Kerala is known for its spices, namely Coconut, vanilla, cardamom, cumin and coriander, also known as the scents of the south. The trading of spices between Kerala and the world goes back to the third millennium B.C and has resulted in the shaping of its history. Kerala’s tryst with spices even today remains as strong as ever, and its delectable cuisine is linked, in all its richness, to the history, geography, demography and culture of the land. The hills of Kerala produce an aromatic bouquet of spices: pepper, cloves, cardamom, nutmeg, cinnamon, and tea. Embark on this exquisite tour to discover the magic of Kerala and understand the Kerala way of life. Time permitting; do enjoy a blissful spa experience by enjoying one or more of the 5000 year old Ayurvedic spa treatments.

**In The Know:**
The state of Kerala in south India, known as “God’s Own Country”, gets its name from a phrase meaning “land of coconuts”.

Ground Operator: Luxe India
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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>HOTEL</th>
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<td>01</td>
<td>Arrive Cochin</td>
<td>Brunton Boartard (sea facing room)</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>In Cochin</td>
<td>Brunton Boatyard (sea facing room)</td>
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<td>03</td>
<td>Cochin – Karukachal</td>
<td>Serenity at Kanam Estate</td>
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<td>04</td>
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<td>05</td>
<td>In Periyar</td>
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<td>06</td>
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<td>Kumarakom Lake Resort (pool villa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>In Kumarakom</td>
<td>Kumarakom Lake Resort (pool Villa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Kumarakom – Cochin &amp; Departure</td>
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<td><strong>OR</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>08–11</td>
<td>Optional Marari Extension</td>
<td>Carnoustie Beach Resort &amp; Ayurveda Spa</td>
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<td>(Akund Deluxe Villa)</td>
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Arrive Cochin by flight. You will be met upon arrival and transfer to the hotel.

_Cochin_ is a vibrant city situated on the south-west coast of the Indian peninsula in the breathtakingly scenic and prosperous state of Kerala, hailed as 'God's Own Country'. The fairytale milieu suits Kochi impeccably since it is one of the most laid-back of Kerala cities. A city, despite being the commercial hub is a self-assured juxtaposition of both the past and the present. Experience this city with its modern new town at Ernakulam contrasting with the sleepy old town with its melting pot of history including, Dutch, Portuguese, Chinese and Jewish influences.

You will spend two nights in Cochin.
DAY 02  IN COCHIN

After breakfast, meet with your guide for a morning sightseeing of Fort Cochin, visiting St Francis Church, where Vasco da Gama was originally buried before his remains were returned to Portugal, the Santa Cruz cathedral with its pastel colored interior and carved wooden panels and the nearby, unique cantilevered Chinese fishing nets. You will also visit the Jewish Synagogue and stroll through the markets and Dutch Palace.

Later, in the evening we will take you to a Kathakali Dance show. Arrive early and see the face painting session of the dancers before the dance performance. “Kathakali” dance which tells stories from the ancient Hindu epics - Ramayana and Mahabharata. The dancers narrate the story through intricate facial expressions and gestures, with sudden leaps, spins and freeze balances, each wearing fantastic costumes and elaborate make up.

DAY 03  COCHIN – KARUKACHAL

After breakfast, proceed to Karukachal. This place is located in a plantation. They have a pet Elephant and a day with the elephant can be booked at additional charges.

You may proceed for a walk in the spice and rubber plantations or explore the surroundings in a bullock cart. (Accommodation is does not air – condition)

Spend one night at Karakuchal.
DAY 04
KARUKACHAL - PERIYAR

After breakfast, proceed on a private road transfer to Periyar. (Approx. 5 hours drive) On arrival you will be assisted for check in at the hotel.

*Periyar or Thekkady* located in the Cardamom Hills & has is one of India’s best parks for spotting elephants, bison, wild boar, oxen, deer and a variety of birds. The heart of this sanctuary is the Periyar Lake where there are regular boat trips which are hugely popular and often prove to be far more interesting an experience in observing the delight and excitement of local visitors than an opportunity to see wildlife!

In the afternoon take a Spice Plantation tour.

The spice plantation in Thekkady is one of the major spice plantations in Kerala. The spice plantations in Kerala are captivating farms to wander in, since different spices are cultivated in different sections of each plantation. Periyar is, due to its location in the lower mountains around 1000 meters above sea level, blessed with numerous types of spices. Consequently, the spice plantation tour is in one of the most important activities outside the reserve that a visitor can engage in. It is an opportunity to see why the Kerala cuisine is so different from most of the other Indian cuisines. The tour gives you a chance to enjoy cardamom, pepper, clove, cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla and many other varieties of spices and medicinal plants. High quality tea, also known as the Queen of beverages, grows over the hills around Periyar Tiger Reserve. The visit to the tea factory will give you an insight into the cultivation and processing of tea.

*Spend two nights in Periyar.*
This morning, proceed on nature trails traversing diverse habitats form the trekking routes, generally 4 to 5 km in length. This is an interpretive program offering excellent opportunity to watch birds, butterflies and other wildlife. The trails often pass through evergreen and moist deciduous forests interspersed with marshy grasslands. This program is with a tribal guide. The program is offered between 0700 hrs-1030 A maximum of 5 persons can go for trekking at a time along each nature trail accompanied by a trained tribal guide. The Nature walk is the right program to feel nature, hear her whispers and smell her flowers.

