

Western Ghats Explorer

Day 01: Cochin-Thekkady (5 Hour Drive)

After an early breakfast, drive Thekkady(Periyar) . On arrival check into your resort. Afternoon guided spice farm visit. Overnight at Resort



Periyar - Conjures up images of elephants, chains of hill and spice scented plantations. Here, in the crisp, cool air of the Western Ghats you will see a lot of wildlife and observe the way of life of simple mountain people. Periyar Tiger Reserve is one of the finest wildlife reserves in India, and spread across the entire district are picturesque plantations and hill towns that hold great opportunities for treks and mountain walks.

Day 02: Periyar (Thekkady) 7.30 AM till 4.30 PM

Full day trekking in the Sanctuary. It will be a guided program by the forest Department and there are chances of closure of the Sanctuary between April & June due to the fear of wild fire /heavy rains . At 0730 AM we have to report at the bus boarding point .Once you reach the starting point ,you will finish the registration formalities and collect leech socks, packed light breakfast & a proper hot lunch etc. The program has around 12 kms of soft hike and 3 kms of bamboo rafting. This will be a nice program to watch possible wildlife in the sanctuary. Only physically fit travelers can do this full activity. Children below 13 years are not allowed to do the program. Packed breakfast and lunch are a part of the package. Evening return to the base to return to your hotel. Overnight at hotel.

This is one of Kerala's first Responsible Tourism Programs as a part of rehabilitating the tribal people who lived inside the Sanctuary and sometimes Poachers and hunters. With the help of an Eco Development Society (EDS),these people are now the guards of the forest for the best conservation and the best guides for tourists because they know the forest very well including the movement of wild animals. The revenue from these programs help the Government to give back to the Community to enable them to have decent living.



The Thekkady sanctuary is one of the best in the country for watching and photographing unique flora & fauna. A cruise through the waters of Periyar Lake around which the wildlife sanctuary is situated, offers lots of photo opportunities. This is the only sanctuary in India where you can have the unique experience of viewing wildlife at close quarters from the safety of a boat on the lake. The greatest attraction of Periyar remains the large herds of wild elephants that come down to the lake's edge. Tigers are sighted when the forest water holes dry up and these animals come and drink water from the river.



Evergreen and semi-evergreen forests constitute the major part of the Periyar Tiger Reserve. The rest of the area is a combination of moist deciduous forests and grasslands. Of the 27 tiger reserves in India, the Periyar Tiger Reserve is the oldest in the country and the largest in the State. The abundant wildlife here attracts a lot of visitors. Apart from being a recognised breeding ground for tigers, the reserve has also been identified as the best place for researching elephantine life. The tiger population in the area is estimated to be about 40. Though it is difficult to sight them, visitors often spot pugmarks and scats around the reserve. Thirty-five species of

mammals have been identified here. They include rare and endangered species. A boat ride on the lake is a great way to spot the wild elephants, the Gaur, the Sambar and so on. While the Gaur is the largest of the bovines here, the Sambar, the largest deer in India, is the main prey of the tiger and the wild dog. Apart from these, there are wild pigs, Malabar Giant Squirrels, Small Travancore Flying Squirrels, jungle cats,

sloth bears etc. The endangered species in the area include Nilgiri Langurs and the Lion-tailed Macaque, that is usually seen only in the evergreen interiors. Nilgiri Tahrs are also found in the reserve, especially in the higher rocky areas. Salim Ali's fruit bat, one of the rarest bats, is also reported to have been found in the area. The stripe-necked mongoose, usually found in the semi-evergreen and evergreen forests, the extremely rare Nilgiri Marten - the only species of marten found in southern India- and endemic mustelids are also seen here.



There are about 265 species of birds in the Periyar reserve including migrant birds. The birds include raptors, water birds, galliform birds, pigeons, wood peckers, darters, kingfishers, golden orioles, Brahmini kites, cormorants and passerines, as well as a large flock of the Great Pied Hornbill and the Ceylon Frogmouth. The endemic species include the Malabar Grey Hornbill, the Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, the Blue-winged Parakeet, the Nilgiri Flycatcher, the small Sunbird and the White-bellied Blue Flycatcher. Other birds found in the area are the Black Baza, Forest Eagle Owl, Nilgiri Thrush, Little Spider Hunter,

Rufous bellied hawk eagle etc. An interesting sight is that of water fowl perched on the dead trees protruding out onto the lake. Other aquatic birds include the Indian Darter and the Black-Necked Stork. Woodland birds, owls etc. can also be seen in the forest.

