

NOTES FOR BIRDERS TO SOUTH INDIA & ANDAMAN ISLANDS

Kalypso Adventures welcomes you to an interesting and productive birding trip to South India. This document provides information about your holiday including information about modes of transport, your guide and about the weather and equipment.

The design of this tour is focused on the selected bird-rich areas covering hot spots in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The tour spans the entire range of altitudes and habitats, thus presenting a unique birding opportunity

VISA

ALL VISITORS TO INDIA MUST OBTAIN A VISA BEFORE DEPARTURE

At Port Blair (Andaman Islands), you will need to fill in a few forms on arrival. No separate entry permit is required prior to arrival.

INFORMATION ON WEATHER, CLIMATE & CLOTHING

In general the weather will be warm and pleasant - hot during the day, except in the hills, where it will be cooler. Please look at the chart below for details.

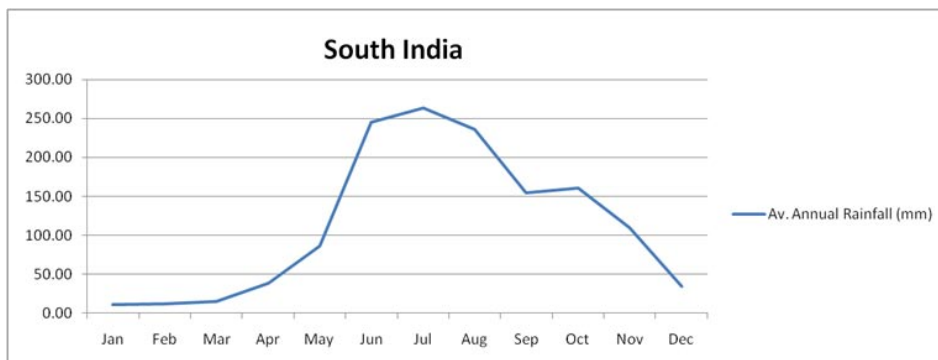
TEMPERATURE PATTERN

Place	Elevation	Temp Range
Bangalore	920 m	14 - 32 C
Mysore	760 m	15 - 34 C
Madumalai	500- 1100m	15 - 35 C
Ooty	2280 m	2 - 25 C
Top Slip	1000m	15 - 25 C
Munnar	1500m	5 - 27 C
Periyar	900 m	10 - 30 C
Thattekkad	90 m	18 - 35 C
Port Blair	0m	20 - 32 C

The coldest months are from December to February. The hottest months are April & May.

RAINFALL PATTERN

The monsoon months are from June to September, with July being the peak rainy month.



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DRESS

You will need cotton wear, with full sleeves for evenings, except at Ooty & Munnar where it will be colder. A raincoat is always a welcome addition since it may rain even in 'non-rainy' season while you are out birding. Suggested list of essentials is given under 'Logistics'.

GUIDE

Your birding guide will be with you throughout the tour. He would be responsible for birding as well as sorting all your logistics during the tour.

ACCOMMODATION

All accommodation on the tour have been carefully chosen for their cleanliness, cuisine, 'birding-friendly' and nearness to birding areas.

FOOD & WATER

Food provided by the hotels will be safe for you - there is little risk to your health. If you wish to buy your own food, snacks or beverages at any time, we recommend that you ask for advice from your guide. In general - hot beverages (tea and coffee) are fine. Fruit juices should be avoided unless freshly squeezed (but you would need to feel comfortable about the cleanliness of the glasses). Fresh fruit for eating that has a skin that can be peeled is fine - e.g. bananas, pineapple, oranges. Snacks that are deep fried in oil are usually fine, providing that the oil is fresh.

TIPPING

Many of our guests have asked us for guidelines on tipping. It is important to get it right (not too much, not too little). Tipping is customary to show your appreciation for the hard work done by the birding guide and the driver & we strongly recommend that you tip them if you have enjoyed the trip. Our guideline figures are:

- Birding guide - INR 500 per day
- Driver - INR 300 per day
- Bell Boys - INR 20 per bag.
- At some hotels, there is 'central tipping' so that everyone including the lowly paid staff gets a share.

These are guideline figures only and we do not want you to be constrained by these figures.

