

SKILL BASED ELECTIVE III (V SEMESTER)

TOURISM PRODUCT - 3

Unit I: Geography of Tourism – South Indian Culture – Art & Architecture – Temples in west coast – Thiruvananthapuram and Guruvayur.

Unit II: Temples in Karnataka – Saravabelagula, Beblur – Hampi – Halebidu – Garden City Bangalore.

Unit III: Heritage Tourism – Eco Tourism – Cultural Tourism – Sports Tourism – Health Tourism Adventure Tourism.

Unit IV: Temples in Tamil Nadu – Grand Temple in Thanjavur – Airavatheswara Temple in Darapuram – Cave Temples in Mamallapuram – Meenakshi Temples in Madurai – Church in Velankanni, Durgam in Nagore.

Unit V: Tourism marketing – purpose of Tourism marketing – marketing information systems (MIS) – Tourism promoting strategy – Tourism planning – Tourism advertisement strategy - publicity – overseas marketing and domestic marketing.

Reference Books:

1. Rometa Chawla – Economics of tourism and Development 2002
2. K.K.Sharma – Tourism and Economics Development 2003
3. M.Plankaj Bhalla – potential of Tourism in study of Himachal Pradesh 2004.
4. Diamond J. – Tourism role in economic development and cultural change 2004.
5. J. Jafari – Economic costs of tourism Developing countries 2002.

‘The activities of a person travelling to a place outside his or her usual environment for less than a specified period of time and whose main purpose of travel is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited’.

Geography of Tourism

Tourism geography is the study of travel and tourism, as an industry and as a social and cultural activity. Tourism geography covers a wide range of interests including the environmental impact of tourism, the geographies of tourism and leisure economies, answering tourism industry and management concerns and the sociology of tourism and locations of tourism.

Geography is fundamental to the study of tourism, because tourism is geographical in nature. Tourism occurs in places, it involves movement and activities between places and it is an activity in which both place characteristics and personal self-identities are formed, through the relationships that are created among places, landscapes and people. Physical geography provides the essential background, against which tourism places are created and environmental impacts and concerns are major issues that must be considered in managing the development of tourism places.

Geography and tourism are two terms predestined to be joined because every geographer has to necessarily be doubled by the qualities of a tourist and reciprocally, we can say that in every tourist there is a hidden geographer, because the intelligent tourist is actually a geographer that has not discovered himself.

Critical tourism geographies apply critical geography theory to tourism issues. Some of the major perspective of this approach include:

- Tourism as a force for social change, exploitation and empowerment, including issues of commodification, consumption and place creation
- Social justice, environmental justice, and inequality in tourism, as seen in gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability
- Identity, exclusion and hegemony in postcolonial and heritage readings of tourism
- Activism, action research, sustainability and environmental change in tourism

Importance of Geography tourism

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Characteristics Geography Tourism

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- Rural tourism: Focused on countryside
- Urban tourism: Focused on town & cities
- Spa tourism: Travel for health & wellness
- Sport tourism: Focused on spectators travelling to sports events.
- Eco tourism: Based on nature
- Heritage tourism: Focused on heritage cities and Heritage buildings.

Geography Includes

1. **Physical Geography:** Physical geography (also known as geosystems or physiography) is one of the two major sub-fields of geography. Physical geography is that branch of natural science which deals with the study of processes and patterns in the natural environment like the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, and geosphere, as opposed to the cultural or built environment, the domain of human geography.
 - a. Geomorphology. (Surface of Earth)
 - b. Hydrology. (Movement ex: Water, Space)
 - c. Glaciology. (Ice)
 - d. Bio-geography. (faunal/ecology)
 - e. Climatology.
 - f. Meteorology. (contrast of climatology)
 - g. Pedology. (Soil)
 - h. Palaeogeography. (Historical or human cultural)
 - i. Coastal geography. (Ocean and Land interface)
 - j. Oceanography. (Seas and Oceans)
 - k. Environmental Geography.
2. **Human Geography:** Human geography is a branch of geography that focuses on the study of patterns and processes that shape the human society. It encompasses the human, political, cultural, social, and economic aspects. It is further divided into various sub-branches.
 - a. Cultural geography.
 - b. Development geography.
 - c. Economic geography.
 - d. Health geography.
 - e. Political geography.
 - f. Demography.
 - g. Religion.
 - h. Transportation.
 - i. Tourism geography.
 - j. Urban geography.
3. **Regional Geography:** Regional geography is a branch of geography that studies the world's regions. A region itself is defined as a part of the Earth's surface with one or many similar characteristics that make it unique from other areas. Regional geography studies the specific unique characteristics of places related to their culture, economy, topography, climate, politics and environmental factors such as their different species of flora and fauna.
 - a. Macro-region.
 - b. Micro-region.
 - c. Meso-region.

The Role of Tourism Geography

As the importance and popularity of tourism increased, especially in the last two or three decades, becoming one of the biggest industries in the world, so did the role of tourism in geography and its study. While before there, were few mentions of tourism related facts in any book or research of geography, today we cannot imagine any geographical descriptions without a separate chapter on tourism. Still rather raw and simple, L. Merlo (1969) considers this science as being a branch of geography that studies the position and appearance of tourist centers, their individual natural and cultural-historical characteristics, the attractions and traditions in the context of the area where they are found, the transportation network assuring the accessibility and the links with other tourist centers. Tourism is essentially a geographical phenomenon, regarding the transfer of people and services through space and time, so a special domain dedicated to the research of the interconnections between tourism and geography was inevitable. Although the scientific field

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is new, the connections of geography and travel can be traced to ancient times, when geographers had no other way of describing the world than traveling and seeing it for themselves.

South Indian Culture

South Indian culture refers to the culture of the South Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana. South Indian culture though with its visible differences forms an important part of the Indian culture. The South Indian Culture is essentially the celebration of the eternal universe through the celebration of the beauty of the body and motherhood

Cultural Attractions in South India

The distinctive culture of south India (encompassing the states of Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu) lends itself to a number of unique and fascinating attractions. These south India cultural attractions will provide you with an unforgettable glimpse into the south Indian way of life.

- **South Indian Food:** If you love seafood, you'll find dining in Kerala and other coastal parts of south India a real treat. The food in Kerala is coconut-based, however the fiery dishes of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh might be too much for some unaccustomed western palates. Many travellers do love Tamil Nadu's idlis though, and Hyderabadi biryani is renowned. Food is traditionally eaten off a banana leaf with your hands and rice is an important part of meals. Wash it down with some aromatic south Indian filter coffee (kaapi). The best way of sampling south Indian food is by staying at a homestay, such as The Bangala in Tamil Nadu's Chettinad region (which serves a seven course feast, and offers cooking demonstrations and packages for exploring local cuisine). The food will be cooked fresh in real home style and most likely with recipes handed down from generation to generation. You can even participate in the process! Alternatively, go on a food or cooking tour. Yum!
- **Carnatic Music:** Carnatic music is south India's classical style of music, dating back to the 15th century. Its most common form is the kriti – a composition based on a fixed raga (melody) and tala (rhythm), which involves a great deal of improvisation. The greatest concentration of Carnatic musicians is found in the city of Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu. If you're a fan of Carnatic music, you shouldn't miss the Chennai Music Festival (also known as the Madras Music Season), held annually in Chennai from mid-December to mid-January. Over 1,000 performances take place during the festival. The Thyagaraja Carnatic Music Festival, held every January in Thiruvaiyaru (in the Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu), is also excellent.
- **Classical Dance:** South India has many classical dance forms. Bharatanatyam is perhaps the most well-known one. It's believed to have originated in the Tanjore district of Tamil Nadu. It flourished in the temples, and is most popular in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The annual Indian Dance Festival, held for a month from late December to late January in Mammallapuram, showcases many south Indian classical dance forms.
- **Kathakali:** Kathakali is a very unusual and ancient form of dance-drama that's traditional to Kerala. You won't get to see performers dressed up like every day, that's for sure! The look, with its red bloodshot eyes, borders on grotesque. The movements of the dance are subtle, yet they tell a meaningful mythological story. Performers are required to undergo intense training, including hours of eye exercises, when learning the art of Kathakali. Kathakali performances can be seen in many tourist areas of Kerala. However, Cochin has the most theaters, with daily performances. Try the Cochin Cultural Center or the Kerala Kathakali Center. Classes are also offered in Kathakali and other art forms.
- **Kalaripayattu:** Kalaripayattu is an ancient martial arts form practiced in Kerala. It's believed to be the oldest existing martial arts form in the world, dating back more than 2,000 years. (This is even older than Chinese martial arts, which apparently grew after Buddhist monk Bodhidharma took knowledge from India to China). Kalaripayattu features strikes, kicks, grappling, present forms, weaponry and healing methods. One place to see it is being performed at the Kadathanadan Kalari Center in Thekkady. Travspire offers a group tour from Kochi.
- **Ayurveda:** Ayurveda, the medical side of yoga, is India's traditional natural healing system that's been practiced for over 5,000 years. It's divided into eight branches called ashtvaidyans. The origins of Ayurveda can be traced back to Kerala, where 18 families were believed to have practiced these ashtvaidyans and developed their own specialized treatments, handed down through generations. A number of other legends associate Ayurveda with Kerala. These days, many people head to the state for Ayurvedic treatments.
- **Festivals:** Festivals are an excellent way to immerse yourself in south India's culture. The two prominent festivals that take place in south India are Onam in Kerala, and Pongal in Tamil Nadu. In

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the town of Thrissur, a rather quirky part of the Onam festival involves the art of Pulikali – where men dress up as tigers and parade around! Kerala is also renowned for its elephant festivals. The festivals, which are part of annual temple celebrations, take place all over the state from February to April, with each festival running for around 10 days.

- *Temple Architecture:* When it comes to south India temples, the state of Tamil Nadu dominates with its many ancient, towering Dravidian masterpieces. These temples, which display some of India's greatest temple architecture, are the backbone of Tamil culture. As if the temples aren't captivating enough, many of them are located in spectacular surroundings including an island, perched high on a rock, and in the remote mountains.
- *Clothing:* Who can resist the gorgeous brightly coloured south Indian silk saris? Places such as Mysore in Karnataka and Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu are renowned for the saris that are hand-woven there. Before making any purchases, have a read of this Essential Guide to Buying Kanchipuram Saris. If you want to visit the weavers and learn how the saris are made, consider this insightful Looms of Tamil Nadu Tour.
- *Literature and Poetry:* Literature buffs will be excited to know of south India's literary excellence, which extends back over 2,000 years to the poetic Sangam period. It produced a collection of 2,381 poems composed by 473 poets! A towering statue of Thiruvalluvar is a standout feature at Kanyakumari, on the coast of Tamil Nadu. This Tamil poet and philosopher authored the Tirukkural, classic Sangam literature consisting of 1,330 couplets. It's one of the most important works in the Tamil language. What's also noteworthy is that women are considered to be powerful in south Indian literature and philosophy. This no doubt contributes to the more respectful way that women are treated in south India compared to the north.

Thiruvananthapuram

Thiruvananthapuram, with a tradition dating back to 1000BC, lies on a small strip of land covered with coconut and palm trees. Thiruvananthapuram means "City of Lord Anantha" (the serpent on which Lord Padmanabha/Vishnu reclines) in Sanskrit and Malayalam. Historically, it was a trading post for spices, sandalwood and ivory. Thiruvananthapuram is the largest city in Kerala. The city is the state capital and houses many central and state government offices, organizations and companies. Besides being the political nerve centre of Kerala, it is also a major academic hub and home to several educational institutions, including the University of Kerala, and many science and technology institutions. Some prominent institutions being the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Technopark, the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) and the Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER).

Thiruvananthapuram is a major tourist hub in India. Kovalam and Varkala are popular beach towns located near the city. Other important beaches include Poovar, Shankumugham Beach, Azhimala Beach, Vizhinjam Beach and Veli Beach. The Padmanabhaswamy Temple is one of the richest temples in the world. Other places of interest include Agasthyamala rain forests, Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kallar, Braemore, Ponnudi hills, Poovar, Anchuthengu backwaters, Varkala Cliffs and Kappil-Edava lakes. The city is also known for its unique style of architecture involving Kerala Architecture with British and Dravidian influences. Napier museum, Zoo, Padmanabha Swamy temple, Kuthira Malika palace, Kilimanoor palace and The Trivandrum Golf Club heritage building are examples for this.

Climate: The city has a tropical climate and does not experience distinct seasons. The mean maximum temperature is 34°C and the mean minimum temperature is 21°C. Humidity is high, and rises to about 90% during the monsoon season. Thiruvananthapuram is the first city along the path of the south-west monsoon and gets its first showers in early June. However, pre-monsoon showers are common in April and May, accounting for about 35 cm on average. Annual rainfall is not high compared to other districts of Kerala, but it is still a substantial 180 cm. The rainiest months are May, June, July, August, and October, but there are frequent showers in other months too between April and November. For travelers who wish to avoid the rain, the best period to visit is from December to March.

Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple: Unarguably, Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple is the most famous temple in Thiruvananthapuram and maybe the whole of Kerala due to immense wealth hidden inside its chambers. Government officials opened all the vaults except Vault B. No one dares to open the Mysterious Vault B as astrologers warn that whoever opens the Vault B will meet disastrous consequences. The temple's Main Deity Lord Vishnu is found in the "Anantha Shayanam" (eternal yogic sleep) posture. The temple has two more shrines dedicated to Ugra Narasimha and Krishna. Ugra Narasimha is an avatar of Lord Vishnu and depicted as having a human torso and lower body with the face of a lion. The Gopuram (Tower at the

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entrance of the temple) is Gold plated. Gopurams are not usually found in Keralite temples, but the Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple is a fusion of Keralite and Dravidian style (where Gopurams are common) of architecture.

In adherence to an age-old tradition, the temple management allows women devotees to enter the premises given they are wearing either a Saree or a Dhotti or a long skirt.

Attukal Bhagavathy Temple: Attukal Bhagvathy Temple also called women's Sabarimala is one of the most famous temples in Trivandrum city. Everyone who pays a visit to this temple, come out feeling full of positive energy. Some attribute it to the Peaceful environment while some say it is a result of God Kannaki's blessings. Found in Attukal which is just two km from Padnabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram, the temple has Guinness record to its name thanks to the 3 million women who flock every year to the temple during Pongal festival to prepare and offer Pongala to Kannaki Mata.

Pazhavangadi Ganapathy Temple: As the name suggests, the temple's main deity is Lord Ganesha/Ganapathy. Other deities worshiped here are, Dharmasasta, God Durga, and Nagaraja. The temple has strict dress code for men and women as many other temples in Kerala. For men, it is bare chest and a mundu (even dhoti will work fine). Women need to wear traditional dresses like Saree to gain entrance. Do remember to carry Dhotti or Mundu by yourself and you won't find them at the temple. The Prasada offered to Lord Ganapathy is Coconut, and it offered in a unique way – Breaking the coconut outside the sanctum. The walls of the temple are adorned with sculptures depicting Lord Ganesha in his 32 different forms like Bala Ganapati (childlike Ganapati), Vira Ganapati (valiant Ganapati) etc.

Aazhimala Siva Temple: The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is near the Trivandrum city just 20 km away from it, on the way to Poovar islands and Kovalam. Modestly sized, the temple offers a scenic view of the Arabian sea. The sound of water hitting the rocks has a very calming effect on the devotees.

Karikkakom Chamundi Devi Temple: Made in true Kerala style architecture, the temple is situated on the outskirts of Trivandrum city. The temple houses three forms of Chamundi Devi – Maha Chamundi, Raktha Chamundi, and Bala Chamundi. It even has an idol made of panchaloha (meaning five metals) which is considered very sacred in Hinduism. The temple attracts thousands of women during the Pongal festival in Feb-march where they offer Pongal to their god. The idol is then paraded among the devotees outside in a Golden Chariot.

Guruvayur

Guruvayur also written as Guruvayoor, is a municipal temple town in Thrissur District, of Kerala State in India. It houses the Guruvayur Sri Krishna Temple, the fourth largest temple in India in terms of the number of devotees visiting per day.

Guruvayur, according to the legends may be 5,000 years old as the Guruvayur temple idol is. There are no historical records to establish it. It is also believed that Lord Krishna, asked 2 sages to take the idol from his temple in Dwarka while the city was being destroyed and establish it in Kerala. The idol of Lord Krishna was brought by Vayu deva and Brahaspathi and was placed in Guruvayur. The name Guruvayur is a merge of both their names ("guru" Brahaspathi and "vayu" deva. In the 14th century, Tamil literature 'Kokasandesam', references about a place called Kuruvayur is made. As early as the 16th century, many references are seen about Kuruvayur. In ancient Dravidic, Kuruvai means sea, hence the village on the coast may be called Kuruvayur. According to eminent historian Professor K. V. Krishna Iyer, the Brahmins had begun to come and settle at Kodungallur during the period of Chandra Gupta Maurya (321-297 BC). Guruvayur was a subordinate shrine of Trikkunavay Shiva temple before the latter was destroyed by the Dutch in 1755. Trikkunavay in the Guruvayur documents is the same as Thrikkannamathilakam or Mathilakam mentioned in the Dutch and British records. And this place was in between Guruvayur and Kodungallur. The story of Pandyan King building a shrine here may be a reference to the Azhavars, but they are all silent in their writing about Guruvayur. It was Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri's Narayaniyam through which the Guruvayur temple got famous all over India.

Art & Architecture Kerala

Kerala has made its notable contributions to the science of architecture, both secular and religious. The Tantrasamuchaya, Vastuvidya, Manushyalaya-Chandrika and Silparatna are well-known treatises on the subject. The Manushyalaya Chandrika is a work devoted to domestic architecture. The traditional Kerala house is a quadrangular building called Nalukettu constructed strictly in accordance with the principles of Tachu Sastra (Science of Architecture). It was located in a self-contained compound and was specially designed to cater to the needs of the huge taravads of old under the Marumakkathayam (matrilineal) system. The Nalukettu was so called because it consisted of four blocks viz., the Vadakkini (northern block),

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Padinjattini (western block), Kizhakkini (eastern-block) and Thekkini (southern block). The house was generally built of laterite plastered with Chunam and the roofs were tiled or thatched with the leaves of palmyrah or coconut trees. The wood work of the building was usually solid and beautifully carved. It may also be noted that the old palaces of Kerala represent the style of traditional domestic architecture. The most important palaces that deserve mention are the Padmanabhapuram Palace (Kanyakumari District), the Dutch Palace at Mattancheri and the Krishnapuram Palace near Kayamkulam. In recent times domestic architecture has undergone significant changes in style and design. The houses are now built only to accommodate single households. Cement concrete houses have taken the place of the traditional houses made of brick set in either mud or lime.

The Kerala temple has a distinct architectural style which has been acquired as a result of a long process of evolution. The rock-cut temples are among the earliest known of the temples of Kerala and they are assigned to the period prior to 800 AD. They come mainly under two groups, the southern group and the northern group. The former includes the rock-cut temples of Vizhinjam, Madavurppara, Kottukal and Kaviyur and the latter of those of Trikkur, Irunilacode and Bhrandanpara. The Saivite cult dominated the architectural style of the temples of both these groups. Those of southern group are of Pandya origin and of the northern groups. Those of southern group are of Pandya origin and of the northern group of Pallava origin. In addition to these two groups of rock-cut temples, there is also the rock-cut temple of Kallil near Perumbavur which is at present a Bhagavathi temple, but was formerly a Jain Shrine.

The structural temple of Kerala had its origin during the 9th century A.D. The Krishna temple at Trikkulasekharapuram near Tiruvanchikulam and the Kizhthali Siva temple nearby are dated to this period on the basis of inscription and stylistic evidences. The origin of the Kandiur Siva temple is ascribed to 823 AD on the basis of clear inscriptional evidence. In the course of centuries Kerala evolved its distinctive types of temple architecture each of which is associated with some area or other in the State. The Kerala temples have been built in square, rectangular, circular, apsidal and elliptical ground plans. The dominance of the circular shrine is a unique feature of temple architecture in Kerala. The southern half of the State has a preponderance of circular shrines. The apsidal temples lay scattered all over the west coast up to Thiruvananthapuram but there is a concentration of this type in central Kerala. The rectangular and elliptical ground plans can be seen only in a few temples in Kerala. As the rectangular plan was more suited for enshrining Vishnu as Anantasayanam, the Sri. Padmanabha Swami temple, Thiruvananthapuram, follows this type. The Siva temple at Vaikom is built on the elliptical plan. It may also be noted that majority of the Kerala temples have walls made of laterite blocks, but some made entirely of granite except the superstructure may also be in wood carvings, representing Puranic stories. The slopping roof and the lavish use of wood have also invested the Kerala temples with a distinct style of their own.