There are 1966 varieties of flowering plants, including angiosperms. Both dicots and monocots have been included in this count. There are about 171 grass species and 140 species of orchids in the region. The richness of the flower wealth is so outstanding that it constitutes more than 50 percent of the entire flower wealth of Kerala, which is about 3800 species. Teak, Rosewood, Terminalia, Eucalyptus, Sandalwood, Jacaranda, Mango, Jamun, Tamarind, Banyan, Pipal, Plumeria, Gulmohar and bamboo are some of the trees found here. The three main endemic plants are *Mucuna pruriens thekkadiensis*, *Habenaria periyarensis* and *Syzygium periyarensis*. Rare plants like the *Podocarpus wallichianus*, the only South Indian



conifer, are also found in the reserve. More than 350 medicinal plants, including trees, shrubs and herbs, have been identified at the Periyar Tiger Reserve, mainly in the evergreen and moist deciduous forests.



Plants belonging to the family of Fabaceae and Euphorbiaceae are the major ones among them. Glory Lily (*Gloriosa superba*) and Kino Tree (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) are two plants with medicinal value found here.

Day 03: Periyar- Munnar 4 Hours Drive

After breakfast, drive to Munnar to check into a plantation resort. You will be driving through spice farms and unending tea plantations. Afternoon go for a short trekking in the Lechmi Hills. Overnight at Hotel.



Munnar ...breathtakingly beautiful - a haven of peace and tranquillity - an idyllic tourist destination in God's own country with unending expanses of tea plantation. Set at an altitude of 6000 ft, situated at the confluence of three mountain streams, Munnar was the favoured summer resort of the erstwhile British rulers in the colonial days. Munnar also has the highest peak in South India - Anamudi - which towers over 2695 M and is an ideal spot for campers who like trekking.



Day 04: Munnar

Today you will go for a full day guided Rainforest trek through Shola forests with packed lunch. Return to Munnar for overnight stay.



High altitude mountain forest or Shola forest is a unique biome spread across the high mountains of tropics. In scientific term it is described as Southern Wet Temperate Forest. Even in tropical belt, this forest is described as 'temperate' due to its unique eco-system which create 'temperate' climate and bio-diversity. Apart from adapted evergreen floral and faunal wealth, this forest carries species restricted to temperate climates. There are various scientific hypothesis regarding this unique characteristics of Shola forests. Any how these forests represents mother species from Gondana land. Since ice age and the corresponding climate change was not affected the tropics, these forests are of 65 to 70 millions old. Many giant size spore producers and primitive species of amphibians and reptiles found in shola shows its primitive phase.



The largest concentration of southern wet temperate forest is situated in the high mountain folding of Western Ghats mountains of India. The Nilgiri bio-sphere and Anamalais carries the largest shola patches in the world. Anamudichola and Pambadum Shola , presently National Parks- (In Munnar region) constitutes the largest

sholas in Asia. The Shola forest is not an independent eco-system. It consists of high grassland hills associated with the forests. Ecological importance of this forest is its ability to preserve water for perennial supply to streams originating from these forests. Major species of animals are Nilgiri langur (Western Ghats endemic), Nilgiri Marten (Endemic), Brown mangoes (endemic) , stripe necked mangoes, jungle cat, Nilgiri golden cat (endemic), Travancore palm civet (endemic) , Tiger, Leopard, Malabar giant squirrel , wild gaur , Sambar deer, barking deer, mouse deer , porcupine, sloth bear etc. Elephants are migrants to this region. The Shola carries 14 out of 21 endemic species of birds of Western Ghats.



A day in rain forest, while staying in Munnar gives glimpses of this unique ecosystem, which one cannot experience in other parts of India . Trekking through the forest is subject to the permission from Department of Forest, Govt. of Kerala. Our Adventure activity team has regular arrangements for permits as we are closely associated with the Eco Development Societies in most of the forest regions of Western Ghats in South India which is a part of our sustainability efforts to give back to the local community. Eco Development societies are formed of the local tribal community to enable them to receive a decent income to manage their life. This helped to eradicate the poaching in the forest reserves. We closely follow the preservation system of forests and its bio diversity.

