



## Living Traditions of St. Thomas

India has a positive Kaleidoscope of religions. There is probably more diversity of religions and sects in India than anywhere else in the earth. Christianity is said to have arrived in India with Saint Thomas, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ, who according to some legends, sailed to India from Eastern Asia in AD 52. He spent 12 years in India, the final eight of his life in Mylapore in Madras (now Chennai). Several shrines have been created in the places associated with him. However, others believe that the first missionary to arrive in the country was Saint Bartholomew. Although the origins of Christianity in India remain unclear, there is a general scholarly consensus that Christianity was established in India by the 6th century AD, including some communities who used Syriac liturgically, and it is possible that the religion's existence there extends to as far back as the 1st century. Christianity was as such established in India even before some nations of Europe had been Christianised.

Historically, Christian missionary activity started with the advent of Saint Francis Xavier in the 15th century. He was followed by Portuguese missionaries at first and the advent of Europeans in India from 15th century onwards led to the mass influx of Christians and subsequent development of Christianity. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries Catholic as well as Protestant missionaries preached Christian doctrines in India and also made important contributions to social improvement and education in India. Much of the modern influences in the Indian society can be attributed to the role of Christianity in India. Christian missionaries helped in setting up schools and colleges all over India and also spread the message of faith and goodwill in the country.

Churches in India reflect the typically European ecclesiastical architecture. The Christians in India are organized into local communities, regional or provincial and national bodies. Most Indian Christians have bishops as their regional head of a diocese and priests are in charge of each parish.

## Program Routing

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DAY 1	ARRIVE CHENNAI	BY: INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT
DAY 2	CHENNAI	
DAY 3	CHENNAI – TRICHY – VELANKANNI	BY: FLIGHT / SURFACE
DAY 4	VELANKANNI – TRICHY - COCHIN	BY: SURFACE / FLIGHT
DAY 5	COCHIN	
DAY 6	COCHIN	
DAY 7	COCHIN – GOA Via MUMBAI	BY: FLIGHT
DAY 8	GOA	
DAY 9	GOA - MUMBAI	
DAY 10	MUMBAI – KOLKATA	BY: FLIGHT
DAY 11	KOLKATA	
DAY 12	KOLKATA	
DAY 13	KOLKATA – DELHI	BY: FLIGHT
	DEPART DELHI	BY: INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

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**DAY 01      ARRIVE CHENNAI****By International Flight**

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- Arrive at International airport
- Overnight in Chennai

**Welcome to India!** You are met by our representative in the arrival area of the airport after you clear all immigration and customs formalities. Transfer to hotel for your stay.

**Chennai** formerly known as Madras is the capital city of Tamil Nadu state and is the fourth largest metro city in India. The city grew up around the English settlement of Fort Saint George and gradually absorbed the surrounding towns and villages. However, despite the strong British influence, Chennai has retained its traditional Tamil Hindu culture and effectively blended it with the foreign influence. The city is widely spread in about 180 Sq. Km It is a major trade center, being well linked by road, rail and air to important cities besides being a seaport.

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**DAY 02      CHENNAI**

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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Morning city tour with visits to local Churches
- Afternoon visit National Art Gallery
- Overnight in Chennai

Morning, proceed on a city tour of Chennai starting with **Fort St. George**, which is considered to be the first establishment of the British in India. Initially erected as a trading post, it later served as the origin of the modern Indian Army. A live example of the military architecture marvel, the St. George Fort is probably the most noticeable ancient monument in Chennai.

Primarily, the St. George Fort is divided into two sections: **St. Mary's Church** and the **Fort Museum**. St. Mary's Church enjoys the status of being one of the oldest surviving churches built by the British in India as well as the oldest Anglican Church on the land of India. This beautiful building, established in 1680 has stood the test of times and still holds the splendor of the yore. The tombstones in its graveyard are incomparable and are seen as the oldest one in India. Another fascinating structure here is the 150 ft tall flagstaff, made entirely of teakwood. Though the original flagstaff is no more to be seen, its relics are still visible. The church is famously known as the 'Westminster Abbey of the East'. The museum holds many remembrances of the East India Company and the British period.