In the early period the Christians of Kerala seem to have built their churches after the model of Hindu temples, as is evidenced by the alleged action of Vasco-da-Gama in entering a Kali temple at Calicut mistaking it for a Christian church. They adopted for their churches the temple plan comprised of a four-sided sanctuary with a large pillared hall in the front. The church had also a tower which, like the Sikhara above the Garbhagriha of the temple, soared to the maximum height. The indigenous tradition which influenced church architecture continued without break till the coming of the Portuguese in 1498 AD. As part of their policy of Latinisation of the Church in Kerala, the Portuguese introduced innovations in the design of church buildings. The massive arch replaced the thick entrance door and stained glass windows were installed to allow more ventilation. The sanctum chamber (Madubaha) was attractively ornamented with statues made of wood or clay as well as with beautiful wall paintings. The first church to be built in the new style was Santo Antonio, the present St. Francis church, Cochin. The St. Francis church provided the model for the construction of more churches in India.

In modern times styles of church architecture from outside have influenced the construction of churches in Kerala. The Puthen Palli at Trichur with its arches, vaults, steeples, flying buttresses and stained glass windows has been built after Gothic style. The St. Joseph's Cathedral of the Latin Christians at Palayam, Thiruvananthapuram and the Kothamangalam church are Romanesque in their architectural style. The St. Thomas Pontifical shrine, Kodungallur, resembles the St. Peter's Church in Rome. The new Orthodox Syrian church at Kolancherri (the church of St. Paul and St. Peter) is one of the finest specimens of modern church architecture in Kerala. Mosque architecture which drew inspiration from Persian and Turkish tradition in north India had no influence on mosque architecture in Kerala till recently. The traditional Kerala mosque is a simple two-storied building with tiled roofs. Its outer walls are built on a basement similar to that of a Kerala temple. It has a central hall meant for prayers with corridors on all four sides. As in the case of temples and churches wood has been used profusely in the construction of the Kerala mosques.

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But there are a few mosques, like the Juma Masjid at Palayam, Thiruvananthapuram and Puthiya Palli at Calicut in Kerala now which are reminiscent of the Islamic style of architecture prevalent in north India.

Temples in west coast (Kerala)

Kerala is the southernmost state of India, which is known as 'The Land of Gods' as the land is full of legends & tales and houses several ancient as well as magnificent temples. Some of the temples are 2000 years old and most of them are dedicated to Lord Shiva and Vishnu. Therefore, Kerala can be considered as a remarkable and spiritual tourist destination in India. Kerala is an ideal destination for those seeking immense spirituality in India. A spiritual tour to South India can give you the feeling of divinity, opportunity to explore great religious places, amazing architecture of the ancient temples, enriched tradition, unique festivals & rituals and glorious sculpture.

Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Thiruvananthapuram: Sri Padmanabhaswamy is one of the most popular temples in Kerala which is known worldwide for its architectural superiority. This temple is situated in Thiruvananthapuram and is dedicated to God Vishnu. It is constructed in Dravidian style in the 8th century. Beside the splendid structure of the temple, it is the two major festivals celebrated in the temple that draws a large number of tourists from all across the world. These two annual festivals are celebrated with much enthusiasm. The best time to visit this temple is October/November during the Alpashy festival and March/April during Panguni festival.

Ambalapuzha Sri Krishna Temple, Ambalapuzha: A 17th century old temple called Ambalapuzha Sri Krishna temple, located at Ambalapuzha in Kerala is one of the popular temples of the state. This temple is dedicated to Lord Krishna and an idol of Krishna as a child resides in the temple. It is believed that Guru Vayoorappan visits the temple at the time of prayers or serving Palpayasam. The deity of this temple has been brought from Guruvayoor at the time of Tipu Sultan's administration. The temple remains thronged by the tourists visiting Alappuzha to experience the serene backwaters, which is only 8 miles away. The best time to visit Amabalapuzha Temple is during its Festival (Amabalapuzha Temple Festival) in the month of July and the Aaraattu festival celebrated in March-April.

Sabarimala Sree Ayyappa Temple: One of the most popular temples of Kerala is Sabarimala Sree Ayyappa, located at a hill top of the Western Ghats, in the Pathnamthitta district, near Periyar Tiger Reserve is a notable pilgrim temple. The temple is dedicated to Lord Ayyappa, which is surrounded by mountains and thick forest. The temple location is rich and rocky that enthralls the visitors. The temple opens during the two major festivals- the Mandal Puja and Makara Sankranthi Puja celebrated during the month of November till mid-January. The temple also remains open on the first six days of every Malayalam month. The pilgrims visiting this temple wear black or blue dresses with Chandan (Sandal) smeared on their forehead. During the whole journey, the pilgrims remain unshaven.

Guruvayoor Sree Krishna Temple, Guruvayoor: Guruvayoor Sri Krishna is one of the most religious temples, which is dedicated to Lord Krishna. The idol has been carved out with Patalanjana stone is definitely known for its medicinal values. The temple is popular for witnessing several rice feeding ceremonies (which is the tradition of new born's first meal and marriages conducted in the outer area of the temple. The temple always remains thronged by the visitors and for the senior citizens, individual entry lines has been arranged.

Chottanikara Devi Temple, Ernakulum Chottanikara Devi is a popular temple dedicated to God Bhagawati. It is about 4 to 5 ft. tall and is famous for its curing powers. It is considered that the god removes all the mental disorders and illnesses, providing peace to the devotees. The temple is located atop hill amidst natural beauty with the golden idol of the God. It is only 17 km from Ernakulum, having all the stuff to keep travellers mesmerized.

Ettumanoor-Vaikom-Kaduthuruthy Temple: Ettumanoor-Vaikom-Kaduthuruthy Temple, which is dedicated to Lord Shiva is also known as Vaikom Mahadev Temple. It is a strong belief that those who visit this temple along with Ettumanoor Siva Temple and Kaduthuruthy Thaliyil Mahadeva Temple, their wishes get fulfilled and their inner voice becomes clean and pure. Not only the myth about this temple, but also its exquisite architecture and the detailed murals play a major role in drawing large number of visitors towards the temple.

Mannarasala – Nagaraja Temple: An ancient and world famous Mannarasala – Nagaraja temple is dedicated to the serpent God. It is located amidst lush green forest like any other snake temples. This temple houses more than 30,000 images of snakes on the trees, which draw visitors from all across the world to come to this place, while making it remarkable. Women visit this temple to carry thanks giving ceremonies after child-birth and they offer snake images.

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Thiruvanchikulam Shiva Temple, Thrissur: Thiruvanchikulam Shiva Temple which is situated at Kodungallur, in the Thrissur district of Kerala, is also popular as Mahadeva Temple. As this temple has exclusive mural paintings on its walls it has been considered as a heritage building, as examined by the Archaeological Survey of India. Among all the ancient Tamil literature and out of Shaivite Thiruppathies (which is 274 in number) in India, Thiruvanchikulam Shiva Temple is the only temple in Kerala that presents ancient principles and idol.

Lokanarkavu Temple, Kozhikode: Lokanarkavu Temple is located at Memunda about 4 km from Vatakara, in the district of Kozhikode, in Kerala. This temple is considered as the official family temple of the 500 Aryan Nagariks and their successors, migrated to Kerala. The temple receives large number of visitors during the grand celebration of the major festivals- Mandala Utsavam (which is celebrated for 30 days) or Mandalavilakku festival. Visitors can watch the very unique folk dance known as Poorakkali, which is similar to the martial art form called Kalaripayattu. All the artists of Kalaripayattu visit the Lokanarkavu Temple before their performance to seek blessing from the idol.

Sree Parassinikadavu Muthappan Temple: Sree Parassinikadavu Muthappan is a beautiful temple with exquisite architecture is located on the banks of the river Valapattanam and is dedicated to Lord Muthappan. Visitors offer alcohol and liquor bottles to Lord Muthappan. This temple allows entry of people from all caste and religion that makes it unique. Even dogs are allowed to enter this temple, as this temple is the only temple of Kerala with the entrance gate having embellishment of dog's statues on both the sides. This temple provides free accommodation and meal to all its visitors. So after taking a glimpse of few of the max popular temples of Kerala which are listed above its clear that Kerala religious spots are truly admirable and no doubt blessed his devotees who come with true love and affection. Then what are you waiting make a religious trip of Kerala with travelogy India. command don't miss to include all these famous temples.

Attukal Bhagavathy Temple, Thiruvananthapuram: Attukal Bhagavathy Temple located 2km away from Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, is another popular place of worship in the South Indian state of Kerala. The shrine is dedicated to the incarnation of God Parvati or God Kannaki. She is considered to be the Supreme Mother, who created all the living beings. Attukal Bhagavathy Temple has entered the Guinness Book of World Record for holding the largest gathering of women for performing religious activities. It is a must to visit temple for those coming to Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, in Thiruvananthapuram. The best time to visit this temple is during the time of Attukal Pongal (February/March).

Tali Temple, Kozhikode: Tali Temple of Kozhikode is a 14th century old temple, popular for its intricate architectural style. This beautiful temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, which is amongst the two Brahmanical royal temples constructed by Zamorin. This temple has a perfect blend of architecture in laterite and wood. The wooden roof of this temple has intricate brass carvings and the beautiful brass work on the walls of the sanctum sanctorum keep the visitors enthralled. Tali Temple is considered as one of the well-known tourist spots in Kozhikode. A visit to this temple in the month of October or November (Revathi Pattathanam) can be considered to be the best.

Thirunelli Temple: Thirunelli Temple is an ancient Vishnu Temple also known as Maha Vishnu Temple is a popular tourist spot in South India. This shrine is also considered as the Kashi of South. This temple has a rich historical background as it has mentions in the Puranas. According to the Puranas, Thirunelli was built by Lord Brahma himself. The special feature of Thirunelli is that it is located up the valley, north from Wayanad. Therefore, this shrine is a never to miss place in Kerala.

Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple, Mallapuzhassery: Aranmula Parthasarathy is another major temple in Kerala, which is dedicated to Lord Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu. In this temple, the deity is worshipped in the form of Parthasarathy (which means Charioteer and another name of Krishna according to Mahabharat). The temple has become famous for being one of the stops during the annual procession of carrying the holy jewels (Thiruvabharanam) of Ayyappan to Sabarimala. The temple also houses safely the golden attire of Ayyappa called Thanka Anki, donated by the King of Travancore. Aranmula is also famous all around for hosting the annual Snake Boat Race in the nearby river called Pamba River. Visit the place during Arnamura Uttarattathi Boat Race, which is considered to be the best time to visit this place.

Sivagiri Temple, Varkala: Sivagiri Temple is one of the best sacred pilgrimage centers of Kerala. The temple preserves the tomb of Sree Narayana Guru (a social reformer and sage). The Samadhi holds importance and so every year, pilgrims visit this place between December 30 and January 1. The pilgrims can be seen in yellow attire during their pilgrimage days. Millions of devotees visit Sivagiri every year. The best time to visit this temple is during Sri Narayana Jayanthi and Samadhi day (August/September).

Karnataka

Karnataka has an enthralling history. This state lying in the southern part of India has been under the rule of several dynasties that have shaped its history. It has been invaded by a number of rulers at different points of time in history. Due to the influence of various rulers and dynasties Karnataka became enriched with their distinctive culture and values. In the ancient times Karnataka was known as Karunadu which means elevated land or high plateau. The history of Karnataka can be traced back to the prehistoric days.

Pre-history of Karnataka

The pre-historic culture of Karnataka was very different from that of the northern part of India. During the pre-historic times the hand-axe culture was prevalent in Karnataka. This culture was similar to the pre-historic culture of Africa. The use of iron was known to the inhabitants of Karnataka even before 1200 B.C. This was far earlier than the time when the inhabitants of North India came to know about the use of iron.

Early history of Karnataka: The early rulers of Karnataka were from the northern parts of the country. During the 4th and 3rd century BCE parts of Karnataka was under the rule of the Maurya and Nanda Empire of North India. After the fall of the Mauryan Empire the Satavahana dynasty came to power in Karnataka around 3 BCE. They ruled over extensive parts of Northern Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Prakrit was their administrative language. Both Kannada and Telugu were found and evolved during their rule. The Satavahana dynasty ruled over Karnataka for almost 300 years. The weakening of the Satavahana dynasty resulted in the Pallavas of Kanchi becoming the political power in Karnataka for a brief period of time. The domination of the Pallavas was brought to an end by indigenous dynasties, the Kadambas of Banavasi and the Gangas of Kolar. The ascent of the Kadamba dynasty and the Western Ganga Dynasty marked the starting point of Karnataka becoming an independent political entity.

Medieval History of Karnataka: Karnataka has been witness to the rise and fall of many dynasties and empires.

Kadamba Dynasty (325 AD–540 AD): The Kadambas are regarded as the earliest royal dynasty of Karnataka. The dynasty was founded by Mayurasharma. This dynasty ruled over North Karnataka and the Konkan from Banavasi. The Kadambas were the first rulers to use Kannada language at the administrative level. They also minted gold coins and contributed to the architectural heritage of Karnataka. The Kadambas ruled Karnataka for more than 200 years before Chalukyas overtook their empire. But some minor branches of the Kadamba dynasty continued to rule Hanagal, Goa and some other regions till 14th century.

Western Ganga Dynasty (325 AD–999 AD): The Ganga Dynasty initially ruled from Kolar and later moved their capital to Talakad. This dynasty is referred to as Western Ganga to distinguish them from The Eastern Ganga dynasty that in later centuries dominated over Kalinga (present day Odisha). Their reign extended over Southern Karnataka, parts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. They laid a strong foundation for the development of Kannada literature. The Gangas constructed several monuments. The Gomateshwara statue in Shravanabelagola, constructed around 983 AD, is the tallest monolith statue in the world and is considered to be the most famous Ganga architecture.

The Ganga dynasty ruled for about 700 years and were a sovereign power till the advent of the Badami Chalukyas. They continued to rule under the Badami Chalukyas and the Rastrakutas till the end of the 10th century.

Badami Chalukya Dynasty (500 AD–757 AD): The Chalukya dynasty was founded by Pulakeshin. The earliest dynasty was known as Badami Chalukyas and they ruled from Vatapi (present day Badami). The Chalukyas of Badami were instrumental in bringing the whole of Karnataka under a single rule. They contributed heavily in the fields of art and architecture. The Badami Chalukyas were responsible for changing the political atmosphere in South India, shifting from small kingdoms to large empires. The Chalukyas ruled over most of Karnataka and Maharashtra and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Gujarat. The rise of the Rashtrakutas eclipsed the reign of the Badami Chalukyas.

Rastrakuta Dynasty (757 AD–973 AD): The Rastrakuta dynasty was founded by Dantivarman or Dantidurga II. The Elichpur clan owed feudal allegiance to the Badami Chalukyas. During the dominion of Dantidurga, the clan toppled Chalukya Kirtivarman II and built an empire keeping the Gulbarga region in present day Karnataka as their base. This clan was later known as the Rastrakutas of Manyakheta. According to an Arabic text, Silsilat al-Tawarikh (851), the Rastrakutas were regarded as one of the four principal empires of the world. This dynasty ruled over all of Karnataka and Maharashtra and large parts of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. During their rule architecture flourished. The world famous Kailash Temple at Ellora was built by the Rastrakutas. The era of the Badami Chalukyas and Rastrakutas is considered as the “Age of Imperial Karnataka”.

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Kalyana Chalukya Dynasty (973 AD–1198 AD): The Chalukyas of Kalyana came to power after they overthrew the Rastrakutas in 973 AD. Their ruler, Someshwara I built his capital at Kalyana (present day Basava Kaluyana in Bidar district). The Kalyana Chalukya dynasty is also known as the Western Chalukya dynasty to differentiate them from the Eastern Chalukya dynasty of Vengi. This dynasty ruled over entire Karnataka and Maharashtra and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. During their rule literature flourished in Karnataka as the Chalukyas were patrons of art and architecture. The Mahadeva temple at Itagi (in present day Raichur district) is considered to be the finest Chalukyan monument. The rulers of the Kalachuri dynasty overtook their empire and reigned for about 20 years but could not uphold the integrity of the empire. This led to the empire becoming weak and finally it broke up and was shared by Sevunas in the north and Hoysalas in the south.

Sevuna Dynasty (1198 AD–1312 AD): The Sevuna dynasty established their rule when the Kalyana Chalukya dynasty's power waned. The Sevunas were once the feudatories of the Rashtrakutas and then of the Western Chalukyas before they declared independence. The founder of the Sevuna dynasty was Dridhaprahara. This dynasty is also known as Seuna or Yadavas of Devagiri as they had their capital at Devagiri (present day Daulatabad in Maharashtra). They ruled over northern Karnataka, parts of Andhra Pradesh and most of Maharashtra. The dynasty was immortalised in history by the writings of the celebrated mathematician Baskarasharya, the famous scholar Hemadri and the great writer on music, Sharngadeva. The rulers of this dynasty were constantly in fight with the rulers of the Hoysala dynasty. The dynasty finally fell to the sultan of Delhi, Allah-ud-din Khilji and his general Mallikaffar.

Hoysala Dynasty (1000 AD–1346 AD): The Hoysala Empire was found by a legendary individual called Sala. He became famous for killing a tiger in order to rescue his master and thus the empire was named as Hoysala (meaning to shoot it or to hit it). The Hoysalas initially had their capital at Belur but later shifted it to Halebidu. This dynasty ruled over southern Karnataka, parts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The Hoysala era saw significant development of art, architecture and religion in South India. They became famous for their temple architecture. The world-famous Chennakesava Temple at Belur, the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu, and the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura are examples of their sculptural exuberance. Even today there are more than a hundred temples scattered across Karnataka that were built by the Hoysalas. They also encouraged literature to flourish in Kannada and Sanskrit. The era saw the emergence of great Kannada poets like Rudrabhatta, Raghavanka, Harihara and Janna.

Vijayanagara Empire (1336 AD- 1565 AD): The Vijayanagara Empire was established in 1336 by Harihara I and his brother Bukka Raya I of Sangama Dynasty. Hampi was the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire. The empire rose to prominence due to the combined efforts of the southern powers to fend off Islamic invasions by the end of the 13th century. The Vijayanagara Empire dominated over most parts of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, entire Kerala and Tamil Nadu. This empire was famous for its power and wealth. The rulers of this empire enabled fine arts and literature to reach new heights in Kannada, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. Carnatic music evolved during this era. The empire's legacy included several astounding monuments spread across South India. Some of the best known remnants of Vijayanagara Empire's architectural prowess can be seen at the Group of Monuments at Hampi, which is recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Stone Chariot in Hampi is a brilliant example of the Vijayanagara style of architecture. The Vijayanagara Empire's power declined after it was defeated in the battle of Talikota in 1565 AD by the Deccan Sultanates.

Bahmani Empire (1347 AD- 1527 AD): The Bahmani Empire (also known as Bahmanid Empire or Bahmani Sultanate) was the first independent Islamic Kingdom in South India. The Bahmani Empire was established by Turkic or Brahmin convert Ala-ud-Din Hassan Bahman Shah. It was considered to be one of the great medieval kingdoms of India. The empire's rule extended over northern Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The empire collapsed after the last remnant of the Bahmani Sultanate was defeated by Krishnadevaraya of the Vijayanagara Empire. After 1518 the Bahmani Sultanate got divided into five states, namely: Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar, Qutubshahi of Golconda (Hydrabad), Baridshahi of Bidar, Imadshahi of Berar, Adilshahi of Bijapur. Together they are known as the Deccan Sultanates.

Bijapur Sultanate (1490 AD- 1686 AD): The Adilshahi was a Shia Muslim dynasty that was founded by Yusuf Adil Shah and the dynasty ruled over the Sultanate of Bijapur. Their rule extended over Bijapur and the adjoining areas. Bijapur was a great centre of learning in that era. During the rule of Bijapur Sultanate Islamic architecture flourished in the region. The Gol Gumbaz in Bijapur is the most famous monument built during their reign. The Bijapur Sultanate was conquered by Emperor Aurangzeb and it was absorbed into the Mughal Empire in 1686 AD.

Modern history of Karnataka

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The modern history of Karnataka saw the emergence of the Wodeyars of Mysore and Hyder Ali as significant political powers. Karnataka later came under the British rule before the country gained independence.

Nayakas of Keladi (1500 AD- 1763 AD): Nayakas of Keladi (also known as Nayakas of Bednore and Kings of Ikkeri) initially ruled as a vassal of the Vijayanagar Empire. They declared independence after the decline of the empire in 1565. They ruled over Coastal and Central Karnataka and parts of northern Kerala, Malabar and the central plains along the Tungabhadra River. They were an important dynasty in the history of Karnataka. In 1763 they were defeated by Hyder Ali and were absorbed into the Kingdom of Mysore.

Wodeyars of Mysore (1399 AD- 1761 AD): The Kingdom of Mysore was initially a vassal state of the Vijayanagara Empire. With the decline of the Vijayanagara Empire the kingdom gained independence. They shifted their capital from Mysore to Srirangapattana. By 1686 the kingdom's reign included almost all of south India. In 1687 AD the Wodeyars bought the city of Bangalore from Mughal by paying three lakh rupees. The Wodeyar Kingdom was overtaken by Hyder Ali by 1761 AD.

Sultanate of Srirangapattana (1761 AD- 1799 AD): Hyder Ali ruled over the Kingdom of Mysore from Srirangapattana. His son Tipu Sultan came to power after him. The Sultanate of Srirangapattana extended over most of Karnataka, parts Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The Kingdom of Mysore reached their height of military power and dominion under the de facto ruler Haider Ali and his son Tipu Sultan during the latter part of the 18th century. Tipu Sultan repelled the attack from the British many times. Finally, he was defeated due to the united efforts of British, Maratha and Hyderabad Nijamas and was killed on the battle field in 1799 AD. Due to his bravery on the battle field Tipu Sultan is known as the Tiger of Mysore.