Optional Half-day activities in Periyar:

Meet an Asian Elephant:
This programme offers an unique opportunity to experience Elephants very close to your heart. Elephants are a common sight on our roads and temples and are still used in forestry operations. They are an ideal option to explore some inaccessible places in the jungles as well. Elephant activity in Periyar wildlife sanctuary gets you up close and personal with these majestic animals. You can enjoy Elephant bathing, feeding, Timber Dragging and a half an hour ride. The 30 minute safari is through a spice plantation where the gentle breeze will refresh one with the spice-scented air. (Minimum 2 pax required)

Jeep Safari with English Speaking Naturalist
This programme is having a jeep drive for three hours through the panoramic view and enjoys the sightseeing. On the way you can see some commercial plantations of Cardamom, Pepper, Coffee ....etc and you can see the processing of Cardamom. Spice plantation tour is in one of the most important activities outside the reserve that a visitor can engage in. It is an opportunity to see why the Kerala cuisine is so different from most of the other Indian cuisines. The tour gives you a chance to enjoy cardamom, pepper, clove, cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla and many other varieties of spices and medicinal plants. A guide will be there to accompany you to explain about the spices and about the area which you cover. (Minimum 2 pax required)

Bamboo Rafting – (Range Hiking and Rafting) with English Speaking Naturalist
This is a dawn to dusk range hiking and rafting programme through some of the richest forest tracts of Periyar Reserve. Starting at 8 am from the boat landing, a mosaic of habitats will be traversed before the party gets into rafts made of bamboos. The forests are rich in bird life and arboreal animals like giant squirrel and Nilgiri langur. The rafting is for about three hours and one gets a panoramic view of forest-clad hills reflected on the lake. Animals like elephant, gaur and sambar are sighted keeping close to the edges of the lake. (Minimum 2 pax required; Timing Slots: 7.30 am to 2.30 pm & 9.30 am to 2.30 pm)
DAY 06  PERIYAR - KUMARAKOM

After breakfast, drive to Kumarakom and check-in at your hotel.

Kumarakom is an emerald peninsula of paddy fields, meandering lagoons and backwaters that juts out into Lake Vembanad. Famously knows as the Backwaters this area is unique being made up of the labyrinth of canals and lakes that stretch between the capital Kochi and Quilon in the south. From the vastness of Lake Vembanad to the quiet streams just large enough for a canoe, the Backwaters form the arteries through which rural daily life calmly flows - children splashing in the water, women washing clothes at the water’s edge, fishermen up to their necks in water digging out fish with their feet, rice barges transporting coconuts and rice (the staples of Keralan diet) and, above all, an overriding sense of peace and tranquility that permeates every aspect of this stunning region.

Late afternoon, proceed with visit of Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary, spread across 14 acres and a favorite haunt of migratory birds and an ornithologist’s paradise.

Spend two nights in Kumarakom.
DAY 07

IN KUMARAKOM

After a leisurely breakfast at the hotel, proceed for a day cruise on the backwaters of Kerala through the narrow canals on a traditional houseboat.

Backwater cruises in Kerala are carried out on large converted traditional boats, where you can rest at ease and observe the beautiful countryside while sitting on the deck. See the birds and aquatic life along the banks of the Kerala backwaters, and the local people in villages along the banks of Kerala backwaters carry out their daily routine of farming and fishing as you pass by on your cruise.

While on board, savour traditional Kerala cuisine.

DAY 08

KUMARAKOM – COCHIN & DEPART

After a leisurely morning, check out of the hotel and drive to Cochin (3-4 hour drive) to connect flight for onward destination – or consider continuing on with an extension tour to Marari (see below)
EXTENSION TOUR TO MARARI

DAY 08 KUMARAKOM - MARARI
Post breakfast, you will be driven to Marari (Approx. 5 ½ hours). On arrival, check-in at the beach resort.

Marari originates from "Mararikulam", one of the local fishing villages, where life still goes on much as it did a hundred years ago, with the men going out to sea each day to earn a living bringing in the daily catch. Completely new to the holiday maker; Marari offers endless miles of superb sand beaches backed by swaying palms, virgin territory where you can experience the local charm and traditional Kerala Hospitality at its best. Not that you need to spend the whole of your holiday in seclusion, you couldn’t be in a better location for exploring the marvelous backwaters, where the tranquility, the stunning scenery and the feeling of being transported back in time, make it a superbly relaxing and inspiring experience.

Spend three nights in Marari

DAY 9 & 10 IN MARARI
These days will be spent relaxing on the beach of Marari. (No transportation & guide for these days at leisure).

DAY 11 MARARI – COCHIN - DEPART
Morning at leisure. Standard hotel check out time is 1200 hours. You will be transferred to Cochin airport (Approx. 2 hours drive), you will be met by our representative who will assist you to board your flight for your onward destination.

= = = END OF OUR SERVICES = = =
The above tour includes:

- Hotel accommodation on twin/double sharing basis hotels listed above on bed & breakfast
- Meeting and assistance on arrivals and departures with services of our representatives.
- Private transportation in our chauffeur driven air-conditioned Toyota Innova (02-03 pax) & Tempo Traveler (04-06 pax) as per program.
- Private & exclusive sightseeing tours as per above program with services of local English speaking guide in Cochin and Periyar.
- Entrance fees to all monuments (One time only) as mentioned in the above program.
- Kathakali dance show tickets at Greenix Theatre in Cochin.
- Day cruise on backwaters by houseboat with lunch on board.
- Government Services tax @3.09% on total tour cost

The above tour excludes:

- Domestic or International airfares, airport taxes, visa charges or any kind of insurance cover
- Items of personal nature i.e.: telephone calls, drinks, laundry, tips etc
- Camera/video fees at various monuments
- Cost arising out of any last minute request by the guest for additional arrangements
- Any other items other than mentioned as ‘included’
- Any Spa treatment or massages