



Worldwide Quest presents to  
University of Toronto Alumni and Friends

# South India: Temples & Tamarind

November 17 - 29, 2017





## Dear Alumni and Friends,

I am pleased to present this tour to a vibrant and exotic destination that offers a wealth of World-Heritage sites, a thousand shades of green, and a warm, friendly welcome.

The southern states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala are the perfect introduction to the wonders of India. Lush tropical landscapes, world-renowned temple complexes, neat colourful villages, gorgeous heritage accommodation, and a subtle, distinctive cuisine all make for a truly authentic experience.

We will encounter many different facets of South Indian culture and history. Spend time strolling in the *Life of Pi's* Indian Cote d'Azur town of Pondicherry, touring the thriving technicolour temples of Madurai and Trichy, exploring the extravagant courtyard mansions of Chettinad, and walking in the fragrant spice gardens and tea plantations of Periyar.

Cooking demonstrations, privately hosted lunches, and presentations on topics as varied as temple architecture, early Indian painting, Ayurveda practice, and the continuity of cultural practices are all part of our very comprehensive trip. And throughout our journey, we will enjoy landscapes that are extraordinarily rich, full of colour and life. An optional extension to the palm-fringed backwaters of Kerala is the perfect way to relax at the end of an enriching and inspiring tour.

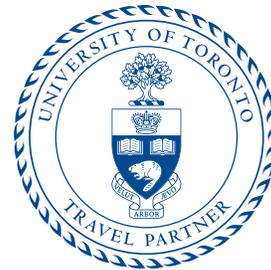
Please be in touch with our travel partner, Worldwide Quest, to follow the road less travelled through South India.

*Daphne Tao*

### **Daphne Tao**

Manager, Alumni Travel Program

The University of Toronto respects your privacy, your personal information remains confidential and is never released to our travel partners. The promotional information in this mailing is provided by an official travel partner of the University of Toronto. Revenue generated through travel programs support student and alumni events and initiatives. If you prefer not to receive information regarding the university's travel programs, please contact [address.update@utoronto.ca](mailto:address.update@utoronto.ca) or write to: "Alumni Records — Attn.: no travel mailings", 21 King's College Circle, Toronto, ON M5S 3J3.



## Detailed Itinerary

### **Friday, Nov. 17: Arrive Chennai (Madras)**

Upon arrival in Chennai in the late evening, transfer to your luxury hotel for a good night's sleep.

*Overnight: The Leela Palace, Chennai*

### **Saturday, Nov. 18: Chennai**

Explore one of Chennai's most characterful neighbourhoods. Discover the Kapaleeshwarar Temple with its rainbow-coloured gateways and pillared pavilions. Visit Fort St. George, completed in 1653 by the British East India Company, and the Indo-Saracenic style Madras High Court with its beautiful painted ceilings and stained-glass door.

*Overnight: The Leela Palace, Chennai*

*Meals: Breakfast, Welcome Dinner*

### **Sunday, Nov. 19: Along the Coromandel Coast to Pondicherry**

Admire the magnificent World Heritage-listed Shore Temple overlooking the sea at Mamallapuram and the 7<sup>th</sup> century 'Five Rathas'. These are temples carved from single large rocks. Continue to the former French colony of Pondicherry which reflects a bohemian-chic fusion with its quiet cobbled streets lined with yellow colonial houses.

*Overnight: Palais de Mahe, Pondicherry*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### **Monday, Nov. 20: Explore the capital of French India**

Start the day with a walk in the 'Ville Noir' to get a feel for the unique Franco-Tamil ambience and the restored heritage buildings. Visit the Hindu temple of Manakula Vinayagar, which has 40 different forms of Lord Ganesha and a temple elephant that blesses devotees. This afternoon is free to explore on your own. 'Pondy' is easy to navigate and there is a huge selection of galleries, museums and shops to enjoy plus a blissfully car-free ocean-side promenade.

*Overnight: Palais de Mahe, Pondicherry*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

**Tuesday, Nov. 21: Tanjore's magnificent temple complex**

Tanjore, the 'rice bowl' of Southern India is the birthplace of the great Chola Empire, the most remarkable civilisation in Dravidian history that expanded Hinduism from here to the banks of the Mekong River. Visit the Royal Palace, a mix of worn-down building and glorious art. End the day at the World Heritage-listed Brihadishwara Temple as the sun sets over the elaborate structure.