Mysore Wodeyars (1800 AD- 1831 AD): After the death of Tipu Sultan major portions of the Mysore Kingdom were annexed by the British and Mysore was transformed into a Princely state. The Wodeyars were reinstated as the rulers of the princely state and they ruled till 1831 AD, after which the British once again took over the empire.

British takeover (1831 AD- 1881 AD): After the British snatched control the Mysore Empire in 1831 AD, they appointed commissioners to rule on their behalf. They introduced many changes in the functioning of the empire. They divided the state between Bombay and Madras provinces, Hyderabad Nijamas and Mysore.

Mysore Wodeyars (1881 AD- 1950 AD): In 1881 Mysore was once again handed back to the Wodeyars under the rule of Jayachamaraja Wodeyar. By that time the cry for independence from British rule had gained much momentum across the country. The rule of the Wodeyars continued till India's independence in 1947. After independence Mysore merged with the Indian union. Thus, Mysore became an independent state in 1950. Under the Wodeyars, Mysore became one of the modern and urbanized regions of India. The rulers of the Wodeyar dynasty encouraged fine arts, architecture, music and art.

Unification of Karnataka – 1956 AD: After India's independence, the states were reorganised based on linguistic and other criteria. The Kannada speaking population came together to form the present day Karnataka under the name of Mysore. It was ruled by the former Maharaja of Mysore as its governor till 1975. Mysore state was renamed Karnataka in 1973.

Temples in Karnataka

Karnataka is a place that has preserved its cultural heritage in modern times. There are many places in the state that are blessed with natural beauty and hence the state is one of the most visited places in the country, visited by both domestic and foreign tourists from different parts of the world. One of the main attractions of the state is definitely its temples, as they are not just sacred places of worship but they are also steeped in the country's history, heritage and traditions. Plus, most of these temples are ancient and are architectural wonders.

Karnataka has about 34,000 temples and Bangalore alone has over 1,000 temples. Few of these are very ancient and pujas are no longer performed because they are under the care of archaeology department.

Most Famous Temples in Karnataka;

- Shri Agnidurga Gopalakrishna Temple, Karamogaru, Mangaluru
- Shri Kadri Manjunatha Temple, Mangaluru
- Navagraha Jain Temple, Hubli
- Shri Mangaladevi Temple, Mangaluru
- Sri Kollur Mookambika temple, Kollur
- Shri Subramanyeshwara Temple, Kukke Subramanya

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- Shri Rajarajeswari Temple, Polali
- Shri Durga Parameshwari Temple, Kateelu
- Gokarnanatheshwara Temple Kudroli, Mangaluru
- International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) Temple, Bangalore
- Sri Hasanamba Temple, Hassan
- Sri Chennakesava Temple, Belur, Hassan
- Sri Mahantheshwara mata karegudda
- Sri Hoysaleswara Temple, Halebidu, Hassan
- Padutirupathi Venkataramana Temple, Karkala
- Kudalasangama
- Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri
- Sri Gude mahalineshwara Temple, Herenjal Kundapura tq, Udupi dist
- Santhoor Subramanya Temple
- Mandyada Shri Shiradi Sai Baba Mandir, Mandya, Mandya District, Karnataka

Temples of Karnataka feature many architectural:

- Hoysala Architecture
- Badami Chalukya Architecture
- Vijayanagara architecture
- Dravidian Architecture
- Western Chalukya Architecture
- Badami Cave Temples
- Rashtrakuta style
- Ganga Architecture

Most temples have some features in common:

- Nandi (bull) sculpted in black stone at the entrance of a temple is symbolic of the start of the divine place and temple area.
- Pushkarani (a stepped bathing area), with neatly sculpted steps, for temple devotees travelling from far places to take a breather and cleanse. The pushkarani is typically a square shaped construction which has arrangements to keep the water flowing so it does not stagnate.
- Gopura are ornate monumental towers which mark the entrance to the temple.
- Garbhagudi (garbha meaning womb in Sanskrit/Kannada) is the inner sanctum, which can be of various size and shapes according to the architecture. Garbhagudi may be placed on an elevated place on a stone foundation. Artists may find a place to practice and display devotional sangeetha (music) and naatya (dancing).
- Vighraha is an image of the God, typically a black stone lingam, inside the inner sanctum (garbhagudi).
- Normally the oldest temples are built on hilltops, where people view God being placed on top of all in the midst of Prakṛti (nature). The steps to reach the top are carefully carved on rocky hills as most of the hard stone mountains rocks contain water. Shiva Gange at Therhalli is one such example.

Saravanabelagola: (The Land of Lord Gomatheeswara)

The Hassan district in Karnataka is famous for its innumerable temples that attract tourists from all over the world. The Shravanabelagola temple is a holy place for the Jains and is world renowned for the majesty of Lord Gomatheeswara towering over everything around. It is one of the holiest places for the Jain community attracting millions of devotees annually.

The word Shravanabelagola literally means 'the white pond of Sravana' as 'bel' means white and 'kola' means pond in Kannada. There is a beautiful pond in the town, true to its name. Another legend has it that the name was due to an old woman who poured the milk she had carried in a 'gullakayi' over the deity anointing him every day. Now the image of Lord Gomatheeswara being anointed with milk is a world-famous sight.

History: There are two hills Chandragiri and Vindyagiri making up the area. Chandragupta Maurya is reputed to have stayed there with his mentor and the temple there dedicated to him was built by Emperor Ashoka in the third century B.C. There are plenty of monuments and shrines dedicated to other sanyasis and saints in Chandragiri. The statue of Lord Gomatheeswara, built by Chandrayana of the Gangas is in

SKILL BASED ELECTIVE III (V SEMESTER)

Vindygiri. The verdant greenery and calm crystal clear waters of the ponds that have attracted hundreds of monks to seek this sanctuary to meditate have helped to make this place truly a 'tapobhumi' where people come to get deliverance.

Architecture: The Shravanabelagola Gomatheeswara statue is the largest monolithic idol in the world. It spans centuries with different ruling dynasties and kings adding their own contributions and so is a living historical evidence of the last millennia. Historians describe the idol of the Lord as both magnificent and munificent – both beautiful and graceful, breath taking yet serene. It is this impossible combination of beauty and serenity that gives the Shravanabelagola its unique appeal. Standing 57 feet tall, the Lord is a beacon for the world-weary who flock here to shed their worldly burdens and to embrace a life of peace and ahimsa, meaning non-violence.

Religious Significance: Bahubali, as the Jains call Lord Gomatheeswara, offers the path to eternal happiness by helping man live a life attuned to the natural world around him and not causing any harm to any living being. The Jains believe that Bahubali is endowed with great qualities that inspire renunciation, enlightenment and to attain salvation. Every twelve years Jains from all over the world converge for the Mahamastakabhisekha in which the Lord is adorned with thousands of litres of milk, curds, and ghee, saffron and gold coins.

Place: Shravanabelagola is situated in the beautiful district of Hassan amidst verdant greenery and surrounded by serene ponds. It is about 12 kilometers from the Bangalore – Mangalore highway, NH 48 and at a distance of almost 160 kilometers from Bangalore. It is very well connected by rail and road and offers a pleasant drive from the city on a weekend. You can visit this spot throughout the year.

Shravanabelagola – Facts: Recently in a nation-wide poll, Shravanabelagola was voted as the first of the Seven Wonders of India

Behlur

Belur is well known for Chennakeshava temple which was a capital during Hoysala kingdom for a short duration. This place is situated in Hassan district of Karnataka in India. The Chennakeshava temple is one of the finest built using soft soapstone during Hoysala period. The temple was constructed during 1116 AD to mark the victory done by the king Vishnuvardhana of Talkad against Cholas. Belur is on the banks of river Yegachi. This place is one of the famous tourist destination in Karnataka - India. As per saying, the beauty of this temple is inside as there are 48 pillars carved in different designs. Belur was also called as Velapuri during Hoysala period. The empire during Hoysala period is called Yadava kings which was under Chalukyas and became separated later.

Belur is 40Kms from the district headquarters, Hassan in North direction. The transportation is only by road. This place is just on the way to Chikmagalur and frequent buses available. Other than this main road, there are few more ways to reach Belur. People planning to visit Halebid and Belur, can proceed to Halebid taking right turn at Hagare (25Kms from Hassan on Chikmagalur road). From Hagare, Halebid is 12 Kms. Travellers having private vehicles can only plan this route as public transport is very less. After visiting Halebid, tourists can reach Belur which is 15Kms. There is frequent private and Government transportation available between Belur and Halebid. One more way to reach Belur is to travel upto Halebid from Hassan taking Master Control Facility (also called space city) road. Halebid is 30Kms by this road from Hassan. Very frequent bus service available between Hassan and Halebid in this route. Nearest airport is Mangalore or Bangalore (both of same distance).

Inscriptions

Historians have found 118 inscriptions in the temple complex, dated between 1117 CE to the 18th century, which provide a history of the temple, the grants made to the Chennakeshava temple for its upkeep and the repairs during later times.

- An inscription found on the east wall near the north entrance of the temple's main mandapa (hall) states that Vishnuvardhana commissioned the temple for god Vijayanarayana in 1117 CE. Some historians have interpreted this inscription as stating that the Chennakeshava Temple was completed in 1117 CE.
- The Chennigaraya temple was built concurrently with the main temple, and the queen sponsored it.
- Narasimha I of Hoysala dynasty made grants to the temple for its maintenance and operation.
- Ballala II in 1175 CE added temple buildings for kitchen and grain storage in the southeast corner, and a water tank in the northeast corner of the temple.
- The original temple was without boundary wall. The main mandapa was also open for the devotees to view and appreciate the intricate carvings inside the temple. For security of the temple, a high wall was

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constructed around the temple, a wood-and-brick gateway and doors added by Somayya Danayaka during the rule of Veera Ballala III (1292–1343), as well as the open mandapa was covered with perforated stone screens. The new screens darkened the inside of the temple making it difficult to see the artwork but allowed enough light for the darshana of the garbha griya.

- The temple was raided, damaged and its gateway was burnt down in a raid by a Muslim general Salar and his army working for Muhammed bin Tughlaq (1324–1351).
- The temple was repaired by the Vijayanagara Empire under the sponsorship of Harihara II (1377–1404). In 1381, they added four granite pillars; in 1387, a gold plated kalasa was added by Malagarasa to a new tower above the sanctum; it added a new seven storey brick gopurum in 1397 replacing the destroyed gateway.
- An Andal shrine, the Saumyanayaki shrine, the dipa-stambha at the entrance, the Rama and Narasimha shrines were added during the Vijayanagara Empire era.
- The main temple had a shikara (superstructure tower) but it is now missing and the temple looks flat. The original tower, suggest the inscriptions, was made of a combination of wood, brick and mortar. It was destroyed and rebuilt several times.
- The Vijayanagara Empire sponsored the addition of smaller shrines dedicated to god and the Naganayakana mandapa within the temple complex. These were constructed by collecting the war ruins of other demolished temples in Belur area and reusing them.
- The temple premises were again damaged after the destruction of Vijayanagara Empire by a coalition of Sultanates. The first repairs were done in 1709, followed by additions in 1717 and 1736. The temple was repaired in 1774 by a Hindu officer of Hyder Ali during a period when Hyder Ali was the de facto ruler on behalf of the Wadiyar dynasty.
- In late 19th-century, the collapsing tower above the sanctum was removed to save the lower levels and never replaced. In 1935, parts of the temple were cleaned and restored with financing by the Mysore government and grants by the Wadiyar dynasty. The Chennigaraya shrine was rebuilt, new images of Ramanuja and Garuda added along with many other facility improvements and repairs to the complex. These repairs were inscribed in stone for a historical record, just like earlier inscriptions.

Importance of Belur

Belur temple Lady with bow There are somany art and sculptures to see in Channakeshava temple. The star shaped Garbhagruha, Navaranga and Sukanasi Pillars, the image of Vijaya narayana (Keshava), more than 80 sculptures of Madanika in the temple, 38 bracket figures outside and 4 inside, Lady with her pet parrot, Kesha Shrungara, Gandharva Dance, Shantaladevi, Fortune teller, Songstress, Arch dancer, Lady with make-up, Kite dancer, Pony-tale haired lady, Drum dance, Nagaveena Dance, Gypsy girl, Bhasma Mohini dance, Huntress, Divine Dancer, Masculine woman, Violinist, Bewitching beauty, Musician, Flutist, Darpana Sundari, Thribhangi Nritya, Dwarapalakas flanking the Sukanasi doorway, Narasimha pillar, Kadle basava, Mohini pillar. Gravity pillar is about 42 feet high of single stone, standing on its self-weight. Kappe Channigaraya temple is located south of Sri Keshava Temple. Inside people can see Venugopala, Saraswathi, Lakshminarayana, Ganapathi and Chamundeswari statues. Few more temples of Anjaneya, Krishna, Narasimha, Soumyanayaki, Veeranarayana can also be seen. Statues of Vishnuvardhana and Krishnaraja Wodeyar can be seen in a courtyard near the pond. Garudangambha and Garuda statue are outside the main temple facing towards Sri Channakeshava.

Guides have been appointed by Archaeological department for a nominal fee of INR 125 (reciept will be issued). Photography allowed inside the temple premesis, no additional fee for cameras. A nominal fee of INR 10 is to be paid for flood light inside the temple if tourists want to see the carvings.

Belur channakeshava temple inside pillars Standard tourist package available by Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporations (KSTDC) to visit Belur, Halebeedu and Shravanabelagola. Halebid and Belur are situated to the North of Hassan (district headquarters) and Shravanabelagola is situated almost to the South of Hassan. So, people travelling from Bangalore can visit Shravanabelagola first as it is on the way to Hassan (on National Highway 48 linking Bangalore and Mangalore). After visiting Belur and Halebidu, people can proceed towards Chikmagalur if they have planned to visit Western ghats and other tourist places in Shimoga and other districts. People travelling from North part of India, they can visit Belur and Halebid and proceed towards Hassan and see Shravanabelagola later.

Description:

The Chennakeshava complex at Belur consists of a 443.5 feet by 396 feet court with several Hindu temples and minor shrines inside a walled compound. The compound is entered from the east through a Gopuram

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added during the repairs of the Vijayanagar empire era. The temples and monuments found inside the walled complex are:

- Chennakesava temple, also called as Kesava temple, is the main temple. It is in the middle of the complex, faces east, in front of the gopuram. Including the improvements added later, it is 178 feet by 156 feet. The temple stands on a wide platform terrace (jagati) about 3 feet high. The temple is dedicated to Vishnu in the form of Kesava.
- To the south of the Kesava temple is the Kappe Chennigaraya temple measuring 124 feet by 105 feet. It has two sanctums inside, one dedicated to Venugopala and the other to Chennigaraya (local popular name of Chennakeshava, Vishnu). The temple is called Kappe Chennigaraya because, according to a local legend, a Kappe (frog) was once found near its navel. This smaller temple was built by the queen concurrently with the main temple, and is believed to be similar smaller version.
- A stone slab with a couple standing side by side in a namaste posture under a canopy. The monument is damaged.
- To the west of the Kesava temple is the Viranarayana temple measuring 70 feet by 56 feet. It is a small but complete temple with a navaranga (nine square hall) and a garbha griya (sanctum) with 59 large reliefs on the outer walls. These reliefs are dedicated to Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma, Bhairava (angry Shiva), Lakshmi, Parvati, Saraswati and others. Some panels depict the Bhima story from the Mahabharata. The temple is also dated to the 12th century.
- To the southwest of the Kesava temple is a small temple to Somyanayaki (form of the god Lakshmi), also dated to the 12th century. However, the temple was expanded and enhanced later. This temple is notable because the local tradition holds that its tower is miniature version of the major tower that once rose above the main Kesava temple.
- The Andal temple, also called Ranganayaki shrine, is to the northwest of the Kesava temple. Its outer wall is decorated with artwork such as elephants and nature. It also displays 31 large images of deities from the Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Shaktism traditions of Hinduism. It also has intricately carved Venugopala, Mohini and Lakshmi, as well as friezes showing legends in the Puranas.
- The complex has a number of small shrines. To the east of Kappe-Chennigaraya temple are shrines for Narasimha, Rama, Jiyar and Alvars of the Bhakti movement fame. To the east of Andal temple are shrines for Krishna, and Vaishnavism scholars Desikar, Bhashyakara and Ramanuja of Vishishtadvaita Vedanta fame. On the base of the shrines for Alvars are friezes showing stories from the Ramayana. Some of these shrines were added later because few of these scholars such as Desikar lived after the 12th century.
- Two main sthambha (pillars) are found in the temple complex. The pillar facing the main temple, the Garuda (eagle) sthambha was erected in the Vijayanagar period while the pillar on the right, the Deepa sthambha (pillar with lamp) dates from the Hoysala period. Near the Viranarayana temple is a mandapa where annual procession ratha and temple vehicles have traditionally been stored. It is called vahana mandapa. The complex also has a kalyana-mandapa in the southeast corner for ceremonies. It was added in the 17th century.
- A granary for storing food reserves is found in the northwest corner of the complex. There is smaller northern gate to the complex, near which is a pakasale or community kitchen built in the 13th century. A stepped water tank, called kalyani or Vasudeva-sarovara in inscriptions, is found in the northeast corner with two stone elephants on its side.

The complex has many other small monuments and features, such as the ane-bagilu or "elephant's gate" just south of the gopuram and a memorial of past destruction in the form of pillars and statues in the northwestern part of the complex.

Main temple: Kesava

The temple is a ekakuta vimana design (single shrine) of 10.5 m by 10.5 m size. It combines elements of North Indian Nagara and South Indian Karnata style architecture. The temple stands on an open and wide platform designed to be a circumambulatory path around the sanctum. The temple and platform were without walls and the platform surrounded an open mantapa, following the contour of the temple. A visitor would have been able to see the ornate pillars of the open mantapa from the platform. Later walls and stone screens were added, creating an enclosed vestibule and mantapa, providing security but creating too much dark to appreciate the artwork inside. The vestibule connects the circumambulatory platform to the mandapa (hall). There is intricate and abundant artwork both on the outside and inside the temple.

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The temple has a simple Hoysala plan and features one sanctum. The building material used in the Chennakesava temple is chloritic schist, more commonly known as soapstone. It is soft when quarried and allows artists to more easily carve details. Over time the material hardens. This Hoysala temple, according to the art critic and historian Settar, deployed the Western Chalukyan artists and their tradition that originally developed in Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal. It is simpler than later Hoysala temples (including the Hoysaleswara temple at Halebidu and the Keshava temple at Somanathapura).

Platform: The temple is built on a jagati (literally, "worldly"), a symbolic worldly platform with a wide walking space for circumambulation (pradakshina-patha). There is one flight of steps leading to the jagati and another flight of steps into the mantapa. The jagati provides the devotee the opportunity to do a pradakshina around the temple before entering it. The jagati carefully follows the staggered square design of the mantapa and the star shape of the shrine.

Exterior walls: The visitor sees numerous artwork during the circumambulation of the temple over the jagati platform in horizontal bands. The bottom band is of elephants with different expressions, as symbolic supporters of the entire structure. Above it is an empty layer, followed by cornice work with a periodic lion face. Above it is another band of scroll and then cornice band, except at the back of the temple where a row of horsemen in various riding positions are depicted. The fifth carved band is of small figurines, mostly females with various expressions facing the viewer, while periodically the band includes Yakshas who face towards the inside of the temple. This layer also has numerous dancers and musicians, as well as professionals with their tools. The band above has pillasters between some of which are carved secular figures mostly females and couples. A nature and creepers band wraps the temple above the pillaster band, with scenes of the Ramayana epic included in this band. Above this layer are scenes from common life depicting kama, artha and dharma. Included here are couples in courtship, eroticism and sexual scenes, followed by couples with children, economic and festive activities. Towards the north outer wall, friezes with scenes from the Mahabharata are portrayed.

Above these bands is later construction that added 10 perforated stone windows and screens to north side and 10 to the south side of the temple. The later artists engraved Purana scenes in ten of these later additions, and the other ten have geometric floral designs. The perforated screens with characters' show:

- Hoysala court scene, with the king, queen, officers, attendants and two gurus with their students
- Kesava with Hanuman and Garuda,
- The Vamana dwarf, Bali and Trivikrama legend,
- The Krishna Kaliyamardana legend, Shiva on Nandi with Ganesha and Kartikeya,
- The Prahlada, Hiranyakashipu and Narasimha legend (notable for Thenkalai namam style Urdhva pundra symbols on Prahlada's forehead),
- Yoga-Narasimha with Hanuman and Garuda,
- The Samudra manthan legend,
- The Krishna killing Kamsa legend,
- Ranganatha reclining on Sesha,
- The Hanuman and Garuda fighting over Shiva linga legend.

