

## Konkan Railways & beyond

4 – 19 October 2024

**A less travelled but fascinating railway line built post-independence from about Mumbai To Trivandrum including the sunny beaches of Goa, the UNESCO World Heritage Nilgiri Mountain Railway ride and lazy cruising in backwater lagoons in an exclusive houseboat in Kerala. A perfect holiday for all that includes off the beaten track, cultural sights, lovely hotels & food, lots of sunshine & much more..**

### Tour Highlights

- Ride on India's youngest long distance railway line post-independence!
- Covering all of the 760 kms long rail line.
- Cross 146 rivers & streams nearly 2000 bridges and 91 tunnels.
- Asia's largest tunnel which measures 6.5 Km is part of this Konkan Rail route.
- Riding the 'Local' train ride on the suburban trains in Mumbai. As seen on the famous documentary of Bombay Railway on BBC Four.
- Sunny beaches & scrumptious sea food in Goa.
- Steam charter on the UNESCO World Heritage Nilgiri Mountain Railway (NMR).
- Lazy overnight houseboat cruise in Kerala's backwater.
- Spice trading market of Cochin & it's Jewish & Portuguese hold.
- Extend your holiday in Kerala's white sand beaches & indulge in some ayurveda massage!
- Plenty of attractions for non-railway enthusiasts.

### Friday 4 October

We can offer departures from London (or other airports) for your overnight flight to Mumbai....

### Saturday 5 October

..Arrive in the morning at the Mumbai International airport Terminal 2.

We will meet you in the international arrivals meeting area after you have cleared immigrations and collected bags. Look for a Darjeeling Tours paging board.

Check-in your city hotel with rest of the day at leisure to acclimatise. We will venture out in the bustling 'Bollywood City' for a nice Indian meal!

### Sunday 6 October

Today we enjoy a guided tour of this lively city of round about 21 million inhabitants. Gateway of India is not just a monument but a landmark of Mumbai from where we take a ferry to the famous Elephanta Caves on the Gharapuri Island on a 45 minutes ride.

Return to shores to see the city getting into it's daily chores. Visit the Ghobi Ghat, Asia's largest open air laundry, Hanging Gardens, drive past the Marine Drive, CSMT (erst VT) railway station building and walk through it's historic arches.

By evening, it's best to spend some time in the Colaba markets and try out the famous cafes (read Bar!).

## **Monday 7 October**

Morning transfer to the Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (VT) railway station for a local train ride service to Neral station. An experience of it's own sort! Live a life of a regular Mumbaikar for a day! (We mean just the way they commute). Don't worry, we will be travelling against the dense load factor!

We switch over to the NG line for a ride on the Neral-Matheran 2 feet narrow gauge railway to & fro Matheran. Late afternoon, we board the local train from Neral to VT station and then transferred back to our hotel followed by a evening meal.

## **Tuesday 8 October**

This morning we transfer to VT to catch a local train to suburban Terminus for our reserved train to Chiplun. We commence our Konkan Railway line expedition travelling from a Central Railway zone handing over operations to Konkan Railway zone in Kolad. Truly fascinating!

*Luggage transfer from hotel to main station will be done by a coach.*

On arrival in Chiplun, we are transferred to our resort for an overnight with dinner.

## **Wednesday 9 October**

We catch the morning service to Goa where we arrive in the afternoon and straight get to our beach resort to enjoy the sunset on the Arabian Sea.

## **Thursday 10 October**

Free day in Goa to enjoy sun & beach. You may also like to explore the city visiting it's Portuguese colonial impressions viz. houses, small markets, Churches. We'll avoid the Siesta time which is still followed as part of it's culture!

## **Friday 11 October**

We have most of the day free to make the most of the sandy beaches.

For the more adventure seekers, we take the beautiful 'Ghat' line from Madgaon station to Castle Rock allowing one to experience the marvel engineering of the loco working hard to climb. Not to be missed the Dudh Sagar waterfalls visible across on the other side of the hill.

We catch our late afternoon service for a evening arrival in Udupi town.

## **Saturday 12 October**

Udupi to Mangalore was the first Konkan Railway service that ran in 1993. So, we ride on this to mark our appreciation and dive in the experience of this engineering marvel.

In Mangalore we arrive by lunch time and then, visit to the famous Cashew nut processing factories which is the main business of this city. We also visit the pristine sea side before retiring to our hotel.

## **Sunday 13 October**

A relaxed start where we continue our ride on the great Konkan Railway where it technically terminates just outside of Mangalore and hands over the operation to South-Western Railways. We arrive in Coimbatore by evening and overnight in a hotel.

## **Monday 14 October**

This morning we have a special steam hauled charter train built by the Swiss Locomotive Works X-class rack & pinion section. We ride up to Ooty, a charming hill station in Nilgiris (Blue Mountains) district constructed by the British during the Raj.

We arrive by afternoon and retire to our charming resort overlooking the valley and tea gardens!

## **Tuesday 15 October**

Free day in Ooty with an optional possibility to ride on the regular service from Ooty to Coonoor return journey.

## **Wednesday 16 October**

We drive down to Coimbatore where we have the afternoon service train from Coimbatore station to – Cochin arriving early evening! We will transfer to our hotel in the fort Kochi, traditional name of Cochin old Portuguese & Dutch colonial areas & market.

## **Thursday 17 October**

We enjoy the sights of Cochin with a guided walk through the old city witnessing life on the lake with it's popular & traditional Chinese Fishing Nets being lowered for a catch and the business thereafter!

A short drive to Alleppey, mecca of Kerala backwaters! Where we embark our exclusive & traditional style Kerala houseboats for an overnight lazy cruising on the Vembanad lake. Lunch and dinner cooked and served on board whilst you gaze through the lakes & lagoons and plenty of birds chirping around!

## **Friday 18 October**

After breakfast, unwillingly, but we will have to disembark our charming stay on board the houseboat. We are transferred to Cochin where we will have an exciting visit to the Spice market where we will witness the large Godowns full of aromatic spices & get to see the auctioning! We then transfer to Cochin international airport for our connecting flight to UK..

## **Saturday 19 October**

...Britain, arriving in the morning.

## **What's included**

Economy class flights from the London.

Continental breakfasts are included at most of our accommodations; however, houseboat is on full board (including lunch & dinner), but otherwise meals are NOT included, except where noted. Accommodation is in reasonable hotels ranging from 4-star and above with a mix of heritage, which we have used in the past and are catering to overseas tourists. We include all transport, train rides and excursions as set out in the itinerary and the services of a Darjeeling Tours Limited Tour Manager. (Personal and incidental expenses are not included).

**Fully inclusive price from London: £ TBA (based on two people sharing).**

**Ground only price: £ TBA (based on two people sharing)**

**Single supplement £ TBA**

## **Flights**

If you would prefer to travel to India from a regional UK airport, we will do our best to find you something suitable. It usually works well from Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh, and can sometimes work from other airports too. Please note that all carriers, train times and flight times are subject to change at any time.