

## SOUTHERN SPLENDOUR GOLDEN CHARIOT TRAIN TOUR

Golden Chariot now brings to you the "Southern Splendour", a journey spanning 7 nights and 8 days that links some of South India's greatest destinations filled with memorable moments guaranteed to stay with you for a lifetime. On this splendid voyage covering three states we take you through exotic locales starting from the garden city of Bangalore passing through ancient temple towns of Tamil Nadu and finally ending our journey in the coastal city of Kochi. In short, it's an experience that captures the romance of a by-gone era making your sojourn an unforgettable one.

### SOUTHERN SPLENDOUR DETAILED 7 Nights / 8 Days Detailed Tour

#### Day 01: Mon: Bangalore Depart

Report in Lobby of Hotel Taj West End by 4pm for Check-In formalities of Southern Splendour train, followed by high tea, brief train tour presentation and cultural program. Proceed to visit ISKON Hindu Temple, before reaching Yashwantpura Railway Station by 8:15pm to board the Southern Splendour - Golden Chariot Train. At 9pm train departs. Dinner is served on board.

#### Day 02: Tue: Chennai & Mahabalipuram

Train reaches Egmore Railway Station Chennai by 9:30 am, and you depart for sightseeing. Visit the Roman Catholic Saint Thomas Cathedral, built in 1504 and then re-built in neo-gothic style in 1893, is said to house the remains of St. Thomas the Apostle. Drive through Marine Bay Road Drive and then proceed for excursion to Mahabalipuram Beach (1.5 hrs).

In Mahabalipuram visit the 8th century built stone cut Hindu temples complex located on the seashore, now an UNESCO World Heritage Site. The whole of Mamallapuram is a fabulous open-air museum of sculptures in living rock- Monolithic shrines, magnificently sculpted scooped out caverns and the world's biggest bas relief in rock, are truly wondrous examples of the sculptor's art. The famous Ratha temples, the Penance of Arjuna, the Shore Temple and the eight Mandapams are also located at the beach. Take a break from the journey and have sumptuous lunch at beach side 5-Star Resort. Later drive 2.5hrs onwards to Pondicherry Railway Station to board the awaiting train. Dinner onboard.

NOTE: After dropping passengers at Chennai, the train proceeds empty to Pondicherry.

#### Day 03: Wed Morning : Auroville

After breakfast drive 1.5hrs to Auroville Ashram. Conceived in 1968, the meaning of Auroville only becomes clearer in the context of the vision of its founders. Auroville was conceived as universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities. At the very centre of Auroville is the 'soul of the city, the Matrimandir (Temple of the Mother), situated in a large open area called 'Peace', from where the future township will radiate outwards. Enjoy screening on Auroville Ashram, tour of Auroville Ashram, Matra Mandir and shopping in the Ashram.

Later Drive back to Pondicherry town for lunch in boutique restaurant and return to train for brief rest.

#### Day 03 Late After Noon: Pondicherry

Visit Aurobindo Ashram (former residence of founder of Auroville) & 17th Century built Ganesh Hindu Temple. Enjoy stroll through 19th Century built cobbled streets called Latin quarters, built by former French Colonial rulers & time free on Promenade Beach. Later return to the railway station to board the train for dinner and depart.

#### Day 04: Thurs: Morning: Tanjavur (Tanjore)



Tanjavur is popular for the Chola bronze collection and the art of 3 dimensional paintings done in gold leaf. After breakfast, visit the famous Brihadeshwara Temple complex, built in early 11 Century and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The main temple dedicated to Hindu God Lord Shiva is carved out of single granite rock, which weighs around 80 tons and has a bulbous structure on the top. The temple tower is 66 meters high. Facing the temple is a big statue of Nandi (Sacred Bull) again carved out of single rock, 16 feet long and 13 feet high. Later visit the former Royal Palace with an interesting museum, art gallery and library. Enjoy lunch at the Tanjore Hotel, then depart by road for Trichy Town (1.5hrs drive)

NOTE: After dropping passengers at Tanjore Railway Station, the train runs empty to Trichy.

