



Society for Asian Art

South India

**Exploring its Living Heritage
of Temples, Art, Architecture
and Crafts**

January 17th - February 2nd, 2024

Itinerary

Itinerary

Day 1

Wednesday, January 17th 2024

Arrival at Chennai. You will be transferred from the airport by taxi to the luxurious Leela Palace Hotel, an amalgamation of royal Indian hospitality with uber-modern amenities. Look forward to a Welcome Reception with wine and appetizers to meet your guides and fellow travelers.

(Breakfast, Wine and Snacks)

Day 2

Thursday, January 18th 2024

This morning, visit the Chennai Museum to see their spectacular collection of bronzes, guided by the scholar Dr Sharada Srinivasan, an archaeometallurgist and an accomplished Bharatnatyam dancer.

Enjoy a private cultural performance with traditional Indian dance followed by a Welcome Dinner

(Special dinner)

Stay at Leela Palace
Chennai
Days 1,2





Day 3

Friday, January 19th 2024

We pack our bags and head to Dakshinchitra Heritage Museum, an unusual, living open-air museum. Walk through the 18 traditional houses here to get a flavour of the different cultures of south India. We will have an exclusive interaction with the architect of the museum, Dr Benny Kuriakose.

Later today, we move to Mamallapuram (formerly Mahabalipuram) a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its rock-cut shrines, ancient sculptures, and temples from the 6th- 9th cent CE. To walk us through the meanings in the monuments, we have the scholar, art historian Gayathri Iyer.

Our hotel in Mamallapuram is Radisson Blu, a charming beachfront property.

(B)

Day 4

Saturday, January 20th 2024

Spend the day exploring Mamallapuram's cave temples, the massive and dramatic relief sculpture known as Arjuna's Penance, a 1,800-year-old temple that was uncovered by a tsunami, and the Shore Temple which stands overlooking the sea. In the evening, we visit a traditional stone sculptor's workshop (to be confirmed)

(B)

Stay at Radisson Blu,
Mamallapuram
Days 3, 4



Day 5

Sunday, January 21st 2024

Experience the antiquity of the 7th century Kailasanathar Temple complex and the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple in Kanchipuram, famous for their animated carvings depicting scenes from Hindu mythology. Art historian Gayathri Iyer will accompany us to explain what we see. Enjoy a hearty and delicious south Indian lunch and visit a weaver's workshop to watch the transformation of silk yarn into dazzling silk sarees.

We move to Pondicherry and stay at The Promenade Hotel.

(B, L)

Day 6

Monday, January 22nd 2024

A rest and leisure day for you at Pondicherry, a coastal town that is a charming blend of French and Indian cultures. We suggest strolls through the French Quarter, the Tamil Quarter and sampling some of the town's many quaint little cafes. In the evening, scholar Anirudh Kanisetti who will deliver a lecture on The Cholas.

(B)





Day 7
Tuesday, January 23rd 2024

Scholar Anirudh Kanisetti will walk us through the temple in Chidambaram, home of Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer. It is famous for its gold-plated superstructure, bronze idols, numerous halls, temple tanks and for its depictions of traditional south Indian dance.

Later today, we visit the 11th century Brihadeshwara Temple in Gangaikondacholapuram, a part of the Great Living Chola Temples UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will also stop by at an excavation site where archaeologists have unearthed the remains of a Chola palace.

In the evening, we have a second lecture by Anirudh Kanisetti on the Cholas. Tonight's stay is at Cholaa Dynasty Hotel, Kumbakonam.

(B, packed lunch)

Day 8
Wednesday, January 24th 2024

This morning, we visit the gorgeously carved Airavatesvara Temple in Darasuwrām, also part of the Great Living Chola Temples UNESCO World Heritage Site. After a traditional South Indian lunch, we will visit a workshop Swamimalai to see the intricacies of making bronze idols through the lost-wax process.

Our stay tonight is at the Great Trails Riverview Resort in Thanjavur, which is situated on the banks of a river.

