



India

Kerala and the Western Ghats

14 Days

Kerala, a state in southern India, is famous for its palm-lined beaches, legendary backwaters and rolling hills lined with vibrantly green, tea and spice plantations. Kerala is a tropical symphony of wildlife, pristine hiking trails, glistening canals, hill stations and ancient temples. This expedition brings you into the thick of it, trekking through the Western Ghats and living alongside the locals on project. Let's not forget the cycling, kayaking and river cruises! This is an enchanting expedition in a world away from the frenzy of northern India. An expedition here is sure to stay with you forever.



[Learn more about our Carbon Labels](#)

Your Recommended Expedition Itinerary

Days 1 - 2	Depart from the UK, Arrive Kerala On arrival in Kochi, we will be met by our STC Leader and transferred directly to our hotel. After freshening up, we will set out to explore the heritage city, Fort Cochin and see the world-famous Kathakali art. In the evening we will have a welcome briefing and enjoy our first meal in Kochi.	LD
Day 3	Kochi to Suryanelli Base Camp After breakfast we transfer to Suryanelli, a small town near the famous Munnar hill station. This is our gateway into the stunning Western Ghats Mountain range, a rich, bio-diverse area. Here we will be surrounded by flocks of birds and rolling hills dotted with tea and cardamom plantations established in the late 19th century. We will reach Suryanelli by midday and begin our trek, 6km through grassland and pine forest until we reach Kalypso Camp, where we will overnight.	BLD
Day 4	Trek to Anaerangal Lakeside Today we'll rise for an early morning climb of Phantom's Head, the tallest rock feature nearby. Once we reach the summit, we can watch the spectacular sunrise over the Papathy Shola (butterfly forest). There is a mass migration of butterflies here in October and November. Our trek continues to Papathy Shola Village, through cardamom plantations and on to Muthuvankudy. Finally, we reach a settlement on the shores Anaerangal Lake where we camp tonight. Anaerangal is a large, placid lake which forms a source of water for all farmers downstream.	BLD
Day 5	Mathikettan Shola Trek Today we will trek from the village to Shantanpara Camp, approx 14kms. The route begins in grasslands until we reach the boundary of Mathikettan Shola National Park. Here the landscape transforms into dense forests and flora & fauna of giant proportions! The national park is home to a variety of wildlife which we will try to spot including the Malabar Giant Squirrel, gaur, sambar and elephants! This afternoon our trek weaves through plantations and local settlements where we can meet local farmers and learn more about their daily lifestyles. Tonight, we camp at Shantanpara Camp, overlooking the national park.	BLD
Day 6	Chaturangapara Trek After a quick transfer, we begin our climb up to a mountain pass at 2,200m. This is the highest point of our trek and once we reach the top, we are rewarded with beautiful views over the vast plains of Tamil Nadu. This is a more challenging trekking day with increasingly steeper and rocky trails through the Western Ghats, until finally we begin our final and gradual descent back into elephant territory.	BLD
Day 7	Chaturangapara to Haripad This morning we enjoy a relaxing breakfast and then transfer to our project in Haripad (approx. 5hrs). This is an ancient Buddhist town known as the land of art, dance, music and the 'land of snake boats'. There are many schools in need of renovation in Haripad and the group can assist with various restoration projects.	BLD



Days 8 - 11**Haripad Project**

During our time in Haripad we will assist with a school restoration or construction project. The exact tasks will be confirmed closer to the time of departure and following consultation with the school to find a sustainable solution to their needs. During our project we will stay with the local community and learn about daily life in rural India. In the evenings we can explore the charming temple town of Haripad.

BLD

As this is typically a very low-income area, there are two common problems faced by schools. One is inadequate toilet facilities and the other is a lack of an internal water supply. These are projects which are in much need and can be achieved with additional fundraising from the school in the UK. We are likely to work alongside local tradesmen during the day to complete our tasks. There will be plenty of opportunity to interact with the local villages and students.

Days 12 - 13**Alleppey, Cycles, Kayaks & Cruise**

We wave farewell to the friends we have made and transfer to Alleppey. Alleppey (or Alappuzha) is best known for houseboat cruises along the rustic Kerala backwaters, a network of tranquil canals and lagoons. Having checked in to our hotel we will freshen up and head out for a cycling tour of the local area.