Above the perforated screens, on capitals of the supporting pillars, are madanakai (Salabhanjika) figures. There were originally 40 madanakai, of which 38 have survived in damaged or good form. Two of these are Durga, three huntresses (with bow), others are dancers in Natya Shastra abhinaya mudra (acting posture), musicians, women dressing or doing make up, a woman with a pet parrot, men making music. A majority of these madanakai figures are also carved into miniatures in the sixth band of the outer wall around the pradakshina patha. The wall also features 80 large reliefs around the temple. Of these 32 are of Vishnu, 9 of his avatars (Narasimha, Varaha, Vamana, Ranganatha, Balarama); 4 of Shiva in various forms including Nataraja (with or without Parvati); 2 of Bhairava (Shiva); 2 of Harihara (half Shiva, half Vishnu); 4 of Surya (Sun god); 5 of Durga and Mahishasuramardini; 1 of Kama and Rati; 1 of Ganesha, Brahma, Saraswati, Garuda and Chandra. Other major reliefs are of Arjuna shooting an arrow to win Draupadi; Ravana lifting the Kailasha; Daksha, Bali and Sukracharya.

Some of the statues present exceptional details. For example, one madanakai figure is shown with a fruit tree canopy, where a small fly is shown sitting on the fruit and nearby a lizard is preparing to pounce on the fly. In another, an eagle is shown attacking a sarabha, which in turn is attacking a lion, which in turn is pouncing on an elephant, which itself is seizing a snake, which in turn is shown in the act of swallowing a rat – a sight that includes a pondering sage. Secular life is shown in these images, such as an artist making a drawing or

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musicians lost in their music. A notable image is the depiction of 12th century Rudra-vina and a Lasya dance posture. Also included is the image of a Jina of Jainism.

The outer wall on the side of the eastern entrance into the temple inside shows Bhairava and Durga. The outer wall on the side of the southern entrance into the temple shows Tandavesvara and Brahmani. The outer sides at the northern entrance into the temple show Vishnu and Mahishasuramardini.

Interior: The Chennakesava temple has three entrances and their doorways have decorated sculptures called dvarapalaka (doorkeepers) on either side. The central hall (navaranga) was originally open on all sides except the west where the sanctum is, but all sides were later closed with perforated screens. This reduced the amount of light significantly and the intricate art work is difficult to appreciate without secondary light. The artwork starts on entry to the three entrances to the hall. Each leads to raised verandas on both sides. The hall has carved pillars with a large domed ceiling in the center. The mandapa has 60 "bays" (compartments). The navaranga in Kesava temple at Belur is the largest of any Hoysala temple, is of triratha diamond-shaped layout, according to James Harle.

Pillars and ceiling: The navaranga hall has forty-eight pillars. All except the central four are carved in a unique way. The central four are later additions, added in 1381 CE during the Vijayanagara Empire era, to support the internal structure of a damaged temple. The pillars are of three sizes. Two pillars are particularly notable. One is the so-called Narasimha pillar which is carved with miniature figures from top to bottom, such as a tiny bull (kadale basava). The local legend states that this pillar once could rotate because of how it was supported, but it no longer can be rotated. The other pillar is the Mohini pillar. Other than the female avatar of Vishnu, the pillar has eight bands of carvings, including those of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, then ten avatars of Vishnu, the eight direction deities, mythical animals with the body of a lion but the face of other wildlife. The four central pillars are notable for having been hand carved while the others were lathe turned.

In the center of the hall is a large open square, above which is a domed ceiling about 10 feet in diameter and 6 feet deep. At the top is a lotus bud with Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva carved on it. At the bottom of the dome is a series of friezes with the Ramayana story. On the capitals of the four pillars are madanikas (Salabhanjika). One represents dancing Saraswati, the Hindu god of knowledge, arts and music. The others are regular dancers, but with different expressions. One is dressing her hair, the other in a Natya posture, and the fourth has a parrot seated on her hand. The head and neck jewelry made of rock are freely mounted and can be moved. The bracelets similarly are moveable. The design of the ceiling follows the Hindu texts, and is a modified utksipta style with images placed in concentric rings. Other reliefs inside the hall include large images of Vishnu avatars, friezes of the Vedic and Puranic mythologies, and more scenes of the Ramayana.

Sanctum: The mandapa leads to the garbha griya past the pillars and a doorway. The door is flanked by dvarapala, Jaya and Vijaya. Its pediment has Lakshminarayana in center. Below it is musicians playing 12th-century musical instruments. On the side are two makaras with Varuna and Varuni together riding on them. Inside the square sanctum is the image of Keshava, or as inscriptions call it "Vijayanarayana". It stands on a 3 feet high pedestal, is about 6 feet high with a halo. It has four hands, with chakra and shankha in the upper hands and a gada and lotus in his lower hands. The halo has cyclical carving of the ten avatars of Vishnu – Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki. The temple is active house of worship, with Keshava dressed and decorated, priests present and devotees doing darshana.

Superstructure: The temple had a tower, which was repeated damaged and destroyed, rebuilt and restored. In the 19th century restorations, the temple was left without a tower. According to Foekema, the tower when it existed would have been of the Bhumija style when it existed and not the regular star shaped tower that followed the shape of the vimana. The Bhumija towers, which are intact on the miniature shrines at the entrance of the hall are actually a type of nagara (North Indian) tower, being curvilinear in shape. This shape of tower is quite uncommon in pure dravidian architecture.

Artists: Some of the Hoysala artists signed their work in the form of inscriptions. In doing so, they sometimes revealed details about themselves, their families, guilds and place of origin. Stone inscriptions and copper plate inscriptions provide more information about them. Ruvvari Mallitamma was a prolific artist to whom more than 40 sculptures are attributed. Dasoja and his son Chavana who were from Balligavi in modern Shimoga district made important contributions. Chavana is credited with the work on five madanikas and Dasoja accomplished four of them. Malliyanna and Nagoja created birds and animals in their sculptures. Artists such as Chikkahampa and Malloja are credited with some of the sculptures in the mantapa.

Hampi

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Hampi is a UNESCO World Heritage Site in India located near Hospet town in the Karnataka state, India. Among the attractions of Hampi are beautiful temples, ruins of palaces, remains of aquatic structures, ancient market streets, royal pavilions, bastions, royal platforms, treasury buildings... the list is practically endless. Hampi is a backpacker's paradise, the same way a pilgrim's delight.

It became the centre of the Hindu Vijayanagara Empire capital in the 14th century. Chronicles left by Persian and European travellers, particularly the Portuguese, state Hampi was a prosperous, wealthy and grand city near the Tungabhadra River, with numerous temples, farms and trading markets. By 1500 CE, Hampi-Vijayanagara was the world's second-largest medieval-era city after Beijing, and probably India's richest at that time, attracting traders from Persia and Portugal. The Vijayanagara Empire was defeated by a coalition of Muslim sultanates; its capital was conquered, pillaged and destroyed by sultanate armies in 1565, after which Hampi remained in ruins.

Located in Karnataka near the modern-era city of Hosapete, Hampi's ruins are spread over 4,100 hectares (16 sq mi) and it has been described by UNESCO as an "austere, grandiose site" of more than 1,600 surviving remains of the last great Hindu kingdom in South India that includes "forts, riverside features, royal and sacred complexes, temples, shrines, pillared halls, mandapas, memorial structures, water structures and others". Hampi predates the Vijayanagara Empire; there is evidence of Ashokan epigraphy, and it is mentioned in the Ramayana and the Puranas of Hinduism as Pampaa Devi Tirtha Kshetra. Hampi continues to be an important religious centre, housing the Virupaksha Temple, an active Adi Shankara-linked monastery and various monuments belonging to the old city.

Hindu monuments

Virupaksha temple and market complex: The Virupaksha temple is the oldest shrine, the principal destination for pilgrims and tourists, and remains an active Hindu worship site. Parts of the Shiva, Pampa and Durga temples existed in the 11th century; it was extended during the Vijayanagara era. The temple is a collection of smaller temples, a regularly repainted, 50-metre (160 ft) high gopuram, a Hindu monastery dedicated to Vidyaranya of Advaita Vedanta tradition, a water tank (Manmatha), a community kitchen, other monuments and a 750 metres (2,460 ft)-long ruined stone market with a monolithic Nandi shrine on the east end. The temple faces eastwards, aligning the sanctums of the Shiva and Pampa Devi temples to the sunrise; a large gopuram marks its entrance. The superstructure is a pyramidal tower with pilastered storeys on each of which is artwork including erotic sculptures. The gopuram leads into a rectangular court that ends in another, smaller gopuram dated to 1510 CE. To its south side is a 100-column hall with Hindu-related reliefs on all four sides of each pillar. Connected to this public hall is a community kitchen, a feature found in other major Hampi temples. A channel is cut into the rock to deliver water to the kitchen and the feeding hall. The courtyard after the small gopuram has dipa-stambha (lamp pillar) and Nandi.

The courtyard after the small gopuram leads to the main mandapa of the Shiva temple, which consists of the original square mandapa and a rectangular extension composed of two fused squares and sixteen piers built by Krishnadevaraya. The ceiling of the open hall above the mandapa is painted, showing the Shaivism legend relating to Shiva-Parvati marriage; another section shows the legend of Rama-Sita of the Vaishnavism tradition. A third section depicts the legend of the love god Kama shooting an arrow at Shiva to get him interested in Parvati; and the fourth section shows the Advaita Hindu scholar Vidyaranya being carried in a procession. According to George Michell and other scholars, the details and colour hues suggest all the ceiling paintings are from a 19th-century renovation, and the themes of the original paintings are unknown. The mandapa pillars have outsized yalis, mythical animal melding the features of a horse, lion and other animals with an armed warrior riding it a characteristic Vijayanagara feature. The sanctum of the temple has a mukha-linga; a Shiva linga with a face embossed with brass. The Virupaksha temple also has smaller shrines for two aspects of Parvati-Pampa and Bhuvaneshwari to the north of the main sanctum. The compound has a northern gopura, smaller than the eastern gopura, that opens to the Manmatha tank and a pathway to the river with stone reliefs related to the Ramayana. To the west of this tank are shrines of Shaktism and Vaishnavism traditions, such as those for Durga and Vishnu respectively. Some of the shrines on this pilgrim's path were whitewashed in the 19th century under orders of the British India officer F.W. Robinson, who sought to restore the Virupaksha temple complex; whitewashing of this cluster of historic monuments has continued as a tradition. According to local tradition, the Virupaksha is the only temple that continued to be a gathering place of Hindus and frequented by pilgrims after the destruction of Hampi in 1565. The temple attracts large crowds; an annual fête with a chariot procession to mark the marriage of Virupaksha and Pampa is held in spring, as is the solemn festival of Maha Shivaratri.

Krishna temple, market, Narasimha and linga: The Krishna temple, also called Balakrishna temple, on the other side of Hemakuta hill, is about 1 kilometre (0.62 mi) south of Virupaksha temple. It is dated to 1515

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CE; this part of the Hampi complex is called Krishnapura in inscriptions. In front of the ruined temple is a long market street, also referred to locally as the bazaar. Between the colonnaded stone shop ruins is a broad road that allowed chariots to transport goods to and from the market, and hosted ceremonial functions and festive celebrations. To the north of this road and middle of the market is a large Pushkarani a public utility stepped water tank with an artistic pavilion in its centre. Next to the tank is a public hall (mandapa) for people to sit.

The temple opens to the east; it has a gateway with reliefs of all ten avatars of Vishnu starting with Matsya at the bottom. Inside is the ruined temple for Krishna and small, ruined shrines for god. The temple compound is layered into mandapas, including an outer and an inner enclosure. The compound has two gopuram entrances. Inside, a 25 (5x5)-bay open mandapa leads to a 9 (3x3)-bay enclosed mandapa. The original image of Balakrishna (baby Krishna) in its sanctum is now in a Chennai museum. A modern road passes in front of the eastern gopura, linking Kamalapuram to Hampi. The western gopuram has friezes of battle formation and soldiers. South of the Krishna temple's exterior are two adjacent shrines, one containing the largest monolithic Shiva Linga and the other with the largest monolithic Yoga-Narasimha avatar of Vishnu in Hampi. The 3 metres (9.8 ft) Shiva Linga stands in water in a cubical chamber and has three eyes sketched on its top. South of this is the shrine for a 6.7 metres (22 ft)-high Narasimha—the man-lion avatar of Vishnu—seated in a yoga position. The Narasimha monolith originally had god Lakshmi with him, but it shows signs of extensive damage and a carbon-stained floor—evidence of attempts to burn the shrine down. The statue has been cleaned and parts of the shrine have been restored.

Achyutaraya temple and market complex: The Achyutaraya temple, also called the Tiruvengalanatha temple, is about 1 kilometre (0.62 mi) east of Virupaksha temple and a part of its sacred centre is close to the Tungabhadra River. It is referred to be in Achyutapura in inscriptions and is dated to 1534 CE. It is one of the four largest complexes in Hampi. The temple is unusual because it faced north. It is dedicated to Vishnu. In Vijayanagara times, the temple was traditionally approached from the river, first past a ceremonial tank then along the market street with a broad road. The temple had an outer gopuram leading into a courtyard with a 100-column hall and an inner gopuram leading to the Vishnu temple. On each side of each pillar in the 100-column hall are reliefs of avatars of Vishnu; other deities such as Shiva, Surya, Durga; scenes of daily life—rishi, amorous couples, jokers; people in yoga asanas; people in namaste poses; and Vijayanagara emblems. The temple gateway shows the Vijayanagara dynastic emblems; a boar from Varaha, a sword, the sun and the moon. The temple and the market street are ruined but their layout suggests it was a major market with streets provided for chariot traffic

Vitthala temple and market complex: The Vitthala temple and market complex is over 3 kilometres (1.9 mi) north-east of the Virupaksha temple near the banks of the Tungabhadra River. It is the most artistically sophisticated Hindu temple in Hampi, and is part of the sacred centre of Vijayanagara. It is unclear when the temple complex was built, and who built it; most scholars date it to a period of construction in the early-to-mid-16th century. The inscriptions include male and female names, suggesting that the complex was built by multiple sponsors. The temple was dedicated to Vitthala, a form of Krishna also called Vithoba. The temple opens to the east, has a square plan and features an entrance gopuram with two side gopurams. The main temple stands in the middle of a paved courtyard and several subsidiary shrines, all aligned to the east. The Vitthala temple has a Garuda shrine in the form of a stone chariot in the courtyard; it is an often-pictured symbol of Hampi. Above the chariot is a tower, which was removed during the late 19th century restorations. In the front of the stone chariot is a large, square, open-pillared, axial sabha mandapa, or community hall. The mandapa has four sections, two of which are aligned with the temple sanctum. The mandapa has 56 carved stone beams of different diameters, shape, length and surface finish that produces musical sounds when struck; according to local traditional belief, this hall was used for public celebrations of music and dancing. It is classified as Karakkoil, a temple fashioned after temple chariots which are taken in procession around the temple during festivals. The mandapa links to an enclosed pradakshina patha for walking around the sanctum. Around this axial mandapa are (clockwise from east); the Garuda shrine, the Kalyana mandapa (wedding ceremonies), the 100-columned mandapa, the Amman shrine and the Utsav mandapa (festival hall). The walled enclosure covers about 1.3 hectares (3.2 acres) with colonnaded verandahs lining the compound walls. In the south-east corner is a kitchen with a roof window (clerestory).

Outside the temple compound, to its east-south-east, is a colonnaded market street almost one kilometre (0.62 mi) long; all of which is now in ruins. To the north is another market and a south-facing shrine with reliefs of Ramayana scenes, Mahabharata scenes and of Vaishnava saints. The north street ended in a temple honouring the Hindu philosopher Ramanuja. The region around the Vitthala temple was called Vitthalapura. It hosted a Vaishnava matha (monastery), designed as a pilgrimage centre centred around the Alvar tradition. It was also a centre for craft production according to inscriptions found.

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Hemakuta hill monuments: The Hemakuta hill lies between the Virupaksha temple complex to the north and the Krishna temple to the south. It is a collection of modestly sized monuments that are the best-preserved examples of pre-Vijayanagara and early-Vijayanagara temples and construction. The site has several important inscriptions, is easily accessible and provides views of some parts of Hampi and the fertile, agricultural valley that separates the sacred centre from the urban core with its royal centre.

The hill has more than thirty small-to-moderate-sized temples, together with water cisterns, gateways and secular pavilions. The latest examples are dated to the early 14th century. Some of the structures are differently-sized prototypes of temples or mandapas, assembled from blocks of stones. Others are completed monuments of different designs, such as the Phamsana style. Two temple groups in this style look similar; each has a triple vimana consisting of square sanctums with each set connected to its own shared square mandapa. The towers (shikaras) on these are pyramidal granite structures consisting of eleven stacked, shrinking squares and a top in the Deccan-style square kalasha finial. Both sets are Shiva temples with triple linga; early sources misidentified these as Jain temples because of their simple exterior and interior walls. One of these groups has a historically important inscription that records that Kampila built the monument in the early 14th century. This inscription links Hampi with the Kampili kingdom and suggests an association of the Kampili history with that of Vijayanagara Empire that followed it. The style of temples on the Hemakuta hill suggest it may have been a study centre for experimenting with different types of Hindu temples. The styles present include those of the Chalukya period, the Rashtrakuta period and later periods. It may also have been the template for the original Virupaksha temple, which was later greatly expanded with gopuram, mandala and other additions. A similar monument dedicated to Narasimha, the man-lion avatar of Vishnu, is located east of Hampi; an inscription near it states that it was operating in 1379 CE. The Hemakuta hill also has monuments with two monolithic Ganesha; the Kadalekalu Ganesha and the Sasivekalu Ganesha. The Kadalekalu Ganesha, named after Ganesha's gram-shaped belly, is in the middle of Hampi's sacred centre on the east side of the hill near Matanga. A colonnaded, open mandapa leads to the sanctum, which houses a monolithic image of Ganesha more than 4.5 metres (15 ft) high, which was carved in-situ from extant rock. Ganesha's tusk and other parts have been damaged, but the left hand—which holds a rice cake treat with his trunk reaching out for it—has survived.

The Sasivekalu Ganesha, named after Ganesha's mustard seed-shaped belly, is near the Krishna temple south-west of the Kadalekalu Ganesha. It is a 2.4 metres (7.9 ft)-high monolith that was also carved in-situ from extant rock. The Sasivekalu Ganesha is carved with his mother Parvati, in whose lap he sits. She is only visible from the back of the statue. The monument is housed inside an open-pillared mandapa; the left hand and tusk have been damaged.

Hazara Rama temple: The Hazara Rama temple, referred to as the Ramachandra temple in inscriptions, occupied the western part of the urban core in the royal centre section of Hampi. This temple was dedicated to Rama of the Ramayana fame, and an avatar of Vishnu. It was the ceremonial temple for the royal family. The temple is dated to the early 15th century and is attributed to Devaraya I. The temple's outer walls portray the Hindu Mahanavami (Dasara) and the spring Holi festival procession and celebrations in parallel bands of artwork. The lowest band shows marching elephants, above it is horses led by horsemen, then soldiers celebrated by the public, then dancers and musicians, with a top layer depicting a boisterous procession of the general public. The depiction mirrors the description of festivals and processions in surviving memoirs of Persians and Portuguese who visited the Vijayanagara capital. The Hindu epic Ramayana. The temple has an entrance mandapa and a yajna ceremony hall, whose ceiling is designed to ventilate fumes and smoke through the roof. Inside the main mandapa are four intricately carved pillars in the Hoysala style; these carving include depictions of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita of Vaishnavism, Durga as Mahishasuramardini of Shaktism and Shiva-Parvati of Shaivism. Images are missing from the square sanctum. The temple has a smaller shrine with friezes depicting the legends of Vishnu avatars. This ruined temple complex is well known for its thousands of carvings and inscriptions, its elaborate frescoes depicting Hindu theosophy and its sprawling courtyard laid with gardens.

Kodandarama temple and riverside monuments: The Kodandarama temple complex lies near the Tungabhadra River, and is north of Achyutaraya temple. The temple overlooks Chakratirtha, where the Tungabhadra turns northwards towards the Himalayas. The river banks, considered holy, accommodate a Vijayanagara-era ghat and mandapa facilities for bathing. In front of the temple is a dipa stambha (lighting pillar) under a Pipal tree, and inside is a sanctum dedicated to Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman. Nearby, and continuing until Kotitirtha to its north, are a number of smaller shrines, dedicated to Vitthala, Anjaneya, Shiva linga and other deities. On the rock face are reliefs of Anantashayana Vishnu (reclining Vishnu creating the cosmic cycle, Ranganatha), friezes narrating the legends of Narasimha and Prahlada, and the twenty-

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four avatars of Vishnu according to the Puranic tradition of Vaishnavism. Near the river is a rock carved with Shaivism's 1,008 lingas.

Pattabhirama temple complex: The Pattabhirama temple complex is in the southern suburban centre outside the sacred centre and the urban core, about 500 metres (550 yd) from the ASI Hampi museum. It was at the nucleus of economic and cultural activity of this suburb, now located north-east of Kamalapura. The complex, also known as Varadevi Ammana Pattana, was likely built in the early 16th century and dedicated to Rama (Vishnu avatar). The complex has a main temple, a colonnaded courtyard inside an enclosure and a 64 (8x8 square)-pillared and roofed mandapa in front of the sanctum. The complex and the sanctum face east; the normal entrance was through the eastern gopura. The ruins suggest the gopuram had six tiers. The Pattabhirama temple included a 100-pillared hall—likely a feeding hall attached to the southern wall of the enclosed compound. The pillars have reliefs depicting Hindu themes which include gods, god, a scene from a Hindu text, yoga and namaste.