(B, L)





Day 9
Thursday, January 25th 2024

On the cards today: Thanjavur, the erstwhile Chola capital that is still a hub of Tamil culture. We visit the Thanjavur palace complex, wander through its grand Audience Hall, explore the Chola bronzes in the palace museum and drop in at the Saraswati Mahal library to look at its collection of manuscripts. We have lunch in a local restaurant. We meet painters who work in the traditional Thanjavur style of painting, which among other things, uses gold foil. And we marvel with scholar Anirudh Kanisetti at the gigantic Brihadeswara Temple, also known as the Big Temple, built in 1010 CE, a part of the Great Living Chola Temples UNESCO World Heritage Site.

(B, L)

Day 10
Friday, January 26th 2024

Hobnob with the scion of the erstwhile ruler of Thanjavur today (subject to his availability). Later, we drive to Srirangam, where we wander through the labyrinthine Ranganathaswamy temple (dedicated to Vishnu), one of the world's largest functioning temple complexes.

Our stay in Trichy will be at the Courtyard by Marriott.

(B)

Day 11
Saturday, January 27th 2024

If time permits we will make an early morning visit to Rangathaswamy Temple before heading to the airport. We catch a flight to Kochi in the state of Kerala, deservedly tag-lined God's Own Country! We stay at The Malabar House (or similar), a boutique heritage hotel with a history going back to 1755.

(B)



Day 12
Sunday, 28th January 2024

Our morning excursion takes us to Cheraman Mosque, one of India's oldest mosques that, according to local lore, was built during the Prophet's time. We will visit Paravur synagogue, built in 1615, to see a beautiful blend of Kerala-style architecture with Jewish traditions. We will also see Dutch-influenced Kerala architecture at the 17-18th century Paliam Palace.

In the evening, a lecture by historian Dr PJ Cherian on the flourishing Indo-Roman trade 2000 years ago at the port of Muziris aka Pattanam, a village near Kochi.

(B)

Day 13
Monday, 29th January 2024

Enjoy a relaxed morning in Kochi. We suggest a wander around the Fort Kochi area which is dotted with cafes, beautiful bungalows and venerable old trees. Later in the day, we catch a flight to Bangalore where we will check in at West End Hotel, a 136-year-old heritage property with a deep and varied history.

(B)

Day 14
Tuesday, 30th January 2024

This morning, we head over to the Museum of Art and Photography to see its collection of photography, digital art and objects from India and elsewhere in South Asia, dating from the 10th century to today. After lunch at a local restaurant, we have a private gathering at a collector's home to see his vast collection of tribal carpets from countries along the Silk Roads. And then its time for a private celebratory dinner at the 140-year-old Bowring Club.

(B, L, D)

Stay at West End
Bangalore
Days 13, 14, 16



Day 15
Wednesday, 31st January 2024

We head out of Bangalore to the lands of the Hoysala kings, to see the 12th century Chennakeshava temple in Belur, known for its ornate sculpture and for its unusual stellate plan. Our stay tonight is at Hoysala Village Resort, Hassan.

(B)

Day 16
Thursday, 1st February 2024

A morning visit to Halebidu (25 km, drive time 35 minutes) to see the stunning 12th century Hoysaleswara temple, known for its walls which are completely clothed in sculpture. We will also visit a 12th century Jain temple in the same town. Later, we head back to Bangalore to the West End.

(B)

Day 17
Friday, 2nd February 2024

On our last day, a quick visit to the National Gallery of Modern Art followed by a tour around the Tudor-inspired Bangalore Palace built in the late 1800s. You have the afternoon for any last-minute shopping you may want to do before you board your flights back home that night.

(B)



ABOUT THE SCHOLARS AND EXPERTS

Dr. Sharada Srinivasan

Dr Sharada Srinivasan is a Professor in the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru. She is an archeologist researching ancient mining, archaeometallurgy and archeological sciences. Prof. Srinivasan has made pioneering contributions by exploring engineering applications in the materials characterization of archaeological metals, early ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy and artisanal technologies. She has written extensively on archeometric characterization and finger-printing of metal artefacts and prized South Indian and Chola metal icons using frontline lead isotope ratio geo-chemistry and analysis and the early use of leaded bronze, brass and metallic zinc. She received the Padma Shri award of the Government of India for her work in Archeology in 2019. She was elected as International Honorary Member of American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2021. She is Fellow of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. She is also an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer.