#### Day 04: Thurs: Afternoon: Trichy (Tiruchirapalli)

Visit the Sri Rangam Temple, dedicated to Hindu God Lord Vishnu. The main entrance raises from base area of 5720 sq feet and goes up to 237 feet, moving up in eleven progressively smaller tiers. The temple is enclosed by 7 concentric walls with total length of over six miles. The complex has 21 towers, 39 pavilions, fifty shrines, a hall of 1000 pillars and several small water bodies inside. Non-Hindus are allowed up to the second outer courtyard but not inside the gold topped sanctum sanctorum.

Later Drive to Trichy Railway Station to board the train for dinner and departure.

#### Day 05: Fri: Morning: Madurai Temple Visit

Madurai has been inhabited since at least the 3rd century BC. and is famous for its silks, pearls and spices. It was this lucrative trade that let its Pandyan kings to erect the mighty Meenakshi temple in 13th Century. It is one of the Southern India's oldest cities and has been a centre of learning and pilgrimage for centuries. After breakfast Visit the Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple, dedicated to Hindu Goddess Parvati (consort of Lord Shiva). The present temple was reconstructed in 17th century and houses 14 gateway towers, tallest of which is 170 feet high. There are an estimated 33,000 sculptures in the complex with two golden structured shrines over the main deities in the inner sanctum. Later return to train for lunch and brief rest.

#### Day 05: Fri: Evening : Madurai Sound & Light Show

Evening visit 17th century built Thirumalai Nayak Palace, to savour the history and culture of Tamil Nadu at the sound and light show based on Silappatikaram, one of great epics of Tamil Literature. Later return back to train for dinner and departure.

#### Day 06: Sat: Morning: Kanyakumari & Wooden Palace

Early morning the train reaches Nagercoil Railway Station and by 5am proceed for excursion (30 minutes drive one way) to Sunrise Point at Kanyakumari. This location is the southernmost tip of peninsular India and is the meeting place of three oceans- the Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. After breakfast on the train and a brief rest, proceed for an excursion (30 minutes drive one way) to early 17th Century built Padmanabhapuram Wooden Palace, one of hallmarks of traditional Kerala style architecture.

Later return to the train at Nagercoil Railway Station and depart. Lunch on board.

#### Day 06: Sat: Evening: Kovalam Beach (Near Trivandrum)

Train reaches Kochhuvelli Railway Station (Near Trivandrum) by 4:30PM and drive 45 minutes to World famous Kovalam Beach on the Arabian Sea. Time free on the beach followed by dinner and cultural program at leading 5-star beach resort. Return to train by 10:30pm and depart.

#### Day 07: Sun: Morning: Alleppey (Kerala Backwaters)

Proceed at 9.30 am to Alleppey Jetty Point and board a Kettuvallam (traditional houseboat having coir ropes tied in knots holding the entire wooden plank structure together) to enjoy a cruise through backwaters of Punnamada Lake. Enjoy a traditional Kerala lunch on board. Return to Alleppey Jetty Point by 2:30pm and board buses for onward 2 hrs drive to Cochin.

NOTE: After dropping passengers at Alleppey, the train runs empty to Cochin.

#### Day 07: Sun: Late Afternoon: Fort Kochi Town

On arrival in 16th Century built Fort Kochi Town, proceed to explore Chinese Fishing Nets, Jew Synagogue and local spice market. Later drive to Ernakulam Railway station to board the train and depart. Dinner onboard.

#### Day 08: Mon: Bangalore

Your journey ends at 11 am on arrival at Yeshwanthpur Railway Station, Bangalore



\* For customizations please feel free to get in touch with us at [info@tamarindglobal.com](mailto:info@tamarindglobal.com)

\* All the above information is correct at time of uploading on the website and is subject to change without notice