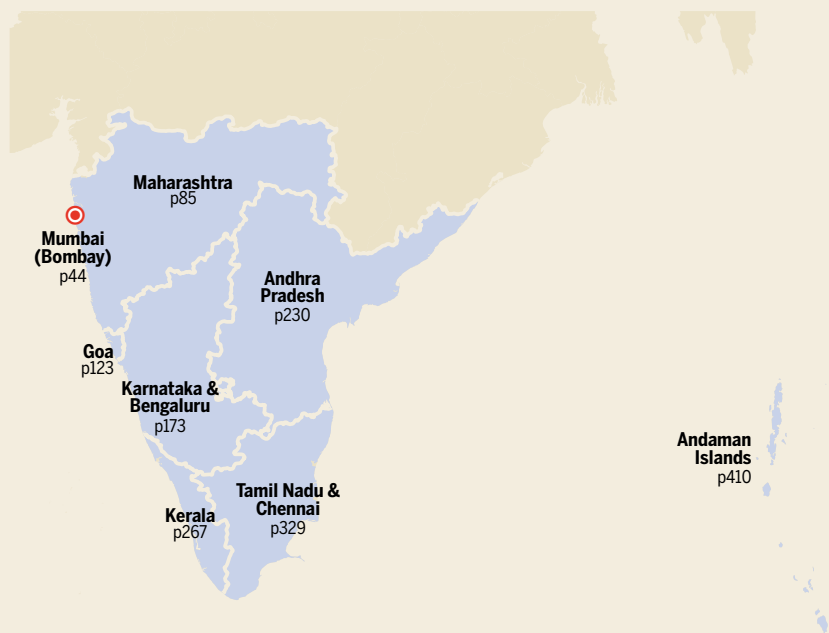




# South India & Kerala



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

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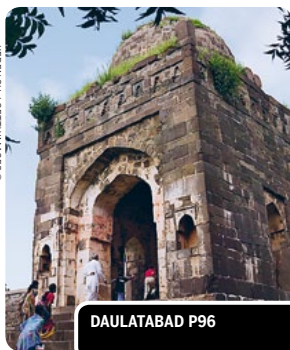
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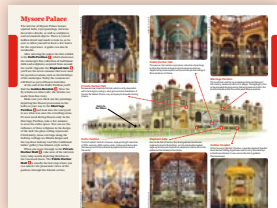
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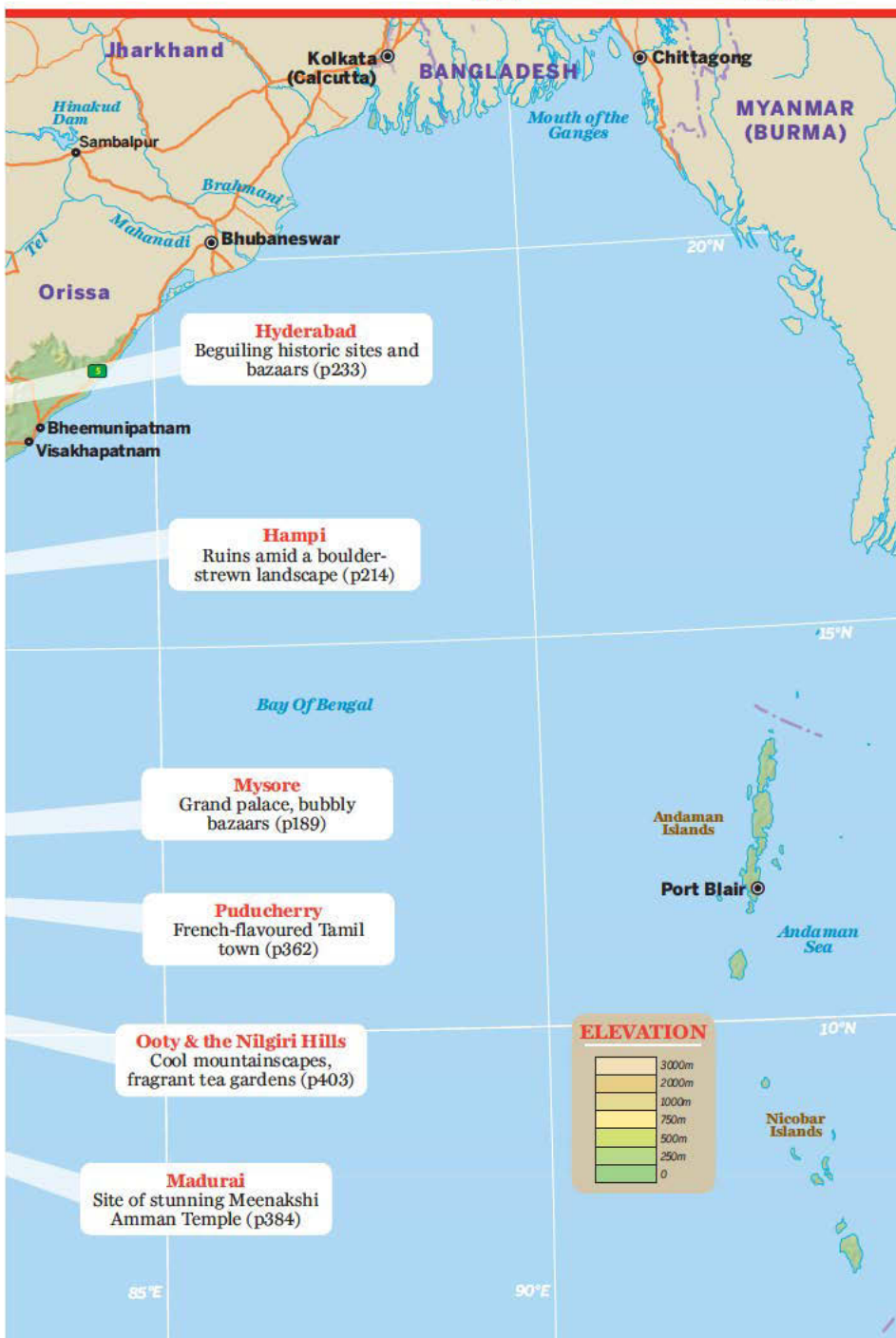
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# South India & Kerala







