



Our Personal Guest, Inc.



## ॥ अग्नि ॥

*The delicacies by Indian fire*

DATE	SOUTH INDIA PROGRAM	REMARKS
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*It's not what you **taste***

*It's what you **spice** your memory with*



Agni – Fire, since it was tamed by ancient Indians, it has been the residing deity of all things culinary. Enjoy the rich and exotic ten day culinary trip down the spice-laden trail of South India or up North India. Sink your teeth into succulent meats gently teased by Indian fire or savor the melting taste of fragrant rice prepared over charcoal. Medium, rare or well done, Agni in its different forms serves you cuisine to your ultimate satisfaction.

Camellia Panjabi, arguably India's foremost gourmet and food expert, a legend throughout the culinary world and credited with introducing regional Indian cooking to the UK, besides being the author of the best selling " 50 Great Curries of India" will be planning, to the last detail, all the culinary inputs for you for this incredible journey. She is one of the directors of Masala World, which owns Chutney Mary, Veeraswamy, Amaya and several Masala Zone restaurants in London. Camellia as your Cuisine Curator.....It couldn't get better than this!

While on this culinary holiday you will enjoy personal, hands-on cooking sessions with acclaimed chefs at the Taj Hotels and escorted visits that will include shopping in local markets for fresh produce and spices -the raw materials for cooking your lunch, celebratory meals hosted by the chefs, et al.

In South India you will sojourn at Fisherman's Cove - Chennai, Taj Garden Retreat- Madurai and Taj Malabar – Kochi. Be it a local meal tempered with aromatic spices or a barbecue under the stars- the rich beauty of this region leaves one spellbound.



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ROUTING PROPOSAL ONLY  
NO RESERVATIONS ARE PRESENTLY BEING HELD

The check-in time in all major hotels in India is 2:00 pm and the check out time is 12:00 noon. In case you are early you may have to wait on arrival to get your room. While we will all try to minimize the waiting time, in case the hotel is full, we appreciate your patience. You can freshen up, check out the Spa, or, if you are not feeling tired, go for sightseeing. Our local office representative will be available for you at these times to help you decide.

### Highlights of the program:

- *One meal (Lunch/Dinner) at every place will be hosted by the chef of the hotel*
- *Shopping of spices and raw materials for cooking your lunch*
- *After your shopping the executive chef to demonstrate key elements of cooking*
- *Best quality Indian wines will be showcased at select hotels during your stay*
- *Few meals at local restaurants for local flavours*
- *Visit to Silk production and weaving factory during Chennai stay*
- *Visit to Dakshinachitra – an ethnic crafts village in Chennai*
- *Visit to Bronze metal work in Tanjore*
- *Visit to the hand made Tiles factory in Karaikudi*
- *Visit the spice plantations in Thekkady*
- *Visit Paddy fields, local village markets during Backwater cruise*
- *Visit traditional dance school to see makeup and 'Kathakali' dance performance in Kochi*
- *Enjoy a private harbour cruise in Kochi Harbour*
- *Taj Recipe book / Host authored book as Souvenir*

Day 1	<p style="text-align: center;">International Arrival</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Arrive Chennai</p> <p>You will be met by representatives of <b>Our Personal Guest</b> on arrival at the airport and transferred to your hotel by a private car. The drive will take approximately 45 minutes.</p> <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <h3>Beginning Of Empire</h3> </div> <p>Popularly regarded as the "Gateway to the South", <b>Chennai</b> presents culture that is distinctly different from that of northern India. Music, dance and all other</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Details required</p>
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	<p>art forms of the South are cherished and nurtured in this city which, though industrialized, continues to be traditional and conventional in many ways. Modern Chennai grew out of a small village when in 1639 a fishing hamlet called Madraspatnam was selected by early English merchants of the East India Company as a site for the settlement.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Taj Fisherman's Cove</b> Included Room: Standard Room</p>	
<p>Day 2</p>	<p><b>Chennai</b> Breakfast at hotel's designated restaurant (Cost included).</p> <p>Full day Chennai: Late morning start with a visit to <b>Kalakshetra</b>; Then proceed for sightseeing of Chennai. It will include <b>San Thom Cathedral</b>, Colonial Chennai, <b>Fort St. George</b>, including the houses of Lord Clive and the Duke of Wellington. The <b>State Legislature</b> and the Secretariat are located inside this Fort. <b>St. Mary's Church</b>, the oldest Anglican Church in India built in 1680 is situated here. The weddings of Robert Clive and Governor Elihu Yale, who later founded the famous Yale University in the US, were solemnized in this ancient prayer house ending at the <b>National Museum</b>.</p> 	
<p>Day 3</p>	<p><b>Chennai</b> Breakfast at hotel's designated restaurant (Cost included).</p> <p>Go on an excursion to <b>Kanchipuram</b>: Ancient Kanchipuram was the city of thousand temples and is one of the seven most sacred pilgrim centers for Hindus. Apart from its temples, this small town is also known for its thriving handloom industry. The <b>Silk Weavers</b> of Kanchi settled in the temple town more than 400 years ago and have given it an enviable reputation as the producers of the best silk and cotton saris in the country.</p> <p>Visit the <b>Mahabalipuram Temples</b> this evening especially the Shore temple at sunset. Though it is no longer a port, Mahabalipuram has retained its fame in</p>	<p>2 hr drive one way</p>




