

Welcome to South India & Kerala

Like a giant wedge plunging into the Indian Ocean, peninsular South India is the subcontinent's steamy heartland, and a lush contrast to the snow-capped peaks and sun-crisped plains of the North.

Expect the Unexpected

India loves to toss up the unexpected. This can be challenging, particularly for the first-time visitor: the poverty is confronting, Indian bureaucracy can be exasperating and the crush of humanity may turn the simplest task into a frazzling epic. Even veteran travellers find their nerves frayed at some point, yet this is all part of the India experience. With an ability to inspire, frustrate, thrill and confound all at once, adopting a 'go with the flow' attitude is wise if you wish to retain your sanity. Love it or loathe it – and most travellers see-saw between the two – to embrace the unpredictability is to embrace India's soul.

Soul Stirring

Spirituality is the common thread that weaves its way through the vast and complex tapestry that is contemporary India. The multitude of sacred sites and time-honoured rituals are testament to a long, colourful, and sometimes tumultuous, religious history. And then there are the festivals! South India hosts some of the nation's most spectacular devotional events – from formidable city parades celebrating auspicious dates on the religious calendar, to simple harvest fairs that pay homage to a locally worshipped deity.

Luscious Landscapes

South India comprises thousands of kilometres of coastline that frame fertile plains and curvaceous hills, all kept glisteningly green by the double-barrelled monsoon. The region's tropical splendour is one of its greatest tourist drawcards with thick coconut groves, luminescent rice paddies, fragrant spice gardens and picturesque tea plantations proffering plenty of green respite. And then there are the waterways. Azure seas gently lap crescents of sun-warmed sand and boats cruise along the slender rivers and glassy lagoons of Kerala's famed backwaters.

Deliciously Festive

With its glorious culinary variety and mélange of dining-out options, South India is deliciously rewarding. From traditional southern favourites such as *idlis* (fermented rice cakes) and large papery *dosas* (savoury crepes) to a mix of inventive fusion creations, there's certainly no dearth of choice for the hungry traveller. Food has also long played a prominent role in many of the region's festivals, with temptingly colourful *mithai* (sweets) more often than not taking centre stage.



Why I Love South India

By Sarina Singh, Author

The moment I start to think I'm right on the precipice of unravelling one of its deep mysteries, India has an uncanny way of reminding me that it would take more than just a few lifetimes to do so. Indeed, demystifying India is a perpetual work in progress. And that is precisely what makes the country so deeply addictive for me. The constant exploration. The playful unpredictability. And knowing that, just when it's least expected, you can find yourself up close and personal with moments that have the power to alter the way you view the world and your place in it.

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