From the British hold of centre, proceed to **Mylapore**, which was inhabited in the 16th century by the Portuguese to visit **the Saint Thomas Church**. San Thome Basilica at the south end of Marina Beach was named after Saint Thomas (Doubting Thomas). It is believed that he had come to Chennai in 52 AD and was killed at St. Thomas Mount just outside the city in 78 AD. Built in 16th Century by the Portuguese, it was made a basilica in 1896.

The beautiful stained glass window at the basilica portrays the story of St Thomas and the central hall has 14 wooden plaques depicting scenes from the last days of Christ. In the cathedral is a 3ft. high statue of Virgin Mary believed to have been brought from Portugal in 1543.

Afternoon, visit the **National Art Gallery**. Built in 1906, the gallery is situated in a splendid Indo-Saracenic edifice. The building was initially known as Victoria Memorial Hall and was designed by Henry Irwin. The eminent historian Tillotson described it as one of "the proudest expressions of the Indo-Saracenic movement". There is a good collection of old paintings and sculptures including Tanjore paintings on glass; Rajput and Mughal miniature paintings; Deccan paintings from 17th century; and handcrafts, metal ware, and ivory carvings from 11th and 12th century.

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<b>DAY 03</b>	<b>CHENNAI – TRICHY TRICHY – VAILANKANNI</b>	<b>By Flight By surface (150 KM/ +/- 3 hour)</b>
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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Morning fly to Trichy and drive to Vailankanni
- Enjoy the stay at Vailankanni, the “Our Lady of Health”
- Overnight in Vailankanni

Morning, fly to Trichy (*Please note, luggage allowance on this flight is 15 kg checked in baggage and 7 kg hand luggage*). On arrival, drive to Vailankanni and check-in to your accommodations

Afternoon tour of Vailankanni

Vailankanni, a hamlet in the sandy shores of Bay of Bengal was once a port that traded with Rome and Greece, the ancient commercial centers of the western world. The tiny commercial center gradually lost its importance to the larger city of Nagapattinam. The canal built to link this town with Vedaranyam still lies to the west. The Vellayar, a minor branch of the Cauvery River, runs south of the town and discharges into the sea. The town was among the worst hit by the tsunami caused by the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake.

The town is home to a significant Catholic shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Health, the Madonna of Vailankanni, locally known as the '*Sacred Arogya Matha Church*'. The Catholic Basilica is popularly known as the "Our Lady of Health".

The origins of this church can be traced back to the 16th century and its founding is attributed to three miracles: the apparition of Mary and Jesus to a slumbering shepherd boy, the curing of a lame buttermilk vendor, and the survival of Portuguese sailors assaulted by a violent sea storm. It is built in the Gothic style, was modified by Portuguese and then further expanded later on due to the influx of pilgrims. The church building was raised to the status of basilica in 1962 by Pope John XXIII.

Annually, 20 million pilgrims flock to the shrine from all over India and abroad, out of which an estimated 3 million people visit the shrine during its annual festival from 29 August to 8 September. The 11-day annual festival concludes with the celebration of the Feast of the Nativity of Mary on 8 September.

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<b>DAY 04</b>	<b>VAILANKANNI – TRICHY TRICHY – COCHIN via CHENNAI</b>	<b>By surface By Flight</b>
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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Morning drive to Trichy and fly to Cochin
- Overnight in Cochin

Late morning drive to Trichy and connect flight for Cochin via Chennai (*Please note, luggage allowance on this flight is 15 kg checked in baggage and 7 kg hand luggage*). On arrival, assisted transfer to the hotel and check in to your accommodations.

**Kochi** (popularly known as Cochin) is spread across islands and promontories in a stunning location between the Arabian Sea and the Backwaters. The city was founded in 1341 when a flood created a natural safe port which became the principal harbour for Malabar coast's spice trade. Cochin was on the main trade route between Europe and China. The rulers invited people of various religions to settle here, attracting the Jews and the Christians who built places of worship and their own communities.



