



“The Grande Dame” of Women’s
Adventure Travel Since 1982
2007 ~ Celebrating 25 Years!

DATES

February 9 – 26, 2008

COST

\$7,395 all-inclusive with international and all
internal airfare from Los Angeles on Singapore
Airlines (\$800 deposit)

RATING

Moderate

ACTIVITIES

*Architecture, Archeology, Houseboat Trip, Cultural
Exploration, Cultural Performances, Humanitarian
Projects, Local Family Visits, Natural History,
Photography, Sightseeing, Walking, Wildlife Viewing*

MAIN ATTRACTIONS

- Enjoy the hospitality of one of the world’s friendliest peoples in a country considered to be the oldest living culture in the world.
- Visit Southern India’s most colorful and vibrant cities. Discover exuberant temple architecture of Jain and Hindu temples and ancient World Heritage Sites.
- Enjoy an enchanting overnight backwater cruise on a luxury “rice boat” in Kerala. Float through lush vegetation and glimpse Kerala’s unique rural lifestyle.
- Participate in two special “Humanitours” projects to augment the efforts of entrepreneurial Indian women.
- Experience spectacular wildlife viewing “on safari” in the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary and Tiger Reserve led by poachers-turned-guides.
- Stay in splendid accommodations in luxurious and distinctive hotels, beach bungalows, historic Heritage Hotels, Ayurvedic spa resorts, and the world-renowned Spice Village. Dine on sumptuous, world-renown cuisine.

AdventureWomen is the oldest
adventure travel company for
active women over 30.

SOUTHERN INDIA – A Cultural Kaleidoscope and a Banquet for the Senses

AdventureWomen’s 2008 adventure vacation in Southern India takes us deep into a country very different from the Taj Mahal and the Mughal North. India’s southern region is splendid and diverse. Here we’ll find some of the world’s oldest cultures, traditions, and faiths; gorgeous landscapes; fascinating historical monuments and a rich architectural heritage; lush tropical lands and brilliant green tea estates; Ayurvedic spas and resorts; famous wildlife reserves; and superb, world-famous cuisine. It is an astonishing part of India that few visitors explore. As one of the few, you will be well-rewarded by an incredible array of experiences, accommodations, and activities. And, this customized, luxurious tour of Southern India includes unique “Humanitours” aspects.

Our adventure begins in Chennai (formerly Madras) with an exploration of Dakshina Chitra, a Heritage Village that provides a fascinating glimpse into the homes and lifestyles of the people and culture of South India. We’ll also visit Kanchipuram, a spectacular temple city that is one of the seven sacred cities of the Hindus. This area is also well-known for its exquisite silk weaving industry. For our first Humanitours project, we’ll drink tea with a group of women weavers and donate much-needed eyeglasses.

Next we’ll travel to Mahabalipuram, a World Heritage Site famous for its 12th-century rock temples. Then we’re on to Pondicherry, a quaint coastal town and former French Colony settlement. Our second Humanitours project will take place during our stay at The Dune, a chic and eco-friendly beach hotel with its own organic gardens. It is also an Ayurvedic village, a base for artists in residence, and it supports the Tsunami Project, which helps fisherwomen who were traumatized by the Tsunami disaster. Initially, the Tsunami Project trained women from six coastal villages to channel their energy into making small “Tsunami” dolls from waste fabric. The project team then bought the dolls from the fisherwomen and began distributing them around the world as gift items. Ultimately, the project became a means of livelihood for nearly 180 women. We will spend an afternoon learning about this project from some of these women and make a large donation of material that will allow them to expand their livelihood.

Our adventure takes us on a ride through the lush delta of the Kaveri River to Thanjavur, World Heritage site of the Brihadishwara Temple, a

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THIS TRIP

- Round-trip international flights on Singapore Airlines from Los Angeles to Chennai, India.
- Dayroom hotel accommodations in twin-bedded rooms inside Singapore Airport during transfer from Singapore to Chennai.
- Domestic flight within mainland India from Cochin to Chennai.
- 13 nights in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms in 4- and 5-star hotels, beach bungalows, historic Heritage Hotels, and Ayurvedic spa resorts.
- One overnight on a luxury "rice boat" in Kerala, all meals included.
- All meals as listed in the itinerary, including special Welcome and Farewell Dinners.
- Fully escorted trip with India national guide and local English-speaking guides for select activities.
- One AdventureWomen trip Associate.
- All ground transportation and motor coach transfers in private, air-conditioned motor coaches.
- Humanitours donation for women's Tsunami Project.
- Special evening cultural performances, teas, sightseeing, wildlife and boat safaris as listed in the itinerary.
- All admission fees for programs, museums, and special events as listed in the itinerary.

NOT INCLUDED

- Add-on airfare from your hometown city to Los Angeles.
- Visa costs.
- Alcoholic beverages, bottled water, and items of a personal nature such as excess baggage, travel insurance, passport, laundry, telephone, and anything not mentioned above as included.
- International airline departure taxes and any additional fuel surcharges and airport fees.
- 6 pairs of reading eyeglasses in various magnifications for our Humanitours project for women weavers.
- Gratuities for the trip, which add up to a total of approximately \$100-\$150. See the "Recommended Tipping" section in the full itinerary.

Chola architectural marvel. Then we're on to Tiruchirapalli (Trichy) to view its spectacular and famous landmark, the Rock Fort perched on a 300-foot-high outcrop above the town. Karaikudi and the Elephant Valley are our next stop. Here we'll learn about a unique project that promotes conservation of traditional varieties of vegetables and grains.

In Madurai, we explore the cradle of Tamil culture and one of Southern India's most ancient temple cities. Our drive to Thekkady, the Spice Capital of India, takes us to a different world: the tropical and lush area of Kerala, Spice Village, and the Periyar Wilderness.

In the "land where pepper grows," our stay at Spice Village allows us to discover an area of Kerala formerly settled by voyagers and adventurers, mercenaries and empire builders, kings and merchant princes, all drawn here by the romance and wild beauty of the land. Fertile rainforests, spice plantations, and unique wildlife attract modern visitors. We'll walk through the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary and Tiger Reserve with poachers-turned-guides; view wildlife (elephant, bison, antelopes, langurs, sambar) from a boat on Periyar Lake; and explore the myriad spice plantations from our fabulous accommodations.

