

Pedaltours

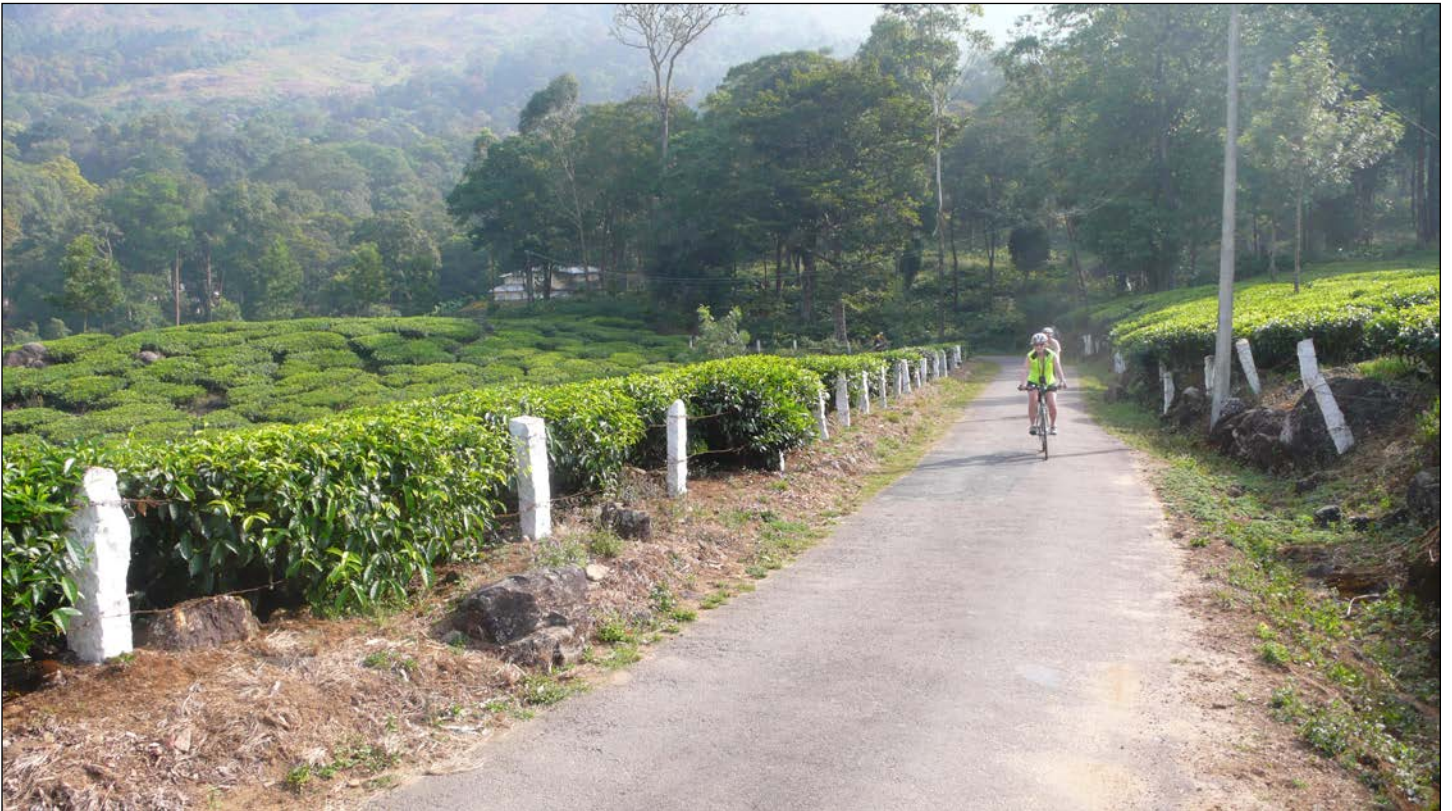
VACATIONS FOR CYCLISTS SINCE 1985

KERALA, INDIA **Spices and Tea** 10 days, 9 nights *Superior Accommodation*

The tour starts in Cochin in the Southern State of Kerala.

Join Pedaltours as we leave the highways behind and cycle through villages where we will share the road with goats and sacred cows – perhaps even an elephant; see local women pumping water at the communal well as we bike through tea plantations, banana, coffee, rubber, spices and so much more. Enjoy the lush vegetation of the Western Ghats and relax on a house boat.

Lodgings have been carefully chosen for their location, character and comfort.



Please bring this information with you to the tour start.

Suggested cycling distances are given for each day Distances are given in kilometres. 1 km = 0.62 miles.

Cycling distances given are entirely optional. Cycle as little or as much as you wish each day, the support vehicle will always be close by.

