

A World of Sophisticated Journeys and Retreats

160 Oakland Street

Suite A

Rochester

NY

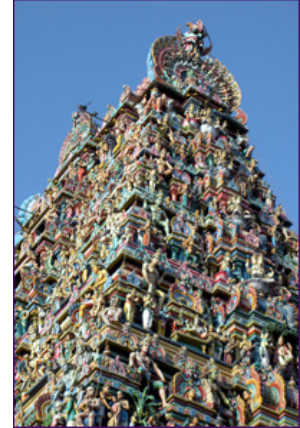
14620

info@luxworldtravel.com

Golden Sands and Silvery Backwaters of South India

A Transformational Journey of Tropical Yoga and Radiant Meditation

February 26 - March 11, 2012



Tour Description

Join internationally renowned yoga and meditation teacher and television host, Padma, on our captivating Golden Sands and Silvery Backwaters journey through South India. Practice unique, world-class yoga and dive into sublime meditations in tropical and radiant environments and settings. As you experience the healing wonders of hatha yoga, breath exercises, Sanskrit chanting, meditation, philosophy, and other yogic techniques in a unique program carefully designed by Padma, you will be carried closer to a space of inner peace and delight.

Throughout the journey, Padma will help you release the weight and concerns of everyday life. Constantly present as a host and teacher, she will lead you towards clarity in your spiritual journey. As an expert meditation master and an experienced spiritual counselor, Padma will also inspire you to fully explore your soul's desire for freedom with a special offering of private one-on-one meditation consultations.

Your journey begins in Kochi, the first European colony in India and once an important spice centre on the south-west coast. You will then travel on to the hill station of Munnar with its unending expanse of tea plantations, pristine valleys and mountains, exotic species of flora and fauna, and aromas of spice scented cool air. After an overnight backwater cruise through silvery rivers, natural fresh water lakes, serene lagoons, and majestic palm groves, relax and renew on 14 acres of lush green land overlooking the blue sea and soft white sands, and indulge in optional treatments at the Ayurvedic Centre on site. Here, Padma will lead a deluxe four-night, three-day yoga and meditation retreat. During the final days, travel to the "Temple City" of Madurai to visit the stunning ancient temples there, and then onto the amazing temples of Kanchipuram and Mahabalipuram, one of seven most holy places for Hindus in India. Your journey then ends in the capital city of Tamil Nadu, Chennai, for sightseeing and last minute shopping.

The pace of this journey has been thoughtfully designed, based in all our experience, not to be fast, but to create an optimal blend of fun exploring and adventuring in India, combined with the benefits of a yoga and meditation retreat, rich with revitalizing practices and restful days. The yoga and meditation times for every day have been firmly scheduled to ensure that this is not merely a sightseeing tour, but a unique and delightful mix of authentic yoga and meditation practice whilst visiting Indian wonders.

Through classical yoga, insightful meditation, enlightened spiritual discourses, and time for questions, you will not only have the opportunity to explore South India's astonishing delights, but you will also embark on an authentic journey within yourself as well. Experience a true and honest reconnection with the spark of spirit within yourself.

This journey is limited in size to a maximum of 20 people in order to maintain an intimate and quality vacation for you and to give time to be on your own, with friends and with Padma. Please book early to reserve your space on this transformation journey.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 Sun, Feb 26: Arrive Kochi (D)

Arrive in Kochi (Cochin) on the west coast of India. Be met at the airport by our representative and be transferred to our hotel in the Fort Cochin area. Kochi is a jewel in the crown of Kerala with its European heritage and true cosmopolitan air. A centre of trade, Kochi merchants began trading spices such as black pepper and cardamom with the Arabs, Dutch, Portuguese, and Chinese more than 600 years ago. A striking scene here is the row of Cheena vala, Chinese fishing nets that line the mouth of the harbor, which leads to the Arabian Sea in Fort Kochi. A leisurely walk through its streets is one of the best ways to discover all that the city has to offer including its natural harbour and historical sites. This evening we will gather for our Welcome Dinner at the Terrace Garden Restaurant where we will first meet Padma and our fellow yogis.

