serene spice garden nestled in the mountains and wrapped in the cool embrace of a tropical rainforest. Spread amongst 8 acres of pristine cardamom plantations, this truly boutique experience offers 13 independent cottages garden-view and mountain-view style giving magnificent visions of the valley and the verdant mountains. Niraamaya's acclaimed Spa with Western & Ayurveda rooms, Madira Bar and Samsara, an all-day dining café. For the more adventurous traveller Thekkady offers several options including jeep safaris, trekking, bamboo rafting, cultural shows, spice walks and shopping.



### Basis

Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

**Day 9: In Periyar**

**(Mon, 11 November)**

### Day Itinerary

This morning take an early morning group boat ride around Lake Periyar. You might be lucky enough to spot some of the estimated 700 wild elephants roaming within the wildlife sanctuary, as many come down to the banks of this lake to bathe.

Kerala has grown and exported spices around the world since the 14th Century and later you will take a fascinating tour of a spice plantation high in the Cardamom Hills. Learn about the cultivation and processing of the area's natural bounties including pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, mace and anise.

**Basis**

Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

**Day 10: Drive Periyar - Kumarakom****(Tue, 12 November)****Day Itinerary**

Today drive to Kerala's backwaters (170km/approx. 4hrs) and upon arrival check in at the resort. Please note standard check-in time is 14:00.

The rest of the day will be at leisure to enjoy the peaceful surrounds of your tranquil backwater retreat.

**Kumarakom**

One of Kerala's most alluring towns is Kumarakom, a hub of biodiversity where mangrove forests are mixed in with rice paddies, coconut palms, and bursts of white lilies. This vivid subtropical peninsula juts into Vembanad Lake and is a popular place to study yoga, meditation, and Ayurvedic massage, and from which to take bird-watching, boating, and fishing trips. Nearby attractions include the Aruvikkuzhi Waterfalls, just two kilometres from Kumarakom, which cascade down the mountain slopes from roughly 30 metres above, and Pathiramanal (meaning 'sands of midnight') a beguiling island and bird sanctuary in the middle of the lake.

**Overnight: Kumarakom Lake Resort**

Kumarakom Lake Resort is nestled on the serene banks of the Lake Vembanad amidst one of India's popular holiday spots - Kerala.

Sprawling across 25 acres of lush greenery, this resort consists of luxury rooms, villas and suites for guests to select their preferred accommodation. Other facilities include the Ayurmana - the Ayurveda Spa; swimming pools; a health club; multi-cuisine and specialty restaurants; the traditional Kerala teashop and countless other attractions in and around the resort.

**Basis**

Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

**Day 11: In Kumarakom****(Wed, 13 November)**

**Day Itinerary**

Today board your private houseboat in time for a lunch. Spend the rest of the afternoon cruising through the peaceful backwaters.

**Basis**

Full Board – Bed, Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

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**Day 12: In Kumarakom****(Thu, 14 November)**

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**Day Itinerary**

Day at leisure to enjoy activities offered by the resort.

**Basis**

Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

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**Day 13: In Kumarakom****(Fri, 15 November)**

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**Day Itinerary**

Day at leisure to enjoy activities offered by the resort.

**Basis**

Half Board – Bed, Breakfast and Dinner

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**Day 14: Drive Kumarakom – Cochin****(Sat, 16 November)**

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**Day Itinerary**

Today you'll be transferred to Cochin airport (70 km/approx. 2hrs) for your onward flight. Please note standard check-out time is 12:00.

**Basis**

Bed and Breakfast

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