Kerala, one of India's smaller states, lies to the south west of the sub-continent, bordered by the Arabian Sea and the hills of the Western Ghats. Known as 'God's own country', it is extremely fertile and people are very friendly. There is a huge range of crops and much birdlife, in addition to the occasional elephant, monkeys, deer and elusive tigers.

Kochi is the site of the first European settlement in India. It is a blend of Portuguese, Dutch, British and Chinese influences. We stay close to the harbour side in an attractive part of town. From here we make our way to Thattekad Bird Sanctuary, then climb to Munnar in the highlands, known for its tea plantations. We descend to Kumily and Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary with three nights' stay giving time for a side trip into neighbouring Tamil Nadu and a trek in the park. We then head back to the coast via the backroads of Vagamon to the backwaters of Kumarakom, with a half day excursion on a house boat. From here it is a flat final day's ride back to Cochin and the end of a fabulous trip.

This tour is fully supported – cycle as little or as much as you wish each day. It will be necessary to drive out of the city of Cochin and the latter part on the day to Kumarakom. On other days a reasonably fit cyclist will be able to cycle the entire distance each day.

Meeting Day / Day 1 Arrive Fort Cochin.

Namaste! You will be welcomed in the traditional Indian way with hands clapped together and then transferred to your hotel.

After lunch, we explore Kochi, formerly known as Cochin, Kerala's commercial capital with one of the finest natural harbours in the world. We visit St Francis Church the oldest European Church in India. Vasco Da Gama was buried here before his remains were taken back to Portugal. Next we visit the Roman Catholic Santa Cruz Cathedral built by the Portuguese in the 16th century, which is famous for beautiful paintings on its ceiling. We continue to the Jewish Quarter with its Old Synagogue and the Dutch Palace, built by the Portuguese. Later we take a boat cruise to visit Bolghatty Palace and observe the fascinating Chinese fishing nets in action.

Meals: L,D

Accommodation: Killians Boutique Hotel

Post Box 22, River Road, Fort Kochi

Ph +91 484 2217245, www.hotelkillians.com

Facilities: Restaurant , swimming pool, Ayurvedic spa, yoga and cooking classes, wifi, laundry service.

Features: Small luxury hotel within walking distance of Princess St (good shops and cafes), Chinese fishing nets- and interesting churches.



Cycling distances given are entirely optional: the support vehicle will be available at all times

Day 2: Cochin to Thattekkad

Cycling distance: 47km/ 29 mi

We drive out of town for about two hours (with no Freeways, driving even on a highway is slow) then cycle on a very minor road through a tropical landscape to the bird Sanctuary of Thattekkad. We will pass rubber, banana, tapioca, coconut and pineapple plantations and have time for a visit to the bird sanctuary.

Meals: B,L,D

Accommodation: Hotel Birds Lagoon

Thattekkad. Ph +91 485 2572444 www.birdslagoon.in

Bird sanctuary with over 253 species of birds.

Features: Traditional Kerala architecture, 7 acres of land with views of lake and forest

Facilities: Ensuite but 2 star. Restaurant, Ayurveda spa



Day 3: Thattekkad to Munnar

Cycling distance: 69 km / 43 mi

with a 1,395 m / 4,600 ft altitude gain

We continue on the minor road until we reach the main highway to Munnar. After just 600 m we turn off the hwy and swoop down through a forest to the Periyer River and the Kallerkuty dam. From here we start the challenging climb to Munnar and its world famous tea plantations. We will also see jacaranda trees and cardamom plantations. With the gain in altitude the temperature will decrease from c.32/ 90 F at the coast to a pleasant c.25 / 77 at Munnar, with night time temperatures dropping to 10 C / 50F.

Meals: B,L,D

Accommodation: The Tall Trees Resort – 4 star

Bison Valley Road Pothamedu Viewpoint Munnar,

Ph +91 486 523 2716 www.ttr.in

Features: Very comfortable cottages built on stilts under decades-old trees

Facilities: Air conditioned rooms, restaurant, bar, internet connection available



Cycling distances given are entirely optional: the support vehicle will be available at all times

Day 4: Munnar to Kumily / Periyar / Thekkady Cycling distance: 96 km / 60 mi

Today we make our way to Kumily, known for its spices and proximity to Periyer Tiger Reserve. The Periyer Wildlife Sanctuary covers 777 sq km of which 360 sq km is thick evergreen forest. The greatest attraction of Periyar is the herds of wild elephants that come down to play in the lake. The day is quite hilly but there is an overall loss in altitude as we descend to 800m / 2,640 ft . The day starts with a spectacular descent through forest and tea plantations, later passing rice fields, coffee and cardamom. There will be excellent views of the Western Ghats.

Meals: B,L,D

Accommodation: Cardamom County – 4 star

Kumily Thekkady Road,, Thekkady

Ph +91 486 9224501 <http://xandari.com/cardamomcounty-xandari-overview.html>

Features: Peaceful resort with superb individual, thatched cottages with verandahs in spacious grounds.