We next check in to our luxury Ayurvedic resort in Kumarakom for a day of rest and optional Ayurvedic treatments. From Kumarakom we travel a short distance to one of the most enchanting experiences that Kerala has to offer: a backwater cruise on a luxury "rice boat" that floats through villages set among lush vegetation, allowing us to catch a glimpse of Kerala's unique rural lifestyle. We'll spend a day and night on a relaxing cruise through the backwaters of Vembanad Lake.

Then it's on to Cochin, a trading port since ancient Roman times and one of the most interesting towns in Southern India. Silhouettes of Chinese fishing nets, the perfect symbol of the eclectic charm of Cochin, dominate the timeless views along beautiful canals and the harbor.

The dynamic, cultural, and historic charm of our adventure is heightened by our remarkable accommodations: 5-star hotels, fabulous beach bungalows, quaint and luxurious Heritage Hotels, Ayurvedic spa resorts, an organic eco-resort, a luxury houseboat, the world-renowned Spice Village, and a small boutique hotel.

Southern India is a dazzling collection of impressionistic moments, unbelievably gorgeous temples, spice scented cities, brilliantly colorful markets, and rainbow-colored silk. There are flowers everywhere, energetic dancers and musicians, glittering blue waters, and lush green valleys. The food is flavored with a variety of spices unique to each region. But, above all, this is a land of gentle and welcoming people. It is indeed a cultural kaleidoscope and a banquet for the senses!

**LIABILITY FORM
AND FINAL PAYMENT**

Part of what AdventureWomen hopes to foster is the taking of more self-responsibility for our own lives, health, and safety. **Please read the LIABILITY FORM carefully, sign it, and return it with your final payment by November 12, 2007.**

**CANCELLATIONS AND
REFUNDS**

Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date, and 50% of the registration deposit is non-refundable.

For cancellations received 60-89 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the total trip cost is non-refundable. For cancellations received 1-59 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the total trip cost is non-refundable.

You are highly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance to cover emergency situations. Information will be sent to you in your registration packet.

SWITCHING TRIPS

Before your final balance due date, you may change your deposit to another trip within the same calendar year by paying a **\$75 fee to switch**. You may not switch your deposit to a trip in another calendar year.

NO SMOKING POLICY

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on AdventureWomen vacations.

HOW TO REGISTER

First, call (800-804-8686) or email (advwomen@aol.com) the AdventureWomen office to determine space availability. We will hold a space for you for 5 days while you are completing the application process, and making personal and travel arrangements.

Next, complete and sign the **Trip Application** form included in all of our brochures. We can also fax or mail one to you, or you can fill out the Trip Application form on our web site by clicking the "Register for a Trip" icon. Include with the application the **required deposit** that can be made by credit card (Visa or MasterCard), personal check, money order, or cashier's check. You can also register over the phone with a credit card. Once we receive your deposit and your trip application, we will mail you a package of information verifying your registration.

Then, call our travel consultants at Montana Travel, 800-247-3538, and ask for Ciretta to make your airline reservations.

Note: We will only hold your space for 5 days without a trip application and deposit payment!

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Citizens of the United States must possess a valid passport and India visa. Citizens of other countries should inquire about requirements for entry. If you do not have a passport, please **APPLY NOW!** Make sure that your passport is valid for a minimum of 6 months beyond your travel dates, and that you have a minimum of 2 blank facing pages for your visa. When you have your passport photographs taken, you should get extra photos: you will need one passport-size photo when you apply for your India visa, and you should always carry 2-3 **EXTRA** photos, just in case an emergency arises (i.e. in case your passport/visa is stolen).

At a future date we will send visa forms and instructions to everyone who is registered for the trip so you can apply for your India visa.

No special vaccinations are required for travel to India. However, please consult your personal physician, local health department, travel clinic, or immunization center about any vaccinations you may need to update, or others that may be personally recommended for you based on your age, health, and past vaccination history. Hepatitis A and B are present in India, as in the rest of the world, so you should talk to your Doctor about this.

You MUST have your own health insurance and be in very good physical condition to participate in this trip. The trip is rated as Moderate. Trips of this designation offer moderate physical challenges. You should be able to walk/hike from 5-8 miles, in rolling terrain. This trip involves a lot of walking to view temples, ruins, and World Heritage Sites.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION
ABOUT TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**

We suggest you book your air reservations with our travel consultant soon after registering for this trip!

On this AdventureWomen Southern India trip, all international airfare is included round-trip from Los Angeles on Singapore Airlines, where we will fly as a group to Chennai, India.

In order to facilitate group arrivals and departures, we ask you to work directly with our travel consultant at MONTANA TRAVEL to make your travel arrangements. After booking your trip, please call CIRETTA at MONTANA TRAVEL, in Bozeman, Montana, to reserve your air space and discuss any add-on air arrangements to Los Angeles.

1-800-247-3538
OR FAX 1-406-586-1959
CANADIAN RESIDENTS,
please call 406-587-1188

When calling, please identify yourself as an ADVENTUREWOMEN TRAVELER. If you leave a message on CIRETTA'S voice mail, she will return your call promptly.

Not included is extra add-on airfare from your hometown to Los Angeles, which is available on many airlines. Ciretta can help you with this. These add-on fares are much less expensive than if you were to ticket them separately. In addition, by getting an add-on fare you will have a continuous ticket on Singapore Airlines, and if for any reason the international flight times change, or if you miss the flight from Los Angeles, Singapore Airlines will be responsible for getting you to India.