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**DAY 05**      **COCHIN**

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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Morning city tour
- Afternoon visit St. Francis Church and Santa Cruz Basilica
- Evening, witness Kathakali Dance performance
- Overnight in Cochin

Morning, begin your city tour from **Mattancherry**, famous for having "Jew Town" in its heart. This is a historical part of India, where the ancient Jews started their trading. This neighborhood is now famous for antique showrooms. Jew Palace and the Jewish synagogue are two famous landmarks.

You will visit India's oldest **Jewish Synagogue** (*remains closed on Fridays, Saturdays and Jewish Holidays*). Built in 1568, it was destroyed by the Portuguese and rebuilt by the Dutch a century later. Next visit the cantilevered Chinese fishing nets, lined at the entrance to the harbor mouth. Chinese traders are believed to have originally introduced them in the 14th century although, today parts of the nets are known by Portuguese names. Continue on to the **Dutch Palace** (*remains closed on Fridays and national holidays*). Built in 1555, its coronation hall and murals at Ramayana are noteworthy features.

Afternoon, visit the **St. Francis Church**. Built in 1503 as Santo Antonio, it is the oldest European Church in India and has great historical significance as a mute witness to the European colonial struggle in the subcontinent. The Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, died in Kochi in 1524 when he was on his third visit to India. His body was originally buried in this church, but after fourteen years his remains were removed to Lisbon.

Next visit **Santa Cruz Basilica**, one of the eight basilicas in India. The basilica serves as the Cathedral church of the Diocese of Cochin. Counted as one of the heritage edifices of Kerala, this church is one of the finest and most impressive churches in India. It is a place of devotion as well as a center of historic significance, endowed with architectural and artistic grandeur and colours of the gothic style. It was built originally by the Portuguese and elevated to a Cathedral by Pope Paul IV in 1558, was spared by the Dutch conquerors who destroyed many Catholic buildings. Later the British demolished the structure and Bishop D. João Gomes Ferreira commissioned a new building in 1887. Consecrated in 1905, Santa Cruz was proclaimed a Basilica by Pope John Paul II in 1984.

Evening, visit a local theatre to experience **Kathakali**. Literally a stylized dance-drama, it is noted for the attractive make-up of characters, elaborate costumes, detailed gestures and well-defined body movements presented in tune with the anchor playback music and complementary percussion.

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**DAY 06**      **COCHIN**

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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Excursion to Malayattor
- Overnight in Cochin

Morning, take an excursion to the village of **Malayattoor** in the North Eastern corner of Ernakulam district, about 47 km from Cochin. The name 'Malayattoor' is an amalgamation of three small words. Mala (Mountain) Arr (River) Oore (Place). This meeting place of mountain and river shot into prominence when she was blessed by the missionary work of St. Thomas the apostle of Jesus Christ.

Situated at Kurisumudi, a verdant hill, the church is dedicated to St. Thomas, who is believed to have prayed at this shrine. The Church has a life-size statue of St. Thomas and the imprint of the feet of the Apostle on a rock.

Oral tradition says that while travelling through Malayattor, faced with hostile natives, he fled to the hilltop where he is said to have remained in prayer and that he left his foot prints on one of the rocks. According to beliefs, during prayer, he touched a rock, upon which blood poured from it.

One of the most important Christian pilgrim centres in Kerala, this shrine attracts devotees in very large numbers and was promoted to Archdiocesan status by Archbishop Mar Varkey Vithayathil on 4 September 1998.

Return to the city and afternoon is at your leisure.

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<b>DAY 07</b>	<b>COCHIN – GOA via MUMBAI</b>	<b>By Flight</b>
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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Morning fly to Goa via Mumbai
- Afternoon is at leisure
- Overnight in Goa

Morning, fly to Goa (Please note, luggage allowance on this flight is 15 kg checked in baggage and 7 kg hand luggage). On arrival, assisted transfer to the hotel and check in to your accommodations.

