

-Birds of South India



Focus of the itinerary



Southern India is home to some of the best National parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Most of these parks are located on the sides of the Western Ghats, one of the 34 bio-diversity 'hot spots' on earth due to its large volume of endemic species and diversity. Our journey will take us through the lowland forests of Nagarhole to Periyar Tiger Reserve and onwards to the high altitude montane forests & low altitude birding sites like Kumarkom.

Season

- Season - November to mid of May.
- Though Nagarhole national parks are opened around-the-year for tourist, monsoon months [July- August] would be least preferred due to heavy rainfall in region, for bird-watchers, the winter months are a better between, for November to January, many migratory birds from the North, especially the Himalayas come down south to roost. The post-monsoon months are the best time for trekkers to visit.

About –Nagarhole NP

Nagarhole National Park is a part of the Niligiri Biosphere Reserve which consists of 2400 sq km of forest and include other parks like Bandipur National Park, Mudhumalai Wildlife Sanctuary and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.



The northern part of the park consists of moist deciduous forest while south-eastern part is dominated by dry deciduous forest. The park is drained by several rivers and tanks forwarding an ideal base for wildlife.

Nagarhole National Park is worldwide known for harboring a very diverse kind of animal species. Elephants and tiger are the main attractions of Nagarhole national park. Other animals are panther, chital, sambar, sloth bear, dhole, Nilgiri langur, smooth-coated

otter, common palm civet, stripe-necked mongoose, jungle cat, wild boar, golden jackal, Indian grey mongoose, striped hyaena, rusty-spotted cat, ratel and Indian spotted chevrotain. Some commonly seen reptiles in the park are lizards, Cobras, crocodiles, kraits, pythons and vipers.

Recognised as an Important Bird Area the park has over 270 species of birds including the 'Critically endangered' Oriental white-backed vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), 'Vulnerable' lesser adjutant (*Leptopilos javanicus*), greater spotted eagle (*Aquila changa*) and the Nilgiri wood-pigeon (*Columba elphinstonii*).

'Near threatened' species like darters (*Anhinga melanogaster*), oriental white ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*), greater grey headed fish eagle (*Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*) and red headed vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*) too can be found here. Endemics include the blue winged parakeet (*Psittacula columboides*), Malabar grey hornbill (*Ocyrceros griseus*) and the white bellied treepie (*Dendrocitta leucogastra*).

Seven of the 15 Biome-10 (Indian Peninsula Tropical Moist Forest) and 21 of the 59 Biome-11 (Indo-Malayan Tropical Dry Zone) species have been noted from here. Some of the birds that can be sighted here include the white cheeked barbet (*Megalaima viridis*), Indian scimitar babbler (*Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*) and Malabar whistling thrush (*Myiophonus horsfieldii*).

Birds commonly seen in drier regions like painted bush quail (*Pendicula erythrorhyncha*), Sirkeer malkhoa (*Phaenicophaeus leschenaultia*), ashy prinia (*Prinia socialis*), Indian robin (*Saxicoloides fulicata*), Indian peafowl (*Pava cristatus*) and yellow legged green pigeon (*Treron phoenicoptera*) can be found here.

Reptiles :-Reptiles commonly found here are mugger(*Crocodylus palustris*), common vine snake (*Ahaetulla nasutus*), common wolf snake (*Lycodon aulicus*), rat snake (*Ptyas mucosus*), bamboo pit viper (*Trimeresurus gramineus*), Russell's viper (*Daboia russellii*), common krait (*Bangarus caeruleus*), Indian rock python (*Python molurus*), Indian monitor lizard (*Varanus bengalensis*) and the common toad (*Bufo melanostictus*).



About –Wayanad



Wayanad is explicitly beautiful with mist clad mountains, intense forests and fertile green plantations. The forests of Wayanad are cosmic landmasses for animals to enjoy their natural dwelling.

Snuggled amidst the Western Ghats Mountains, Wayanad is one of the exquisite hill stations of Kerala.



It is a revenue state due to foreign exchange of cash crops such as vanilla, tea, coffee, pepper, cardamom and many other condiments. Wayanad shelters endangered species as it has an amazing range of flora and fauna. Wildlife aficionados and nature lovers will find Wayanad wildlife sanctuaries as the right place of visit. The place enjoys a pleasant climate the whole year.

Tranquil at Waynad -

Tranquil is run with the efficiency of a resort but with the intimacy of a homestay. Here you will be staying as house guests of Victor, Ranjini, Ajay and Nisha and their family who offer a personalized experience of living on the plantations. Much of the experience at Tranquil is to enjoy the serene surroundings and re-charge your batteries.