Add-on airfares are available from the following cities on various airlines. You'll need to call Ciretta Green to

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**THE EXCITING ITINERARY FOR OUR SOUTHERN INDIA
DISCOVERY ADVENTURE**

**Days 1 and 2, Saturday and Sunday, February 9 and 10, 2008
U.S.A to Singapore**

We convene at the Los Angeles International Airport the evening of February 9 for our flight to Singapore. We depart Los Angeles on Singapore Airlines at 11:20 P.M. [Meals enroute]

We lose one day, due to crossing the International Date Line, and arrive in Singapore at 11:35 A.M. February 11. Inside the airport, we rest up in hotel day-rooms (provided) until our 8:35 P.M. flight to Chennai.

Day 3, Monday, February 11 Travel from Singapore to Chennai

We depart Singapore at 8:35 P.M. and arrive in Chennai at 10 P.M., where we are met and transferred to our hotel by air-conditioned coach.

For the next three nights we stay at one of Chennai's 5- star hotels, the Trident Hilton Hotel, in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

This elegant low-rise hotel is situated on five acres of tropical gardens with 167 well appointed guestrooms, decorated in rich, earthy tones with sliding wooden blinds, Indian patterned fabrics, light walls and wooden furnishings. All the rooms are centrally air-conditioned and have mini-bars, satellite television with pay movies, wireless Internet connections and tea/coffee-making facilities.

The lobby is gleaming white marble. The hotel is well located for travel from the airport and for day trips nearby, has friendly staff and very good restaurants. There is a palm-flanked outdoor swimming pool and health-conscious guests will appreciate the onsite gymnasium, which offers a range of modern fitness equipment. Other amenities include a gift shop, a concierge desk, and currency exchange.

Day 4, Tuesday, February 12 Dakshina Chitra Crafts

After breakfast at the hotel, we spend the day visiting Dakshina Chitra, a center for the living traditions of art, folk performing arts, crafts, and architecture of India with an emphasis on the traditions of South India. The word Dakshina means "South" and Chitra means "Art." Dakshina Chitra is a non-profit project of the Madras Craft Foundation created to showcase and preserve the culture of the South Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. The Foundation organizes direct marketing opportunities for craftspeople through the craft bazaar and the craft shop. And, traditional craft and textiles are exhibited throughout the center.

Each South Indian state's unique architecture, crafts, art, and lifestyle are showcased in an authentic setting with stone pathways leading to each State's section. For instance, in the Tamil Nadu section there are various types of houses which have been painstakingly re-created using original parts from an authentic house. There are potters, weavers, and Brahmin houses. The central piece is a beautiful Chettinad mansion with its ornate wood door, carved pillars, and a central courtyard.

[Breakfast and Welcome Dinner]

(continued from page 4)

determine which airline offers an add-on airfare from your gateway city. These add-on fares are determined by the Zone where you live:

San Francisco – If you are flying from SFO to LAX, there is no charge for an add-on air cost with Singapore Airlines. What we mean is, the round trip flight from SFO-LAX is free! (although there might be a tax on the ticket).

Zone 1 – ABQ, BZN, BOI, XOS, DEN, FAT, LAS, PDX, PHX, RNO, SAN, SLC, SEA, SBA, TUS, EUG (AS and UA only), MFR (UA only) - \$ 160.00

Zone 2 – AMA, AUS, BIL, CRP, DAL, ELP, GEG, HOU, HRL, LBB, MFE, OKC, SAT, TUL - \$ 270.00

Zone 3 – ABE, ALB, AVP, BDL, BOS, BUF, BWI, COU, CAK, CHI, CLE, CMH, CVG, CID, DAY, DSM, DTT, ERI, FAR, GRR, ICT, IND, LNS, MKC, MSP, MDT, MKE, MSN, NYC, OMA, PHL, PIT, PVD, ROC, STL, SYR, TOL, WAS - \$ 335.00

Zone 4 – ATL, BHM, BNA, BTR, BTX, CAE, CHA, CHS, CLT, DAB, FLL, FMY, FYV, GSO, GSP, HSV, ILM, JAN, JAX, LEX, LFT, LIT, MEM, MIA, MHT, MLB, MLU, MOB, MSY, ORF, ORL, PBI, PWM, RDU, RIC, ROA, SAV, SDF, SHV, SRQ, TPA, TRI, TYS - \$ 380.00

NOTE: The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure time than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible booking last minute registrants, we must often relinquish hotel space and air reservations 6 to 12 weeks prior to departure!

Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.

Overnight at the Trident Hilton Hotel Chennai in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

DAY 5, Wednesday, February 13 *Kanchipuram and the Women Weavers*

After breakfast we drive to Kanchipuram, the spectacular “City of a Thousand Temples” that reflects the glorious traditions of South India. Also known as Kanchi in the past, this ancient city was once the capital and principal port of the Pallavas who ruled between the 6th and the 9th centuries A.D. Today, it is a major Hindu pilgrim center, one of the seven most sacred in India.

Kanchipuram is also well-known for its handloom industry. The exquisite silk sarees and cloths made from pure mulberry silk yarn are world famous and the best in the country.

For our first “Humanitours” project, we have tea with women weavers to learn about their beautiful work. We will also take this opportunity to donate reading glasses to improve their vision. Most don’t have the means to buy glasses (or even know they need them), and after years and years of fine weaving work, many of them find this really improves their ability to see.

[Breakfast and Dinner]

Overnight at the Trident Hilton Hotel Chennai in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

DAY 6, Thursday, February 14 *The Famous Rock Temples of Mahabalipuram to the Dune Hotel and the Tsunami Project*
HAPPY VALENTINE’S DAY!

After breakfast, we say goodbye to Chennai and travel to Mahabalipuram (Mamallapuram), the World Heritage Site of the famous rock temples of the Pallava Emperors.

In the 7th century, Mahendravarma Pallava built this seaport for ships to sail from India to Southeast Asia. The spectacular Shore Temple, perched dramatically on a promontory by the sea, has survived the ravages of time and erosion. Inland from the Shore Temple is the celebrated bas-relief, Bhagiratha’s Penance. These early rock temples, shrines, and huge bas-reliefs are considered the greatest examples of Pallava art.

We continue on to Pondicherry and our next very special destination: the Dune Eco Hotel.

Overnight in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms at the Dune Hotel.

