



## TOUR PROSPECTUS

This prospectus sets out the contents of the tour and together with the Booking Conditions and Booking Form is the basis of our contract with you.

# **India – Kerala & Tamil Nadu**

## **20 February – 7 March 2010**

### **Tour 0969**

This is a very popular moving on tour with luggage transfer and vehicle support, using mid-range and good hotels, plus one night aboard houseboats. It takes in the highlights of Kerala, including Kovalam Beach, the Cardamom Hills, the inland waterways and Cochin on the Malabar Coast. In Tamil Nadu visit the world-famous temple in Madurai. On cycling days, much of the day will be spent riding, but there are several days at leisure and lots of interesting sightseeing.

#### **Itinerary**

Sat 20 Feb	Arrive Trivandrum. Transfer to guesthouse nearby. Assemble bikes. Optional short afternoon ride to Kovalam Beach and back. Stay 2 nights.
Sun 21 Feb	Day ride to Neyyar Dam with a visit by boat to the elephant sanctuary.
Mon 22 Feb	Cycle to Padmanabhapuram. Transfer to Nagercoil, afternoon train to Madurai. Stay 1 night.
Tues 23 Feb	Morning visit to the magnificent Meenakshi temple. Explore town. After lunch, short vehicle transfer and cycle ride to Vathalagundu. Stay 1 night.
Wed 24 Feb	Cycle from Vathalagundu to Kodaikanal. Long climb. Stay 2 nights.
Thurs 25 Feb	Rest day. Explore the lake and botanical gardens, Coaker's walk.
Fri 26 Feb	Lots of downhill from Kodai to Palani. Explore market and temple. Stay 1 night.
Sat 27 Feb	Ride to crocodile sanctuary and through the Indira Gandhi National Park to Munnar. Not a ride to hurry. Stay 2 nights.
Sun 28 Feb	Explore the fabulous tea plantations
Mon 1 March	Superb descent to the Edasserry Resort. Stay 1 night.
Tues 2 March	Morning ride through the Cardamom Hills to Kumily in the Periyer National Park. Afternoon guided tour of the spice plantations. Explore the town or have a rejuvenating ayurvedic massage or view the Kathakali dance performance. Stay 1 night.
Wed 3 March	An undulating cycle ride to Kottiyam. Stay 1 night.
Thurs 4 March	Short cycle ride to board houseboats and begin leisurely cruise of the beautiful inland waterways, one of Kerala's highlights. Stay 1 night.
Fri 5 March	Disembark at Alleppey late morning. Coastal ride through shady coconut palms and sleepy fishing villages with an opportunity for a dip in the Arabian Sea. Picnic lunch then cycle through prawn farms and rice paddies to Fort Cochin on the Malabar Coast. Stay 2 nights.
Sat 6 March	Sightseeing in Cochin. Guided tour of Dutch Palace. Explore spice warehouses and antique shops. Afternoon at leisure and prepare bikes for return journey.
Sun 7 March	Early morning transfer to Cochin airport.

Distances 65 – 100kms per day (some climbing on several days)

Local conditions can sometimes close roads, making it necessary to make minor alterations to the itinerary.

#### **Luggage carrying**

Luggage will be transferred and there will be sufficient space to assist riders if necessary. Transfers from Trivandrum airport and to Cochin airport at the beginning and end of the tour will be provided.

#### **Travel**

Since travel to the start of the tour is not included, it is very important that you note that neither your leader nor CTC Holidays & Tours are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting point. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you may incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before finalising travel arrangements to meet the tour, you should ensure that you have read and understood our booking conditions. Should this tour not attract sufficient bookings to reach the minimum operating size, we may cancel the tour at any time up to 10 weeks before departure. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and accommodation, or wait until the leader has advised you that the tour will run, as in the event of the tour being cancelled, we will not be responsible for any losses incurred.



### Passports, Visas and Health

EU citizens must hold a passport with at least six months validity remaining at the end of the tour. A Visa is required, and you are responsible for completing your own visa application. We will provide the necessary forms.

There are no compulsory vaccinations for foreign visitors although it is strongly recommended that you be vaccinated against Typhoid, Tetanus, Polio and Hepatitis A and B. You might also need adequate supplies of a suitable malarial prophylactic. You should contact your doctor at least 3 months prior to travel to obtain these vaccinations and the latest advice to travellers.

### Accommodation and meals

Rooms will be in mid-range/good hotels and a guesthouse, with air conditioning or ceiling fans and en-suite facilities. One night will be spent on houseboats (2 or 3 twin bedrooms with private facilities on each boat). All rooms are based on two people sharing. Breakfasts and evening meals (vegetarian and fish options usually available) will be taken at the guesthouse/hotel, with the exception of two nights in Cochin where dinner is not included. Full board will be provided on the houseboats. On moving-on days the support crew will provide light lunches and mineral water, to be paid for from a kitty.

### Price £1350

The price is based on a minimum number of 16 participants taking part in the tour. If there are insufficient bookings by 12 December 2009, we will contact you and return all monies paid, though in certain circumstances the tour may still run at below minimum numbers but at the same price.