*Overnight: Ideal River View, Tanjore*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**Wednesday, Nov. 22: Trichy, Chettinad**

Visit the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Trichy, possibly the biggest temple in India with 49 separate shrines all dedicated to Vishnu, the preserver of the universe. Then onward to the remote area of Chettinad, the cultural home of the Chettiars who made their fortune as money lenders, merchants and jewellers throughout Southeast Asia from where they sent back lavish furnishings to outfit their magnificent mansions. We're staying in one of these splendidly restored mansions for two nights.

*Overnight: Visalam Hotel, Chettinad*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**Tuesday, Nov. 23: Cooking class in Chettinad**

The Indian adage has it that "one is lucky to eat like Chettiar". Food in Chettinad is one of the most renowned fare in the country using a distinctive set of spices including star anise, cinnamon, bay leaves, nutmeg and unusual local ingredients. We'll have a cooking class this morning and learn to prepare a traditional meal. There's time this afternoon to enjoy the hotel's swimming pool and explore the lost grandeur of this striking village.

*Overnight: Visalam Hotel, Chettinad*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**Wednesday, Nov. 24: Madurai**

Drive through the Tamil countryside to Madurai, one of the oldest cities in India, a metropolis that traded with Ancient Rome. The spiritual heart of the city is the massive Hindu temple complex dedicated to Meenakshi, the "fish-eyed goddess." Outside, 14 pyramidal towers are encrusted with a mind-boggling array of gods, goddesses, demons, and heroes, while inside priests perform rituals at multiple shrines, and worshipers seeking favours from the gods pay their respects in most unusual ways.

*Overnight: Taj Gateway, Madurai*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**Thursday, Nov. 25: Across the Western Ghats to Periyar**

The Western Ghats are a chain of mountains older than the Himalayas and a hotspot of biological diversity recognized by UNESCO as of outstanding universal value. It's a particularly scenic drive to our resort in the heart of the Periyar spice jungle.

*Overnight: Spice Village*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

**Friday, Nov. 26: Periyar's spice gardens**

Periyar is famous for its spices. Pepper, cardamom, cloves, and cinnamon are all cultivated here as are tea and coffee. Visit plantations to learn what it's all about from plucking to processing and enjoy a boat ride on Lake Periyar.

*Overnight: Spice Village*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**Saturday, Nov. 27: Kochi**

A scenic drive through lush green forest takes us to Kochi, the Venice of the East. Explore the city's intriguing mix of ancient mosques, Portuguese houses, a 400-year-old synagogue, the remains of the Raj, and giant fishing nets from China by the waterfront.

*Overnight: Eighth Bastion*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

**Sunday, Nov. 28: Kochi**

This morning is at leisure to explore independently. The old city is a centre of Keralan arts with antique and craft shops in abundance. This afternoon attend a Kathakali performance, the traditional dance of Kerala; then cruise the harbour for iconic photos of the Chinese fishing nets at sunset. Celebrate our South Indian sojourn with a farewell dinner this evening.

*Overnight: Eighth Bastion*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**Monday, Nov. 29: Depart Kochi**

Transfer to the airport for homeward-bound flights.

*Meals: Breakfast*

*Note: The itinerary and accommodation described in this tour brochure are subject to change due to logistical arrangements and to take advantage of local events.*



## Optional Pre- and Post-Tour Extensions

Please contact Worldwide Quest for tour details and customized extensions.



### Delhi & the Taj Mahal (pre-tour or post-tour)

A four day extension exploring the dynamic city of Delhi includes a full day guided tour and the splendours of Agra with visits to the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort.

Extension cost (per person): US\$995

Single supplement: US\$350

Tour cost includes: accommodation based on double occupancy (two nights at the Trident Hotel, Delhi and one night at the Radisson Hotel, Agra), breakfast and dinner daily, transportation by private vehicle, entrance fees, full sightseeing program with private expert guides.