The Dune cherishes the spirit “to live in harmony with nature and man.” For ages, swamis (Holy Men) and pilgrims from the nearby temples of Mahabalipuram would come to this area for retreat. Today, set on 30 acres along the stunning Coromandel Coast, the Dune is a chic and eco-friendly beach hotel that reflects the sense of innovation and style of modern India. Its beach bungalows are spaciouly spread across palm-filled grounds and they are uniquely designed for their commitment to reduce the impact on the environment. They were built from reclaimed building material from South Indian Colonial houses and Chettinad palaces and are mostly equipped with solar hot water systems. Each bungalow has a unique theme, furniture, and private garden.

There is both a flavor of luxury and a commitment to green awareness at the Dune, particularly at the restaurant, which serves wonderful food and organic produce grown in the hotel's own garden. Other amenities include a raised freshwater swimming pool, an Ayurvedic spa, and free yoga sessions at 1 and 5 P.M.

Most importantly, however, the Dune is a place for creative experiments and cultural exchanges. The Artists in Residence program is dedicated to creativity and culture. It acts as a hub for international artists to live, meet, work, and to discover India. The hotel is also actively involved with local education and capacity building. An Indian trust called "Children of The World India," in association with "Enfants du monde," which is based in France, administers these activities.

The Dune also supports the Tsunamika Project, which helps fisherwomen who were traumatized by the Tsunami disaster. Initially, the Tsunamika Project trained women from six coastal villages to channel their energy into making small "Tsunamika" dolls from waste fabric. The project team then bought the dolls from the fisherwomen and began distributing them around the world as gift items. Ultimately, the project became a means of livelihood for nearly 180 women. For our second AdventureWomen "Humanitours" project, we will spend an afternoon learning about this project from some of the women. We'll also make a large donation of material that will allow them to expand their livelihood.

[Breakfast and Dinner]

Day 7, Friday, February 15 *Provincial Pondicherry to Thanjavur, the Ancient Capital of the Chola Kings*

After breakfast, we travel a short distance to Pondicherry, a former French Colony settled in the 18th century. Pondicherry is a quaint, provincial, and coastal town where French is still spoken among the older residents. The police wear Red kepis (caps) and belts, French cuisine is still served in some restaurants, and the houses, buildings, gardens, and churches reflect a French influence.

We'll visit the Pondicherry Museum, which has an outstanding collection of artifacts from the French colonial period. It also displays rare bronzes and stone sculptures from the Pallava and Chola periods. Next, we'll visit the Ashram founded by Shri Aurobindo, a firebrand Bengali poet-philosopher, who took refuge in the French territory of Pondicherry to escape from the British. It was here that he was drawn into the spiritual realm and studied and wrote about the principles of yoga. His disciple, Mirra

Alfassa, known later as "the Mother," was instrumental in the establishment of the Aurobindo Ashram, a spiritual and physical center of the community.

After lunch we drive to Thanjavur (Tanjore), the ancient Capital of the Chola kings of the 10th century. The city is located in the fertile Kaveri Delta, a region often referred to as the "rice bowl of Tamil Nadu." The magnificent Brihadishwara Temple, a World Heritage Monument, is the crowning glory of Chola temple architecture. It stands 216 feet tall and is topped by a monolithic cupola made from a granite block that weighs about 80 tons.

We'll also visit the Art Gallery to see its fabulous collection of Chola bronzes, and the Saraswati Mahal Library Museum, one of the most important reference libraries in India.

[Breakfast and Dinner]

Overnight Hotel Sangam (Tanjore) in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

The Hotel Sangam, situated in an ideal location, offers comfortable guest rooms and exquisite service. Some rooms come with a view of the Sri Brihadishwara Temple, an architectural marvel.

Day 8, Saturday, February 16 *The Pilgrim City of Tiruchirapalli*

After breakfast we drive to Tiruchirapalli (Trichy). Situated on the banks of the Kaveri River, it is a pilgrim center with a fine blend of temples and monuments. Dominating the town is the massive granite Rock Fort, an impregnable fortress perched dramatically on a rocky outcrop that rises 272 feet above flat plains. At the summit of the fortress is a small Ganesha Temple. From there, we'll have spectacular views of verdant rice fields and the sacred island of Srirangam.

Overnight Hotel Sangam (Trichy) in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

Hotel Sangam is situated in the heart of Trichy. Its spacious guest rooms feature luxuriously appointed marble bathrooms. The Health Club provides complete and comprehensive fitness facilities, including the swimming pool surrounded by beautiful landscaping.

[Breakfast and Dinner]

Day 9, Sunday, February 17 *Karaikudi and the Mansions of Chettinad*

Today's drive takes us through the fertile Delta of the Kaveri River to Karaikudi, the principal town of

the Chettinad region. This is home to the Natukkotai Chettiars, a prosperous banking community whose inhabitants amassed great fortunes after they ventured overseas to South and Southeast Asia in the 19th and 20th centuries. Their legacies are the grand mansions of Chettinad, which are splendid architectural delights.

These houses have to be seen to be believed! Built in the early 20th century, the houses reflect the social, ritual, and kinship needs of the community, as well as its economic status. Now unoccupied for most of the year, they are still used for family celebrations. Chettiars are still prominent bankers and industrialists based in Chennai and Bangalore.

Apart from the houses, Karaikudi offers extensive antique shopping, weekly shandy (village market); a number of temples; visits to craftsmen working with wood and metal; silversmiths and goldsmiths; attractive textiles; and most important and exciting, the Chettinad cuisine.

After checking in to our hotel, this afternoon is free time to relax or visit the town.

[Breakfast and Dinner]

Overnight Hotel Bangala in a twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

For the next two nights, it is a treat to stay at the "Bangala," (the Tamil pronunciation of "The Bungalow"), a quaint Heritage Hotel restored by the Meyyappan Chettiar family. Once a beautiful Chettinad home, the Bangala is now an elegant boutique hotel in the heart of Chettiar country that has been restored to its original Art Deco style. It is a charming white painted bungalow with dark green mango tipped wooden eaves. Now in its sixth year as a Heritage Hotel, it is the favorite of visitors to Chettinad and is gaining fame for its genuine home-cooked Chettinad food.