Gayathri Iyer

Gayathri Iyer is an art historian and a Bharatanatyam dancer with a special interest in the Abhinaya tradition of the Kalanidhi Narayanan style. She has trained under Bragha Bessell, Vigneshwary Jeyagandhi and Minal Prabhu of Kalakshetra. Upon completion of a Master’s Degree in Arts and Aesthetics with a specialisation in Bharatanatyam in the context of Visual Arts, Theatre and Cinema, she obtained an MPhil in Indian Art History from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. She is currently working on her PhD under the art historian Prof Naman Ahuja.

Dr. Benny Kuriakose

Dr Benny Kuriakose is an architect and designer known for his work on sustainable architecture. He is the founder of Benny Kuriakose and Associates, an architect and consulting company in Chennai, India. He received the Charles Wallace India Trust Award for a Master’s degree in Conservation Studies from the University of York, UK, and earned his PhD from the Indian Institute of Technology in Madras, India. Benny is more for his work for the design of the public buildings and the transplantation of the buildings in the Dakshinachitra heritage village in Chennai. Major architectural works include the Muziris Heritage Project in Kochi, the design of the tsunami-affected villages of Chinnangudi, and Tarangambadi in Nagapattinam District, and others. Benny has offered his services as a consultant to UNDP, UNESCO, various State Governments, and other organizations.

Anirudh Kanisetti

Anirudh Kanisetti is a history researcher and writer. He is the author of the critically acclaimed Lords of the Deccan: Southern India from the Chalukyas to the Cholas, presenting a new history of early medieval India. He has received grants from the Princeton Center for Digital Humanities and the India Foundation for the Arts and his writing has been featured in The Hindu, The New Indian Express, LiveMint, and The Print, among others.

Dr. PJ Cherian

Dr PJ Cherian is a historian, former Director of the Kerala Council for Historical Research and is now director of the PAMA Institute for the Advancement of Transdisciplinary Archaeological Sciences.

Tour Operator :
CARNELIAN HERITAGE CONSULTANTS LLP (CHC)



CHC is a Bangalore-based niche travel company specializing in in-depth tours to places of historical, cultural and heritage interest in India.

Our team members:

Pankaj Modi

Pankaj Modi is a conservation architect with more than 20 years of experience in the field of conservation and restoration of heritage buildings. He has done a specialisation in Wood Architecture from Norway. He has been involved in several restoration projects around the country with both government and private agencies. He recently co-authored a book Domes and Vaults in South India. He is a visiting faculty in several architecture schools in Bangalore. He is Technical Co-ordinator at the Bangalore Chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). Pankaj loves working on restoration of old buildings, taking their stories to people and making them engage with history.

Aravind Chandramohan

Aravind Chandramohan is Founder Director of a city-based power tools manufacturing company. He is co-founder of a very popular restaurant in his home town of Tumkur, near Bangalore. He brings to Carnelian his entrepreneurial skills from his wide-ranging interests in industrial design, hospitality, furniture and architecture. Aravind is Co-Convenor at the Bangalore Chapter of INTACH. Aravind is a connoisseur of food, and loves automobiles and motorbikes.

Meera Iyer

Meera Iyer is a writer and independent researcher. She is the author of the popular book Discovering Bengaluru: History. Neighbourhoods. Walks on Bengaluru’s history and heritage; and the editor of Eleven Stops to the Present, an anthology of children’s historical fiction set in Bengaluru. Her other recent writing includes an essay on Hoysala temples in the book Where the Gods Dwell: Thirteen Temples and their (hi)stories. She is a columnist with a local newspaper and has hundreds of articles on history, heritage and culture in several newspapers and magazines. Meera has a PhD in Forest Ecology from Michigan State University. She loves forests, potsherds, chocolate and green tea.