**Goa**, the former Portuguese enclave, one of India's gems, has been popular with tourists for many years with its magnificent palm-fringed beaches and renowned "travelers' scene". It has much more to offer than sun, sand and sea. Goa has a character quite distinct from the rest of India, and the people are fun loving and relaxed, having retained some of the gaiety of the Portuguese.

Afternoon is at your leisure

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<b>DAY 08</b>	<b>IN GOA</b>
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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Morning visit the Basilica of Bom Jesus church – a World Heritage Site
- Afternoon walking tour in Fontainhas
- Overnight in Goa

Morning, take a guided tour of Old Goa, a serene locale dotted with majestic churches and imposing cathedrals. All, dating back to a glorious era when it was the hub of activities for both Adil Shah of Bijapur and the Portuguese rulers who had ambitions of making its second Lisbon in terms of grandeur and magnificence.

Visit the Basilica of Bom Jesus Church. Built in 1695, the church of Bom Jesus, "Good" or "Infant" Jesus, is known principally for the tomb of St. Francis Xavier. In 1946, it became the first church of India to be elevated to the status of Minor Basilica. One of the richest churches in Goa, it is covered with marble and inlaid with precious stones and paintings depicting the life of St. Francis Xavier. The basilica, where the mortal remains of St. Francis Xavier are kept, is the best specimen of baroque architecture in India. St. Francis's body was brought to Goa almost 150 years after his death. It was a gift from Medici, Cosimo III, the Grand Duke of Tuscany. It now lies in an airtight glass coffin, placed inside a silver casket fashioned by a 17th century Florentine jeweller. Continue to the imposing Se Cathedral of St. Catherine- the largest church in Asia, which has 14 altars, an 80m long aisle and 5 bells including the Golden Bell.

Next visit the Church & Convent of St Francis of Assisi the former palace of the Archbishop that connects the Se Cathedral to the Convent and Church of St. Francis of Assisi. The exterior of the Church is of the Tuscan order while the main entrance is in Manuline style. To the west of the Se Cathedral is the former palace of the Archbishop that connects the Se Cathedral to the Convent and Church of St. Francis of Assisi. The structure is built of laterite blocks and is lime-plastered. The church faces west and has a nave with three chapels on side, a choir, two altars in the transept and a main altar. To the north of the main altar are a belfry and a sacristy. The convent, which forms an annexure to the church, now houses the Archaeological Museum. Later, visit the church of St Cajetan's Church, which is modelled on the original design of St. Peter's Church in Rome.

Afternoon, proceed on a walking tour of Fontainhas – the old Latin quarter. It maintains to this day its Portuguese influence, namely at the architectonic level, such as narrow streets, old villas and buildings painted in lively colors. End the day after a drive to Panjim to visit the well preserved Immaculate Conceição church and nearby market area.

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<b>DAY 09</b>	<b>GOA – MUMBAI</b>	<b>By Flight</b>
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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Afternoon flight to Mumbai
- Enroute visit Mount Mary Church
- Overnight in Mumbai

Morning is at your leisure. Afternoon, fly to Mumbai (*Please note, luggage allowance on this flight is 15 kg checked in baggage and 7 kg hand luggage*).

**Bombay** also known as **Mumbai** is the economic powerhouse of India. A confluence of varied cultural currents and cross currents has given Mumbai a unique position of the most multi-ethnic city of India. Mumbai is the most populous city in India, and the fourth most populous city in the world, with a total metropolitan area population of approximately 20.5 million. Mumbai is also country's financial and commercial hub and has a principal port on the Arabian Sea. It is also the hub of Indian film industry, which has played a pivoted role in the development of cinematography. "Bollywood", as it is called, produces the second most number of pictures in the world every year, next only to Hollywood, USA.

On your transfer to the hotel, stop enroute at the **Mount Mary Church**, a catholic basilica in Bandra. The feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated here on the first Sunday after 8 September, the birthday of the Virgin Mary. Overlooking the Arabian Sea, it is one of the prominent churches in Mumbai and home to the revered Madonna of Mount Mary. It draws many devotees and pilgrims annually with many of the faithful attesting to the miraculous powers of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The church was destroyed in 1738 during a raid by the Marathas and rebuilt in 1760.