BLD

This morning we will explore these legendary backwaters and beaches by kayak. After lunch we can relax and explore the local markets. Tonight, we will step aboard our private houseboat for an unforgettable dinner whilst watching the sunset.

Day 14**Fly to London**

After an exhilarating trip, we take our return flight to the UK.

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Look what's included:

- International flights
- All accommodation, transportation and activities
- All food as described above
- Local, bi-lingual, first-aid qualified STC leader
- Parent and student trip launch presentation
- Pre-travel training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for school staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Emergency Medical & Repatriation Insurance

- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Donations to two carbon & conservation charities
- Free Fairtrade t-shirt for every participant and teacher
- Free travel guide book to your destination

What's not included:

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations or Covid tests

- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters (ask for guidance)
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Personal effects and cancellation insurance



A word about Responsible Tourism

On our expeditions and educational journeys, we strive to connect teachers and students with the people they meet, nurture the cultures they experience and protect the beautiful environments they are lucky enough to explore.

Many companies talk the talk, few truly walk the walk. We are far from perfect, but we are leading the way in sustainability in the school travel sector. In 2018 we were the first UK travel company to become **Travelife Certified** – a verified sustainability certificate formally recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.



Trees for Life

This is our passion, and we'd love to tell you more about it in due course. In the meantime, for more information on some of the steps we take as a company to make our operations more sustainable, please visit:

<https://www.thestc.co.uk/travel/what-do-we-do/>

Physical Rating for this trip: Grade 3



Moderate physical activities are included in Grade 3 trips. Good health and reasonable fitness are important to get the most out of the trip. Trips of this grading are likely to include some walking at moderate altitude (up to 2,500m) and occasional longer/harder days may be involved, with between five and seven hours of walking on certain days. The trip may contain other activities such as cycling or rafting which also require physical effort and a reasonable level of fitness. Some steady preparation and an increase if your underlying fitness levels would help you get the most from this grade trip.

Cultural Rating for this trip: Grade 4



Students joining trips at this level will find the comforts of home are more of a rarity – or viewed another way, a welcome luxury. English is unlikely to be widely spoken and the food will be quite different to home, perhaps for extended sections of the trip. You should observe local customs so not to cause offence. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty and accommodation in some locations is likely to be basic. Whilst a challenge, destinations and trips at cultural level 4 are also a fantastic opportunity to see a very different part of the world.



Travel Safety & Other Expedition Training

Preparing students and teachers for their upcoming adventure is an opportunity to teach important life skills and a vital part of our overall approach to safety management. Please ask for your quote for the training schedule specific to your expedition. Topics covered will include:

Responsible Tourism workshop

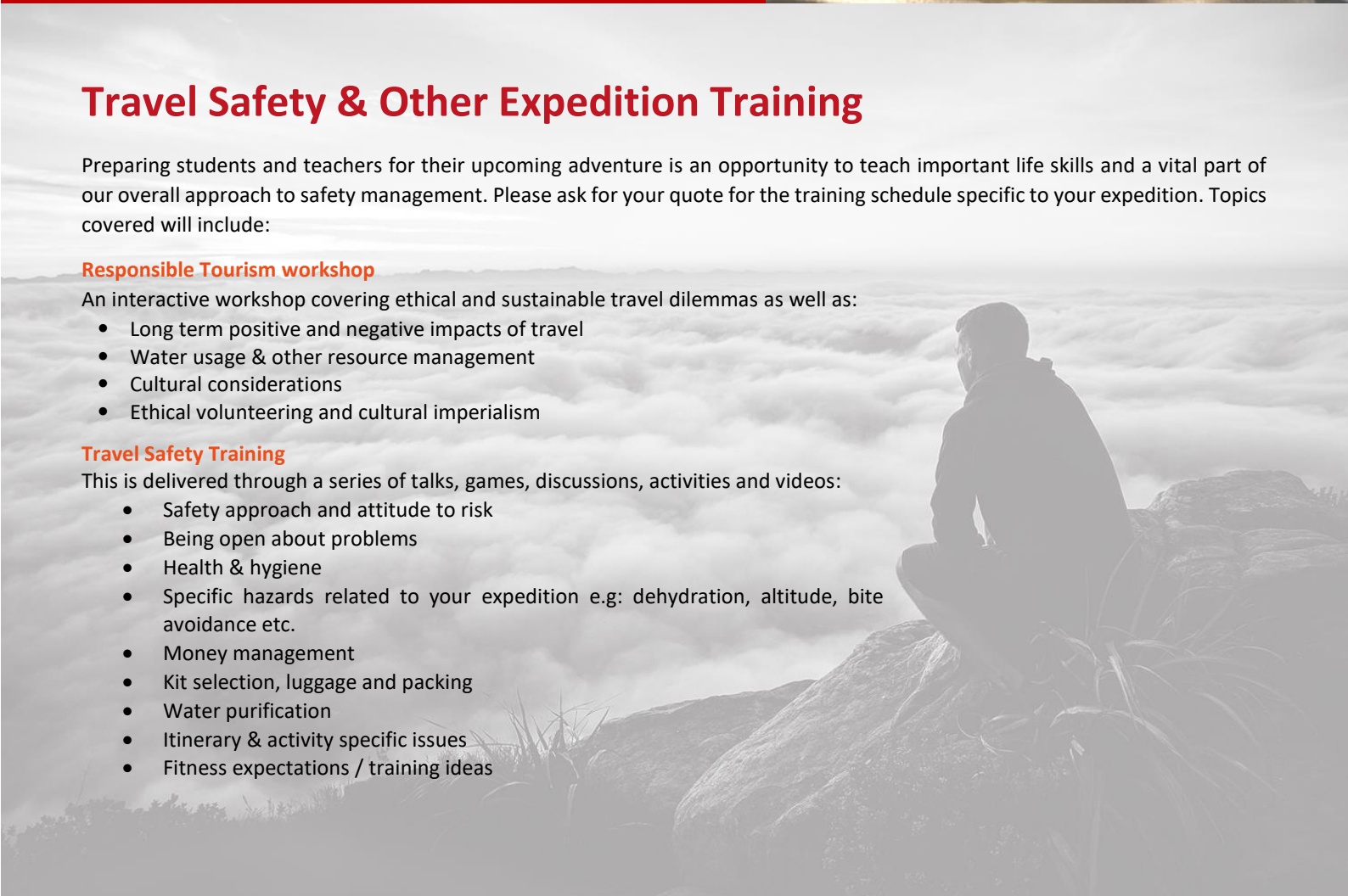
An interactive workshop covering ethical and sustainable travel dilemmas as well as:

- Long term positive and negative impacts of travel
- Water usage & other resource management
- Cultural considerations
- Ethical volunteering and cultural imperialism

Travel Safety Training

This is delivered through a series of talks, games, discussions, activities and videos:

- Safety approach and attitude to risk
- Being open about problems
- Health & hygiene
- Specific hazards related to your expedition e.g: dehydration, altitude, bite avoidance etc.
- Money management
- Kit selection, luggage and packing
- Water purification
- Itinerary & activity specific issues
- Fitness expectations / training ideas





A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your expedition journey

1 Ask for your personalised quote & further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your expedition itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an adventure that's just right for you and your students. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk and threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your Pre-Booking Information Pack too.

3 Arrange an expedition launch evening

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the expedition with a comprehensive information evening covering the itinerary, safety management, the build-up to the trip and lots more. There is also plenty of opportunity for questions.



The home of the modern, innovative school expedition, where a sustainable, ethical approach guarantees unique experiences and a life enhancing adventure.



Our school trips and educational tours are all about maximising the learning opportunities of travel. It's all here, the humble school tour has just come of age.



Adventures, holidays and cultural journeys for teachers looking to 'Escape the Classroom' and discover more about our amazing world, its people and places.



"I am being completely serious when I say that I won't ever run a school trip without you guys. I trust you and your team completely - and the in-country staff that you carefully cultivate and train are a cut above the rest."

Teacher feedback, King's High Warwick

Contact Us:

STC Expeditions, 6b King Street, Exeter, EX1 1BH

t: 01392 660056 | e: schools@thestc.co.uk | w: www.thestc.co.uk