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	<p>stone, thanks to the great contribution of Pallava artisans. It is among the most outstanding examples of Dravidian art and architecture and a jewel in the crown of Tamil Nadu.</p>  <p>On your return stop at <u>Dakshinachitra</u>, (Closed on Tuesday) the museum of vernacular architecture... the car and driver will drop you back to the hotel.</p>	
Day 4	<p><b>Chennai / Thanjavur (via Trichy)</b> Breakfast at hotel's designated restaurant (Cost included).</p> <p>Transfer to the domestic airport in your private car for your flight to <b>Trichy</b>. The drive will take approximately 40 min.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Depart Chennai Arrive Trichy</p> <p>You will be met by representatives of <b>Our Personal Guest</b> on arrival at the airport and transferred to your hotel in <b>Thanjavur</b> by a private car. The drive will take approximately 1½ hr.</p> <div style="background-color: #cccccc; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><b>The Chola's Legacy</b></div> <p><b>Thanjavur</b> rose to glory during the later Chola period between the 9th and 14th centuries A.D. It has been the treasure house of art for centuries. It is called the <b>Rice Bowl of Tamil Nadu</b>. Thanjavur is well-known throughout the world for being the home of the <b>Brahadeeswara Temple</b>. The Temple is an architectural wonder and reflects the artistic skills of the erstwhile Chola rulers who ruled peninsular India in the early medieval period.</p>	Daily morning flights



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Day excursion to the nearby temples of **Kumbakonam** and **Darasuram**. Later visit the Bronze metal work at Swamimalai.

Hotel Parisutham  
Included Category: Deluxe Rooms

Day 5	<p><b>Thanjavur / Karaikudi</b> Breakfast at hotel's designated restaurant (Cost included).</p> <p>In the morning visit the <b>Nayak Durbar Hall Art Museum</b> which has an excellent collection of bronze deities and stone sculptures from the Chola period, dating from the 9th - 12<sup>th</sup> century. Then proceed to <b>Saraswati Mahal Library</b> – this library has one of the most important oriental manuscripts collections, in India. Established around 1700 AD, it contains over 44,000-palm leaf, paper manuscripts in Indian and European languages ending the tour at the 11<sup>th</sup> C <b>Brahadeeswara Temple</b>.</p> <p>Drive late morning to Karaikudi...drive will take approx 2 hours.</p> <div style="background-color: #cccccc; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><b>Merchant Princes</b></div> <p>Karaikudi and 74 other villages comprise Chettinad, the homeland of the Nattukottai Chettiars. The Chettiars were a prosperous banking community who ventured overseas to do business in South and Southeast Asia in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Their legacies are the fascinating houses of</p>	2 hr drive
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	<p>Chettinad they built with simple materials. Not yet discovered by the world, Chettinad is a rural area certain to surprise even the most discerning traveller.</p>  <p>Apart from the houses, Karaikudi offers extensive antique shopping, a village market, a number of temples, and <b>visits to Craftsmen</b> working with wood and metal, silversmiths and goldsmiths, attractive textiles and <b>hand-made floor tiles</b>. In the antique market, for collectors, there are crystal, ceramics, old pictures, wooden artifacts imported from the UK a century ago, wooden chests from China...end the day with <b>Chettinadu Cuisine</b> dinner.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>The Bangala</b> Included Category: Deluxe Rooms</p>	
Day 6	<p><b>Karaikudi / Madurai</b> Breakfast at hotel's designated restaurant (Cost included).</p> <p>After breakfast drive to Madurai.</p> <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><i>The Glory Of The Pandyas</i></p> </div> <p>Madurai is referred to as the temple city of India and is home to the famous <b>Shree Meenakshi Temple</b>. The temple is dedicated to the goddess Meenakshi and her consort Lord Shiva, and has twelve temple towers in all. Located on the banks of the Vaigai River, Madurai is the second largest city in Tamil Nadu. The city, known as the <b>Athens of the East</b>, is globally famous for its "Jasmines".</p>	2 hr drive