Overnight in Kochi at Grande Residencia

Day 2 Mon, Feb 27: Kochi (B, D)

After breakfast in the hotel, we meet from 8:00 - 10:00 AM for our orientation meeting along with introductions, setting intentions and our first meditation session to initiate the journey. Afterwards, we leave for a guided tour of Kochi. We visit the St. Francis Church considered the first European-built Church in India, built in 1562 by St. Francis and then continue on to the Mattanchery Dutch Palace, a double-storied palace. The most important features of Mattanchery Palace are the murals in the bedchambers,

which depict scenes from the epic story, the Ramayana, Mahabharata. These murals are some of the most beautiful and extensive in India. We then visit the Jewish Synagogue, which was constructed in 1568 and is the oldest in the Commonwealth. While driving along the coastline, at the Harbor's mouth, you can also catch a glimpse of the unique and still-in-use Chinese fishing nets, which were introduced by the Chinese traders in the 14th Century. Our city tour ends in the Fort Kochi area where you will have time to walk through the historical Dutch and Portuguese areas. Some parts of the nearly 500-year-old Fort are amazingly well preserved.

After lunch on your own, we meet again at the hotel for our 3:00 - 4:30 PM yoga class. This will be a gentle and restorative yoga class designed to help you recover from jet lag and to settle you easily into India.

In the evening you will witness the Kathakali Dance Show, India's most spectacular dance drama based on stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. The dancers are elaborately made up with paint and masks, accompanied with drummers and musicians. We reach the theatre early to get a chance to see the dancers getting ready for the show and their faces being painted. Afterwards, we return to the hotel for dinner.

Overnight in Kochi at Grande Residencia

Day 3 Tue, Feb 28: Kochi; Munnar (B, L, D)

After breakfast we leave for Munnar (150 kms / 5 hrs including stops), the summer resort of the former British in South India. Situated 1600 metres (5249 feet) above sea level, Munnar is a confluence of three mountain rivers – Mudrapuzha, Nallathani and Kundala. Nestled in the midst of 60 acres of cardamom plantations, our hotel, Windemere Estate, has a harmonic relationship with nature. Manicured tea gardens merge with the lush green forests of the western ghats. After checking into our rooms and getting settled in we enjoy lunch at the hotel.

In the afternoon, we tour this hill station town. Munnar offers a breathtaking view of the hills draped in folds of green carpets of tea, coffee and cardamom plantations. Beyond the rolling hills, discover the rich tropical forests abounding in exotic flora & fauna. It is here that you will spot Anamudi peak, the highest peak in the Western Ghats at 2479 metres (8133 feet). Munnar's serene atmosphere, silver streams and pleasant climate welcome you to breath deeply. We visit the sprawling tea estates as well as the tea museum, where we learn more about the various stages of tea processing and the area's interesting history. At a tea tasting, you learn about the different delicious varieties of south Indian tea.

Later we enjoy an evening yoga and meditation class from 5:30 – 7:30 pm to help us unwind and decompress. Padma will teach a class designed to keep you limber and relaxed. She will guide a peaceful meditation, introducing some yoga philosophy to clarify the kinds of thinking and emotions that arise on a journey in India. We start to explore how Indian philosophy aligns perfectly with the magical experiences of the country. Afterwards, enjoy dinner at the estate. **Overnight in Munnar at Windemere Estate**

Day 4 Wed, Feb 29: Munnar (B, L, D)

Today we enjoy the entire day at leisure for our yoga and meditation practice as well as independent activities. All our meals will be enjoyed at the estate for our convenience.

Padma will offer two yoga and meditation classes today, one in the late morning from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM and another in the early evening from 5:30 – 7:30 PM, each carefully designed to suit your needs of the

day. If everyone is tired, she will lead a more restorative class. If the group is feeling more active you will start to work on poses and sequences that gently build your strength and move your energy in a way that's perfect for you. The class includes yogic breath work and beautiful Sanskrit chanting. Padma will also teach meditation techniques which you will be able to practice while gliding along on the houseboat ride the next day, since there will be no formal class together on the boats. **Overnight in Munnar at Windemere Estate**

Day 5 Thu, Mar 1: Munnar; Alleppey (B, L, D)