This evening we will enjoy an authentic dinner of highly specialized Chettinad cooking in the dining room of The Bangala. Chettinad cuisine is one of the spiciest and most aromatic cuisines in India. Although the Chettiars (the local traders) are well-known for their delicious vegetarian preparations, their repertoire of food items also includes fish, fowl, and meat. Chettinad cuisine also includes carefully preserved sun-dried legumes and berries that the Chettiar ladies make into curries. Oil and spices are liberally used in cooking and most dishes have generous amounts of peppercorn, cinnamon, bay leaves, cardamom, nutmeg, and green and red chilies. Some of the popular dishes on a Chettinad menu are varuval (a dry dish fried with onions and

spices), pepper chicken, poriyal (a curry), and kuzambu, which is a stew in a gravy of coconut milk and spices.

Day 10, Monday, February 18 Exploring Karaikudi

After breakfast we'll spend a leisurely day exploring Karaikudi and its environs. We'll explore the famous mansions of Chettinad, the town's many temples, and numerous antique shops. We'll visit a Santhai, (a village market) and crafts workshops, where we'll watch silversmiths fashion silver utensils and artisans create handicrafts of metal and wood.

We may also have the opportunity to learn about Chettinad cuisine through a cooking demonstration at our hotel.

[Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner at the hotel]

Overnight hotel Bangala in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

Day 11, Tuesday, February 19 The Unique Elephant Valley Farm

After breakfast, we say goodbye to "The Bungalow" and depart for an interesting and unique visit and overnight at Elephant Valley Farm. A 100-acre nature reserve, organic farm, and Ec lodge in the Palni hills of the Western Ghats area of Tamil Nadu in Southern India. Elephant Valley is one of the 25 biodiversity hotspots on the planet. It is the last settlement on the border of the National Forest, which extends into the wildlife sanctuaries of Kerala, and is uniquely situated on an ancient elephant migration route. This remote land, and the rivers that flow through it, has escaped the ravages of modern chemical agriculture. It is rich in thriving vegetation and animal species, including birds, leopards, deer, bison and elephants.

The residents of Elephant Valley promote the conservation of traditional varieties of vegetable and grain seeds that are tasty and rich sources of nutrition. The philosophy at Elephant Valley is that in today's India, much of its flora and fauna is threatened and India faces a quick depletion of its fresh water resources. Its current agriculture uses heavy amounts of chemicals, machinery, and hybrid seeds, which destroy the soil fertility and pollute the underground water. The old wisdom of traditional agriculture has been neglected, and original seeds are disappearing little by little. In addition, the food that Indians eat contributes to the growth of new diseases. Environmental awareness and environmental education are important tools to provide for Indian children, enabling them, in their adult life, to make conscious choices, to influence political decisions, and act as guardians and caretakers of their environment.

During our stay, we'll visit Elephant Valley's organic

demonstration coffee plantation, vegetable gardens, and re-forestation project. We'll eat in their fabulous restaurant which serves a fusion of Indian and Continental cooking that uses fresh vegetables and fruits from the organic farm. There are also horses to ride and trails to hike!

[Breakfast and Dinner]

Overnight at Elephant Valley in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

The accommodations at Elephant Valley are in beautiful estate cottages built with local granite and recycled Burma teak that was salvaged from demolished old houses. Each is equipped with solar lights, kerosene lanterns, western-style dry/composting toilets, and firewood-fueled hot water showers. Colonial and art deco furniture are part of the interiors. Each cottage has the privacy of its own garden overlooking the perennial Gangavaar River and the coffee plantation. Solar Energy is used to provide electricity for each room. Hot water is provided by a centralized low-consumption wood boiler. The wood used to power the boiler is provided through the shade looping of the coffee demonstration plantation. Natural cross-ventilation keeps the room aerated and cool.

DAY 12, Wednesday, February 20 *The Great Temple Town of Madurai – Athens of the East*

After breakfast we drive to Madurai, often referred to as the Athens of the East and one of South India's great temple towns. The cradle of Tamil culture, Madurai is known to have had links with Greece as far back as the 4th century B.C. By the 14th century A.D., it had become a major center for writers, builders, and academicians, while art and trade with China and Rome flourished.

Madurai's main attraction is the labyrinthine complex of temples within the Sri Meenakshi Temple. This colorful temple contains friezes, stone and brass images, and a fabulous exhibit of Hindu deities in its 1000-pillared hall. Its soaring towers rise from solid granite bases and are covered with stucco figures of deities, mythical animals, and monsters all painted in vivid colors. Outside the temple are the Musical Pillars which, when tapped, produce the entire scale of "swaras," or musical notes.

In the evening we'll see the Sound and Light show at the Tirumal Nayak Palace and the sunset darshan (viewing) at the Meenakshi Temple.

[Breakfast and Dinner]

Overnight at the Taj Garden Retreat in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

Perched atop the Pasumalai hill, amidst 62 acres of

landscaped gardens, the hotel is a seamless blend of 105-year-old colonial architecture and recent renovations. It also offers picturesque views of the Temple City and the Kodai hills. A haven of solitude and relaxation, the hotel offers a relaxing palette of local colors, materials, and fabrics.

Day 13, Thursday, February 21 *Thekkady, the Spice Capital of India and Home to the Periyar Wildlife Reserve*

Today we drive to Thekkady, the Spice Capital of India, renowned for its sprawling spice and tea plantations. Our drive takes us over rolling highlands and through carpets of tea bushes, estates of tall rubber trees, and gardens of coffee, cardamom, and pepper.

Ancestors of the Portuguese and Jewish population of Cochin once visited as traders before turning the natural bounties of the area into wealth. Pepper and cardamom, cinnamon and ginger, nutmeg, mace, and anise became nature's taste factory in the 14th century, as Cochin became nature's harbor, the port of lading for a spice-hungry world. Later, the area came under the Kingdom of Travancore and many of its plantations, orchards, and hunting lodges date from that time.