Mahanavami platform, public square complex: The Mahanavami platform, also called the "Great Platform", "Audience Hall", "Dasara" or "Mahanavami Dibba" monument, is within a 7.5-hectare (19-acre) enclosure at one of the highest points inside the royal centre (urban core). It has ceremonial structures. It is mentioned in the memoirs of foreigners who visited Vijayanagara, some calling it the "House of Victory". The largest monument in this complex has three ascending square stages leading to a large, square platform that likely had a wooden mandapa above it. This was burnt down during the destruction of Hampi. The two lower levels of the platform are made of granite. It has reliefs—possibly a catalogue of 14th century royal activities—and lines of marching animals including elephants, horses and camels. Reliefs on the south side show musicians and dancers, including female stick-dancers. The third level reliefs show a battle procession, couples and scenes of common citizens celebrating Holi (Vasantotsava) by throwing water at each other. Near the great platform is an audience hall, which also probably had a wooden pavilion, evidenced by 100 stone stubs; this too was burnt down. South of the platform is an aqueduct leading water to large, symmetrical, stepped tank made of granite that was excavated by archaeologists in the 1980s. The complex has another large water pool—possibly for water sports—a garden and various mandapa. there is a ruined temple-like monument near the step tank

Water infrastructure: The Square Water Pavilion, also called the Queen's Bath, is in the south-east of the royal centre. It has a pavilion, a water basin and a method of moving fresh water to it and taking away wash water and overflows. The basin is enclosed within an ornate, pillared, vaulted bay. Nearby are ruins of the aqueduct. The modern name of this building, the Queen's bath, is probably a misnomer because this was a public bath for men and travellers. The building's interior arches show influence of the Indo-Islamic style, reflecting an era in which Hindu and Muslim arts influenced each other in India. The Vijayanagara empire built an extensive water infrastructure, some examples of which—including the Manmatha tank near Virupaksha temple, which is dated to about the 9th century—predates the Vijayanagara. According to an inscription found there, the Manmatha tank was upgraded and a Durga shrine added in 1199 CE. The inclusion of artwork at the tank, such as a warrior fighting a lion, is dated to the 13th century, when Hoysalas frequented Hampi. The Hampi monuments include aqueducts to carry water to tanks and other parts of the city, as well as drains and channels to remove water overflow. For example, excavations in the 1980s near the Mahanavami platform in the urban core revealed a large, square-stepped tank that was fed by an aqueduct. The tanks were public utilities; some were perhaps used for royal ceremonies. Archaeological excavations in 1990 revealed twenty-three wells and cisterns in the Hampi-Vijayanagara metropolis. Of these, thirteen were found outside the city walls in the suburbs, and ten inside. Of these were twelve at roadsides, eight near temples, ten in residential areas and two were used for irrigation within the urban core. More water structures were found in Daroji valley for agriculture. According to archaeologists Kathleen Morrison and Carla Sinopoli, the Hampi water infrastructure was for the use of travellers, rituals, domestic use and irrigation.

Fountains and community kitchen: Several major temples in Hampi have an embedded kitchen and 100-or-more-pillared feeding halls. Hampi also had a dedicated public Bhojana shala (house of food) where numerous thali (dish) were carved in series in a rock on both sides of a water channel. One example is found near an octagonal fountain in the south of the royal centre; according to epigraphical sources, this Hampi bhojan shala was a utada kaluve or "canal connected with eating".

Elephant stables and Zenana enclosure: In the east of the royal centre lies the Gajashala, or elephant stables, which consist of eleven square chambers aligned north-south. The openings to the stables are arched; above ten chambers are alternating fluted and plain domes. In the middle of the stables are stairs to reach the roof. The Zenana enclosure is close to the elephant stables; it was thus named in a Persian memoir whose 19th century translation was an early introduction to Hampi ruins for many. The name "Zenana" is a misnomer,

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states George Michell, because it gives the impression that the women of Vijayanagar royalty lived here; its design and location makes that highly unlikely. The Zenana enclosure contains the Lotus Mahal, the latter being a two-storeyed pavilion in the royal centre. The Lotus Mahal combines a symmetrical, square, Hindu mandala design with lobed arches, vaults and domes of the Indo-Islamic style. Its basement and pyramidal towers are based on Hindu temple architecture. Like almost all of the structures in Hampi's royal centre, this monument has no inscriptions nor epigraphs mentioning it and therefore dating it and establishing its function with evidence has been difficult. The Lotus Mahal and other structures in the Hampi urban core, however, were not built with Muslim patronage, unlike the tombs in the various Muslim quarters of the city. These buildings reflect the assimilative approach of the Vijayanagara Hindu rulers. Lotus Mahal looks like a syncretic, congested space and its purpose is unclear. Speculations include it being a council hall.

Other Hindu temples and monuments

In the sacred centre near the southern banks of the Tungabhadra River and close to the Vitthala temple complex, are gateways and a monument now called the King's Balance. The latter is similar to those found at the entrances of South Indian Hindu temples for the tula-purush-dāna or thulabharam ceremonies in which a person gives a gift by weight equal to, or greater than, their body weight. The Vijayanagara rulers built forts, fortified gateways and watchtowers after their dynasty was founded from the ruins of a war and for security from repeated raids and invasion. Hindu-style corbelled arches are the most common gateways and watchtowers in Hampi. One such gateway is located south-east of Ganagitti Jain temple; it incorporates a central barbican wall designed to entrap and confuse a stranger aiming for a surprise, while frequent visitors knew the three changes of direction before the gateway. These functional Hindu monuments are identifiable by a legendary Hindu character incorporated into them, such as of Bhima of the Mahabharata's Pandava fame. Another such gate is found on the north-east road to Talarighat Hindu monument and the Vitthala temple. The Hampi site has over 1,600 surviving ruins mostly Hindu spread over a wide area. Other significant monuments include a temple near the octagonal bath for Saraswati, a Hindu god of knowledge and music; a temple in the suburbs for Ananthasayana Vishnu; an Uddana Virbhadrar temple for Shiva and Vishnu; a shrine for Kali, the fierce form of Durga unusually shown holding a ball of rice and a ladle; an underground temple in the royal centre; a Sugriva cave temple; the Matanga hill monuments; the Purandaradasa temple dedicated to the scholar musician famed for the Carnatic music tradition; the Chandrashekhara temple for Shiva near the Queen's bath monument; and the Malyavanta hill dedicated to Rama-Sita-Lakshmana and Shiva. The Malyavanta hill features several shrines including the Raghunatha temple and a row of Shiva lingas carved in stone.

Jain monuments (hampi)

Reliefs of Jain temples at Hampi includes Hemkut Jain temples, Ratnantraykut, Parsvanath Charan and Ganagitti Jain temples. Most of the idols are now missing from these temples, which were built in the 14th century.

Ganagitti temple complex: The Ganigitti Jain temple is near Bhima's gate in the south-east of the urban core section of Hampi. In front of it is a monolithic lamp pillar. The temple faced north; it is dated to 1385 CE, during the rule of Hindu king Harihara II, based on an inscription in the temple. It is dedicated to Tirthankara Kunthunatha and has plain walls, a pillared mandapa and a square sanctum from which the Jina's statue is missing. There are capitals on the pillars and the doorways have decoration. Over the sanctum is a Dravidian-style, narrowing square, pyramidal tower. Other monuments in the temple compound are in ruins.

Other Jain temples and monuments

A cluster of Jain and Hindu temples are co-located about 150 meters (160 yd) east of the elephant stables. One north-facing temple is dedicated to Parshvanatha Tirthankara. It was built by King Devaraya II and dates to 1426 CE, per an inscription in the temple. In front of the temple are two ruined temples; one of Shiva and the other dedicated to Mahavira. Jain Tirthankaras are also included in reliefs inside Hindu temples.

Muslim monuments (Hampi)

The Hampi site includes a Muslim quarter with Islamic tombs, two mosques and a cemetery. These are neither in the sacred centre nor in the royal centre of the Hampi site. Some Muslim monuments are a part of the urban core while others are in the suburbs where most Vijayanagara residents lived. These are in the north-east valley of the urban core, where settlements of Hindus and Jains are also found. Much of this region is deeply silted and the soil conceals abandoned temples, roads, water tanks, gateways and residential quarters.

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Ahmad Khan mosque and tomb: There is a Muslim monument in the south-east of the urban core on the road from Kamalapura to Anegondi, before Turuttu canal in the irrigated valley. This monument was first built in 1439 by Ahmad Khan, a Muslim officer in the army of Hindu king Devaraya II. The monuments include a mosque, an octagonal well and a tomb. The mosque lacks a dome and is a pillared pavilion, while the tomb has a dome and arches. Other Muslim monuments and a graveyard were added later near the Ahmad Khan's legacy.

Helibid

Halebeedu or Halebid, literally "old capital, encampment" is a town located in Hassan District, Karnataka, India. Halebidu (which used to be called Dorasamudra or Dwarasamudra) was the regal capital of the Hoysala Empire in the 12th century. It is home to some of the best examples of Hoysala architecture. Most notable are the ornate Hoysaleswara and Kedareshwara temples. The city got the name "Halebidu" because it was damaged and deserted into "old capital" after being ransacked and looted twice by Islamic forces of the Delhi Sultanate in the 14th century.

The town is known for its temple complexes

- Hinduism

Hoysaleswara temple, also referred simply as the Halebidu temple, is a 12th century Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva. It is the largest monument in Halebidu, a town in the state of Karnataka, India and the former capital of the Hoysala Empire. The temple was built on the banks of a large man-made lake, and sponsored by King Vishnuvardhana of the Hoysala Empire. Its construction started around 1121 CE and was complete in 1160 CE. During the early 14th century, Halebidu was twice sacked and plundered by the Muslim armies of Delhi Sultanate from northern India, and the temple and the capital fell into a state of ruin and neglect. It is 30 kilometres (19 mi) from Hassan city and about 210 kilometres (130 mi) from Bengaluru

Kedareshwara Temple: Kedareshwara Temple (also spelt "Kedareshvara" or "Kedareshvara") is a Hoysala era construction in the historically important town of Halebidu, in the Hassan district of Karnataka state, India. It is located a short distance away from the famous Hoysaleswara Temple. The temple was constructed by Hoysala King Veera Ballala II (r. 1173–1220 A.D.) and his Queen Ketalladevi, and the main deity is Ishwara (another name for the Hindu god Shiva). The temple is protected as a monument of national importance by the Archaeological Survey of India.

- Jainism

Jain Basadi complex in Halebidu, Hassan district consists of three Jain Basadis (Basti or temples) dedicated to the Jain Tirtankars Parshvanatha, Shantinatha and Adinatha. The complex is situated near Kedareshwara temple and Dwarasamudra lake. These temples were constructed in 12th century during the reign of Hoysala Empire along with Kedareshwara temple and Hoysaleswara Temple are now proposed as UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Garden City Bangalore:

The capital of the southern state of Karnataka, Bangalore is known for its pleasant weather throughout the year. Well connected by road, rail and air the city of Bangalore is a beautiful amalgamation of the historic and the modern. The city is known as the information technology capital of India as it has the headquarters of Indian technological organisation like ISRO, Infosys, Wipro, Hal in the city.

The city's gentle climate, broad streets, greenery and the presence of many public parks Lal Bagh and Cubbon Park has earned the city the name of "India Garden city". Biannual flower shows are held at the Lal Bagh Garden during the week of Republic day and Independence day. The glass house there is the venue for these shows.

The Lalbagh botanical Gardens which means, "The Red Garden" in English is a well-known botanical garden in Bangalore. The garden was originally commissioned by Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore, and later finished by his son Tipu Sultan. Lalbagh house India's largest collection of tropical plants, has a lake, and is one of the main tourist attractions in Bangalore. It also is home to a few species of birds and commonly sighted birds include Myna, Parakeets, Crows, Barahmini Kite, Pond Heron, Common Egret, Purple Moore Hen, Etc.,

Lalbagh is aesthetically designed, with lawns, flowerbeds, lotus pools and fountains. It has trees that are hundreds of years old much like Cubbon Park, a landmark "Lung" area of the city located at the heart. Organically created 1870, it covered an area of 100 acres and subsequent expansion has taken place and the area now 300 acres.

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This public park was first named as Meade's park after Sir John Meade, the acting commissioner of Mysore (Mysuru) in 1870 and subsequently renamed as Cubbon Park after Sir Mark Cubbon, the longest serving commissioner of the time. To commemorate the silver jubilee of Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar's rule in Mysore in 1927, the park was again renamed as Sri Chamarajendra Park, in the memory of the 19th century ruler Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar during whose rule the park came into existence.

The landscaping in the park creatively integrates natural rock outcrops with thickets of trees, massive bamboos with grassy expanse and flowerbeds and the monuments within its limits, regulated by the Horticulture Department of the Karnataka government.

Indigenous and exotic botanical species found in the park of about a total of around 6000 plants and trees, the Karnataka High Court, the Museum Building, Central Library, the Aquarium, and Press Club are around the park.

The State Archaeological Museum is one of the oldest in India and was built in 1876 by Colonel Sankey. It is located within Cubbon Park and is similar in design to the high court in its architectural style and hue. While the original collection in the museum that belonged to Benjamin Rice of the Gazetteer, antiquities from Mohenjo-Daro period are on display in the museum. Exhibits in the museum include specimens of Vijaynagara and Halebidu architecture, ancient coins and stone inscriptions as old as 5000 years.

The Indira Gandhi Musical fountain on Raj Bhawan Road near the Jawahar Lal Nehru Planetarium is a must see for those in Bangalore. The dancing and musical fountain has a number of patterns and is a great experience. There are two shows from Tuesday and Sundays from evening 7 -7.30 and 8 -8.30. The fountain garden is closed on Mondays. The aquarium is said to be the second largest in India and has a good variety of fishes.

Heritage Tourism

Cultural Heritage Tourism (or just Heritage Tourism) is a branch of tourism oriented towards the cultural heritage of the location where tourism is occurring. The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States defines heritage tourism as "travelling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past," and cultural heritage tourism is defined as "travelling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present."

Eco tourism

Eco tourism is one of the fastest growing trends in the worldwide tourism industry. Environment has an intrinsic value which outweighs its value as a tourism asset.

It is also agreed upon by environmental experts that the three elements, viz., political acceptability, social responsibility and sound environment with a perfect balance between quality and quantity, in tourism development/ promotion, can ensure quality tourism. Whilst there is a general support for a symbiotic relationship between the two, i.e., tourism and environment; the dilemma is that the residents lay greater stress on tourism development whereas the tourists focus on environmental protection.

In this context, 'eco-tourism' is being promoted as a means of 'giving nature value' and hence of achieving sustainable tourism. The term 'eco-tourism' has been defined in many ways and is usually used to describe tourism activities which are conducted in harmony with nature. It is a form of tourism which fosters environmental principles with an emphasis on visiting and observing natural areas; the emphasis on tourism as much as this can be separated from recreation is deliberate. Eco tourism relates to the quality of the environment and to ensure that the impacts from the activity are controlled comprehensively. Eco tourism can be defined as "purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the cultural and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the eco system, while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources financially beneficial to local citizens".

Eco tourism is one of the most popular alternative tourism forms. Its advocates believe that it engenders a sense of need for environmental protection among local population once the latter realize conservation does not mean loss of economic opportunity. Hopefully, eco-tourism can provide the local community with jobs, enabling a shift away from unsustainable practices such as over grazing, mining or logging in environmentally sensitive eco systems. However, the critics argue that with the establishment of biodiversity protection-cum-tourism conservation projects, people living in the area tend to lose their shelter and means of livelihood. On the contrary, some of the deleterious effects notwithstanding, tourism has also contributed to the protection of natural environment and cultural heritage; in particular, to the restoration of historical and archaeological buildings, works of art.

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Nature parks in many parts of the world have been established partly to boost tourism, thus, protecting natural environment (landscape, fauna and flora) from destruction by modern development. Preservation and conservation of environmental qualities, recreation and education are, indeed, the core themes behind the development of national parks and reserves. As an ideal principle, tourism should be developed within the carrying capacity of the park and not at the cost of the park resources. Despite all this, eco tourism's attraction analysts urge against blindly embracing it as a benign alternative to mass tourism. Academics warn that like any other form of tourism, eco-tourism attracts visitors to isolated and remote areas which often cannot sustain intensive human activities.

Although eco-tourism supposedly increases local involvement in the industry, government policies typically counteract this object through exclusion of the poorest. Moreover, similar to mass tourism, many organizations controlling eco tourist flows are powerful transnational companies, allowing the destination only a minor part of income generated by it. Nevertheless, eco-tourism is regarded as a positive dimension of tourism involving minimum density, low impact activities taking place at natural sites of sufficient biological, cultural and geographical interest to tourists. The major factors contributing to the boom are an international awareness of global ecological realities, the desire among a rapidly growing and relatively affluent segment of the industrialized world to have nature based experiences, and the developing world's conviction that natural resources are finite and ought to be conserved for future generations.

The development of nature based tourism products by the tourism organizations is an acknowledgement of the perceived value shifts in modern society favouring environmental conservation and liable to be translated into greater active tourist participation, interest and concern for the environment. An understanding of the notion of 'Sustainable Development' gaining currency over the last two decades or so, central to all public discourse and public policy agenda is imperative to have a thorough understanding of the implications of eco-tourism. Eco tourism, indeed, has the phenomenal potential as a tool for sustainable development.

Ecotourism is tourism which is *conducted responsibly to conserve the environment* and sustain the well-being of local people.

- Builds environmental awareness
- Provides direct financial benefits for conservation
- Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people
- Respects local culture
- Supports human rights and democratic movements such as:
 - conservation of biological diversity and cultural diversity through ecosystem protection
 - promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity, by providing jobs to local populations
 - sharing of all socio-economic benefits with local communities and indigenous peoples by having their informed consent and participation in the management of ecotourism enterprises
 - tourism to unspoiled natural resources, with minimal impact on the environment being a primary concern.
 - minimization of tourism's own environmental impact
 - affordability and lack of waste in the form of luxury
 - local culture, flora, and fauna being the main attractions
 - local people, who benefit from this form of tourism economically, and often more than mass tourism

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a traveler's engagement with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life.

Critical aspects of cultural tourism

- Rapid consumption of heritage places.
- Return visits are unlikely.
- Mummification of heritage towns.
- Impact of tourism development on local retail, workshops and residential spaces.
- Degradation of smaller heritage places.

Sports Tourism

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Sports Tourism Many people wonder what sports tourism is. Sports tourism is traveling from one region, country, state, etc. to another in order to watch a sports competition or game. While sports tourism has not always been extremely popular, during the recent decade the amount of people attending out of area sporting events has drastically increased. People are now traveling far and wide just to attend their favourite events, and it is no wonder as to what has encouraged the sudden spike in popularity.

Benefits of sport tourism

- Sports are an investment in the tourism industry.
- Creates economic growth through filled hotels, restaurants and retail establishments.
- Creates exposure and enhances a positive image for your community.
- Creates new product, a new tourism destination.
- Maximizes facility use in your community.
- Builds community relationships and strengthens corporate support.
- Creates youth opportunity/entertainment.
- Attract high-yield visitors, especially repeaters.
- Generate favourable image for the destination.
- Develop new infrastructure.
- Use the media to extend the normal communications reach.
- Generate increased rate of tourism growth or a higher demand plateau.
- Improve the organizational, marketing, and bidding capability of the community.
- Secure a financial legacy for management of new sport facilities.
- Increase community support for sport and sport-events.