### **Amy Karafin**

**Mumbai (Bombay), Andhra Pradesh** Indian in several former lives, Amy first fell for the country in 1996, when she discovered *idlis* (spongy, round, fermented rice cakes), meditation and endless train rides. In many visits since, she has written about everything from Bollywood to *mithai* (Indian sweets), contemporary art to ancient religions, and yoga ghettos to nizams' palaces; read more at [www.amykarafin.com](http://www.amykarafin.com). When not on the road, she can be found watching Guru Dutt

movies or singing filmi in Brooklyn, where she mostly lives.

Read more about Amy at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/amykarafin](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/amykarafin)



### **John Noble**

**Tamil Nadu & Chennai** John, from England, lives in Spain and has written about 20-odd countries for Lonely Planet. He first experienced Tamil Nadu in the 1980s when Chennai's Triplicane High Rd was clogged with bullock carts and families milked their buffaloes beside it. Autorickshaws have replaced bullock carts now, but the bustle of Tamil cities remains as exhilarating and exhausting as ever, and the thrill of reaching cool, green Kodaikanal will never pall. Best discovery of the

trip: the tranquillity of Tranquebar.





## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### Sarina Singh

**Coordinating Author** After finishing a business degree in Melbourne, Sarina travelled to India where she pursued a hotel corporate traineeship before working as a journalist. After five years she returned to Australia and completed postgraduate journalism qualifications before coauthoring Lonely Planet's first edition of *Rajasthan*. Apart from numerous Lonely Planet books, she has written for a raft of newspapers and magazines, and has been a high-profile travel columnist.

Sarina is also the author of two prestigious books – *Polo in India* and *India: Essential Encounters*. Her award-nominated documentary film premiered at the Melbourne International Film Festival before being screened internationally.

Read more about Sarina at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/sarinasingh](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/sarinasingh)



### Lindsay Brown

**Maharashtra** Lindsay, a former conservation biologist and Publishing Manager at Lonely Planet, has been a frequent visitor to India for more than 25 years. Lindsay has trekked, jeeped, ridden and stumbled across many a mountain pass and contributed to Lonely Planet's *Bhutan, Nepal, South India, Rajasthan, Delhi & Agra* and *Pakistan & the Karakoram Highway* guides, among others.