After an early breakfast we drive to Alleppey (240 kms / 6 hrs including stops) and embark at approx. 1:00 PM on our luxuriously furnished houseboats for a relaxing overnight backwater cruise, enjoying freshly cooked traditional meals onboard. Fondly known as the "Venice of the East", Alleppey is famous for its Snake Boat Races. This charming town of picturesque canals, backwaters, beaches and lagoons, is the perfect place to enjoy a little R & R. As we drift peacefully along the backwaters on our beautiful and charming houseboats, we can enjoy the breathtaking scenery, a microcosm of flora and fauna, which includes a large species of birds such as kingfishers, pheasants, cormorants, drogues, woodpeckers, bee-eaters and kite, and admire the scenes of local villages. Our boat cruise will take us to small islets where we will be able to catch glimpses of serene village life at its best. Watch village girls picking mussels and laundering clothes while men are busy harvesting coconuts and dates from the trees, and observe the locals making the golden fibre called coir from coconut husk to be transformed into various coir products. With an abundance of rustling coconut groves around us, we shall stop to drink fresh coconut water from the kernel and watch the toddy-tappers at work. This will be a great day to take time for meditation, journaling and contemplation. Padma will be available to offer private consultations as much as possible.

Overnight on Houseboat

Day 6 Fri, Mar 2: Houseboat; Chowara (B, L, D)

After breakfast, we disembark our houseboats at approx. 9:00 AM, drive to Chowara (175 kms / 5 hrs including stops), and check in to our resort upon arrival. Our resort is located on the lovely shores of the Arabian Sea at Chowara, south of Kovalam, near Trivandrum, Kerala. Set on 14 acres of lush green land overlooking the blue sea and soft golden sands, this resort will be our haven for the next 4 nights. This afternoon, enjoy lunch at the resort restaurant, relax, and stroll around to become better familiar with the grounds. This would also be a good time to book some optional Ayurvedic treatments for the remainder of your stay at the resort's Ayurvedic Centre, which will help you bring back the equilibrium of tridoshas and live your life in a much healthier way.

We will thoroughly delight in our yoga and meditation class from 5:30-7:30 PM after having had a long drive today. Padma will continue to introduce yogic thought and the ancient art of expanding our awareness. We will practice yoga, breath work, Sanskrit chanting and meditation. There will also be time for more questions and answers together. Later, we enjoy dinner together at the resort. **Overnight at Travancore Heritage Resort**

Day 7 Sat, Mar 3: Chowara (B, L, D)

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the resort this morning before beginning our 3 day yoga and meditation retreat with Padma. The classes of yoga, breath work and philosophy will build and evolve in synchronicity with the theme of the whole journey. Our morning yoga session from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM, will include a workshop from Padma's Elemental Series TV show where you will learn Padma's unique program of foundational yogic health practices. This workshop offers an overview of the subtle energy bodies that we

all have. Through yoga, breath, chanting, and meditation you will come to understand how you can keep yourself in peak fitness, joy, and wellness.

During our evening meditation class from 5:30 – 7:30 pm, Padma will guide you to become established in a foundational meditation practice that will stay with you your whole life. She will expand and refine the teachings each day as we all settle more and more into the blissful space of what is truly mystical about India, it's heritage of clear and spiritual awareness.

In your free time, relax on the beach, enjoy the pool and resort amenities, explore on your own, or enjoy optional Ayurvedic treatments at the ayurveda centre. **Overnight at Travancore Heritage Resort**

Day 8 Sun, Mar 4: Chowara (B, L, D)

After another leisurely breakfast at the resort, we continue our retreat with Padma. This morning from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM, we enjoy our yoga class, a workshop from Padma's Modern Meditations Series TV show. This workshop will feature Padma's unique program, which explores how the many various yogic practices and meditations can easily be applied to everyday, real situations and bring balance, strength, and clarity to your life. You will gain an understanding of how therapeutic and useful yoga can be.