The aroma of spices fills the pristine air as we cross the countryside to reach the Periyar Wildlife Reserve, one of the premier reserves of Southern India and home to the wild elephant, bison, antelope, monkeys, and many other animals.

This afternoon we take a boat ride on 100-year-old Periyar Lake to view the Reserve's wildlife. The Periyar Wildlife Reserve, now one of the 16 Project Tiger Reserves in India. Today the 300-square-mile sanctuary is one of the most picturesque wildlife sanctuaries in the world.

Since the only way to travel through the sanctuary is by boat, we can cover large areas in a short time and experience the wilderness from a unique perspective. There may be no other sanctuary in the world where elephant behavior can be watched in such absolute comfort and safety. This is also home to wild dogs, sloths, Indian bison, wild pig, deer, four types of monkeys, the occasional tiger, and a multitude of colorful birds.

[Breakfast and Dinner]

Overnight Spice Village in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

Located in the Periyar Wilderness and set in the heart of Cardamom Hills of Kerala, the breathtaking Spice Village is located just a stone's throw from Periyar National Park and Tiger Reserve. Offering a rare

opportunity to enjoy South India's wildlife and beauty, this world-renowned resort has consistently won acclaim for its service, cuisine, and the unique experiences it offers. Spread over eight acres of dense forests, its traditional thatched roof cottages are surrounded by soothing green forests. This is an ideal place to experience 5000-year old healing Ayurveda therapies. Each cottage features ethnic Kerala décor. This is a place for everyone who loves nature: a place to fill your lungs with fresh mountain air, to savor the rich fragrance of cinnamon and cloves, and to watch young elephants drinking at the water's edge.

The multi-cuisine restaurant at Spice Village offers an enchanting menu that serves everything from traditional Kerala cuisine to Chinese, Continental, and special herbal vegetarian delicacies.

Cooking Demonstrations. For those who want more than just a taste of the delicious Kerala cuisine, cooking classes are held by the Chef every evening. You get to see for yourself how the dishes are made.

The Healing touch at Spice Village Ayurvedic Center. Ayurveda, the Science of Life, is almost as old as the Indian civilization. Its holistic approach, the efficacy of its therapies, and the absence of distressing side effects are some of its more salient features. Health in the Ayurvedic view represents the harmony of body, mind, and soul. It is based on natural principles that inform and animate human life. The Spice Village offers therapies at its Ayurvedic Center under the guidance of an expert "vaidyan" (physician) that you may consult for a fuller understanding of symptoms and appropriate treatment.

Day 14, Friday, February 22 Periyar Wildlife Hike and Kumarakom Lake Resort

This morning we have a special treat—an early morning guided walk (carrying our packed breakfast) through the forest. Led by highly experienced guides (reformed poachers!), we'll hike into cool, green forests and out again into vast, sunny meadows. This is an area populated by an astounding array of wildlife including elephants, sambar deer, the brilliant blue kingfisher, the great pied hornbill, and more than 100 species of butterflies. Maybe, if we're extremely lucky, we'll catch a glimpse of one of Periyar's 41 protected tigers. Our guides, who now protect the forests and its creatures, will regale us with adventure stories about their former lives as poachers.

This afternoon we check into the luxury Kumarakom Lake Resort for rest, relaxation, and optional Ayurvedic treatments. The Resort is on the banks of Lake Vembanad, near the confluence of the Pampa

and Meenachil Rivers. The villas, suites, and cottages at the Resort are a perfect blend of Kerala's traditional architectural charm and luxurious, modern amenities. Some offer a view of the luminous Vembanad Lake and some offer a dazzling view of exquisitely landscaped gardens and clear lotus-strewn canals.

[Breakfast, and Dinner]

Overnight Kumarakom Lake Resort in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

DAY 15, Saturday, February 23 Kumarakom Lake Resort to Backwaters Houseboat Cruise

Late this morning, we depart for an overnight "backwaters cruise" on a traditional and elegant houseboat, also known as Kettuvallam, or rice boats. This is of the most enchanting experiences Kerala has to offer. In the earlier days these boats carried rice bags. Today they are designed for guests and tastefully outfitted using local materials such as bamboo poles and mats, coconut fiber ropes, and local Indian carpets. We'll spend the rest of today and tomorrow morning cruising by villages set in lush vegetation and glimpsing Kerala's unique rural lifestyle. Each boat has comfortable rooms that are fully furnished with attached bathrooms, living rooms with panoramas, a kitchen, and an experienced cook to prepare authentic Kerala cuisine with seafood specialties and fresh vegetables. This is a fabulous way to enjoy and explore the fascinating beauty of Kerala's backwaters!

[Lunch and Dinner on board]

DAY 16, Sunday, February 24 To Cochin – The Queen of the Arabian Sea

This morning we have breakfast on our houseboat and continue cruising through the backwaters of Vembanad Lake. Our coach is waiting for us and after saying good-bye to the wonderful houseboat staff, we drive to Cochin, the commercial capital of Kerala and one of the most interesting cities in Southern India. A trading port since ancient Roman times, it was on the main trade route between Europe and China. Fort Cochin occupies the South promontory on the seaward side of the bay where Willingdon Island was created in the 1920s by dredging the bay to increase the depth of the entrance to the harbor. The rich history of Cochin is represented by such landmarks as a 16th century Dutch Mattancheri Palace and the Jewish synagogue in Mattancherry.

Silhouettes of Chinese fishing nets, the perfect symbol of the eclectic charm of Cochin, dominate the timeless views along beautiful canals and the harbor. It is worth a visit at dusk to see the cantilevered

fishing nets line the entrance to the mouth of the harbor.

We have our Farewell Dinner tonight in the gourmet restaurant, Malabar Junction, reputed to be one of the finest seafood restaurants in the South of India.
[Breakfast and Farewell Dinner]

Overnight at The Trident Hilton Hotel Cochin in twin-bedded, double-occupancy rooms.

Located near Fort Cochin and on Willingdon Island, this hotel combines modern facilities with a relaxed ambience. Nice rooms, a cheerful bar overlooking the beautiful landscaped gardens and swimming pool, and traditional Kerala cuisine.