### Paul Harding

**Goa, Kerala** Paul has explored India and all its mayhem many times over the past 15 years, frequently writing about it. He still has a soft spot for the south, where the pace of life is that little bit slower. For this trip he investigated Kerala's backwaters at close range, was charged by wild elephants in Wayanad, and carefully inspected all of Goa's beautiful beaches while taste-testing fresh seafood. Tough life! Paul also wrote the Itineraries chapter and Kerala colour section.

### Trent Holden & Kate Morgan



**Karnataka & Bengaluru, Andaman Islands** Having worked together on books from Zimbabwe to Japan, Trent and Kate were thrilled to be assigned to India again for Lonely Planet, this time working as coauthors. In Karnataka they had the not-so-shabby task of testing Bengaluru's countless bars and classy restaurants, spotting leopards on safari and taking in Hampi's famous ruins. Trent also returned to the Andamans for more sun, surf and sand. Based in Melbourne, in between travels they write about food and music.

## OVER MORE PAGE WRITERS

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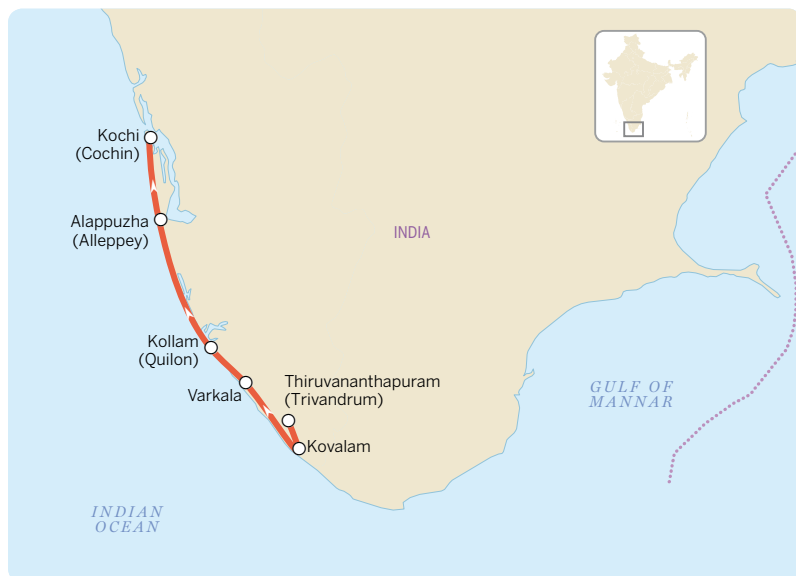
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# Itineraries



## Classic Kerala

Start your Keralan adventure in the capital, **Thiruvananthapuram** (Trivandrum). Spend a day visiting the zoological gardens and the nearby museums before making the half-hour hop to the beach at the well-developed resort of **Kovalam**. Backpackers might prefer to head further north to **Varkala**, a holy town thanks to its Janardhana Temple and alluring for its dizzying cliff-top guesthouse and restaurant enclave. Chill out here with some yoga or surfing for a few days before continuing north to **Kollam** (Quilon), where you can take a canoe tour through the canals and backwaters around Munroe Island. Ditch the bus or train and take the full-day tourist cruise through the canals to Alappuzha (Alleppey) with an overnight stop at the **Matha Amrithanandamayi Mission** (p287), the pink ashram of 'The Hugging Mother'. Moving on to **Alleppey**, you're in houseboat central. Scout out for a houseboat or canoe operator and discover what the sublime backwaters are all about. Continuing north on the rail line to **Kochi** (Cochin), take the short ferry ride to Fort Cochin, Kerala's former colonial outpost. Aromatic seafood barbecues, wonderfully warm homestays, colonial-era mansions, Kathakali shows and the intriguing Jewish quarter at Mattancherry make this a fascinating place to while away a few days.