During our evening meditation class from 5:30 – 7:30 pm, Padma will teach us about the Sanskrit language, chanting, and mantra yoga. During this session, you will come to understand the power of sound as well as the power of thought. **Overnight at Travancore Heritage Resort**

Day 9 Mon, Mar 5: Chowara (B, L, D)

After another leisurely breakfast at the resort, we continue our retreat with Padma. This morning from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM, we enjoy our yoga class, a workshop from Padma's Blissful Living Series TV show. This workshop highlights Padma's decades of expertise with a sublime and unique yoga practice that perfectly integrates pure wellness with blissful spiritual awareness. Learn from a master teacher.

During our evening meditation class from 5:30 – 7:30 PM, Padma will guide us to explore the very special and esoteric spiritual wisdom that permeates India. She will offer the wisdom of her 22 years of study and experience of being a yogi and of living in India. **Overnight at Travancore Heritage Resort**

Day 10 Tue, Mar 6: Chowara, Madurai (B, L)

Today we check out of the resort after breakfast and drive to Madurai, the oldest inhabited city in the Indian peninsula, stopping for lunch en route (325 kms / 7 hrs including stops). Upon arrival at our hotel, we will check in and then you can enjoy the afternoon at your leisure to explore this fascinating city.

In the evening from 6:00 - 7:30 PM we will gather for our session with Padma, who will lead us in a replenishing and restorative yoga class with deep meditation.

This evening enjoy, take the opportunity to explore the city independently once more or with your new-found friends and try a traditional dinner at one of the many restaurants nearby. **Overnight in Madurai at The Gateway Hotel**

Day 11 Wed, Mar 7: Madurai (B)

After breakfast at the hotel we leave for a sightseeing tour of the most important temples in Madurai, the Meenakshi Temple, an enormous temple complex dedicated to Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati or Meenakshi. The temple with its majestic stone walls and 12 towers known as "Gopurams", which rise out of the swarming streets of the city centre, were built in the 17th century by Nayak rulers. The highlight of the Meenakshi Temple is the "Hall of a Thousand Pillars", built in the 16th century in Dravidian architecture. Not to be missed here are the "Musical Pillars", which when struck, produce a different musical note. You then have time to wander about the city and enjoy lunch on your own. Later, we visit the Tirumala Nayak Palace, a gracious building in the Indo-Saracenic style, famous for the stucco work on its domes and arches.

After our sightseeing, we enjoy a yoga and meditation class from 4:00 - 6:00 PM where Padma will guide us in harmony with the energy of the day while building on the themes and explorations of the journey so far.

After dinner on your own, we return to Meenakshi Temple to witness the daily prayer ceremony when the temple bronze of Lord Shiva is carried to the bedchamber of Parvati. The procession is accompanied by religious prayer and temple music. **Overnight in Madurai at The Gateway Hotel**

Day 12 Thu, Mar 8: Madurai; Chennai (B, L)

This morning, enjoy breakfast at your leisure. Our yoga and meditation class will be from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM after which you will have free time until departure for independent activities.

In the afternoon, we will transfer to the airport for our flight to Chennai on the Coromandel coast of the Bay of Bengal (just over 1 hour long), arriving at approximately 6:00 PM. After a meet and greet on arrival by our representative, we will transfer to the hotel and settle in. Dinner is on your own this evening to sample some delicious Tamil cuisine at any of the great restaurants in Chennai. **Overnight in Chennai at GRT Grand Hotel**

Day 13 Fri, Mar 9: Excursion to Kanchipuram & Mahabalipuram (B, L, D)

After breakfast, we leave for an excursion to Kanchipuram, one of Hinduism's seven most sacred cities. This "Golden City of a Thousand Temples" dates back to the early Cholas in the 7th century AD. Only around 70 temples of the original 1000 old temples are still intact and the most famous of them is the Kailasanatha Temple built of sandstone in the early seventh century A.D. As Kanchipuram is also known for its silk weavings, a visit to the nearby villages to see the craftsmen at work on their looms will be a wonderful experience. We will enjoy lunch here.

We then continue on to Mahabalipuram (Mamallapuram) to visit the seventh century rock-hewn monuments. The Shore Temple, a World Heritage Monument and the only surviving one of seven, is a unique example of a temple built of rock quarried elsewhere and carried to the shore. The best known of the rock carvings is the immense bas-relief which is sculpted in fascinating detail on a huge whaleback-shaped rock, depicting the descent of the Ganges to the earth, the penance of Arjuna and myriad characters from the Mahabharata story. We also visit the Five Rathas, a set of monolithic rock temples

located on a sandy compound and a perfect example of the evolution of Dravidian style architecture. The Rathas have an association to the great epic Mahabharata, which describes the heroes of Mahabharata with their wife Draupadi.