### Kumarakom & Mumbai (post-tour)

Spend two days relaxing at the gorgeous Coconut Lagoon Resort in the blissful backwaters of Kerala. Enjoy two days in Mumbai with its grand colonial-era architecture and dynamic energy.

Extension cost (per person): US\$2095  
(based on six participants)

Single supplement: US\$795

Tour cost includes: Airfare (Chennai to Mumbai), accommodation based on double occupancy (two nights at the Coconut Lagoon, two nights at the Trident Nariman Point, Mumbai), breakfast and dinner daily, transportation by private vehicle, entrance fees, full sightseeing program in Mumbai with private expert guides.



Kerala backwaters

## Tour Details

**Tour Cost (per person):** US\$4995

Single Supplement: US\$1895

*We would be happy to try to match you with a suitable roommate. If we are unable to, the single supplement will apply.*

**Tour Cost Includes:**

- Airport transfers for passengers arriving and departing as per the group itinerary
- Accommodation based on double occupancy in hotels listed or similar
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- All internal transportation by private coach
- Sightseeing with qualified English-speaking guides
- All activities and entrance fees
- One cooking class
- Kathakali dance performance
- Taxes and gratuities (for guides, drivers, hotels, restaurants)
- Fully escorted by Worldwide Quest tour director

**Tour Cost Does Not Include:**

- Airfare from your home to join the tour
- Visa fees (obtained prior to departure, US\$50)
- Meals other than those mentioned above
- Beverages with meals
- Fuel surcharges, if applicable
- Travel insurance
- Excess baggage charges
- Items of a personal nature
- Additional arrangements required due to any emergency or other situation

**Group Size:** Limited to 22 participants.

**Payment Details**

A non-refundable deposit of US\$500 per person is required to reserve a space on this tour. A second deposit of US\$1000 is due six months prior to departure. Final payment is due August 19, 2017.



Rangoli

## What to Expect

### Level of Activity: Moderate

A good level of fitness is required to enjoy this trip. You should be able to walk up to two hours at a time over uneven terrain both in rural areas and in crowded cities. Shoes must be removed to enter some temples.

### Accommodation

We are staying in a mix of Western style hotels and restored heritage inns. We begin our trip at the luxury Leela Palace Hotel in Chennai. We have two one-night stays in four star level Western hotels in Tanjore and Madurai. Where we stay longer (in Pondicherry, Chettinad, Periyar, and Kochi) we are staying in particularly lovely inns that beautifully reflect the character and charm of their locations.

### Transportation

We will be travelling in a comfortable air-conditioned vehicle driven by a professional driver. While roads are mostly paved except on rural back roads, there are few divided highways, therefore, we cannot expect to cover distances as quickly as we might in North America. There are some long driving days but roadside scenery provides a quintessential Indian experience.

### Weather

We expect sunny skies and lovely warm weather throughout our South India trip. Temperatures will likely range from highs of 30°C to overnight lows of 20°C.

### Travel Documents

A passport is required for this trip. Please ensure it is valid for at least 6 months beyond your scheduled return home. You will require a visa for India which must be obtained prior to arrival. The current cost of this visa is US\$50.





Visit 3 UNESCO World Heritage Sites



Pick peppers in Periyar

**Signature  
U of T  
Moments**



Take a cooking class



Meet our hosts in Visalam



## How to Book

Please contact Worldwide Quest for more information and to book this tour.

**1-800-387-1483 or 416-633-5666 | [travel@worldwidequest.com](mailto:travel@worldwidequest.com)**

Visit [WorldwideQuest.com/UniversityofToronto](http://WorldwideQuest.com/UniversityofToronto) today.

This tour is offered exclusively to the university alumni community, including:  
University of Toronto, McGill University, Western University and McMaster University.



Worldwide Quest Int'l 491 King St. E. Toronto, ON M5A 1L9

tico.ca

#2667946

The University of Toronto, its officers and employees, do not assume any responsibility for the financing, arranging or conducting of tours. They shall not be liable for any damages or financial loss to person or property of any description that might occur in connection with tours, howsoever arising from the negligence, omission or otherwise of travel services arranged through Worldwide Quest International.

---

University of Toronto Alumni Travel  
21 King's College Circle  
Toronto, ON M5S 3J3  
Canada