HEALTH CONCERNS

General: India is located in south Asia. Its climate is mostly tropical or sub-tropical and subject to seasonal monsoon winds, especially the southwest rain during summer. (Dec to Mar are dry months)

India is an economically developing democratic republic and has worked very hard to control diseases. Adequate medical care is available in the major population centers, but is usually limited in the rural areas of the country. Many developed countries are utilizing the state-of-the-art medical services available in India. The cost of treatment is much cheaper here in comparison to the same facilities available in advanced countries.

The most important cause of illness of travelers in India is food and waterborne diseases. Viruses, bacteria, or parasites can cause diarrhea. Infections may cause simple diarrhea and vomiting, fever, or, in extreme cases, liver damage (hepatitis).

Malaria: The regions you will be passing is Malaria-free.

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Insurance: We recommended that you take your insurance that covers illnesses and accidents abroad.

Precautions: During this birding trip you need not worry about your fitness if you take simple precautions.:-

- Carry all the important prescriptions and OTC medicines. Do not forget to have the brand names as well as the generic names of the medicines one needs to have.
- Wear a sun hat when exposed.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Do not drink tap water. Use only bottled mineral water which is always kept in the back of your vehicle.
- Carry your personal medical kit and insect repellent.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.
- Do not eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Do not drink beverages with ice.
- Do not eat dairy products unless it is known that they have been pasteurized.
- Avoid handling animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats) to avoid bites and serious diseases.

VACCINATION FORMALITIES

Yellow fever: Although yellow fever does not occur in India, proof of appropriate vaccination may be required depending on countries visited before coming to India. Any person (except infants up to the age of six months) arriving by air or sea without a certificate is detained in isolation for a period up to six days if he or she:

- Arrives within six days of departure from an infected area, or
- Has been in such an area in transit.
- Has come on a ship which has started from or touched at any port in a yellow fever infected area within 30 days of its arrival in India provided such ship has not been disinfected in accordance with the procedure laid down by WHO, or has come by an aircraft that has been in an infected area and has not been disinfected in accordance with Indian or WHO regulations

The following countries and areas are regarded by India as infected:

Angola, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, French Guiana, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Surinam, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Zaire, Zambia.

Malaria: The areas you pass through are malaria-free.

No other vaccination certificate is mandatory, though you may like to consult your doctor for inoculation against typhoid, hepatitis A, and meningitis. Visit your doctor at least 4-6 weeks before the trip to allow time for shots to take effect.

The following vaccinations can be thought about depending upon your doctor's advice:-

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- Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG); Japanese encephalitis, only if planning to visit rural areas for four weeks or more;
- Rabies, if someone is exposed to wild or domestic animals during recreation.

Medical Information Update

Information given above are liable to change from time to time and one should contact the Indian missions of the respective country or the government tourist offices for more information.

LOGISTICS

Footwear

- Trekking/ walking or running shoes (trainers)
- Campshoes or throngs (flip-flops)
- Socks - Cotton. One pair woolen or polypropylene

Clothing

- Sweater or light jacket
- Hiking shorts or skirts
- Light Waterproof jacket / poncho
- Hiking pants
- T-shirts or Blouses
- Underwear
- Sunhat (wide brim preferable)
- Swimwear (optional)

Equipment

- Binoculars
- Small Rucksack (day pack)
- Water bottle
- Flashlight with spare batteries and bulb

Other items

- Toilet articles
- Lighter
- Swiss knife
- Sunblock (at least SPF-35 for the higher altitudes)
- Hand Towels for day use
- Laundry soap
- Personal medical kit
- Pre-moistened towelets
- Sewing kit
- Bandana / sweatband
- Sun glasses

Optional gizmos

- Tripods/ telescopes & allied equipment
- Global positioning system GPS
- Thermometer
- Compass

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- Laptop or Notebook for recording bird lists etc

How to pack ?

Daypack: is a small backpack carried personally through out. We suggest you pack in it -

- Spare pair of socks, hankie and hand towel
- Camera & film
- Binoculars, and bird book
- Bandana / scarf, and sun hat
- Flash light / head light with spare cells
- Sun block lotion
- Chocolates, candy, dry fruit as per choice
- Personal medication
- Sweater or light jacket (when going up the hills)
- Personal documents

Holdall bag / Suitcase: Pack what you need for overnight and subsequent days. Items you are likely to need -

- Sets of spare clothing,
- Trainers and camp slippers
- Spare underwear and hankies
- Personal toilet bag
- Wet-bag for carrying wet clothing

Water Bottle: Suggest carry on person either in day pack or on belt.
