

Itinerary for Desiree Rumbaugh Group
The Many Faces of India - South
February 8-28, 2011

Feb 8: Cochin - Arrive Cochin, Kerala (anytime). Overnight Cochin.

Feb 9: Cochin - Enjoy morning yoga at a lovely indoor space across the street from the hotel. Walk to a Kerala cooking class with Leelu where we'll eat our 5 course lunch. The afternoon is free to watch the fisherman catching fish on the boardwalk or to shop for antiques. In the evening, watch a cultural dance performance featuring the traditional dance styles of South India. Eat dinner overlooking the ocean. Overnight Cochin.

Feb 10: Cochin to Allepey - After a nice morning yoga session. Drive an hour to Allepey, home of the backwaters, a maze of interconnected canals, rivers, lakes and inlets containing both fresh and salt water. Board a Kettuvallam, or traditional houseboat where we will sleep that night. Before sunset, head off in a small motorboat and cruise the small back canals watching rural life unfold. Overnight houseboat.

Feb 11: Allepey to Paradisa - In the morning drive to Paradisa Plantation (2 hours), a heritage hotel nestled amongst tea and spice plantations. In the afternoon, walk around the plantation to learn about the different plants and spices used in their amazing Kerala food. Before dinner, enjoy yoga. Overnight Paradisa.

Feb 12: Paradisa Plantation - After morning yoga and breakfast, enjoy an ayurvedic massage, Sirodhara and steam treatment. Take a tour of one of the few organic tea factories in India and learn how tea is processed and graded. In the evening, watch a traditional Kerala dance performance. Overnight Paradisa.

Feb 13: Paradisa Plantation - After morning yoga and breakfast, drive 3 hours to Cochin to catch a 5pm flight to Chennai. Overnight Chennai.

Feb 14: Chennai to Pondicherry - In the morning, visit Desikachar's Yoga Center and practice a yoga therapy class. In the afternoon, drive to Pondicherry via ancient rock cut temples at Mahabalipuram. Pondi is a small coastal city with French flavor. Overnight Pondicherry.

Feb 15: Pondicherry - In the morning, meditate at Sri Aurobindo's Ashram. Shop. Visit Ganesh Temple. At sunset, walk the promenade along the ocean before dinner. Overnight Pondicherry.

Feb 16: Pondicherry to Tiruvannamalai - In the morning, drive to Tiruvannamalai (3 hrs). Visit Ramana Maharshi's ashram before afternoon yoga. Overnight Tiruvannamalai.

Feb 17: Tiruvannamalai - On the full moon, tour the bustling temple and in the evening, circumnavigate Arunachala hill during this festive event in which thousands of people participate. Overnight Tiruvannamalai.

Feb 18: Tiruvannamali to Chennai - Sleep in! At noon, drive to Chennai and on to USA or take 5pm flight to Delhi. 7:40pm arrival Delhi.



Sirodhara oil treatment



Dance Performance



Backwaters Boat Ride



Spice Plantation Walk



Arunachala Hill

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Feb 18: Arrive Delhi. Anytime.

Feb 19 Delhi to Jaipur - Take a 7am train to Jaipur (5 hrs. arrive noon), the largest city in Rajasthan and also known as the Pink City because of its unique pink buildings. Tour the city visiting the City Palace and Jantar Mantar, the biggest of five astronomical observatories built by Maharaja Jai Singh from 1727-1734. Overnight Jaipur.

Feb 20 Jaipur - After morning yoga, take a guided tour of the Amber Fort, an amazing fort built in 1592 of all marble and sandstone. The afternoon free to shop for woodblocks, textiles, pashminas and artwork. Jaipur has it all! In the evening, watch a movie at the Raj Mandir Theatre. From the pushing, shoving, and general chaos in the ticket line, to an audience that laughs, cries, cheers, claps, and consistently talks through the entire film, the Raj Mandir provides an insight into Rajasthani culture. Overnight Jaipur.

Feb 21 Jaipur to Varanasi - Leave bright and early to fly to Varanasi (arrive 11:30am), one of the holiest cities in India. Free time to walk on the ghats and then enjoy afternoon yoga. At dusk, float down the Ganges to watch the Aarti ceremony at the Main Ghat. Overnight Varanasi.

Feb 22 Varanasi - Morning yoga session with a local teacher. Head to an orphanage to visit with children. In the afternoon, take a bike rickshaw to the silk weaving district where 10,000 Muslim people work to produce some of the world's finest silks. See how they are made and visit with a Muslim family. Overnight Varanasi.

Feb 23 Varanasi to Delhi - Eat the best porridge and pancakes in India before driving 45 mins. to Sarnath, the buried Buddhist city where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon. Visit the ruins, the stupa, the Buddhist temple and the museum. Take a 4pm flight to Delhi. Overnight Delhi.

Feb 24 Delhi to Dharamsala - Enjoy a nice yoga session in lovely Lodhi Gardens before heading to the airport for the flight to Dharamsala. Go to Norbulingka Cultural Center, where artisans perfect their craft under the tutelage of the Dalai Lama. Overnight Norbulingka.

Feb 25 Dharamsala - Morning yoga with Desiree followed by a tour of the center. Drive to Dharamsala. Afternoon learn to cook Tibetan momos. Eat dinner with Lama Bhagdro who has written several books on Buddhism. Overnight Dharamsala.

Feb 26 Dharamsala - After morning yoga, hike in the majestic Himalayas through fields of Rhododendrons to Naddi Village. On the walk down, stop at a stupa dedicated to the Dalai Lama and his teacher. Overnight Dharamsala.

Feb 27 Dharamsala to USA - In the morning, meditate at the Dalai Lama's temple with Lama Tashi, a famous chanting monk. Enjoy breakfast at Chonor House with Lama Tashi. Take a 4:30pm flight to Delhi. Overnight Delhi.

Feb 28: Delhi to USA - Wander through the chaos of the Old City including the Spice Market and Red Fort. See where Gandhi walked his final footsteps before his assassination. Eat a South Indian meal and shop in Connaught Place. Home to USA or Taj Group stays overnight in Delhi.



Norbulingka Cultural Center



Yoga in Dharamsala



Varanasi



Llamo shows how to make a momo



Hike to Triund