

14 Days

India

Fairtrade and the Western Ghats

Kerala, a state in southern India, is famous for its palm-lined beaches, legendary backwaters and rolling hills lined with vibrant green tea and spice plantations. Kerala is a tropical symphony of wildlife, pristine hiking trails, glistening canals, hill stations and ancient temples. This expedition takes us from trekking through cloud forests to a refurbishment school project in rural Haripad. We will also learn first hand about Fairtrade Organic Farms and the lives of local farmers. Let's not forget the cycling, kayaking and river cruises too! This is an enchanting journey in a world away from the frenzy of northern India.



Why Fairtrade?

Imagine what life would be like if only **one** type of career was available to you. Imagine if that job **wasn't** guaranteed or secured by a contract. Imagine if, after all the hard work you do, you're **not paid enough** to provide for yourself and your family. This is the reality for many farmers around the world. **Fairtrade** is working hard to change it.

What is Fairtrade?

Fairtrade is a global movement, represented in the UK by the Fairtrade Foundation www.fairtrade.org.uk. Fairtrade is all about better prices and working conditions, encouraging **sustainability** and ensuring fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. It's about tackling poverty in **communities** and working to ensure farmers earn a **fair wage** to pay for their basic needs like food, clean water, education and housing.

Fairtrade & STC Expeditions

As a leading expedition company in responsible travel, STC Expeditions was founded on **ethical business values** and this is also what Fairtrade is all about. Travel and tourism has the potential to bring a huge positive impact to the communities we visit. For example, we employ local Expedition Leaders from your destination rather than sending ones from the UK. We also hire local skilled workers to help on projects and use local and independent service providers such as hotels and restaurants wherever possible. These are just a few examples. By using an ethical approach, we are helping to **put more money into the local economy**. And if you ever pop into our office in Exeter, you can join us for a Fairtrade coffee and chocolate!

**"People know Fairtrade and see the label, but don't get to see what it means on the other end." L.W.
(student)**

What do our Fairtrade trips involve?

- * **Inspirational** educational journeys in southern India and Ghana
- * **Visit** Fairtrade certified farms
- * **Meet** local farmers & workers
- * **Learn, experience & discuss** human right topics and empowerment



Recommended expedition itinerary

Day
1-2

Depart the UK on an overnight flight and arrive Kerala

On arrival in Kochi, we meet our local STC Expedition Leader and transfer to our hotel. After freshening up, we set out to visit the heritage city, Fort Cochin and see the world famous Kathakali art. This evening we have a welcome briefing and enjoy our first dinner in Kochi, followed by a Kathakali Dance performance in the evening.

Day
3

Bananas about Coffee

After a leisurely breakfast we set off to visit one of the largest organic producers of coffee, spices and rubber in India. The organisation is owned and managed by the farmers themselves. A morning lecture gives us an insight into sustainable farming practices, marketing and the exportation of organic products from India.

This afternoon we head further from the city to visit a local farmhouse and learn to make a traditional banana leaf 'sadhya' lunch. Next is our first visit to a Fairtrade certified farm where we have a guided tour of the farm and its crops of fruit trees, spices, coffee and vegetables. This is followed by a session planting our own fruit seedlings! Coffee fans can also learn the four stages of coffee tasting or 'cupping' - most likely the freshest coffee you've ever had!

Day
4

Trek 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, an area rich in bio-diversity. 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 should reach Suryanelli by midday and after lunch we begin our trek, 6km through grassland and pine forest, until we reach Kalypso Camp, where we stay overnight.