This is a full day of amazing sightseeing. There is no time for a formal yoga class at the hotel, however, hopefully there will be an opportunity for a meditation at one of the sites. Padma will work with the guides to find a lovely location for us to sit with her and take a few moments of rest and reflect. Upon our return to Chennai, we will have time to freshen up before enjoying dinner at the hotel. **Overnight in Chennai at GRT Grand Hotel**

Day 14 Sat, Mar 10: Chennai (B, D)

After breakfast, we depart for a sightseeing city tour of Chennai, which served as the economic and political capital of the East India Company from the 17th century onwards. Among the highlights of the city is Fort St George that marks the beginning of Chennai as an important centre for trade. Within the fort is St Mary's Church, the first English church in India and the oldest British building to survive. We will also spend some time in the Mylapore Temple area visiting the 16th century Kapleswarar Temple as well as explore the fruit and flower market. Enjoy lunch on your own to sample some of the delicious local fare. Later, in the afternoon, enjoy some free time for shopping and other independent activities. There are so many treasures to be found here in Chennai!

In the evening, we gather together for our last yoga and meditation class from 5:30 - 7:30 PM where Padma will summarize and review the explorations and discoveries we have made throughout our journey. This class will beautifully conclude the adventures we've shared and send you off with confidence and satisfaction in your yoga and meditation practice. Later we enjoy a final Farewell Dinner at a lovely local restaurant in Chennai. **Overnight in Chennai at GRT Grand Hotel**

Day 15 Sun, Mar 11: Depart Chennai (B)

This morning is free to relax and enjoy the hotel amenities. Check out is at 12:00 noon but you can leave your luggage at the hotel for the afternoon. This afternoon you have the opportunity for last minute shopping. The bus will then take you to a shopping centre and return to the hotel at approx. 6:30 PM. Lunch and dinner are on your own and in the late evening you will be transferred to the airport for your departure flight (most departures are late evening, however an extra night can be arranged if required).

(B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner)

Note: This itinerary is subject to change due to conditions beyond our control.

Tour Includes:

14 nights accommodation in Hotels, Resort, and Luxury Houseboat
Arrival and Departure Transfers
Breakfast Daily, 10 Lunches and 11 Dinners
Transportation by Private Air Conditioned Coach
Hotel Taxes
Baggage Handling at the Hotels (1 bag per person)
Admission to all sites as per itinerary
All Local Guide services as per itinerary
Domestic flight from Madurai to Chennai

Special Added Features:

Travel with Yoga and Meditation Teacher, Padma
30 hours of Yoga and Meditation Instruction with Padma
Private One-on-one Meditation Consultations
Kochi Sightseeing Tour
Kathakali Dance Show
Tour of Tea Estate & Museum with Tea Tasting
Overnight Backwater Cruise
Visit Meenakshi Temple and Tirumala Nayak Palace in Madurai
Prayer Ceremony at Meenakshi Temple
Visit Kanchipuram
Visit Mahabalipuram
Chennai Sightseeing Tour

Tour Does Not Include:

International Airfare to Kochi (COK) and return from Chennai (MAA)
Cancellation & Medical Insurance (ask us for a quote)
Meals and drinks not specified as indicated in the itinerary
Cost to obtain valid passport
Any items of a personal nature such as laundry, drinks and telephone calls. Any item that is not specifically detailed on our website or in the final retreat itinerary.

Tour Price

Price Per Person (Land Only)	USD \$4465.00
Single Supplement	USD \$1525.00
Prepaid Gratuities	USD \$ 180.00

Note: Pre-paid gratuities to cover guides, drivers, waiters, baggage handling, etc. Your local Tour Guide will carry and disburse these funds so that you can relax and enjoy your trip, knowing that everyone assisting you is being taken care of properly.