Target on sport tourism

1. Transportation

- Providers: Airline, bus, rail, and car companies
- Highway and local maps
- Campgrounds
- Shuttle service/taxis
- Local limo, car, van, truck rental agencies
- RV, trailer rental agencies
- On-site vehicles (golf carts)
- Local tour companies
- Travel agents
- Parking/valet services vendor
- Parking areas
- Parking passes (stickers, cards, etc.)
- Assistance vehicles (towing, locksmiths, golf carts)
- Parking equipment (reflector bibs, lights, cones, ropes)
- Transportation/parking signage
- Attendant kiosks, trailers
- Communications (radios, PA system)
- Attendant uniforms

2. Accommodations

- Providers: hotels, motels, campgrounds, RV parks
- Hospitality suites
- Media centers
- Business centers
- Administrative offices
- Staff (rooms or loan of temporary staff)
- Closed circuit TV (many hotels have closed circuit TV, ask them to run event promos)
- Babysitting

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- Recreation facilities
 - Parking
 - Banquet space
 - Equipment
 - Registration pieces
3. Special Events
- Individual days throughout the event
 - Opening/closing ceremonies
 - Hospitality suites
 - Groups (officials, volunteers, hosts, interpreters)
 - Banquets/receptions/meals
 - Social occasions
 - Pro-Am events
 - Seating areas
 - Intermissions
 - Entertainment
4. Competition Equipment
- Public address/sound system
 - Communications (radios, beepers, intercoms, phones)
 - Score/record keeping
 - Timing
 - Lighting
 - Fencing/crowd control
 - Sanitation services (port-a-potties)
 - Signs
 - Portable buildings
5. Emergency
- Security (staffing, fencing, planning)
 - Tow trucks
 - First Aid Station
 - Ambulance
 - Weather
 - Equipment repairs
 - Tenting
 - Medical services
 - Legal services
 - Signage
 - Insurance
6. Special Services
- Janitorial
 - Site maintenance
 - Garbage/litter removal
 - Laundry
 - Seamstress/tailor
 - Couriers
 - Stage hands
 - Lighting/sound technicians
7. Printing
- Stationary (letterhead, second sheets, business cards, computer paper)
 - Registration forms
 - Office forms

SKILL BASED ELECTIVE III (V SEMESTER)

- Media kits
- Sponsorship kits
- Credentials
- Collateral (stickers, signs, name badges)
- Event tickets
- Brochures
- Programs
- Maps
- Posters

Health Tourism Adventure Tourism

Medical tourism refers to people traveling to a country other than their own to obtain medical treatment. In the past this usually referred to those who travelled from less-developed countries to major medical centers in highly developed countries for treatment unavailable at home. However, in recent years it may equally refer to those from developed countries who travel to developing countries for lower priced medical treatments. The motivation may be also for medical services unavailable or illegal in the home country.

Medical tourism most often is for surgeries (cosmetic or otherwise) or similar treatments, though people also travel for dental tourism or fertility tourism. People with rare conditions may travel to countries where the treatment is better understood. However, almost all types of health care are available, including psychiatry, alternative medicine, convalescent care, and even burial services.

History of Tamilnadu

The civilisation of the Tamil people is among the oldest in the world and has been influenced by, influenced, and coexisted with many external cultures. The three Tamil dynasties of Chera, Chola and Pandya were all of ancient origins. Together they ruled over Tamil Nadu with a unique culture and language, contributing to the growth of Sangam Literature, some of the oldest literature in the world. They had extensive overseas trade contacts with the Roman and Greek empires later on. These three dynasties were in constant struggle with each other as they wanted hegemony over the land.

Invasion by the Kalabhras during the third century disturbed the tradition, and order of the land by displacing the three traditional ruling dynasties. These occupiers were overthrown by the Pandyas and the Pallavas, who restored the kingdoms. The Cholas, who came back from obscurity in the ninth century by defeating the Pallavas and the Pandyas, rose to become a great power and extended their empire over the entire southern peninsula. At its height the Chola empire had spread from Bengal in the northeast to Sri Lanka in the south. The Chola navy held sway over the Sri Vijaya kingdom in Southeast Asia.

Rapid changes in the political situation of the rest of India occurred due to the incursions of Muslim armies from the northwest marked a turning point in the history of Tamil Nadu. With the decline of the three ancient dynasties during the fourteenth century, the Tamil country became part of the Vijayanagara Empire. Under this empire the Telugu speaking Nayak governors ruled the Tamil land. The brief appearance of the Marathas gave way to the European trading companies, who began to appear during the seventeenth century and eventually assumed greater sway over the indigenous rulers of the land. The Madras Presidency comprising most of southern India including what is now Tamil Nadu, was created in the eighteenth century and was ruled directly by the British East India Company. After the independence of India by Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi, the Tamil Nadu state was created based on linguistic boundaries, due to a Telugu man who wished the Telugu speaking land bordering Tamil Nadu to become its own state, which it did, Andhra Pradesh was born. This caused a chain reaction because the other languages also wanted their own states. This led to state boundaries because of linguistic reasons, and gave birth to many other linguistically devised states, including Tamil Nadu.

Pre-historic period: Although there is very little concrete historical evidence that has been found so far for the period prior to 600 BC, the history of the Tamil people probably predates this period. Various legends became prevalent after the 3rd century BC regarding the antiquity of the Tamil people. According to Iraiyanar Agapporul, a 3rd/5th century AC annotation on the Sangam literature, the Tamil country extended southwards beyond the natural boundaries of the Indian peninsula comprising of 49 ancient nadus (divisions). The land was supposed to have been destroyed by a deluge. The Sangam legends also added to the antiquity of the Tamil people by claiming tens of thousands of years of continuous literary activity during three Sangams. However, there have been no direct archaeological finds supporting these legends.

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The prehistoric period during which the Palaeolithic civilisations existed in the Tamil Nadu region has been estimated to span the period from about 50,000 BC until around 3000 BC. For most part of the lower Palaeolithic stage, humans lived close to river valleys with sparse forest cover or in grassland environments. The population density was very low and so far only two localities of this lower Palaeolithic culture have been found in south India. One of these is in Attirampakkam valley in the northwest of Chennai in Tamil Nadu. Archaeological research has uncovered evidence of fossil remains of animals and primitive stone implements around the northern Tamil Nadu that could be dated to belong to around 300,000 BCE. Humans in South India, belonging to the species of *Homo erectus*, lived in this primitive 'old stone age' (Palaeolithic) for quite a long time, using only crude implements such as hand axes and choppers and subsisting on food he hunted and gathered instead of actively growing it according to his needs.

The ancestor of modern humans who appeared around 50,000 years ago was more developed and could fabricate thinner flake tools and blade-like tools using a variety of stones. From about 10,000 years ago, humans made still smaller tools called Microlithic tools. The material used by the early humans to make these tools were jasper, agate, flint, quartz, etc. In 1949, researchers found such microliths in Tirunelveli district. In Tamil Nadu, the Neolithic period had its advent around 2500 BC. Humans of the Neolithic period made their stone tools in finer shapes by grinding and polishing. The Neolithic humans lived mostly on small flat hills or on the foothills in small, more or less permanent settlements but for periodical migration for grazing purposes. They gave the dead proper burials within urns or pits. They were also starting to use copper for making certain tools or weapons. Humans started using iron for making tools and weapons. The Iron Age culture in peninsular India is marked by Megalithic burial sites, which are found in several hundreds of places.

300AD-600AD: Ancient Tamil Nadu contained three monarchical states, headed by kings called Ventar and several tribal chieftaincies, headed by the chiefs called by the general denomination Vel or Velir. During the third century BCE, the Deccan was part of the Mauryan kingdom, and from the middle of the first century BCE to second century CE the same area was ruled by the Satavahana dynasty. The Tamil area had an independent existence outside the control of these northern empires. The names of the three dynasties, Cholas, Pandyas, and Keralaputras or Cheras are mentioned in the Pillars of Ashoka (inscribed 273–232 AD) inscriptions, where they are mentioned among the kingdoms, which though not subject to Ashoka, were on friendly terms with him. Karikala Chola was the most famous early Chola. He is mentioned in a number of poems in the Sangam poetry. Pandyas ruled initially from Korkai, a sea port on the southernmost tip of the Indian peninsula, and in later times moved to Madurai. Pandyas are also mentioned in Sangam Literature, as well as by Greek and Roman sources during this period. The early Pandyas went into obscurity at the end of the third century CE during the incursion of the Kalabhras. The kingdom of the Cheras comprised of the modern state of Kerala, along the western or Malabar Coast of southern India. Their proximity to the sea favoured trade with Africa. Internal and external trade was well organised and active.

Interregnum: After the close of the Sangam era, from about 300 to about 600 AD, there is an almost total lack of information regarding occurrences in the Tamil land. Sometime about 300 AD, the whole region was upset by the appearance of the Kalabhras. These people are described in later literature as 'evil rulers' who overthrew the established Tamil kings and got a strangle hold of the country. They did not leave many artefacts or monuments. The only source of information on them is the scattered mentions in Buddhist and Jain literature.

Jainism and Buddhism, took deep roots in the society, giving birth to a large body of ethical poetry. Writing became very widespread and vatteluttu evolved from the Tamil-Brahmi became a mature script for writing Tamil.

Age of empires (600 – 1300AC): The medieval period of the history of the Tamil country saw the rise and fall of many kingdoms, some of whom went on to the extent of empires, exerting influences both in India and overseas. The Hindu sects Saivism and Vaishnavism became more dominant, with temples being built and Dravidian architecture being supported by empires replacing the significance of Nastik Jainism and Buddhism of the previous era. Some of the output of villages throughout the kingdom was given to temples that reinvested some of the wealth accumulated as loans to the settlements. Tamil script replaced the vatteluttu script throughout Tamil Nadu for writing Tamil. Both secular and religious literature flourished during the period.

Pallavas: The seventh century Tamil Nadu saw the rise of the Pallavas under Mahendravarman I and his son Mamalla Narasimhavarman I. The Pallavas were not a recognised political power before the second century. After the fall of the Satavahanas, they began to get control over parts of Andhra and the Tamil country. The Pallavas were at their finest during the reigns of Narasimhavarman I and Pallavamalla

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Nandivarman II. During the sixth and the seventh centuries, the western Deccan saw the rise of the Chalukyas based in Vatapi. The Pallavas had the more difficult existence of the two as they had to fight on two fronts - against the Pandyas as well as the Chalukyas.

Pandyas: Pandya Kadungon (560 - 590) is credited with the overthrow of the Kalabhras in the south. Pandya Cendan extended their rule to the Chera country. His son Arikesari Parantaka Maravarman (c. 650 - 700) had a long and prosperous rule. He fought many battles and extended the Pandya power. After some decades of expansion, the Pandya kingdom was large enough to pose a serious threat to the Pallava power. The Pandya power continued to grow under Srimara and encroached further into the Pallava territories.

Cholas: Around 850 rose Vijayalaya, made use of an opportunity arising out of a conflict between Pandyas and Pallavas, captured Thanjavur and eventually established the imperial line of the medieval Cholas. Vijayalaya revived the Chola dynasty and his son Aditya I helped establish their independence. He invaded Pallava kingdom in 903 and killed the Pallava king Aparajita in battle, ending the Pallava reign. The Chola kingdom under Parantaka I expanded to cover the entire Pandya country. However, towards the end of his reign he suffered several reverses by the Rashtrakutas who had extended their territories well into the Chola kingdom. The Cholas went into a temporary decline during the next few years due to weak kings, palace intrigues and succession disputes.

European colonisation (1650 – 1850AC): European settlements began to appear in the Tamil country during the Vijayanagara Empire. In 1605, the Dutch established trading posts in the Coromandel Coast near Gingee and in Pulicat. The British East India Company built a 'factory' (warehouse) at Armagaon (Durgarazpatnam), a village around 35 miles North of Pulicat, as the site in 1626.

Anglo French Conflicts: The conflict between the British and the French had as result in 1765 the Emperor of Delhi issued a firman (decree) recognizing the British possessions in southern India.

British Government Control: Although the Company was becoming increasingly bold and ambitious in putting down resisting states, it was getting clearer day by day that the Company was incapable of governing the vast expanse of the captured territories. In 1784 Pitt's India Act made the Company subordinate to the British Government. The next few decades were of rapid growth and expansion in the territories controlled by the English. The Anglo-Mysore Wars of 1766 to 1799, the Anglo-Maratha Wars of 1772 and Polygar Wars of 1800-1805 Dheeran chinnamalai, the Tamil king won three polygar wars against Britishers and at last he was hanged along with his two brothers. Then Britishers took entire control of Tamil Nadu by settling East India Company after the death of chinnamalai the brave Tamil king.

End of Company rule: The discontent in the various districts of the company territories exploded in 1857 into the Sepoy war. Although the rebellion had a huge impact on the state of the colonial power in India, Tamil Nadu was mostly unaffected by it.

British rule (1850 – 1947): In 1858 the British Crown assumed direct rule in India. Failure of the summer monsoons and administrative shortcomings of the Ryotwari system resulted in a severe famine in the Madras Presidency during 1876 - 1877. The government instituted a famine insurance grant, setting aside 1.5 million Rupees. Other civic works such as canal building and improvements in roads and railway were also undertaken to minimise effects of any future famines.

Independence struggle: The growing desire for independence began to gradually gather pace in the country and its influence in Tamil Nadu generated a number of volunteers to the fight against the British colonial power in the struggle for Independence. Notable amongst these are Tiruppur Kumaran, who was born in 1904 in a small village near Erode. Kumaran lost his life during a protest march against the British. In 1916 Dr. T.M. Nair and Rao Bahadur Thygaraya Chetty released the Non-Brahmin Manifesto sowing the seeds for the Dravidian movements.

Post-Independence period: The trauma of the partition did not impact Tamil Nadu when India was granted Independence in 1947. There was no sectarian violence against various religions. There had always been an atmosphere of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence between all religions in Tamil Nadu. Congress formed the first ministry in the Madras Presidency. Rajaji was the first Chief Minister. Madras Presidency was eventually reconstituted as Madras State. The Madras state was named Tamil Nadu (the land of the Tamils) in 1968. Ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka during the 1970s and the 80s saw large numbers of Sri Lankan Tamils fleeing to Tamil Nadu.

Tourism in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu Hill Stations: Beckoning Travel Temptations Tourists throng to the hill stations of Tamil Nadu, Ooty and Kodaikanal being its crowning glories. The hill stations in the Nilgiris-Ooty, Coonoor,

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Kotagiri, etc.–are a fathomless fancy for travellers, invitingly beckoning with their natural beauty and salubrious climate. Yercaud in the Salem district of Tamil Nadu is yet another popular hill station, while untravelled ones like Yelagiri, Kolli hills and Valparai which are slowly becoming apparent to travellers.

Tamil Nadu Beaches: Alluring Coastal Charms Coastal tourist places of Tamil Nadu are never-ending expanses of aqua with unfailing aspects that make for a thorough beach holiday. Mahabalipuram emerges in front of the mind's eye for a beach holiday. The Marina Beach and the Besant Nagar Beach in Chennai are travel treats for those paying a visit to the capital of Tamil Nadu. The Covelong Beach is an extension of these waters of Mahabalipuram and Chennai, which is beautiful on its own. The Nagapattinam district include some important coastal places of Tamil Nadu tourism like Nagore, Velankanni, Sikkal, Kodiyakkarai, Vedaranyam, Mannargudi and Tranquebar. Nagore is a quaint little town along the shore of the Bay of Bengal on the border of the Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. Poompuhar, apart from being a coastal place, also holds historical significance and finds place in Silapathikaram, the popular Tamil epic. Kanyakumari is the southernmost tip of India at the confluence of the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Its geographical positioning with its impelling tourist attractions make it a sought-after destination of Tamil Nadu tourism. Thiruchendur and Rameswaram are prominent religious points on seashores.

Tamil Nadu Heritage Points: Culture Clad Centres Some tourist places in Tamil Nadu are known and visited for their strong flavour of culture and heritage, from within and abroad. The Chettinad region is of prime importance in this respect with Karaikudi as its crowning glory. The cuisine, the weaves, the numerous temples and mansions turned resorts stand as significant sources of Tamil culture. Coimbatore with its Kongu culture, the temple city of Madurai and Thanjavur also are also cultural embodiments and even in modern times are culture clad.

Tamil Nadu Temples: Wishful Wonders The temples of the state are integral impressions of Tamil Nadu tourism. The towers called gopurams are often towering with intricate workmanship in sculpting, with designs and patterns in layers. Tourists flock Thanjavur and Kumbakonam, for their air of piety and colossal architectural wonders built by the erstwhile rulers of the past. Darasuram, Mayiladuthurai, Thiruvavur, Thirumanancheri, Thirukarukavur, etc. are some important temples worth visiting. The Madurai Meenakshi Temple built by the Pandya rulers is a magnificent example of the temple architecture of Tamil Nadu and a sculptural wonder, with numerous portions of the temple which bespeak the splendid architecture. The temple of Rameswaram, on a calm seashore where waves are almost still, is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva. Tamil Nadu also boasts of groups of thematic temples, a major source of religious tourism.

The Navagraha Temples (Nine Planets) around Thanjavur dedicated to the nine planets are thronged by devotees from across the country. Alangudi (Jupiter), Thirunallar (Saturn), Kanjanoor (Venus), Thiruvankadu (Mercury), Thirunageswaram (Snake planet), Keezhaperumpallam (Snake planet), Suryanar Kovil (Sun God), Thingalur (Moon) and Vaideeswaran koil (Mars) are the nine Navagraha temples.

Panchabootha Temples (Five Elements) – These are temples dedicated to Lord Shiva considering him as the source and manifestation of the five elements. Thiruvanaikaval, Thiruvannamalai, Kanchipuram and Chidambaram are located in Tamil Nadu while, Kalahasti is in Andhra Pradesh. 6 Battle-camps of Lord Subramanya or Muruga – Claimed as the Tamil God known for his valour and wisdom, there are six temples dedicated to Lord Muruga, thronged by devotees with religious fervour. Palani, Thiruparankundram, Thiruchendur, Palamudircholai, Thiruthani and Swamimalai are the five jewels among temples each with a significance of its own.

Famous Temples in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu is one place in South India where the elaborate architecture and brilliant sculptures of its ancient temples, leave all its tourists spellbound with their astounding beauty. With almost all the temples built during historic and medieval times, a trip to these temples provides you with a deep insight into brilliant architectural, sculptural and artistic skills of the engineers, architects and artisans of the bygone times. These temples also showcase the opulent and lavish tastes of the erstwhile royal kings, be it Pallavas, Cholas or Nayakas. Standing tall as the backbone of the Tamil culture, these temples are today, India's precious jewels adding to its rich heritage.

- Meenakshi Amman Temple, Madurai

Dedicated to God Parvati in the form of Meenakshi and her consort, Lord Shiva in the form of Lord Sundareshwarar, the 'Meenakshi Amman Temple' is one of the most ancient and famous temples not only in Tamil Nadu but, in entire India. According to historical and archaeological records, the temple was originally built around 6th century AD and the major portion of it was damaged in 14th century by the Muslim invaders

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in India. The present structure of the temple dates back to 16th century when it was again restored to its pristine glory by the Nayak rulers.

Meenakshi Amman Temple, also known as Minakshi-Sundareshwara Temple, is one of the oldest and most important temples in India. Located in the city of Madurai, the temple has a great mythological and historical significance. It is believed that Lord Shiva assumed the form of Sundareshwarar (the handsome one) and married Parvati (Meenakshi) at the site where the temple is currently located. Renowned for its astonishing architecture, Meenakshi Temple was nominated as one of the wonders of the world, but couldn't make it into the list of 'Seven Wonders of the World'. However, the temple is definitely one of the 'Wonders of India'. It is also one of the main attractions of South India with thousands of devotees thronging it every day. During the 'Tirukalyanam Festival,' which takes place over a period of 10 days, the temple attracts more than a million devotees. Despite many people visiting it every day, the temple is well-maintained and was named the 'Best Swachh Iconic Place' (cleanest iconic place) in India.

Temple Structure: The temple occupies a huge area in the heart of Madurai as it spreads over 14 acres. The temple is enclosed with huge walls, which were built in response to the invasions. The entire structure, when viewed from above, represents a mandala. A mandala is a structure built according to the laws of symmetry and loci. There are various shrines built within the temple complex. Apart from the two main shrines, which are dedicated to Sundareshwarar and Meenakshi, the temple has shrines dedicated to various other deities like Ganesha and Murugan. The temple also houses god Lakshmi, Rukmini, and Saraswati. The temple also has a consecrated pond named 'Porthamarai Kulam.' The term 'Potramarai Kulam' is a literal translation of 'pond with a golden lotus.' The structure of a golden lotus is placed at the center of the pond. It is said that Lord Shiva blessed this pond and declared that no marine life would grow in it. In the Tamil folklore, the pond is believed to be an evaluator for reviewing the worth of any new literature.

The temple has four main towering gateways (gopurams) that look identical to each other. Apart from the four 'gopurams,' the temple also houses many other 'gopurams' that serve as gateways to a number of shrines. The temple has a total of 14 towering gateways. Each one of them is a multi-storey structure and displays thousands of mythological stories and several other sculptures. The major 'gopurams' of the temple are listed below:

- Kadaka Gopuram – This towering gateway leads to the main shrine that houses God Meenakshi. The gateway was rebuilt by Tumpichi Nayakkar during the mid-16th century. The 'gopuram' has five storeys.
- Sundareshwarar Shrine Gopuram – This is the oldest 'gopuram' of the temple and was built by Kulasekara Pandya. The 'gopuram' serves as a gateway to the Sundareshwarar (Lord Shiva) shrine.
- Chitra Gopuram – Built by Maravarman Sundara Pandyan II, the gopuram depicts the religious and secular essence of Hinduism.
- Nadukkattu Gopuram – Also called as the 'Idaikattu Gopuram,' this gateway leads to the Ganesha shrine. The gateway is placed right in between the two main shrines.
- Mottai Gopuram – This 'gopuram' has fewer stucco images when compared to the other gateways. Interestingly, 'Mottai gopuram' had no roof for nearly three centuries.
- Nayaka Gopuram – This 'gopuram' was built by Visvappa Nayakkar around 1530. The 'gopuram' is astonishingly similar to another gateway called 'Palahai Gopuram.'