The spared over of the property is around 400 acres which itself is a small sanctuary. Drongos, thrushes, sunbirds, flycatchers can be spotted very easily in the property. Tranquil has 8 to 10 walking trails you can choose the one according to your physical strength.



About – Periyar Tiger Reserve



Periyar Tiger Reserve is one of the finest wildlife & birding destinations in South India. With over 320 bird species identified and a leading habitat for the Bengal Tiger, this sanctuary is an ideal destination of the tour. Periyar National Park contains a variety of habitats from grassland and dry deciduous forest to evergreen forest and riverside scrub. As a result of its wide range of habitats Periyar boasts an impressive list of resident species including about half the peninsular endemics and near-endemics.

We will spend the day searching here for some very special species including the secretive and wary Wynaad Laughingthrush. Other birds to look out for include White-rumped and Brown-backed Needletails, Oriental Honey-Buzzard, Black Eagle, the striking Black Baza, Pompadour Green and Mountain Imperial Pigeon, the migratory Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Gray-breasted Prinia, Thick-billed Warbler, Brown-cheeked Fulvetta, and the Asian Fairy Bluebird among other more widespread species.



You may also sight the Woolly-necked Stork, Besra, Vernal Hanging Parrot, Jungle Owlet, White-rumped Spinetail, Black-naped Monarch and the Little Spiderhunter.



About – Gavi



Spread across the beauty of **Periyar Tiger Reserve**, Gavi is a quiet, beautiful and pristine forest haven. It is at the eastern extreme of the Pathanamthitta District at **3400 ft** above MSL. These evergreen forests are abundant with magnificent Wildlife including the **tiger, elephants, leopards, bears, Indian gaur, sambar, barking & Mouse deers, lion tailed macaque**, other varieties of **monkeys, Nilgiri Marten** and a lot more. For the nature explorers Gavi offers the complete acquaintance with the flora around including Nageia Wallichinia (Podocarpus Wallichinia), a highly endemic species of the Gymnosperm family seen only around Gavi in the whole Western Ghats !If you are a birder, the forests around Gavi are home to over **320 species** of birds –the great Indian hornbills, sunbirds, woodpeckers, kingfishers and myriads of mynas, dongos, cuckoos and bulbuls-truly any birder's dream!The sheer beauty of this place is indeed worth a closer look ! Here is nature at its unadulterated best. Gavi often serves as a base camp for deep jungle trekkers, birdwatchers, nature lovers, research students and the like.

Here one can have outstanding trekking experiences, which are overseen by trained local people. Those who would love to be left alone can do so in the tranquil environs

of Gavi or may even go canoeing in the placid waters of the lake or enjoy a breathtaking sunset.

Some of the breathtaking viewpoints at Gavi like the Valley View offer spectacular view of a deep ravine and the forest below. From Kochu Pampa, a point near Green Mansion eco-lodge one can track the grazing Nilgiri Tahrs.



About – Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary



The origin of the Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary, earlier Bakers' Estate, dates back to 1847. It was in that year that Alfred George Baker started developing the wetlands near Lake Vembanad into fertile land, the Kumarakom of today.



Of the 500 acres that he was granted by the king, Baker planted mangroves in 10 acres, on the southern bank of River Kavanar, and then, interfered with the land no more. Soon, local and migratory birds adopted this land as their home.

That was the beginning of its growth into a bird sanctuary.

The bird sanctuary, also known as the Vembanad Bird Sanctuary, was later developed into an area of 14 acres. It is the first scientifically formed and preserved bird sanctuary in India, with about 180 species of birds. The profuse bird life owes much to the location and the climatic peculiarities of the region. The proximity to Kerala's largest lake, the fertile, untouched land ideal for insects and the mangroves all contribute to the abundant avian life.



Programme

Day 01: Arrival In India

Today you will proceed to board your flight for Bangalore.

Your room will be booked from today in Bangalore for immediate check in on arrival in India.

Overnight is at Vivanta by Taj – Yeshwantpur, Bangalore [Superior Charm room with breakfast]

<http://www.vivantabytaj.com/Yeshwantpur-Bangalore/Overview.html/>

Day 02: ARRIVE BANAGLORE -NAGARHOLE

**Flight
Arrive Bangalore**

**BA-119
0500 Hrs**

On arrival in Bangalore, you will be met by our Representative and transfer to your hotel for check in.

Your all travel documents will be issued in India and will be given to you on arrival.