#### Price includes

- Transfers to and from airports in India
- Vehicle support and baggage transfers
- 12 nights guesthouse/hotel accommodation, half board, sharing rooms
- 2 nights hotel accommodation, breakfast only, sharing rooms
- 1 night full board on houseboats, sharing rooms
- Services of an English speaking guide throughout the tour
- Porterage and assistance with baggage and cycles
- All visits/trips as per the itinerary
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

#### Price does not include

- Travel to and from India
- Dinner on 2 nights in Cochin
- Drinks, including mineral water, other than those supplied with meals
- Lunches and refreshments during the day (though these will be provided by the back up crew on moving on days, to be paid for locally; budget £55)
- Visa costs (£39.04 in 2008)
- Gratuities (these are at the discretion of the tour participants)
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance

### Payment schedule

A deposit of £500 per person must accompany the Booking Form, with the final balance of £850 per person to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 12 December 2009. Cheques should be made payable to **CTC Tours**.

### Cancellations

Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows

Written notice received	Cancellation charge
Before 12 December 2009	Deposit (£ 500)
12 December 2009 to departure	100% (£1350)

### To make a booking

Complete, sign and return the Booking Form together with your deposit and the relevant part of the Travel Insurance Declaration Form **directly to the leader** (address on Booking Form).

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you are adequately insured for this tour.

Whether you already hold a policy or will be taking out a new one, the cover it offers must be comparable to that stated in clause 8 of the Booking Conditions, and you must complete the enclosed Insurance Declaration Form and return it with your Booking Form.

CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours Ltd can accept no responsibility for any costs you may incur due to insufficient insurance cover.

## LEADER'S INFORMATION SHEET

The information below is given by the tour leader to help enquirers decide if the tour is suitable for them.

# India Kerala & Tamil Nadu 20 February – 7 March 2010 Tour 0969

### The area covered by the Tour

Kerala is India's most southerly state and the country's most developed region, and as such is an ideal introduction to Asia. Standards of literacy, education, health and hygiene are comparatively high compared to the rest of India. English is widely spoken and the tourist infrastructure is well established. However, road surfaces are sometimes poorly maintained. It is diverse in flora, fauna and physical geography, due mainly to the considerable changes in elevation, from the narrow coastal plain at sea level with its unique network of tropical lagoons and canals, to the cooler high country in the north where conditions are ideal for the cultivation of coffee, tea and exotic spices.

### Rides and rest days

This tour is suitable for experienced cyclists capable of distances up to 90 kilometres and cycling on consecutive days. There are, however, several rest days, and a support vehicle will be with us for the duration of the tour. The terrain is hilly in the Western Ghats, but the climbs are well graded.

On riding days an early start will be made to allow cooler conditions for most of the ride. It is not practical, or enjoyable, to ride together as one group. The navigation is straightforward so you may cycle at your own pace and stop for photographs etc. In theory, traffic drives on the left, though in practice, in built up areas it is chaotic. In busy areas, cycle single file and well spaced, allowing room to manoeuvre. Organised sightseeing to places of interest is included in the cost of the tour, though you may do your own thing if you wish.



### Accommodation / Meals

Accommodation is in good/mid range hotels and a guesthouse. All have en-suite facilities and a ceiling fan or air conditioning. The houseboats have en-suite twin bedrooms and a very attentive crew of three. There are four to six people per boat.

South Indian food is mainly vegetarian and spicy but not hot curry. There is an abundance of fresh fruit and fish. Mineral water is widely available and will be carried on the support vehicle to be paid for from a kitty.

### Group information

The maximum group size will be 20, including the leaders.

### Weather and clothing

Expect it to be hot and dry with daytime temperatures up to 30°C. Sun cream is very strongly recommended. Head and eye protection are also essential. A light windproof/fleece may be necessary in the evenings when visiting hill stations and for early morning descents. Modesty is expected in towns and temples. Ladies should cover their legs and shoulders when not cycling (a beach wrap is ideal for this).

### Cycles / Equipment

Most roads in Kerala are in reasonable condition. A lightweight mountain bike, touring bike or Audax bike will be suitable so long as you are able to carry a daypack or rucksack. Equipment must be in good condition as spare parts will not be readily available, so ensure your bike is in good order, paying particular attention to wheels, tyres and brakes. Use good quality touring tyres.

Each participant will be expected to carry sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs. An accurately calibrated cycle computer is advisable. Lights will not be necessary. All luggage will be transferred by vehicle and assistance will be available if necessary.

### Maps

Maps of Kerala are available from all good map shops. Some of the minor roads we use will not be shown. You will be provided with detailed route sheets.

### Travel Insurance and Advice

Information on CTC Cyclecover Travel Insurance is available from CTC (0870 873 0068) or can be found at [www.cyclecover.co.uk](http://www.cyclecover.co.uk).

Before booking you should check the Foreign Office 'Travel Advice by Country' at [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) or on 0845 850 2829.

### About the leader

This will be the tenth CTC Tour I have led. Most of my tours are in France, but recently I have really enjoyed winter tours visiting Asia. As well as winter sun, I enjoy the opportunities to explore towns and villages and to experience different cultures. I assisted Sheila Simpson with the Kerala 2009 tour, and I am looking forward to returning there.

### Geraldine (Gerry) Goldsmith

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