The temple also has numerous pillared halls called 'Mandapams.' These halls were built by various kings and emperors and they serve as resting places for pilgrims and devotees. Some of the most important 'mandapams' are given below:

- Ayirakkal Mandapam – It literally translates to 'hall with thousand pillars.' The hall, which was built by Ariyanatha Mudaliar, is a true spectacle as it is supported by 985 pillars. Each and every pillar is sculpted magnificently and has images of Yali, a mythological creature.
- Kilikoondur Mandapam – This 'mandapam' was originally built to house hundreds of parrots. The parrots that were kept there in cages were trained to say 'Meenakshi'. The hall, which is next to the Meenakshi shrine, has sculptures of characters from Mahabharata.
- Ashta Shakthi Mandapam – This hall houses the sculptures of eight gods. Built by two queens, the hall is placed in between the main 'gopuram' and the gateway that leads to the Meenakshi shrine.
- Nayaka Mandapam – 'Nayaka Mandapam' was built by Chinnappa Nayakkar. The hall is supported by 100 pillars and houses a Nataraja statue.

Festivals: Apart from the main festival, which is basically the wedding ceremony of the deities, a number of other festivals are celebrated in the temple. Some of these include 'Vasantham festival,' 'Unjal

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festival,' 'Mulai-Kottu festival,' 'Arudhra Dharsan festival,' 'Thai utsavam,' 'Kolattam festival,' etc. Each of these festivals has its own significance and is celebrated during various months throughout the year. The temple also celebrates 'Navarathri festival.' During 'Navarathri' the temple displays colorful dolls which are collectively called 'gollu.' 'Gollu' often convey stories from mythological scenes.

- Brihadeeswarar Temple, Thanjavur

One of the largest temples in India, the 'Brihadeeswarar Temple' is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is located in the Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu. Built under the reign of the Chola dynasty in 11th century AD, the temple stands tall as a testimony to the opulence and grandeur of the Chola rulers. UNESCO World Heritage Site under the list of 'Great Living Chola Temples' and is visited by hundreds of thousands of devotees and tourists every year. The greatest attraction of the temple is its 216 ft. Tall.

The temple took 12 years to complete, and King Raja Raja Chola - I, performed the Kumbhabhishekam (consecration ceremony) in 1011 AD. The temple was built in honour of his victorious reign, during when the Chola kingdom (10th to 14th centuries AD) extended till Ceylon and some parts of the Malaya archipelago. The Temple, like many others built during this period served many functions; the walls are very high and the entrance is built like a fort, along with a moat. On the inside, there are separate waiting areas for musicians, workers etc., and the periphery served as a meeting place for the public. The eastern side of the temple has the yagnasala (place for special prayers), the kitchen, the storeroom and the dining hall. The western and the northern ends have a long corridor with 108 Shiva Lingams arranged along the inner side of the corridor. The walls are decorated with paintings of the 64 divine 'lilas' (plays) of Lord Shiva.

The central attraction is the great Vimana built over the sanctum, which is 216 feet high. It has 14 storeys of intricate sculpting with pilasters and niches, and images of God. Vimana' or tower that is also claimed to be the tallest in the world. The 'Kumbam' or the apex structure on top of the Vimana, weighing 80 tonnes and carved from a single granite, just adds to the magnificence of the entire structure. This is peculiar, because usually, the Gopurams (towers at the entrance) are generally higher than the Vimana in most temples. This style of high Vimana has a feel of the Orissa Temples in Bhuvaneshwar. The main sanctum of the temple is a Mahalingam, a huge lingam that is 23 feet in circumference and 9 feet high. The Nandhi (the divine vehicle of Lord Shiva) is a monolith measuring 12 feet in height, 19.5 feet in length and 18.25 feet in width, it weighs about 25 tons. The Nandi is seated in an ornately sculpted mandapam called the Nayak Mandapam. According to local legend, the Nandhi was growing in size and people fearing that it might grow out of the mandapam, stuck a nail at its back and since then the growth has ceased. Also it houses many other sub shrines, which are later additions to the great complex. The Shrine of Sri Subramanya is a new addition. Built towards 600AD, the architecture is considered 'modern' in the scale of Dravidian architecture and is believed to have been built in the Nayak period.

Some pillars in this corridor have carvings of Maratha rulers in them. The shrine of God Sri Brihannayagi was built by a later Pandya King in the 13th century. The shrine of Lord Ganesha is said to belong to the time of King Sarfoji II, the legendary Maratha King. This temple has Ganesha statues in seven poses. The Nataraja shrine, and Saint Karuvurar's Shrine was built in honour of the Saint Karuvar who helped Raja Raja Chola consecrate the Mahalinga. The Sri Chandeewara Shrine completes the list of sub shrines. These later additions provide us with a wonderful example of the progression of Dravidian architecture. An interesting note is the central stone of the Vimana, which weighed 235 lbs (plus 35 lbs of gold plating on it) and was carried to the top by a scaffold built especially for this purpose, which was 4 miles long.

Another striking feature about the temple apart from the blown out size of almost anything here, are the colours. The fresco painting can be seen in the ceilings of the corridors and also in the ceilings of the many sub-shrines. They are an invention of the Cholas and the painting, which are about 1000 years old are still brightly colourful.

- Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam

Dedicated to Lord Vishnu, the 'Ranganathaswamy Temple' located on the Srirangam Island of the Tiruchirappalli city in Tamilnadu, is another masterpiece of the Dravidian architecture. Spread across an area of over 150 acres, the temple has 49 sub-shrines and is dotted with 21 brilliantly carved Gopurams (tower gateways) with the main or the 'Raja Gopuram' standing tall at 236 ft. making it the tallest in Asia. It is also only one of its kind shrine where you will find a unique mix of a temple and township co-existing; a part of the temple is actually dedicated to temple activities whereas the remaining portion serves as a township for human. The temple also has 7 prakaras or enclosures with the presiding deity of Lord Vishnu in the form of Lord Ranganathaswamy reclining on five-headed serpent, enshrined in the innermost prakara. The tower above the innermost prakara is in the shape of 'Om' and is completely plated in Gold. Counted as

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the first amongst the 108 'Divya Desams' or holy abodes of Lord Vishnu, the temple draws uncountable pilgrims and tourists every year.

The exact date of temple's consecration is still not known but, according to archaeological records, the original structure of the temple dates back to 10th century when the region was under the rule of Chola dynasty. In the 14th century, the temple was plundered of its wealth by Muslim invaders and was again restored to its original grandeur by the Vijayanagara and Nayaka rulers in late 16th century. Magnificent architecture, delicate carvings, exquisite sculptures and brilliant frescoes of the temple, even today give you a deep insight into the superb skills of the then architects, sculptors and artisans. During your visit to the temple, you just cannot miss the thousand-pillared hall that can leave anyone awed with its artistic brilliance; the exquisitely carved figures of horses standing on their rear legs depicting war scenes on the base of these pillars offer a true spectacle.

Mandapams (Halls): The Ranganathaswamy Temple has many mandapams

Thousand pillar mandapam is a theatre like structure made from granite. It was built during the Vijayanagara rule period. It has a central wide aisle with seven side aisles on each side with pillars set in a square pattern. Sesharaya mandapam is the intricately carved hall built during the Nayaka rule period. It is found on the east side of the fourth prakaram courtyard. The northern side of this community hall has 40 leaping animals with riders on their back, all carved out of monolithic pillars. Garuda Mandapam is named after the vahana (vehicle) of Vishnu, named Garuda. It is on the south side of the third prakaram courtyard. It too is dated to the Nayak rule era. Inside the community hall, on its pillars, are portrait sculptures. In the middle is a free-standing seated Garuda figure, identifiable by his eagle-head, wings and him facing the Vishnu shrine. Kili mandapam is found inside the innermost (first) prakaram courtyard. It is next to the Ranganatha sanctum. Here walking elephant balustrades line the steps that lead into the gathering hall. This is dated to the 17th century Hindu rulers. The hall and structural elements are carved with animals, and in its center is a raised square platform with four carved pillars. Ranga Vilasa mandapam is one of the larger community halls designed for large spaces between the pillars for the pilgrim groups and families to sit together and rest. It is covered with Hindu mythology murals and narratives from the Ramayana.

The Hall of 1000 pillars (actually 953) is a fine example of a planned theatre-like structure and opposite to it is the "Sesha Mandap". The 1000-pillared hall made of granite was constructed in the Vijayanagara period (1336–1565) on the site of the old temple. The most artistic halls that the Nayaks added to the complex is the Sesha Mandap on the east side of the fourth enclosure. The hall is celebrated for the leaping animals carved on to the piers at its northern end. The pillars consists of sculptures of wildly rearing horses bearing riders on their backs and trampling with their hoofs upon the heads of rampant tigers, seem only natural and congruous among such weird surroundings. The great hall is traversed by one wide aisle in the centre for the whole of its greater length, and intersected by transepts of like dimension running across at right angles. There still remain seven side aisles on each side, in which all the pillars are equally spaced out. The Garuda Madapa (hall of the legendary bird deity of Vishnu, garuda) located on the south side of the third enclosure is another Nayak addition. Courtly portrait sculptures, reused from an earlier structure, are fixed to the piers lining the central aisle. A free-standing shrine inside the hall contains a large seated figure of garuda; the eagle-headed god faces north towards the principal sanctum. The Kili mandapa (Hall of parrot) is located next to the Ranganatha shrine, in the first enclosure of the temple. Elephant balustrades skirt the access steps that ascend to a spacious open area. This is bounded by decorated piers with rearing animals and attached colonettes in the finest 17th century manner. Four columns in the middle define a raised dais; their shafts are embellished with undulating stalks.

Festivals: The temple is maintained and administered by the Hindu Religious and Endowment Board of the Government of Tamil Nadu. An Executive officer appointed by the Board manages the temple along with Sri Azhagiya Manavala Perumal Temple, Pundarikakshan Perumal Temple at Thiruvellarai, Sri Vadivazhagiya Nambi Perumal Temple and Mariamman Temple at Anbil. There are three trustees and a chairman for the board of trustees. Annadhanam scheme, which provides free food to devotees, is implemented in the temple by the Board. Under the scheme, free food is offered to two hundred devotees every day in the temple and the expenditure is fully funded by the contributions from devotees. The temple celebrates numerous festivals around the year including processions. These are called utsavam. The annual temple chariot festival, called Rathothsavam is celebrated during the Tamil month of thai (January–February) and the processional deity, utsavar is taken round the temple in the temple car. Chitra Poornima is a festival based on the mythological incident of Gajgraha (elephant crocodile). The elephant suffered in the jaws of crocodile and god rescued the elephant. Vasanthothsavam is celebrated during the Tamil month of vaikasi (May–June) which according to inscriptions is celebrated from 1444 AD.

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- Jambukeswarar Temple, Thiruvanaikaval

Another famous temple located on the Srirangam Island of Tamilnadu is the 'Jambukeswara Temple' dedicated to Lord Shiva. Dating back to the Chola era, the temple again represents a Dravidian style of architecture with 7 tiered gopuram adorned with delicate carvings. There are 5 enclosures inside the temple with the innermost being the main sanctum housing the Shivlinga in the form of Appu Lingam (water Lingam). There is an underground stream flowing underneath the Shivlinga from which water continuously flows out.

According to mythological legends, God Parvati in the form of Akilandeswari performed a great penance under the 'Jambu Tree' that is believed to have grown from the head of a meditating saint. To perform the Pooja, she made a lingam from the water of River Cauvery flowing by. Impressed with the devotion of Parvati, Shiva gave her darshans and taught her Shiva Gnana.

Enacting the penance of Parvati as Akilandeswari worshipping Lord Shiva, every day during noon, the priest of the temple dresses as female dressed in saree and offers prayer to Lord Jambukeswarar. This noon prayer is attended by hundreds of devotees every day and provides a great insight into few unusual Indian traditions and customs to those travelling to India for the first time.

In the third enclosure, there is a coconut grove having a small tank where the festival image of Vaishnavite Srirangam temple used to be brought one day a year. As Akilandeswari worshipped Lord Shiva in this temple, even today at noon the 'Archakar' (priest) dresses like a female and does Pooja to Jambukeswara and 'Go Maatha' (Cow). The noon pooja is very famous and a host of pilgrims attend it every day. A special variety of black cow, called Karam Pasu is used for the occasion. Annabhishekam to lingam (ablution with cooked rice) is a daily ritual performed in the temple. The temple is one of the hosts for the annual Natyanjali, a festival of classical Indian dance. The temple has also a school for training nadhaswaram, a classical pipe instrument in Tamil Nadu.

There is a legend that Parvathi worshipped Shiva here and installed the idol in the sanctum. Following the legend, a priest performs the pooja every day. It is believed that Adi Sankara offered ear rings called Thadanga to Akilandeshwari. There are a total of nine waterbodies associated with the temple

- Kanchi Kailasanthar Temple, Kanchipuram

Located in Kanchipuram district of Tamilnadu, the 'Kanchi Kailasanthar Temple' is another one of the most famous pilgrim centres in South India. Dating back to late 7th century- early 8th century, the temple is believed to have been built under the reign of the Pallava Dynasty. Carved entirely out of sandstone, the temple is the oldest temple in Tamil Nadu dedicated to Lord Shiva with its main sanctum enshrining a 16 sided Shivlinga made of a black granite. The architecture of the temple again showcases a brilliant Dravidian style with a delicately carved pyramidal shape tower on the main sanctum and 58 small Shiva shrines enclosed inside the complex. Prominent highlight of the temple are undoubtedly, the beautifully carved sculptures of Lord Shiva and his consort, God Parvati in different dance postures that can be seen adorning the inner walls. Standing tall as a symbol of grandeur of the Pallava kings, the 'Kanchi Kailasanthar Temple' today, attracts hordes of pilgrims from different parts of the country, especially on the occasion of Maha Shivratri when devotees throng here to seek the blessings of the God.

- Ekambareswarar Temple, Kanchipuram

Yet another beautiful and famous temple in Tamil Nadu, the 'Ekambareswarar Temple' attracts thousands of pilgrims and other tourists from different parts of India and abroad. Counted amongst five 'Panch Bootha Sthalas' (five elements of the universe), the temple is dedicated to the element, Earth and holds a great religious significance for devotees of Lord Shiva.

As per mythological beliefs, God Parvati performed a penance here under a sacred mango tree, for Lord Shiva with a Shivlinga made of sand. Pleased with her devotion, Shiva appeared before her and came to be known as Ekambareswarar or the 'Lord of Mango Tree'. The temple is believed to have been existing since 600 AD but, the present structure is said to be dating back to 11th-12th centuries. The architecture of the temple showcases a signature Shaivite structure with a lofty gopuram, 5 prakrams or concentric circumambulatory enclosures. The 1000 pillared hall adorning carvings of 1008 Shivlingas is believed to be added by the Vijayanagara kings during 15th century. The inner sanctum houses the Prithvi Lingam. Also, the sacred mango tree, believed to be more than 3000 years old, can be seen in the temple premises. The speciality of the tree is that it bears four different types of Mangoes in four different seasons in the year.

- Ramanathaswamy Temple, Rameswaram

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One of the four primary pilgrimage destinations ('Char Dhams') for all Hindus across the world, the 'Ramanathaswamy Temple' is swarmed by hordes of pilgrims every day. Besides being one of the holy 'Char Dhams', the temple is also counted amongst the 12 sacred Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva. According to mythological legends, the story associated with the Shivlinga enshrined in the main sanctum of the temple goes back to the times of Ramayana. It is believed that after returning from Lanka, Lord Rama wanted to absolve his sins of killing the demon Ravana who was also a great Brahmin and scholar. In order to do so, he decided to worship Lord Shiva and asked Lord Hanuman to get the biggest Shivlinga from Himalayas. As it took very long for Hanuman to get the Shivlinga, and seeing the auspicious time for prayers being run out, Rama's wife, God Sita built a Shivlinga from sand. The same Shivlinga, known as 'Ramalinga' is believed to have been residing in the sanctum of the Ramanathaswamy Temple for centuries. Enshrined next to Ramalinga is the 'Vishwalinga', the Shivlinga that was brought by Hanuman. As per the legends, Lord Rama seeing Hanuman disappointed, ordained that for any devotee visiting Rameswaram, the holy yatra would be successful only if he first pays his obeisance to Vishwalinga and since then, all the rituals are first made at Vishwalinga and then at Ramalinga.

Located on the serene island of Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu, the structure of this temple is believed to have been built during 12th century CE by the Pandya rulers. The tallest of its 4 gopurams stands at the height of 126 feet metres and is built in typical Dravidian style. The temple is also acknowledged for housing longest corridor hall in India made of almost 1000 intricately carved granite pillars. A colossal statue of Nandi 6 metres tall also grabs attention of many. A visit to the Ramanathaswamy temple not only provides you with an unmatched spiritual experience but, also gives you an opportunity to witness the grandeur and opulence of the kings in the times bygone.

- Kapaleeshwarar Temple, Chennai

Located in Mylapore district of Chennai, the 'Kapaleeshwarar Temple' was built under the reign of the Pallava Kings during 7th century CE. However, the temple structure that stands today dates back to 16th century CE owing to the fact that the original structure was devastated by the Portuguese and it was in 16th century that the Vijayanagara Kings brought the temple back to its pristine splendour. Dedicated to Lord Shiva who is revered here in the form of Kapaleeshwarar, the temple is one of the significant pilgrimage sites in Tamil Nadu for the Shaivites attracting hordes of devotees every day. Adorned with a huge rainbow-coloured Gopuram, pillared halls and a water body; Kapaleeshwarar Temple presents a fine example of a true Dravidian style of architecture.

According to mythological legends, God Parvati in the form of peahen or 'Mayil' as said in Tamil, performed a huge penance for Lord Shiva at this pious site. That is the reason, a small shrine of God Parvati who is revered here in the form of Karpagambal is also present in the temple complex besides the main sanctum of Lord Shiva who is enshrined in the form of Shivlinga. The Karpagambal shrine attracts huge crowds on Fridays when the presiding deity is bedecked with a garland of gold coins. Another interesting site of the temple is a small shrine under the old Punnai Tree in the courtyard that depicts the story of God Parvati in the form of peahen worshipping the Shivlinga. One of the most sacred sites in Tamil Nadu, a visit here is sure to provide you with an unmatched experience of solace and divinity.

- Monolithic Rock Temples, Mahabalipuram

Known as the ancient temple town, Mahabalipuram is a UNESCO World Heritage site that dates back to 7th century and is believed to have been built under the reign of Pallava dynasty. The town today, stands as a testimony to some of India's greatest architectural and sculptural achievements. The main highlight of this temple town is its five monolithic rock-cut temples in the form of 'Panch Rathas' or chariots. Each ratha is believed to have been dedicated to a Pandava brother from the times of Mahabharata. With every ratha carved in different shape and size, adorning captivating sculptures of animals, humans and gods; the architecture of these structures provide you with a deep insight into the architectural skills of the sculptors during the Pallava rule.

Another great attraction of the town is the beautiful 'Shore Temple' embellished with intricate carvings and sculptures. Unlike other temples of the region that have been carved out of monolithic rocks, this temple was made from granite blocks and stands as one of the earliest examples of stone built temples in South India. The inner sanctum of the temple enshrines a Shivlinga. Also, a shrine dedicated to Lord Vishnu with an image of him reclining on the Sheshnag can be seen adorning the inner walls. The outer courtyard of the temple is decorated with multiple sculptures of Nandi bull. Located on the shores of Bay of Bengal overlooking the azure waters of the never ending ocean, the temple not only showcases the artistic brilliance of the artisans of the bygone times but, also the royal taste of the Pallava kings. Withstanding the atrocities

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of wind and sea, the temple even today stands tall in its pristine glory and serves as a stunning backdrop for the annual Mahabalipuram Dance Festival.

A visit to Mahabalipuram is incomplete without witnessing its gigantic bas-relief works carved out of granite blocks dating back to 7th century. Most famous amongst all reliefs is the depiction of River Ganges' descent to earth with Lord Shiva shown taking her in his matted locks. Another amazingly beautiful relief work is of 'Arjuna's Penance' depicting Arjuna undertaking a penance in order to obtain a powerful weapon from Lord Shiva that can lead to Pandavas victory over Kauravas in the battle of Mahabharata.

- Nagaraja Temple, Nagercoil

Located in the Nagercoil town of Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu, the 'Nagaraja Temple' is dedicated to the serpent king Vasuki. The presiding deity of this temple is the five-headed Naga God and is visited by hordes of devotees, especially on Sundays when special Pooja is performed offering milk and turmeric to the deity. The temple sees an uncountable footfall of people suffering from Naga Dosha during the Tamil month of Avani (August and September) when some distinct rituals are performed for 12 days. According to folk tales and legends, once a village girl was cutting grass in the area when all of a sudden she noticed blood oozing out of her axe after accidentally hitting a stone. She hurriedly went to the village and brought few villagers here, out of which one villager recognized the stone as an idol of a five headed snake. Thereafter, the temple dedicated to Nagaraja was built with its walls made of mud and roof made of coconut leaves. The main sanctum of the temple still has these mud walls and thatched roof with the small stone idol of Nagaraja placed on the soil. The soil underneath the idol remains wet as it is believed that the blood is still oozing out of the deity till date. It is believed that this soil holds special powers and can cure any skin ailments; the soil is also given as prasadam to the visitors of the temple.