DAY 17, Monday, February 25 Return to Chennai and Depart for the U.S.

After a leisurely breakfast, we travel to the airport in Cochin and fly back to Chennai. We'll spend the rest of the day doing a little last-minute shopping in some of Chennai's famous silk and wood carving shops, and then have a light dinner at one of the city's specialty vegetarian restaurants.

After dinner we are transferred to the airport for our late evening departure for the U.S.
[Breakfast, Lunch in flight, Dinner]

Day 18, Tuesday, February 26 Return to Los Angeles and Flights Home

This morning our Singapore Airlines flight returns to LAX at 11:05 A.M. Connecting flights for return home.
[Meals en route]

INDIA CLIMATE AND WEATHER IN FEBRUARY

Our visit to India takes place during the dry season (November through March). Temperatures will range from 65 – 85 F, and vary according to the elevation and location. The month of February is generally considered a good time to visit this region, as it rains the least and is not too hot.

MONEY MATTERS

India's unit of currency is the India Rupee. As of May 9, 2007, 1 USD = 40.6000 INR (India Rupees).

Bring U.S. cash, credit cards, and maybe some travelers checks (AM EX and Thomas Cook are the most widely used). Visa, MC, AM EX, and Diners Club are the most commonly used credit cards and are widely accepted in most hotels, restaurants, and department stores. ATMs are available in large cities, and sometimes in smaller ones.

You can find the current rate of exchange at the following website: <http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

RECOMMENDED TIPPING

Tipping is, of course, optional and based on your satisfaction with the guides, drivers, wait staff, etc.

It is tradition at AdventureWomen that we tip the National Guide, Driver and his helper, at the end of the trip. When asked what each person should tip, based on a job well done, we recommend the following:

- National guide (who will be with us for the entire trip): \$50 per client (2000 Rupees).
- Driver (who will also be with us for the entire trip): \$35 per client (1400 Rupees).
- Driver's helper: \$15 per client (600 Rupees).

On the occasion that we have a Local Guide at special temples or in various towns, each person can tip individually, at the end of the day, approximately \$3.00 (120 Rupees) per client for a full day (less if half-day).

For porters who carry your bags to your rooms, expect to tip about \$1 (40 Rupees) per bag.

It is also optional, but not mandatory, that you tip 30-40 Rupees per person at each meal.

FOOD AND WATER

Indian cuisine is as rich in variety as the country itself. The delicate flavors of the classical cuisine that developed in the imperial courts of India are complimented by a vast range of regional specialties.

Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka share a common culinary heritage that rests heavily on rice, lentils, coconut, and spices. Similarities include a variety of snacks such as dosas, idlis, vadas, and an amazing range of imaginatively cooked rice and vegetable specialties. Pungent lentil curries, pickles, chutneys, and curd-based relishes are eaten throughout the south, yet each state's cuisine has its own distinct flavor dictated by regional tastes and locally grown ingredients.

The areas of Southern India, where we will be traveling, are Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Tamil Nadu: Tamil vegetarian cuisine includes a choice of rice preparations seasoned with curry leaves and chilies. Vegetables, either steamed or stir-fried, curries such as sambhar (made with lentils), and rasam (pepper water), as well as curd, chutneys, and poppadams, usually accompany the meal.

**ABOUT ADVENTURE
TRAVEL TODAY
Please Read Carefully!**

At AdventureWomen, we would like to ensure that all participants understand that our excursions are *adventure travel vacations*, and not "tours." We define "adventure travel" as travel in which one *actively participates*, as opposed to a "tour," in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes vacations all over the world for women who want to experience an *active, out of the ordinary vacation, and meet new friends*. Most of all, we want our trips to be fun!

In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a *good-natured realist* and have a sense of humor! *Adventure vacations, by nature, require that participants be self-sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist.* The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. *Being on time is important*, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well being of both individuals and the group!

Kerala: Rice and coconut form the base of Kerala's varied cuisine. The best-known dish is the appam (steamed rice pancake), served with stew. Other specialities are coconut-based curries and fish, meat, and chicken preparations.

Water: Unboiled water is NOT safe to drink anywhere in India and never use tap water, even for brushing your teeth. Stick with bottled and sealed water and drinks. Depending on the restaurants where we eat, our guides will let us know about using ice and eating uncooked vegetables. Always peel your fruit.

WHAT TO BRING

Luggage, Clothing, and Travel Accessories: Three words of packing advice: LIGHT, LIGHT, LIGHT! It is best to condense your luggage into one manageable suitcase with wheels and one daypack or backpack (carry-on size). Also, a spare, very light duffel bag or day pack rolled or folded into your wheeled suitcase is useful for transporting souvenir items home. There are wonderful handicrafts and weavings available in India.

We suggest you use your daypack as your carry-on bag during your flights. In it you should have all valuables and essentials: medications, passports and all important documents, cameras and film, a day's change of clothing, lightweight sleepwear, and toiletries.

Put luggage ID tags outside AND inside your baggage. If your bag is lost and the outside ID tag and baggage stickers are dislodged, the airlines may open the bag to search for an ID inside your bag. (We will send you 3 tags for the outside of your bags.)

You should also be aware of the new airline regulations (www.tsa.gov/travelers) about what you can and cannot bring in your carry-on bag, and what you must put in your checked luggage.

Humanitarian Project

- 6 pairs of reading eyeglasses in various magnifications for our Humanitours project for women weavers.

Pre-Departure Tasks

- Obtain or renew passport.
- Obtain necessary visa for India. Forms will be sent to you at the appropriate time.
- Evaluate and obtain trip cancellation, baggage, and medical insurance.
- Consult with physician for physical examination, immunization, and prescription medicine recommendations.