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<b>DAY 10</b>	<b>MUMBAI – KOLKATA</b>	<b>By Flight</b>
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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Morning visit Cathedral Church of St Thomas
- Drive along the Queen's Necklace
- Afternoon visit Dhobi Ghat – an open-air laundry
- Evening fly to Kolkata
- Overnight in Kolkata

Morning, visit **St. Thomas' Cathedral**; the city's first Anglican Church is situated in the heart of the commercial fort area. The foundation was laid in 1672 during the governorship of Gerald Aungier, and was opened to public on the Christmas Day in 1718, and subject to a number of later additions. Though simple in structure, the interior of the Church has some exquisite art adoration.

Continue to **Gateway of India** - the landmark of Bombay, which, was before the advent of air travel, the only gateway to India. It was built to commemorate the visit of King George and Queen Mary to India in 1911.

Visit the **Prince of Wales Museum** (*closed on Mondays*) – built in gothic and Moorish architecture in the striking confluence of styles that came to be known as Indo Saracenic. It boasts of a significant collection of Indus valley artefacts some of them dating back to more than 5000 years. Most impressive are the miniature paintings – nearly 2000 of them, from various stylistic schools of India.

Drive along **Marine Drive**, *the sea - Front Boulevard*. It is also known as the *Queen's Necklace* as in the evening, the breeze from the Arabian Sea comes over Marine Drive and as the streetlights on this U-shaped road light up, the view from south Bombay's skyscrapers or from the exclusive residential area, is that of a Queen's Necklace.

Next, visit the **dhobi ghats** (photo-stop), the massive outdoor laundry site where dhobhi wallahs (laundry workers) beat, wring, iron and code millions of pieces of laundry daily. End the day with a visit to **Mani Bhawan** - a hallowed memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, to his stay and the activities he initiated from here.

Continue to the airport and evening fly to Kolkata (*Please note, luggage allowance on this flight is 15 kg checked in baggage and 7 kg hand luggage*).

On arrival, assisted transfer to the hotel and check in to your accommodations.

**Kolkata** – A city on the Hooghly, retains the aura of days long gone, weaving the past and the present, the intense and the fun loving into a charming fabric. Home to four Nobel laureates - Ronald Ross, Rabindranath Tagore, Mother Teresa and Amartya Sen, Kolkata is the nerve centre of intellect and human values, where many modern movements began in art, cinema and theatre, science and industry. India's quest for freedom began here. Kolkata is the gateway to Eastern India.

The Archdiocese of Calcutta covers the greater part of West Bengal. The First Christian settlements in Bengal appear at the end of the 16th century around the Church of Bandel on the Hooghly. At Calcutta the first Catholic Chapel is dated from 1700. In 1834, at the petition of Calcutta Catholics, the Holy See erected the Vicariate Apostolic of Calcutta and entrusted it to the English Province of the Society of Jesus, and at the end of 1838 to the Diocesan Clergy.

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## DAY 11      KOLKATA

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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Morning visit St. Paul's Cathedral
- Afternoon city tour
- Later visit St Paul's Cathedral
- Overnight in Kolkata

Morning, visit **St. Paul's Cathedral**. It is the first Episcopal Church of Asia featuring awesome Indo-Gothic architecture. Bishop Wilson patronized the construction of this beautiful church in 1839 and completed in 1847. The church got destroyed due to the earthquake of 1897 and then it was renovated. The church is located within huge grounds, where you can also find a meditation point that has been set up in the recent times in collaboration with distinguished citizens of Tagore's Shantiniketan. The beautiful pictures describe the life and works of Saint Paul. The atmosphere of this cathedral is very tranquil. The architecture and the interior of the Saint Paul Cathedral is truly a feast for eyes.