Day
5

Trek to Anaerangal Lakeside

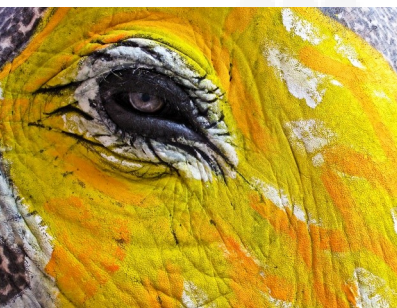
Today we rise for an early morning climb of Phantom's Head, the tallest rock feature nearby. Once we reach the summit, we can watch the spectacular sunrise over the Papathy Shola (butterfly forest). There is a mass migration of butterflies here in October and November. Our trek continues to Papathy Shola Village, through cardamom plantations and on to Muthuvankudy. Finally, we reach a settlement on the shores of Anaerangal Lake where we camp tonight. Anaerangal is a large, placid lake which forms a source of water for all farmers downstream.

Day
6

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.





Day
7-9

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.

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.

Day
10-11

Fairtrade Experiences

Over the next two days we really get to grips with Fairtrade and projects in Kerala. We spend time with the local farmers, workers and community to learn about their daily lives, the challenges they face and what Fairtrade means to them. We overnight in homestays in the community and learn to cook ethnic dishes using organic and local ingredients.

Munnar is well known for growing some of the best tea in the world, helped by its year round cool climate. It became a hotspot for tea cultivation having been introduced by the British during the colonial rule. We explore the seemingly endless tea plantations, estates and gardens before visiting the 100 year old Lockhart Tea Factory. We hear from social service organisations that work to connect and empower marginal spice farmers across the southern districts, by providing assistance in improving the quality of products and ensuring farmers receive the premium price.

Be prepared to get hands on - harvesting our own crops, farming with traditional methods, tasting exotic spices and fruits and living alongside the locals.

Day
12-13

Alleppey, Cycles, Kayaks & Cruise

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 head out for a cycling tour of the local area.

Upon reaching the more remote backwater areas, we get stuck in with our own Environment Clean Up Project and help to clear waste in and alongside the waterways.



On day 13 we 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 adventure in southern India, we transfer to the airport in time for our flight back to the UK. We return with a far deeper understanding of life in Kerala and the importance of buying Fairtrade.

Further information

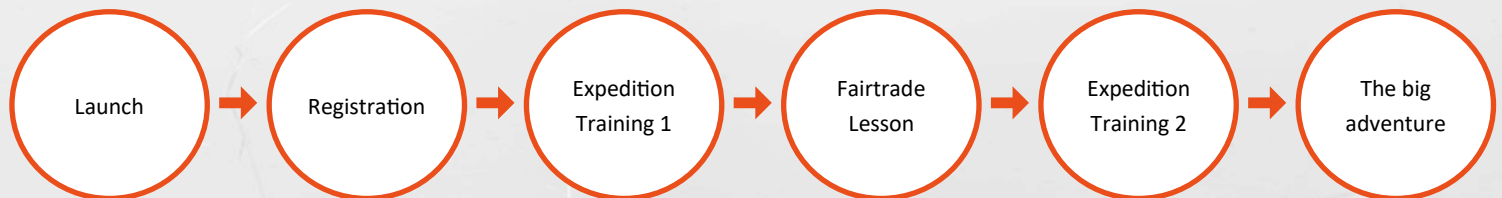
Look what's included!

- International flights
- All accommodation
- All food
- All transportation and activities
- Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local expedition leader
- Parent and student expedition launch evening
- Comprehensive pre-expedition training programme
- **Fairtrade** interactive lesson for group
- **Fairtrade** lesson materials
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel 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
- Carbon offsetting of all flights
- Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

What's excluded?

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Cancellation and personal effects insurance

Your expedition timeline



Physical expedition rating:



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

Culture shock rating:



Students should expect some culture shock. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty. The food will be quite different to home and English, whilst still spoken, will be less prevalent. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and get the most out of your trip. We're likely to visit remoter locations on this tour where access to western style services may be sporadic. Often on trips of this grading there are parts of the itinerary which are more remote, interspersed with sections which are more 'comfortable'.



A journey of 1,000 miles...

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



1 Get your tailor-made proposal and 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 itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination 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 at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the expedition with a comprehensive information evening with opportunity for questions.



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