Clothing

- Clothing should be lightweight, quick drying, and breathable. Pay special attention to sun protection needs.
- Long sleeves and wide brim hats are recommended.
- Underwear. Synthetics are easier to wash and dry.
- Sleepwear.
- Shirts: Long-sleeve, synthetic or cotton shirts because they are featherweight, durable, wrinkle-resistant, and dry quickly. Those with multiple, closed (velcro or zipper) pockets are excellent.
- Short-sleeve synthetic or cotton T-Shirts. Those with multiple, closed (velcro or zipper) pockets are excellent.
- Sweater/Jacket: Medium-weight sweater or jacket made of synthetic fabric (fleece) for cool evenings.
- Vest: A lightweight, multi-pocket, photo journalist-type vest is excellent for day use (use it to store film, cameras, binoculars, etc.).

WHAT TO BRING—(continued on page 12)

WHAT TO BRING—(continued from page 11)

- Pants: Full-length pants, preferably of quick-drying synthetic fabric with many zippered pockets. Convertible pants that convert from long pants to shorts save room and are very convenient for use during a long day.
- Walking shorts, preferably of a synthetic fabric and to the knee (modesty is respectful here).
- Bathing Suit.
- Sun hat with a wide brim, preferably with a chin strap to keep it from blowing off.
- Gore-Tex rain/wind parka and/or sturdy poncho to protect day pack and camera gear from rain or water spray. (This can be your jacket, as listed above, as long as it is waterproof).
- Athletic socks (synthetic for easy washing and drying) that are suitable for your lightweight walking shoes.
- Sturdy, properly fitting footwear can make your trip much more comfortable and enjoyable. Very comfortable, lightweight walking shoes are a good option. We will be doing a lot of walking on this trip, so bring shoes that you will be comfortable in for all day wear.
- Sandals for boats, water, and for walking around resorts (Teva-type sandals or similar: Merrill's, Keens, etc., or any thing that can get wet and dry fast).
- 3-4 cotton bandannas (it's an AdventureWomen tradition!).
- One or two sets of nice, casual city clothes that are dressier for evening restaurants or social activities (maybe a lightweight skirt to be included).

Personal Items

- Passport.
- 2-3 spare passport photos to bring on the trip (in case of lost passport/visa).
- Battery operated travel alarm clock.
- Extra batteries for cameras, alarm clock, etc.
- Small flashlight with extra batteries and bulb.
- Sunglasses, case (90% - 100% ultraviolet and some infrared protection).
- Contact lenses, cleaner, saline solution, extra eyeglasses with safety band.
- Money belt.
- Bring U.S. cash, credit cards, and maybe some travelers checks (AM EX and Thomas Cook being the most widely used). Visa, MC, AM EX, and Diners Club are the most commonly used credit cards and are widely accepted in most hotels, restaurants, and department stores. ATMs are in larger cities, and infrequent in smaller ones.
- Address book, writing paper, or journal, pen/pencil.
- Daypack (also serves as an airline carry-on bag).
- Plastic water bottle. Nalgene plastic is recommended as there is no plastic taste in the heat.
- Locks for your suitcase and duffel bag (when left in rooms).
- Ziploc-type bags for packing shampoo or other liquids, or wet, dirty clothing.
- 1-2 heavyweight plastic garbage bags.
- Washcloth (not supplied in many hotels).
- Personal toiletries in small leak-proof bottles.
- Biodegradable bar soap (can double as laundry soap).
- Tampons or sanitary napkin supply (not always widely available).
- Thread, needles, safety pins for minor repairs.
- Insect repellent with the percentage of DEET recommended by your travel medicine physician. It's important that you bring an ample supply of good quality repellent. If you use DEET, try to wipe it off your hands before touching plastic surfaces such as your binoculars or cameras (DEET damages some plastics).
- Wash & Dries (or other antiseptic wipes) for hand washing and emergency toilet paper.
- A mini-sized English – India - English phrase book dictionary.
- Lonely Planet/or Eyewitness Travel Guide/or other book on India.

Personal First Aid Kit (bring in small amounts and in small containers)

- Foot powder for moisture absorption; cloth, not plastic Band-aids; about 10 individually wrapped alcohol pads; and a small tube of Neosporin or other antibiotic cream.
- Aspirin/ibuprofen, etc.
- Cold-symptom relief tablets, antihistamine, cough drops.

WHAT TO BRING—(continued on page 13)

WHAT TO BRING—(continued from page 12)

- Adequate quantity of sweat-resistant sun screen with at least an SPF 15 rating or higher, and lip balm with sunscreen.
- Tweezers.
- Ace bandage.
- Antibiotics (Cipro, or another systemic antibiotic).
- Prescription medicines in their original bottles.
- Acidophilus enzyme (available in capsules in health-food stores). This often helps your digestive system get in shape for “new” flora.
- Immodium, Lomotil, or similar anti-diarrhea medicine.
- Pepto-Bismol tablets and/or liquid (in leak-proof bottle).
- Emergen-C. Good for higher altitudes, and some people swear they get fewer colds on airplanes if they take this during flights.

Camera Equipment

For many women, photography is a large part of this trip. We suggest you bring the following:

- If you bring a camera that shoots film, bring a lead bag or containers to protect film in airport x-ray machines.
- Digital camera, memory cards, battery charger, and adapter. In India, triple round pin sockets are the norm.
- Most digital cameras have a built in converter so you probably only need to bring an adapter. You can also purchase adapter plugs in stores.

Optional

- Small, lightweight binoculars.
- Pictures of your house, pets, and family (local people love to see this!).
- Reading material.
- Extra, lightweight duffel bag (empty, and packed inside your suitcase).

Last-Minute Reminders

- Make photocopies of your airline tickets and the first two pages of your passport, plus your visas (if they are stamped inside your passport) and put them in different locations (suitcase, carry-on bag, etc.).
- Record numbers of travelers checks (if you bring some) and store separate from the checks.
- Bring your 2-3 additional passport size photos to use in emergencies.
- Your valuables should be insured for the duration of the trip, but better yet, leave them at home.
- Remove extra credit cards, driver's license, and personal items from wallet or purse.
- Make sure passport, tickets, and visa are valid and in the correct name.
- Check with airline to reconfirm reservations and departure time (most airlines want to hear directly from the client for confirmations).

*Thank you for choosing to travel with AdventureWomen!
If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call, write or email us.*

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