3  
WEEKS

## Cities, Caves & Coast

Begin in cosmopolitan **Mumbai** (Bombay), the beating heart of Bollywood and site of some of the nation's best shopping, eating and drinking opportunities. Take a sunset stroll along Marine Dr, a curvaceous oceanside promenade dubbed the 'Queen's Necklace' because of its sparkling night lights, finishing with a plate of *bhelpuri* (fried rounds of dough with rice, lentils and chutney) and a neck massage on Chowpatty Beach. Catch a ferry to Elephanta Island from Mumbai's historic Gateway of India to marvel at its stunning rock-cut temples and impressive triple-faced sculpture of Lord Shiva. Next, head northeast to explore the ancient cave art at **Ajanta** and **Ellora**. Located within 100km of each other, the incredible frescoed Buddhist caves of Ajanta are clustered along a horseshoe-shaped gorge, while the rock-cut caves of Ellora – which contain a mix of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist shrines – are situated on a 2km-long escarpment near Aurangabad. After soaking up cave culture, journey southwest to **Pune**, Maharashtra's IT hub, and its excellent museums, bars and the infamous Osho International Meditation Resort. Next stop is the tropical beach haven of **Goa** for some soul-reviving sandcastle therapy. Wander through a lush spice plantation, visit Portuguese-era cathedrals at Old Goa, shop at Anjuna's colourful flea market and take your pick from dozens of fabulous beach resorts before travelling east to the traveller hotspot of **Hampi** in neighbouring Karnataka. Ramble around Hampi's enigmatic boulder-strewn landscape and imagine what life here was like when it was a centre of the mighty Vijayanagar empire. Make the long trip down to **Mysore** to explore the Maharaja's Palace, one of India's grandest royal buildings, and shop for silk and sandalwood in its colourful markets. From Mysore it's an exciting bus ride into the Western Ghats and across the Kerala border to **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary**, a pristine forest and jungle reserve and one of the best places in the south to spot wild elephants. Finally, take the hair-raising road down to the coast and make your way to **Kochi**, Kerala's intriguing colonial city where a blend of Portuguese, Dutch and English history combines with wonderful homestays and a buzzing traveller scene.



2 WEEKS

## Cities & Sanctuaries

Start in **Hyderabad**, capital of Andhra Pradesh and a wealth of centuries-old Islamic monuments. Don't miss the impressive 16th-century Golconda Fort, then make the long trip south to **Bengaluru** (Bangalore), where you can spend a few days indulging in culinary and shopping delights. For a taste of the city's royal past visit the 18th-century Tipu Sultan's Palace and whimsical Bengaluru Palace. Next stop is the royal city of **Mysore**. Gawp at the Maharaja's Palace, an uber-grand complex topped with rhubarb-red and chalky-white domes. Put on your hiking boots now and head for the hills, south to Tamil Nadu's wonderful **Mudumalai Tiger Park**, where you can spot wild elephants on jeep safaris or trek through pristine jungle. Next stop is the cool hill town of **Ooty** (Udhagamandalam), one of South India's most-loved summer holiday retreats. Take the toy train down to Coimbatore, then cross the border into Kerala and the emerald-green tea-covered hills of **Munnar**, with some fine hiking and secluded accommodation in the surrounding forests. Finish with some optimistic tiger spotting and jungle trekking at pretty **Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary**.



1 WEEK

## Tamil Nadu's Temples

If temples are your thing, Tamil Nadu is the place to be. Delve into the rich history of **Chennai** (Madras) with a wander around the Government Museum before visiting the ancient Shiva Kapaleeshwarar Temple, San Thome Cathedral, and the military memorabilia at Fort St George museum. Travel south to beachside **Mamallapuram** (Mahabalipuram) to explore the superb rock-cut shrines that hark back to the Pallava dynasty. Time to move on to **Tiruvannamalai** to see the Arunachaleshwar Temple, one of the country's largest sacred complexes. Take a break from Hindu temples at **Puducherry** (Pondicherry) to feast your eyes on the faded buildings of the French Quarter and the 18th-century Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. For more spiritual sustenance head to **Trichy** (Tiruchirappalli), site of the memorable hilltop Rock Fort Temple and a gaggle of important Hindu shrines. Head south to **Madurai** to savour the incredible Meenakshi Amman Temple, considered by many to be the pinnacle of South Indian temple architecture. Finally, head to the southern tip of India at **Kanyakumari**, home to the Kumari Amman temple.

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