

Konkan Railways & beyond

4 – 19 October 2024

A less travelled but fascinating railway line built post-independence from about Mumbai to Trivandrum on the south-west coast of India! We travel on the entire Konkan Railway section in parts comfortably experiencing the marvellous railway line!

Starting with the vibrant Bollywood city of Mumbai to sunny beaches of Goa, unexplored Northern Kerala with the famous backwater cruising on Vembanad Lake in an exclusive houseboat. Ending the tour on the mesmerising Kovalam beach where you can extend your holiday for the much needed dose of Vitamin-D.

An off-the-beaten perfect holiday including fascinating train rides, cultural sights, lovely & charming accommodations & finger licking 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 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 & Kovalam.
- Lazy overnight luxury houseboat cruise in Kerala's backwater.
- Spice trading market of Cochin & it's Jewish & Portuguese hold.
- Extend your holiday in Kerala and indulge in some ayurveda massages!
- 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. The city that never sleeps welcomes you to it's abundant Arabian Sea views and to discover it's people!

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! (B,D)

Sunday 6 October

Today we enjoy a guided tour of this lively city that has roughly 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 the shores to see the city getting into it's daily chores. Visit the **Dhobi 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!). (B)

Monday 7 October

Morning transfer to the **Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus** (CSMT or erst 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 (610 mm) narrow gauge heritage mountain railway. Powered by the NDM locos which were originally powered by a ML class when built in 1907 to give a flexible wheelbase before being replaced by diesels in 1982. Darjeeling Himalayan Railway's (DHR) B-class



locomotives which are converted to oil fired were transferred here to do ceremonial runs.

Return from Matheran by late afternoon and catch the local train service from Neral to VT station and then transferred back to our hotel. (B)

Tuesday 8 October

An early breakfast and then a short transfer to CSMT railway station to catch our reserved service train to departing at 0710 hrs to arrive in **Ratnagiri** at 1330 hrs. Our Konkan Railway line expedition has begun! Travelling from a Central Railway zone handing over operations to Konkan Railway zone in **Kolad**. Truly fascinating journey!

Ratnagiri, a port town famous for its **Ratnadurga Fort** which we will aim at visiting this 16th century fort conquered by various dynasties including the great Marathas of the region and finally the British during their Raj.

We will later return to our hotel in town for dinner and overnight stay. (B,D)



Wednesday 9 October

Breakfast at hotel and then we will transfer to Ratnagiri railway station to catch the popular semi-high-speed **Vande Bharat Express** train service at 0950 hrs that is being launched across country! Designed & developed by Integral Coach Factory India (ICF) in Chennai & offering the best hospitality and comfort with food served on board. A modern India experience with warm hospitality!

We will arrive at **Madgaon Junction (Goa)** at 1310 hrs and transferred for three nights to a resort to enjoy the sunset on the Arabian Sea. (B,D)



Thursday 10 October

Free day in Goa to enjoy the sunny beaches and the shacks. 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! (B,D)

Friday 11 October

An exciting excursion ride in the beautiful 'Ghat' section from Madgaon station to **Castle Rock** allowing one to experience the marvel engineering of the line where you will find the scenic beauty with the diesel loco working hard to climb the gradient. Not to be missed the **Dudh Sagar waterfalls** visible across on the other side of the hill.



We will return by road in our coach to stay overnight in Goa. (B,D)

Saturday 12 October

A relaxed start today (As the Goans like it!) for a transfer to Madgaon Jun, for a late morning train at 1030 hrs to arrive in **Mangalore** at 1605 hrs. You will pass the section where the first Konkan Railway service that ran in 1993 from Udipi up to Mangalore.

On arrival in Mangalore we transfer to our hotel for an overnight. (B,D)

Sunday 13 October

Another relaxed start with a late morning train ride at 1105 hrs to arrive in **Calicut (Kozhikode)** at 1417 hrs which is in the state of Kerala. The great Konkan Railway line technically terminates just outside of Mangalore and hands over the operation to South-Western Railways. However, we continue beyond the Konkan Railways to arrive in Calicut, where Vasco Da Gama, the Portuguese explorer arrived in 1498 and was astounded to see the massive spice plantation and trading opportunity besides being credited with the discovery of the sea route to India!

Monday 14 October

We depart from Calicut by morning train at 0859 hrs for **Ernakulam Jn.** (Cochin) to arrive at 1145 hrs.

We will straight transfer via the busy Ernakulam town for our lunch stop before we visit **the Kathakali Dance** performance. Worth a visit to watch this dramatical dance performance depicting a story!

We will check-in our hotel for two nights. (B,D)



Tuesday 15 October

A relaxed start of the day with a local ferry ride from nearby our hotel to the Fort Kochi jetty point and enjoy a stroll to **Mattanchery (Dutch) Palace Museum**, walk through the lovely market area, watch **the Chinese Fishing** nets at sunset.

Return to our hotel by afternoon with time at leisure to enjoy hotel facilities and indulge in Ayurvedic massage and rejuvenate your inner self! Ayurveda is the ancient science of healing common body ailments with the help of various natural oils. (B,D)

Wednesday 16 October

After breakfast, we will have a short road transfer to Alleppey (Alappuzha) jetty point to board our exclusive houseboat and enjoy a very relaxing trip on our way to Lake Vembanad on the famous Kerala backwaters. We will have a comfortable overnight on board.



Lunch and dinner cooked and served on board whilst you gaze through the lakes & lagoons and plenty of birds chirping around! A definite tick on your bucket list! (B,L,D)

Thursday 17 October

After breakfast, unwillingly we disembark at Alleppey jetty point and then a coach transfer to Alleppey railway station to board our lovely coastal view train ride at 1240 hrs to Trivandrum Central railway station arriving at 1505 hrs.



Our coach will meet us at Trivandrum and transfer us to a resort in **Kovalam beach** for two nights (*or more if you choose to extend the stay*). (B,D)

Friday 18 October

Free day on the beach....Relax and enjoy recalling lovely moments and rides through the last two week journey.

Saturday 19 October

An early morning transfer to Trivandrum airport for our connecting via Mumbai to arrive UK by evening....

What's included

- Economy class flights to/from India in fully inclusive price.
- Accommodation in 4-5 star hotels (*or best available locally*).
- Buffet breakfast and dinner daily. Dinner in Mumbai for one night out of three*. Full board (including lunch as well) on the houseboat.
- All transport by deluxe airconditioned vehicles with experienced drivers.
- Train travel in Executive Class or best available as set out in the itinerary.
- Porterage at railway stations on arrival/departure.
- Services of a Darjeeling Tours Limited Tour Manager.
- All tips throughout the tour (except for the Tour Manager) are included and will be dealt with on your behalf.
- A lot more fun & untold authentic insight into India!
- Personal and incidental expenses are not included.

On a daily basis, meals provided are shown with the following key: B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner.

(*) Dinner is included for first night of arrival in Mumbai. There is plenty of choice, both in and out of the hotel. Food is not expensive, and this allows considerable individual flexibility.

The tour

This tour involves travelling on Indian trains in airconditioned class of travel with variety of classes, combination of Executive Class travel with armchair seats on some sectors and on other journeys, two-tier or three-tier berths which are used for sitting during the day travels. Luggage all stations will be carried by the porters up to your carriage.

Price

Per person basis on twin/double sharing basis.

Fully inclusive price from London: **£ 3,699**

Ground only price (international flights excluded): **£ 2,895**

Single supplement: **£ 1099**

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 let us know if you require a Premium Economy or Business and we will be happy to quote the supplement. Please note that all carriers, train times and flight times are subject to change at any time.