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	<p>Visit the historically and religiously important <b>temples</b> and <b>museum</b>. Later in the evening attend the evening worship ceremony at the grand <b>Meenakshi Temple</b>.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Gateway Hotel Pasumalai (Taj Hotel)</b> Included category: Executive Room</p>	
Day 7	<p><b>Madurai / Thekkady</b> Breakfast at hotel's designated restaurant (Cost included).</p> <p>You will travel to Thekkady / Periyar in your own vehicle. The drive will take approx. 4 hrs. You will drive to the tiny hamlet of <b>Thekkady</b> on the periphery of the <b>Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary</b>, in Kerala – a complete change of weather as well as the geography.</p> <div style="text-align: center; background-color: #cccccc; padding: 5px;"><b>Tea &amp; Spices</b></div> <p><b>Thekkady</b> is on the border between Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the Nilgiri Hills. It is one of the most magnificently lush areas of South India surrounded by magnificent tea gardens and spice growing estates. Visit the spice gardens in the afternoon.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Spice Village Resort</b> Included Category: Deluxe Rooms</p>	4 hr drive
Day 8	Thekkady / Backwaters	




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	<p>Breakfast at hotel's designated restaurant (Cost included).</p> <p>Continue your journey more in to Kerala. You will drive about 4 hrs in the morning to arrive at the jetty of the 'Vembanad Lake' to board your houseboat.</p> <div style="background-color: #cccccc; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Lagoons &amp; Dreamscapes</b></p> </div> <p><b>The Backwaters</b> are one of the unique attractions of Kerala, a chain of canals extending about 1500 km, with a network of 44 rivers, lagoons and lakes. Most of it is naturally formed. Canals are remade for continuous traffic of men and materials. These house boats are known for their unique design use of local material like bamboo poles, coconut fiber ropes, bamboo mats, carpets etc. Houseboats are all the rage among the discerning travelers to Kerala. A familiar sight on the waters.</p>  <p>These house boats invite you to enjoy a fabulous way to explore the fascinating beauties of the backwaters. With their languid grace and quaint design it adds another dimension to your cruise in the shimmering blue waters. Here man and nature strike up a balance of co-existing harmoniously beyond the temptations of modernization. For the rest of the day relax and enjoy the breath of fresh air in the full natural surroundings. Sail through the canals – <u>visit local villages, markets and churches/temples.</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Air Conditioned Houseboats Included Category: Deluxe AC Houseboat</b></p>	
Day 9	Backwaters / Kochi	




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	<p>Breakfast at hotel's designated restaurant (Cost included).</p> <p>After breakfast, disembark and drive to Kochi...You will be met by representatives of <b>Our Personal Guest / Destination Indus</b> on arrival at the hotel.</p> <div style="background-color: #cccccc; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><b>Malabar Musings</b></div> <p>This is one of those rare places where the twentieth century and ancient civilizations exist side by side. Kochi truly came on the world map with the arrival of Vasco-D-Gama. However, in 1662-63, the Dutch colonized Kochi. Its past is so rich that it has been called a museum city, with a history of Portuguese, Dutch, British and Jewish trading settlements and one of the oldest synagogues in India. Cochin (now Kochi), established as a city in 1341 AD, is one of those rare places where the twentieth century and ancient civilizations exist side by side.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>Sunset Cruise:</b> Later in the afternoon board your boat from the harbour front of hotel and proceed on the cruise where you will watch the fisher-folks still using the Chinese nets for fishing – quite a sight. The local market where the fresh catch is sold is close by and not only is fish sold there but also cooked, ready to eat in the small shacks.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Taj Malabar</b> Included category: Deluxe Room</p>	<p>2½ hr drive</p>
Day 10	Kochi	




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	<p>Breakfast at hotel's designated restaurant (Cost included).</p> <p>The visit will include <b>The Mattancherry Palace</b>, a unique wooden architectural complex, with ancestral homes, snake boats, and breathtaking landscapes. Proceed on to visit <b>St. Francis Church</b> – This centuries old church at Fort Kochi was originally built completely of timber and later reconstructed in stone masonry. <b>Vasco Da Gama was buried here</b> in 1524 before his remains were moved to Lisbon, Portugal. The tombstone still remains. The <b>Synagogue</b> at Fort Kochi, constructed in 1568, is the oldest in the Commonwealth. The area around the Synagogue (called <b>Jew Street</b>) is a centre of the spice trade and curio shops, a perfect place to pick up quality souvenirs at reasonable prices.</p> <p>In the evening enjoy a <b>Kathakali dance performance</b>. This epic dance/drama of Kerala involve complex mime and elaborate make-up and is held at the residence/"theatre" of the Kochi Cultural Center, the only air-conditioned venue for Kathakali in Kochi. This performance is very colorful and interesting and will take approx. 45 min. You will arrive an hour earlier to see the intricate makeup being applied.</p>	
Day 11	<p>Kochi / Chennai &amp; Final Departure</p> <p>Breakfast at hotel's designated restaurant (Cost included).</p> <p>Depending on the time of your international flight we will book the afternoon / evening flight to Chennai to connect to the flight.</p> <p>Transit</p> <p style="text-align: center;">International Departure</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Depart Kochi Arrive Chennai</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Depart Chennai</p>

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