You will have breakfast at the hotel

After breakfast, you will drive to Ranganthittu Bird sanctuary, [Approx. 125 kms-3 Hrs]

Ranganthittu is on the river Cauvery,. The part that visitors are allowed to see is a slow section of the river, with many little islands which form nesting sites for sorts of migratory birds. Low hanging branches, small rocks with crocodiles sunning themselves are easily found,

Some of the birds seen at Ranganthittu are the white Ibis, cormorants, egrets, herons, river terns and darters. In addition, the place is also home to a large number of crocodiles.

You will explore sanctuary by boat.

After that you will drive to Nagarhole. [Approx. 95kms-3 Hrs]

Arrive Nagarhole and check in at the Resort.

Evening will be at leisure or interaction will elephant will be arranged.

Overnight is at Orange County, Nagarhole [Jacuzzi hut with Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner]

<http://www.orangecounty.in/kabini-resorts/>

Day 03: NAGARHOLE

The park is open daily, from 0600 Hrs. until 1800 Hrs. Safaris take place in the early morning from

0600 Hrs to 0900 hrs, and again in the afternoon from 1500 Hrs to 1700 Hrs.

The park offers the opportunity to see elephants close up in their natural habitat, and it's not unusual to see herds of elephants on the river bank. However, the likelihood of seeing a tiger here is rare compared to parks such as Bandhavgarh in the north. A good thing about Nagarhole is that the main forest reserve office (where the safaris start from) is located deep inside the park. This means that visitors can pass through quite a bit of the park area on their own.

Early morning, you will be taken for Shared Canter safari. Time [0530 hrs- 0830 Hrs –subject to revision as per season]

Return to the lodge for breakfast.

After breakfast, you will be taken for **Village visit**.

After Lunch, you will be taken for Shared boat ride. [For 3 Hrs]

In the evening, you will enjoy tribal dance/ documentary on birds.

Overnight is at Orange County, Nagarhole [Jacuzzi hut with Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner]
<http://www.orangecounty.in/kabini-resorts/>

Day 04: NAGARHOLE

Today, you will enjoy shared boat ride in the morning and shared canter ride in the afternoon.

Overnight is at Orange County, Nagarhole [Jacuzzi hut with Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner]
<http://www.orangecounty.in/kabini-resorts/>

Day 05: NAGARHOLE- SULTAB BATTERY [WAYANAD]

Early morning, you will take walking tour around lodge. -2hr [Aprpx. 0630 Hrs-0800 Hrs]

Return to the lodge for breakfast.

After breakfast, you will check out and drive to Sultan Battery [Wayanad] [Approx 174 Kms-4 Hrs]

Arrive Tranquil Plantation by lunch time,

In the afternoon, you will either enjoy the tranquility of hideaway or opt to stroll through the town and enjoy the market. Even take a ride in one of many Jeeps that line the market place.

Overnight is at Tranquil Plantation, Sultan Battery [Standard room with breakfast, Lunch & Dinner]
<http://www.tranquilresort.com/>

Day 06: SULTAN BATTERY [WAYANAD]

Early morning set course for visit of Muthanga Wild Life Sanctuary (Arriving at 0600-0630 Hrs [depending on season] would be an advantage for Jungle safari at 0700hrs). Return to the hotel

for breakfast, [Note: Sanctuary remains closed in Feb to April: Please check with us on same; This activity will be optional]

After breakfast, you will be taken for full bird watching tour, we will get packed lunch for you.

Its bird watcher's paradise –around 115 odd species of birds have been identified around plantation.

Overnight is at Tranquil Plantation, Sultan Battery [Standard room with breakfast, Lunch & Dinner]
<http://www.tranquilresort.com/>

Day 07: SULTAN BATTERY [WAYANAD] - COCHIN

Breakfast at the Plantation.

After breakfast, late morning, you will be drive to Cochin. This will long Journey of approx 300 Kms.

However, we will have stop enroute at Calicut for lunch at Kadavu Resort. Drive from Sultan battery to Calicut will take approx.2.5 Hrs to cover 98 Kms.

On arrival in Calicut, you will have lunch.

After lunch, you will continue drive to Cochin [202 Kms -5 Hrs]

Arrive Cochin and check in at the hotel.

Overnight is at Malabar House, Cochin [Deluxe room with breakfast]
<http://www.malabarhouse.com/>

Day 08: COCHIN- PERIYAR

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today, in appropriate time, you will drive to Periyar [Approx. 112 Kms-4 Hrs]

On arrival in Periyar, you will check in at the hotel,

Afternoon will be at lesiure to relax at the hotel.