Highlighted Species Munnar

Birds: Nilgiri fly catcher, Nilgiri Thrush, Indian robin, Nilgiri flower pecker, Black and orange fly catcher, broad tailed grass bird, Rufous babbler , Kerala laughing thrush, Indian black bird, Black eagle, lesser kestrel, white bellied blue robin, yellow browed bulbul etc

Mammals- Nilgiri tahr, Nilgiri Langur, Brown mongoose, Brown palm civet, Malabar giant squirrel (southern Morph), dusky squirrel, Nilgiri Marten , velvet fronted nuthatch and so on.

Reptiles: large scale pitwiper, green vine snake, Anamalai Salaia

Day 05: Munnar -Chinnar 3.5 Hours Drive

After breakfast, drive to Chinnar. Enroute go for a short hike through Mararyoor Sandal forest and village with a farm lunch. By early evening on arrival at Chinnar, check into an eco lodge . Evening for free walks around and bird watching. There are chances of wildlife sighting nearby to your lodge.

Day 06: Chinnar

After breakfast, go for a full day guided trip to Chinnar wildlife sanctuary. The programme may be divided into two sections in the morning and afternoon depending on the program availability. Return to your Eco lodge for overnight stay.



Proceed to Chinnar wildlife sanctuary. Hiking through the wildlife zone and visit to a Mesolithic Cave art site. As you go on the nature trail in Chinnar, you are bound to come across a fascinating plethora of bird and animal life. Chinnar Sanctuary is located in the eastern slope of



Western ghats sharing its flora and fauna with Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and Eravikulam National Park. The sanctuary has an area of 90 sq.km. Chinnar has the unique thorny scrub forest with Xerophytic vegetation. The undulating terrain with rocky patches manifolds the scenic splendour of the sanctuary. As the altitude varies from 500 to 2,400 m above sea level within a few kilometre radius, there is a drastic variation in the climate and vegetation.



This sanctuary has also rainfall ranging from 600 mm to 3000 mm and a dry season ranging from three to six months. Elephant, gaur, leopard, spotted deer, sambar, grizzled giant squirrel, hanuman langur and long eared fish owl inhabit the Chinnar forests. The grizzled Giant squirrel is an endangered species



Later you will reach Marayoor valley where you will taste a traditional lunch in banana leaf. Visit to a rock cut temple, ancient inscriptions etc. Walk to the Mount of the Dead, a world famous Megalithic site with dolmens, dolmenoid and dolmenoid cists. Visit to a traditional sugarcane farm and Jaggery (black sugar) manufacturing. Marayoor is famous for its Sandalwood Forest which is protected by the Forest Department.



Highlighted Species Chinnar

Birds: Yellow throated bulbul, Spot bellied eagle owl, brown fish owl, Shama, Small minivet, Jacobin Cuckoo, Spectacled piculet, brown checked fulveta, etc

Mammals : Elephants, Grizzled giant squirrel, Wild gaur, barking deer

Reptiles: Starred tortoise, Rock Agama

Day 07:Chinnar-Ooty (5.5 Hour Drive)

After a leisurely breakfast, drive to Ooty, a colonial hill station known as the queen of Nilgiris. On arrival, check into your hotel. Afternoon you may explore the colonial town and the city market or botanical garden. Overnight at hotel.

Day 08:Ooty-Masinagudi (1.5 Hours Drive)

After breakfast, drive to Masinagudi which is located on the border of Mudumalai Sanctuary. Afternoon, go for a Jeep safari through the borders of Mudumalai Sanctuary. Overnight at Hotel.

Highlighted Species-Mudumalai

You will get Indian Grey hornbill only up to this region for good sighting .

Birds – White rumped vulture , Indian roller etc

Mammals – Tiger, Leopard, Elephant , sambar, spotted deer, sloth bear, ruddy mongoose

Day 09:Masinagudi-Kabini (Nagarhole National Park)-2.5 Hour Drive

After breakfast, drive to Kabini to check into your resort. Nagarhole National Park, was known for the former Maharajahs of Mysore used to go for hunting . This deciduous forest patch inhabits Tigers, sloth bears, leopards, elephants, different monkeys, Malabar trogon and Indian pitta. On arrival, check in at the Hotel. Evening boat safari at Kabini . Overnight at the Resort.

Day 10: Kabini

Early morning and evening go for guided safaris in the National Park. Overnight at the Hotel in Kabini.