Note: The single supplement is ONLY for those who would like to secure a private room throughout the tour, at the indicated additional price. If you are not traveling with anyone you know and would like to share a room, we will be happy to work to find you a suitable roommate. Per our Terms and Conditions, registration for the tour will be held open until two weeks before the departure date in order to try to match everyone with a roommate. If by that date we have not been able to match you with a suitable roommate, you will be responsible to pay for the single supplement. An early registration will facilitate this process.

Trip Leaders



Padma, Marla Stewart B.Sc.: Padma is a certified teacher of Advanced Yogic Sciences and Meditation (Senior Level) and Hatha Yoga (1000-hour Senior Level) by the International Meditation Institute of India. She is a unique educator specializing in a holistic approach to mental, physical, and spiritual wellness. Padma is respected as one of Canada's senior teachers and is highly regarded for her extensive studies and vast knowledge of meditation and classical yogic studies. Her western science and philosophical studies inform her exceptional education in eastern practices. She is a unique bridge between the two worlds of wisdom and speaks with eloquence of their oneness.

Padma practiced and researched advanced meditation in the western Himalayas of India for a decade with her meditation guru. She lived independently, meditating up to six hours a day, and learning the subtle arts of yoga while also learning to read and master original Sanskrit texts. Life in the Himalayas at that time was rustic and minimal, including basic tasks such as boiling drinking water and keeping the wood stove burning in winter. She cooked and lived with no electric appliances, modern conveniences, or hot running water, spending the years in meditation and study. Padma continues to return to India for extended meditation retreats and direct study with her teacher.

Padma has hosted, written, and produced four nationally-syndicated television series: Padma Yoga: Blissful Living, Modern Meditations, The Elemental Series and Living Yoga with Padma. She has produced two educational DVDs and hosted a 12-part series on CBC radio. Her guided meditation recordings, Freedom from Flight Anxiety, are heard on Air Canada flights. Padma is often featured in other national media, such as in the television series Remedy Me and in Chatelaine magazine, December, 2009, Reader's Digest and others.

Padma owned and ran the Padma Yoga and Meditation Center in Vancouver, B.C., and since 2000 has taught yoga and meditation to professionals, government agencies, and major Hollywood celebrities. Visit Padma's website at [Padma Yoga](#).



Mina Tilakraj: Mina Tilakraj is an experienced guide of over 25 years who has worked with many well-established tour companies. Working with internationally acclaimed companies such as Ventours, Micato, Gate1, Abercrombie & Kent, Greaves, Thompsons, Sita, Viaggi Del'Elefante, and Mistral, to name a few, she has been able to accompany many renowned personalities and interesting groups of people.

Some of the prestigious clients whom she has accompanied during their visits, include groups from National Geographic, Discovery Channel, Photo Journalists Society of Italy, a section of the US Photography Club, RAI TV Italia, Archaeological Society of Italy, as well members of Italian nobility, the Chief of the Italian Naval Staff, Bill Clinton's (US ex-President) entourage members, and many families from Italy, Spain, England, South America, and North America. She has led many special interest groups and tours based on photography, architecture and vastu shastra, local cuisine, wildlife, yoga, culture, and religion. She also personally conducts sittings of yoga and gives lectures on religion, yoga, and Indian culture.

Mina has been a government certified guide since 1989 and was also a flight attendant with Indian Airlines for 5 years. She is fluent in many languages including English, Italian, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi and Punjabi, and can also speak some Spanish and French.

Mina is the founder of an NGO, which strives to promote national integration, communal harmony, universal brotherhood, human rights, fundamental freedom and global peace.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss any of these trips in further detail, please contact Melinda Johnston at mj@luxworldtravel.com or by calling toll free: **1.866.269.2659**.



~ Thank you for choosing LUX World Travel~

LUX WORLD TRAVEL (866) 269-2659 USA, + 1 (585) 672-5587 USA Office, + 1 (585) 351-2422 USA FAX

LUX World Travel is proud to present the finest of Luxury Hotels, Spas and Resorts for your vacation. A journey with LUX World Travel is an adventure of mind, body and spirit. We offer a world of sophisticated journeys and retreats for you to experience wildlife, ancient ruins and culture, beaches, adventure, spa, wellness, gourmet food, the best wines, shopping, family fun, and more.