Overnight is at Spice Village, Periyar [Standard Villa with breakfast, Lunch & Dinner]
<http://www.cghearth.com/spice-village>

Day 09: PERIYAR

Early morning, you will be taken on **nature walk**. The programme is unique in being conducted by a team of poachers who turned protectors of the forests. The team members are hardy and dependable with an intimate knowledge of the forest terrain.

Normally 5-7 kms of trekking distance will be covered, depending on the route chosen.

The program offered between 0700hrs & 1030hrs or between 1400hrs 1500hrs. The nature walk is right program to feel nature; hear her whisper and smell her flowers **[Note: It's a common activity and not privatized. Guides will be provided by the Forest Department]**

Return to the hotel for breakfast.

After breakfast, you will enjoy a **walk in the spice plantation [Approx. 1 Hr activity and host will explain the facts]**. The spice plantation in Periyar is a prime attraction of this beautiful land. Though sprawling tea estates cover much of the landscape of Thekkady, plantations of cardamom, rubber, vanilla and coffee are also aplenty. Walk amidst the green, terraced farms of the various spices and breathe in the fragrant air while exploring the spice plantations. Pick up a few packets of the tea and spices grown here that make for a good buy. There are various kinds of spices cultivated in Thekkady. The most abundantly found spice in Thekkady is pepper. But there is a variety of cinnamon, clove, nutmeg, ginger, turmeric and curry leaves on the slanting slopes of the spice plantation in Periyar.

In the afternoon, you will be at lesiure for independent activities.

Overnight is at Spice Village, Periyar [Standard Villa with breakfast, Lunch & Dinner]

<http://www.cghearth.com/spice-village>

Day 10:

PERIYAR

Today, early morning at approx. 0530 hrs, you will start from the hotel and drive 30 km to Vallakkadave and then into the forest, a part of tiger reserve.

You will then drive through forest about 15 km. After reaching **Gavi**, you will have breakfast. After breakfast, you will be taken on a walk inside the forest for about couple of hours.

Later, you will have lunch (vegetarian).

After lunch, you will be taken on boat ride (pedal boat).

After the ride, you will return to your hotel in Periyar.

Overnight is at Spice Village, Periyar [Standard Villa with breakfast, Lunch & Dinner]

<http://www.cghearth.com/spice-village>

Day 11:

PERIYAR- KUMARAKOM -OVERNIGHT HOUSEBOAT

Breakfast at the hotel.

After breakfast, you will drive to Kumarakom [Approx.130kms-3.5 Hrs]

On Arrival, you will board houseboat for overnight stay. [Check in time; 1300 Hrs]

Today you will cruise the narrow rivers and canals of the backwaters in a 'kettuvallam' [rice barge] houseboat. A typical 'kettuvallam' houseboat is about 60 to 70 feet in length and has a width of around 15 feet in the middle. The boat is made of wooden planks joined and stitched together using coconut fibre ropes. Usually the wood used will be 'Anjili', the roof covering is made of bamboo poles and palm leaves. The outside of the boat is painted using cashew nut oil, which acts as a protective coating. Your crew of 3 will prepare your meals and help you appreciate the unique environment and society of the backwaters. It is an experience of intense tranquillity and many visitors to Kerala count it as the highpoint of their tour.

Overnight is at Houseboat

Day 12:

OVERNIGHT HOUSEBOAT- KUMARAKOM

Breakfast onboard,

After breakfast, you will disembark houseboat. [0900 Hrs]

After disembarkation, you will be transferred to Resort for some relaxation time and recall your birding memories.

You will be checked at your Resort.

Evening will be at leisure to relax at the resort, optionally, you can also take ayurvedic massage.

Overnight is at Kumarakom Lake Resort, Kumarakom [Meandering Pool Villa with breakfast]

<http://www.kumarakomlakeresort.in/>

Day 13:

KUMARAKOM – COCHIN

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning will be at leisure.

In the afternoon check out from resort, you will then be transferred to Kumarakom Bird sanctuary.

Located on the banks of the **Vembanad Lake**, the bird sanctuary is spread across 14 acres. The Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary, an ornithologist's paradise is a favourite haunt of migratory birds like the siberian stork, egret, darter, heron and teal.

After visit, you will be transferred to Cochin [Approx. 80Kms-2 Hrs]

Overnight is at Courtyard Marriott, Cochin [Standard Room with breakfast]

<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cokap-courtyard-kochi-airport/>

Day 14:

COCHIN

Early morning, You will be met and transferred to Cochin International airport for your onward flight .

-----Services Ends -----