On your afternoon tour, you will see historic, modern, European, and Asian sights, all together in one city. Visit the beautiful **Victoria Memorial**; a huge white-marble structure and an enduring monument of the British Raj in India housing some interesting memorabilia. You will see the temple of **Kali** - the demonic attribute of Parvathi at Kalighat and drive past the imposing Fort William, the giant cricket stadium Eden Gardens and the Writers Building, all interesting relics of Colonial India.

Stop by the **Howrah Bridge**, a miracle of engineering skill. This is a huge cantilever bridge supported by two piers 270 ft. high from the road level. The span of the bridge between the piers is 1,500 ft while the total distance between the two sheet anchors is 2,115 ft.



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**DAY 12**                      **KOLKATA**

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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Spend the day at Missionaries of Charity
- Overnight in Kolkata

Spend the day at the Missionaries of Charity - a Roman Catholic Latin Rite religious congregation established in 1950 by Mother Teresa.

Start the morning with a mass at motherhouse, followed by a simple breakfast of bananas, bread and chai. If you wish, you can volunteer here. Volunteering with the Missionaries of Charity can be a very humbling experience. You can participate in one of many activities at this centre from serving food, to helping/feeding the old and physically challenged. there are many activities which can be a meaningful experience. In a city as chaotic and noisy as Kolkata, the chapel becomes a vital part of the volunteer day. Mother's Tomb is also a very special place to offer prayers and find moments of solitude.

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**DAY 13**                      **KOLKATA / DELHI**                      **By flight**  
**DEPART DELHI**                      **By International Flight**

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- Breakfast at the hotel
- Transfer to the airport
- Arrive Delhi, met and transfer to the International airport

Morning is at your leisure. Afternoon, fly to Delhi (*Please note, luggage allowance on this flight is 15 kg checked in baggage and 7 kg hand luggage*).

Depending on your post trip plans, you can either continue on the journey to Jaipur or fly to Delhi and connect flight for onward destination.

**End of Main Tour**

## **Price Proposal**

### **Hotel Envisaged or similar:**

<b>City</b>	<b>Proposed Hotels</b>	<b>Room category</b>	<b>Nights</b>
Chennai	Rain Tree Hotel	Deluxe room	02
Vailankanni	Vailankanni Residency	Deluxe room	01
Cochin	Crown Plaza	Backwater view Room	03
Goa	The Zuri resort & Spa	Zuri superior room	02
Mumbai	Trident Nariman Point	Superior room	01
Kolkata	The Lalit Great Eastern	Superior room	03

### **Cost Includes**

- Accommodation of 12 nights on twin share basis at hotels mentioned above or similar.
- Meal Plan: Daily breakfast + dinner
- Transportation by air-conditioned deluxe motor coach as per the itinerary
- Services of English speaking local guide as per the program.
- Entrance fees to the places of visit as per the itinerary.
- Ticket to witness Kathakali Dance performance in local theatre in Cochin
- Packaged drinking water in the coach throughout
- All applicable taxes

### **Cost Does Not Include**

- Any airfare
- Visa fees for India
- Any gratuities
- Any Insurance
- Accommodation in Delhi on the last visit
- Any meals or options not mentioned in the itinerary
- Above given rates are not valid for Expense of personal nature like tipping, laundry, and telephone/fax calls, alcoholic beverages, camera/video camera fee at monuments, medical expenses, airport departure tax etc.

### **Special Notes**

- Hotel Check-In 1400 hour, Check-out time 1200 noon.
- **One person will be complimentary on plan from 15 pax onwards. Only airfare will be payable**
- Rates are net, non-commissionable and include all taxes applicable at the time of quotation. Extreme currency fluctuations or change in the tax structure may cause the total tour price to increase at any time. Final prices are subject to change with any increase in the cost.
- TCI reserves the right to modify itineraries and/or substitute hotels of a reasonably similar quality, when available, should circumstances beyond our control deem it necessary.
- The transportation arrangements includes visitation within city limits only.
- Deposits imposed by TCI's suppliers (e.g. hotels, motor coach companies etc.) will be charged when they occur. Full payment of deposits is due as per deposit invoice. Non-compliance with the deposit requirements can result in change or loss of services. All deposits are non-transferable.