Facilities: Impressive colonial style bar, cooking school, paper making and ayurvedic massage. Swimming pool, badminton, tennis, fitness centre, yoga, meditation centre and good souvenir shop.



**Day 5: Kumily – Theni return Cycling distance: 70 km of biking on backroads,
Return by mini bus.**

We take an excursion into neighbouring Tamil Nadu, a poorer state where you will see many bullock carts and perhaps a working elephant or two. We start with a fabulous descent into a scenic, wide fertile valley and continue gently descending until the town of Theni. Here we have lunch then return on the highway in the mini bus. Time to relax in the afternoon by the pool or do a little shopping.

Meals: B,L,D

Accommodation: Cardamom County



Cycling distances given are entirely optional: the support vehicle will be available at all times

Day 6: Kumily

Rest day

Options include an early morning three hour gentle hike in the Park accompanied by a guide, who will identify plants, birds and other wildlife. There will be a late breakfast on return. Then a visit to a tea plantation and factory and an optional late afternoon trip on Lake Periyer where you are likely to see wildlife, most likely deer, buffalo and elephants, by the lake side. Take binoculars.

Meals: **B**

Accommodation: **Cardamom County**

Day 7: Kumily to Kumarakom

Cycling distance: 88 km / 55 mi

We start the day with a climb as we make our way through tea plantations to the grasslands of Vagamon. We finish with a fabulous 24 km descent. On reaching the highway we board the mini bus to drive (1¼ hrs) to Kumarakom, located near the coast on inland waterways. A spectacular day's biking. Kumarakom is a paradise of mangrove forests, emerald green paddy fields and coconut groves interspersed with enchanting waterways and canals adorned with white lilies. The Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary, on the banks of the Vembanad Lake, is a favourite haunt of migratory birds like the Siberian stork, egret, darter, heron and teal.

Meals: **B,L,D**

Accommodation: Eastend Lakesong – 4 star

Ph +91 484 404 3081 [Eastend Lakesong](#)

Features: Set on the edge of Lake Vembanad, interspersed by many canals, the resort can only be reached by a ten minute boat ride.

Facilities: Restaurant, bar, swimming pool, ayurvedic massage, yoga and meditation center, boating and fishing.



Day 8: Kumarakom/Alleppey/Kumarakom

Cycling distance: 32kms / Houseboat cruise



After breakfast we will bike 32 kms (around 2- 2.5 hours cycling) on flat minor roads through villages to Alleppey. We will board a day-cruise house boat, modeled on a traditional rice boat ("ketuvallam"), for lunch and a delightful lazy afternoon cruising on the picturesque lake and canals with views of villages, paddy fields and the mangrove forests that hug the banks. We return to Kumarakom around 5.00pm.

Meals: **B,L,D**

Accommodation **Delux A.C. Houseboat**

Cycling distances given are entirely optional: the support vehicle will be available at all times

Day 9: Alleppey to Cochin

Cycling distance: 55 kms

After breakfast we will drive to Alleppey to commence cycling on a flat road, parallel with the Arabian Sea coast, back to Cochin, arriving in time for lunch. You will pass hundreds of brightly coloured fishing boats along the way. In the afternoon there will be time to wander around historic Cochin or do some last minute shopping before our farewell dinner.

Meals: B,L,D

Accommodation: Killians Boutique Hotel

Post Box 22, River Road, Fort Kochi

Ph +91 484 2217245, www.hotelkillians.com

Facilities: Restaurant , swimming pool, Ayurvedic spa, yoga and cooking classes, wifi, laundry service.

Features: Small luxury hotel within walking distance of Princess St (good shops and cafes), Chinese fishing nets- and interesting churches.

Day 10: Depart

We wish you 'bon voyage' and hope to see you again. An airport transfer is included.



Cycling distances given are entirely optional: the support vehicle will be available at all times

Pedaltours

VACATIONS FOR CYCLISTS SINCE 1985

10 Days / 9 Nights tour
Superior Accommodation

Day	Location	Accommodation	Phone
01	Fort Cochin	Killians Boutique Hotel	+91 484 221 7245
02	Thattekkad	Birds Lagoon	+91 485 257 2444
03	Munnar	The Tall Trees	+91 486 523 2716
04	Thekkady	Cardamom County	+91 486 922 4501
05	Thekkady	Cardamom County	+91 486 922 4501
06	Thekkady	Cardamom County	+91 486 922 4501
07	Kumarakom	Eastend Lakesong	+91 484 404 3081
08	Kumarakom	Delux A.C. Houseboat	+91 481 2525834
09	Fort Cochin	Killians Boutique Hotel	+91 484 221 7245
10	Depart for home		