Nestled amidst the Karapur Forest lays Kabini, a pristine piece of land that abounds with nature. Beckoning you to explore it for a wild exciting holiday. The steep valleys with rich forests, spectacular pools and



rapids provide an ideal opportunity to revive your adventurous spirits. Karnataka's forests and wildlife are the natural heritage for which the State is boasted of. From the majestic evergreen forests of the Western Ghats to the scrub jungles of the plains, a wide variety of habitats teem with diverse flora and fauna, some of them endemic to the region. Nestled amidst the Karapur Forest lays a

pristine piece of land that abounds with nature. Beckoning you to explore it for a wild exciting holiday. The steep valleys with rich forests, spectacular pools and rapids provide an ideal opportunity to revive your adventurous spirits. Presently Karnataka Sanctuaries boast to have a population of 400 plus Tigers which is the largest share in India's total Tiger population...



Nagarhole, a Kannada name has meaning of Snake River. The name derives from the winding course of the river that flows through the forests. Nagarhole has an astonishing abundance of wildlife, especially the Asiatic elephant. The backdrop of the distant misty blue Brahmagiri Mountains, the natural sounds of the jungle, the gurgling of streams and rivers and the twittering of the birds, make a trip to Nagarhole a memorable experience. It has an area of 643.39 Sq.km. Covered mainly by moist and dry deciduous forests, and dominated by teak, rosewood and dry deciduous forests in the eastern limits of the peak.



Highlighted Species-Kabini

Birds : Indian Cormorant , Greater cormorant, Woolly necked stork , Osprey - best location for photographing them during boat safari

Land safari offers – Lesser adjutant (Between November and March) in Tiger tank area. White bellied woodpecker, Indian Roller, Crested serpent eagle

Inhouse area- River tern, sun birds, Indian pitta, Bhramini starling , lap wing, plovers and snipes , copper smith barbet , Malabar barbet , puff throated babbler, Asian paradise fly catcher, Malabar parakeet, Indian grey horn bill

Mammals – Tiger, leopard, Black Panther , Elephant, Wild gaur, Sambar, Spotted deer, common Langur

Reptile – Mugger

Day 11: Kabini

Early morning and evening go for guided safaris in the National Park. During day time, you may opt to go for a village cycling or walk. Overnight at the Hotel in Kabini.

Day 12: Kabini - Bangalore 5 Hours drive

Early morning guided jeep safari. Later after a leisurely breakfast, drive to Bangalore Airport area to check into an airport hotel. Overnight at Hotel.

Day 13:Bangalore Departure

Today, you will be transferred to Bengaluru International airport for your onward journey

Tour Cost Deluxe:USD 2270 Per Person on Double Sharing basis

Accommodations Suggested:

Periyar:Greenwoods www.greenwoods.in

Munnar:Tall Trees www.ttr.in

Chinnar:Spicetree Eco Living www.spicetreechinnar.com

Ooty:Sullivan Court www.fortunehotels.in

Masinagudi:Bamboo Banks www.bamboobanks.com

Kabini:Red Earth www.redearth.in

Bangalore:Ramanashree Richmond www.ramanashree.com

Tour Cost Premium:USD 3080 Per Person on Double Sharing basis

Accommodations Suggested:

Periyar:Spice Village www.cghearth.com

Munnar:Windermere Estate www.windmeremunnar.com

Chinnar:Spicetree Eco Living www.spicetreechinnar.com

Ooty:Marli Hill Bungalow www.cghearth.com

Masinagudi:Bamboo Banks www.bamboobanks.com

Kabini:Evolve Back www.evolveback.com

Bangalore:The Paul www.thepaulbangalore.in

Tour Cost Includes:

- 12 Nights stay at designated Hotels/Resorts
- Breakfast & Dinner at Kabini & Chinnar
- Breakfast only at other places.
- Guided Spice farm visit in Periyar
- Guided full day trekking and bamboo rafting at Periyar Tiger Sanctuary with packed breakfast and lunch
- Full day guided walks through Shola forests with packed lunch in Munnar
- Half day guided hiking in the Lechmi Hills
- Half day guided walking safari at Chinnar Sanctuary
- Half day guided tour of Marayoor village
- Farm lunch at Marayoor
- Jeep safari at Masinagudi
- 05 guided safaris at Kabini
- 01 Boat safari at Kabani
- Transfers and sightseeing using Aircon SUV
- All entrance fees as per itinerary
- All Taxes