The architecture of the temple is quite simple with scores of sculptures and images of different snakes adorning the walls, trees and pond around. The main sanctum enshrines the deity and is guarded by two huge statues of five-headed serpents. Inside the temple premises, you will also find Shivlinga and idol of Vishnu in Anant Shayana position. One of the very unique temples in India located amidst tranquil and peaceful settings, a visit here is sure to leave you with a blissful experience.

- Kumari Amman Temple, Kanyakumari

Located on the peninsula of Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu, the 'Kumari Amman Temple' is dedicated to the virgin God Kanya Kumari, an avatar of God Shakti. Dating back to 3000 years, the temple sits on the serene confluence of Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal. The idol of the presiding deity is in the form of a charming young girl with rosary in her right hand. As per mythological beliefs, in Puranic times, the demon king, Banasura obtained a boon from Lord Shiva that he could only be vanquished by a virgin. With this boon in hand, he caused great agony to Devas who in turn worshipped God Parvati to get them relieved from the harassment of the demon king. As an answer to the prayers of Devas, God Parvati appeared in the form of a young girl and performed a penance for Lord Shiva on the confluence of these three oceans to kill Banasura. Enchanted with the beauty of Kanya Kumari, Banasura tried to force her in marriage that resulted in a fierce battle ending in his death.

Relieved of the atrocities of Banasura, a temple was built here dedicated to Devi Kanya Kumari by Lord Parshuram. The idol of the deity is believed to be the same that was installed by Parshuram. The nose ring adorned by the deity has another story associated; it is believed that the diamonds of the nose ring are so bright that in the past, few ships sailing in the sea mistook the brilliance of these diamond as light from a lighthouse resulting in their wreckage upon the nearby rocks. Since those accidents, the eastern door (sea facing) of the temple remains closed. One of the famous pilgrim destinations in Tamil Nadu, a visit to this temple is sure to leave you blessed with peace and prosperity.

- Thillai Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram

Dedicated to Lord Shiva in the form of Nataraja or the cosmic dancer, the 'Thillai Nataraja Temple' is one of the most ancient temples of Tamil Nadu known for both, religious and architectural significance. The temple is believed to have been built during the time of Pallava rule in 11th century and further renovations were made during Cholas, Pandyas and Vijayanagara reign. The Nataraja Temple is also one of the 'Panch Bhuta Sthalas' with each one dedicated to five elements of universe – earth, air, water, fire and space; this temple signifies the fifth element, space.

The place where the temple sits is believed to be the centre of earth's magnetic field. The main sanctum known as Chitsabha, houses the deity of Nataraja and Sivakamasundri (Nataraja's consort). The roof of Chitsabha is made of gold and is believed to have been built during the Chola rule. The temple also has a shrine for Sivakamasundri known as the Sivakami Amman Temple and a 1000 pillared hall designed in the

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form of a chariot. Dating back to the Chola period, the temple and the hall are adorned with figures of dancers, drummers and musicians on the walls. The lofty gopurams of the temple ornamented with carvings of Hindu gods, various manifestations of Lord Shiva and dancers representing 108 postures of Bharatnatyam, are also a sight to behold. One of the most significant temples for Shaivites, a visit here is sure to provide you with an inner peace and solace.

- Annamalaiyer Temple, Thiruvannamalai

Another significant temple of the 'Panch Bhuta Sthalas', the 'Annamalaiyer Temple' represents the element, fire and Lord Shiva here is revered in the form of Agni Lingam. The structure of the temple dates back to 9th century when South India was under the rule of Chola dynasty. Further additions were made to the temple by the Vijayanagara kings during 15th century. Located on the foot of Annamalai hills, the temple spreads across an area of 25 acres and is built in typical Dravidian architectural style. The Rajagopuram of the temple stands tall at a height of 217 feet and can be seen from even a far off distance. This 11 tiered gopuram with intricate carvings showcases the artistic brilliance of the Vijayanagara artisans. Inside the temple complex, you will find 6 concentric enclosures with each enclosure housing shrines of various deities. The innermost enclosure has the sanctum that enshrines the Agni Lingam, the presiding deity of the temple.

While you will see the temple always crowded with devotees and pilgrims travelling from far off corners of the world, the footfall gets multi-fold during the annual 'Karthigai Deepam Festival'. Huge processions accompanied with drummers, dancers and people dressed in vibrant attires, this festival provides you with a colourful spectacle also, giving you an opportunity to get an insight into different rituals and customs of South Indian temple festivals.

- Sripuram Golden Temple, Vellore

Situated on the hills of Malaikodi in the city of Vellore in Tamil Nadu, the 'Sripuram Golden Temple' is on the itineraries of almost all tourists on a trip to temples in South India. Standing tall in its stunning beauty and grandeur, the temple is truly a sight to behold. Built only recently in the year 2007, the temple is dedicated to God Lakshmi (God of wealth and prosperity) known as 'Sri Lakshmi Narayani'. Spread across a sprawling area of 100 acres, the temple is entirely built in pure gold. The total amount of gold used in creation of this temple is said to be around 15000 kilograms that costs around 600 crores. Over 800 gold and coppersmiths well experienced in temple art worked on the creation of this amazingly beautiful temple for 7 years. The astoundingly outstanding carvings, sculptures, artwork and exquisite lighting work done by these artisans on the walls, ceiling and pillars of the temple is sure to leave you awe struck. The glittering reflection of the temple in the water body surrounding it, during night is just beyond words and is sure to leave you enchanted with its hypnotising beauty. The pathways leading to the main temple is designed in the shape of a star with each pathway adorned with messages from the Gita, Bible and Quran. As you walk along the pathways, taking in the essence of these messages, you are enlightened with deep wisdom and knowledge. Crossing the pathways and pillared halls, devotees get the darshans of Maha Lakshmi enshrined in the inner sanctum. You would be amazed to know that the deity of Maha Lakshmi itself is made of 70 kilograms of gold. A one of its kind temple in the world, the Sripuram Golden Temple makes for a true feast for eyes.

- Bala Murugan Temple, Siruvapuri

Dating back to 500 years, the 'Bala Murugan Temple' is dedicated to Lord Murugan also known as Kartikeya, son of Lord Shiva and God Parvati. It is believed that Lord Murugan here fulfils the wishes of all his true devotees and therefore, the temple is visited by hundreds of people every day. The temple has a special place amongst the devotees wishing to purchase a new house or property. The presiding deity of the temple is of Lord Murugan standing tall at a height of 4.5 feet. Outside the sanctum sanctorum, a sculpture of peacock made with green emerald is also held to be religiously significant. A shrine in the temple complex, dedicated to Lord Murugan and his consort, Devi Valli depicted in wedlock, is visited by many devotees wishing to get married; praying here on the day of Poosam star is believed to be highly auspicious and fulfils the wish of marriage for all boys and girls. One of the very popular holy shrines in Tamil Nadu, a visit to this temple provides you with a unique experience and a spiritual bliss.

Airavatheswara Temple in Darapuram

Airavatesvara Temple is a Hindu temple of Tamil architecture located in the town of Darasuram, near Kumbakonam in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. This temple, built by Rajaraja Chola II in the 12th century CE is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, along with the Brihadeeswara Temple at Thanjavur, the Gangaikondacholisvaram Temple at Gangaikonda Cholapuram that are referred to as the Great Living Chola Temples.

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The Airavatesvarar temple is one among a cluster of eighteen medieval era large Hindu temples in the Kumbakonam area. The temple is dedicated to Shiva. It also reverentially displays Vaishnavism and Shaktism traditions of Hinduism, along with the legends associated with Nayanars – the Bhakti movement saints of Shaivism. The stone temple incorporates a chariot structure, and includes major Vedic and Puranic deities such as Indra, Agni, Varuna, Vayu, Brahma, Surya, Vishnu, Saptamatrikas, Durga, Saraswati, Sri devi (Lakshmi), Ganga, Yamuna, Subrahmanya, Ganesha, Kama, Rati and others. Shiva's consort has a dedicated shrine called the Periya Nayaki Amman temple. This is a detached temple situated to the north of the Airavateshvarar temple. This might have been a part of the main temple when the outer courts were complete. At present, parts of the temple such as the gopuram is in ruins, and the main temple and associated shrines stand alone. The temple continues to attract large gatherings of Hindu pilgrims every year during Magha, while some of the images such as those of Durga and Shiva are part of special puja.

The Airavatesvara Shiva temple has a water tank. This tank has a connected channel that brings in Cauveri River water where Hindus gather annually to take a dip. The local mythology narrates how Airavata, or Indra's (malla) white elephant was restored with clean, white skin after he took a dip in this tank. This legend is carved in stone in the inner shrine, and this Indra's elephant gives this temple its name.

The Cholas built hundreds of Hindu temples across their empire. Of these four were vast complexes with all stone vimanas. The Airavatesvara temple is one of these four. The other three are the temples found in Thanjavur built by Rajaraja I, in Gangaikonda Cholapuram built by Rajendra I, and in Tribuvanam by the later era Chola king Kulottunga II. The Airavatesvara temple is another square plan structure completed in 1166 CE. The surviving inner courtyard is almost six stacked squares of 35 metres (115 ft) side, measuring a total of about 107 metres (351 ft) by 70 metres (230 ft). The Nandi mandapa and the stambha are found outside of this main temple courtyard and they are aligned with the main temple's east-west axis. It is classified as Karakkoil, a temple fashioned after temple chariots which are taken in procession around the temple during festivals. The temple sanctum is a 12-metre-sided (39 ft) square, have thick walls on which the vimana superstructure rises to a height of 24 m (79 ft). The circumambulatory path is not provided immediately around the sanctum, as is found in the Thanjavur big temple and the Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple. Rather, this path is outside in the courtyard. The sanctum garbha griya is connected to the mukha-mandapa through the ardha-mandapa supported on pillars and flanked by two massive dvarapalas. The maha-mandapa is a rectangle of about 24 metres (79 ft) by 18 metres (59 ft), with six rows of right pillars (forty-eight total). These have reliefs and intricate carvings. Towards the east of the maha-mandapa is the agra-mandapa also called the Rajagambhiran-tiru-mandapam after the king. This hall is shaped like a chariot, provided with stone horses and wheels. The design is similar to the Nritta-sabha (community dance hall) of the Chidambaram temple and the Konark Sun Temple near Puri, Odisha.

Singing steps: The agra mandapa has an attached square porch of 7 metres (23 ft) side. It has ornately carved steps that go from east to west. On its east, outside the main podium, is the bali-pitham. It is unusual, in that it is produced as intricately carved balustraded steps. When one walks or steps on them, they produce a musical note. They are therefore called the "singing steps".

Sculpture: This temple is a storehouse of art and architecture and has some exquisite stone carvings. Although this temple is much smaller than the Brihadeesvara Temple or the Gangaikondacholapuram Temple, it is more exquisite in detail. The elevation and proportions of all the units is elegant with sculptures dominating the architecture. The pedestal of the Balipitha adjoins a small shrine which contains an image of Ganesha. The reliefs all along the base of the main temple narrate the stories of the sixty-three Shaiva Bhakti saints called Nayanars. These stories are found in the Periya Purana by Sekkilar. On the outer walls of the main sanctum are sculpture niches, five on each side, with the middle one larger than others. They show various Hindu deities, with the middle one of each side showing Shiva in different aspects.

Other shrines: In the south-west corner of the court is a mandapam having 4 shrines. One of these has an image of Yama. Adjoining this shrine are large stone slabs sculptured with images of the sapthamathas (seven celestial nymphs). The construction of a separate temple for Devi, slightly later than the main temple, indicates the emergence of the Amman shrine as an essential component of the South Indian temple complex.

Inscriptions: There are various inscriptions in the temple. One of these records the renovation of the shrines by Kulottunga Chola III. The north wall of the verandah consists of 108 sections of inscriptions, each containing the name and description and image of the 63 Saivacharya (Saivite saints) listing the principal events in their life. This reflects the deep roots of Saivism in this region. Other important sculptures of the temple are the 108 Devara Othuvans who sung in the temple during the time of Raja Raja II. There are sculptures for river god like Cauvery, Ganges, Yamuna, Godavari and Narmada. Another inscription close to the gopura, records that an image was brought from Kalyani, then known as Kalyanapura by

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emperor Rajadhiraja Chola I after his defeat of the Western Chalukya king Someshwara I, his sons Vikramaditya VI and Someshwara II his capture of the Chalukyan capital. The inscriptions are also important in identifying the sculptures that once were a part of various ruined monuments. For example, the eastern gopurum has niches with inscriptions that label the sculpture therein. Most of these sculptures are now broken or missing. The inscriptions indicate that it had the following sculptures:

- Northern face: Adi Chandesvara, Gangadevi, Tumburu Nardar, Vaisravana, Chandra, Maha Sata, Nagaraja, Vayu
- West: Devi, Rudrani, Vaishnavi, Brahmi, Varunani, Nandidevar, Periyadevar, Santyatita Sakti, Santa devi, Vidya Sakti, Pratishta Sakti, Nivarti Sakti
- Southern face: Daksha Prajapati, Yamuna devi, Rati, Kamadeva
- East: Agni deva, Agastya, Sri devi, Durga devi, Devendran, Padma Nidhi, Surya, Subrahmanya, Kshetrapala, Sarasvati, Visvakarma, Isana

Velankanni

Velankanni (Vēḷāṅkaṇṇi), is a Special Grade Panchayat Town in Nagapattinam district in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It lies on the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal, 350 km south of Chennai (Madras) and 12 km south of Nagapattinam. Once a port that traded with Rome and Greece, the tiny commercial center gradually lost its importance to the larger city of Nagapattinam. The canal built to link this town with Vedaranyam still lies to the west. The Vellayar, a minor branch of the Cauvery River, runs south of the town and discharges into the sea. The town was among the worst hit by the tsunami caused by the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake. The town is home to one of the most visited Roman Catholic Latin Rite shrines called the Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health.

According to the manuscripts, Mother Mary once visited this shrine with Jesus in the 16th or early 17th century. It is also said that Mary appeared in the dreams of Father Arulappa and expressed her desire of having a church in her name. For constructing the same, Arulappa along with J.P Dsouza, an engineer, finally established an Annai Velankanni Church at the site. Housing a 97 feet Belfry, the church was started in 1971 and was opened in 1972. Offerings are made to God in the form of different shapes of candles, such as in case of jaundice, a liver shaped candle is offered. The preservation centre at the church exhibits small golden or silver replicas of the organs that have been presented to God after the disease has been cured. Representing a Gothic style of architecture, the building of the church is painted white, while the roof is covered with red tiles. The church organises Holy masses in eight languages namely, English, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu, Hindi, Konkani and Marathi. The local people state that the God performed three miracles at different sites, which provided a platform for construction of the Basilica. The premises of the church witnessed the appearance of Mary with the baby Christ, the rescue of the Portuguese sailors from the dangerous sea and curing a lame buttermilk vendor. After the safe landing of the Portuguese sailors, they constructed a chapel whose annual feast is organised in the month of September as Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Nagore Dargah

Nagore Dargah (also called Nagoor Dargah or Hazrat Syed Shahul Hameed Dargah) is a dargah built over the tomb of the Sufi a saint Nagore Shahul Hamid (1490–1579 CE). It is located in Nagore, a coastal town in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Outer doors kept open always. Internal doors opening time is from 4:30 am to 07:00 am and 6:25 pm to 9:30 pm. Friday alone additionally kept open from 12 noon to 2:30 pm also. Shahul Hamid is believed to have performed many miracles in Nagore, and cured the physical affliction of king Achutappa Nayak, a 16th-century Hindu ruler of Thanjavur. He is locally referred to as Nagore Andavar, meaning the "god of Nagore". Nagore dargah as it stands now, is believed to have been built by ardent devotees of Shahul Hamid, with major contribution from Hindus. There are five minarets in the dargah, with the Hindu Maratha ruler of Thanjavur Pratap Singh (1739–1763 CE), building the tallest minaret. The dargah is a major pilgrimage centre that attracts pilgrims from both Islam and Hinduism, symbolizing peaceful coexistence between the two religions. The most prominent event celebrated at Nagore dargah is the Kanduri festival, a fourteen-day commemoration of the death anniversary of Shahul Hamid. Common worship practices at Nagore dargah include the presentation of offerings, accompanied by the playing of musical instruments like nadaswaram, atypical of Hindu religious tradition. The Shifa Gunta, a pool within the precincts of the dargah, is considered sacred; pilgrims take a holy dip in it. The hereditary Khalifa (Sufi saint), c selected from among the descendants of saint Yusuf, performs all the official and religious duties of the dargah.

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Achutappa Nayak, the king of Thanjavur during the 16th century, donated 200 acres (81 ha) of land to the entourage of Shahul, after the saint cured the king's affliction. The dargah was built on a part of the land donated by Nayak. Shahul Hamid is believed to have predicted his death and advised his adopted son Yusuf about his burial location and rites to be performed after his death. Yusuf performed the rites as per the instructions and decided to stay there for the rest of his life. A mausoleum was constructed over the grave. Devotees of Shahul, who continued to believe in his powers after his death, venerated the site of the burial. The shrine was initially a smaller one and gradually gained prominence. Pratap Singh (1739–1763 A.D.), the Hindu Maratha ruler of Thanjavur prayed for a son and built the tallest of the five minarets (called Periya Manara locally) with a height of 131 ft (40 m) once his wish was fulfilled. The Marathas of the later period were patrons to the dargah, with the Maratha king Thuljaji, the son of Pratap Singh, donating 4,000 acres (1,600 ha) of agricultural land to the dargah. During the last quarter of 18th century, when there was conflict between European powers, the Nawab of Arcot, the Maratha kings and Tipu Sultan of Mysore over Thanjavur region, the dargah was considered strategically important by all of them.

Festivals: Kanduri festival is a 14-day annual event celebrated during the urs (death anniversary) of the saint. The festival is celebrated in commemoration of the anniversary of the saint's death, and pilgrims participate in the rituals and rites. The word kanduri is derived from the Persian word for table cloth. The festival is also called Qadir Wali Ke Fande festival. A saffron flag-carrying ceremony is also observed, during which a flag is carried from a devotee's house to the dargah, accompanied by a procession in streets. The flag is hoisted on a tree known as Fande ka Fahad by a Sirang (hereditary trustee) who is assisted by twenty assistants. The Islamic rites performed during the festival include the recitation of Quranic verses and observance of Fatiha (it includes; recitation of Al-Fatiha an essential part of daily prayer and Durood). The main attraction of the festival is the presence of Fakhir Jamas (mendicant priests) and Qalandars—the disciples of the saint who witness the festival. On the 9th day of Jamathul Akhir month in the Islamic calendar, at 10 p.m., a pir (one of the disciples) is chosen for the spiritual exercise of offering prayers to the saint. The disciple throws lemons at the end of the prayers on devotees, which is believed to provide miraculous relief to worldly sorrows. The festival is also seen as a sacred exchange between Hindus and Muslims expressing solidarity of mixed faith in the region. Pilgrims from both the religions from the state and also from Sri Lanka, Burma and Gulf countries, attend the festival. In the evening of the ninth day of Akhir month in the Islamic calendar, a chariot containing sandal paste (locally called santhanakoodu) is pulled across the streets of Nagore by pilgrims and devotees, accompanied by banging of instruments. The sandal paste is received by the saint's descendants and used to anoint the Rowla Sharif (sanctum) of the saint by the Khalifa of the dargah.

Tourism Marketing

Tourism is unique among industries and the application of marketing principles to the industry need to address at least seven important sub-sectors or dimensions; travel, transportation, accommodation, food-service, tour operators, attractions and merchandisers, each of these requires the employment of marketing functions, in whole or in part, which are different yet they must be coordinated and integrated one with the other.

"Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving organisational objectives. It relies heavily on designing the organisation's offering in terms of the target markets' needs and desires, and on using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate, and service the markets".

Features of Tourism Marketing

- It is not possible to evaluate or demonstrate the tourism product in advance. This is because the services are consumed and felt at the same time.
- The tourist not only buys the product but also feels the product and is involved in it.
- The tourism products cannot have stored.
- The tourist buys the experience and does not own the product.
- The tourism product is a combination of several services.
- In the designing and packaging of a tourism product a number of intermediaries are involved. Bad experience at one level can spoil the entire image of the product or service.
- The demand in tourism is highly elastic and seasonal in nature.

Marketing mix for Tourism: The marketing mix for any service industry is discussed as 8Ps. They are,

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1. **Product:** Product in Tourism is basically the experience and hospitality provided by the service provided. In general, the experience has to be expressed in such a way that the tourists see a value in them.
2. **Process:** The process in Tourism include, (a) trip planning and anticipation, (b) travel to the site/area, (c) recollection, (d) trip planning packages. The trip planning packages include, maps, attractions en route and on site, information regarding lodging, food, quality souvenirs and mementoes
3. **Place and Time – Location and Accessibility:** The place and time in tourism is providing directions and maps, providing estimates of travel time and distances from different market areas, recommending direct and scenic travel routes, identifying attractions and support facilities along different travel routes, and informing potential customers of alternative travel methods to the area such as airlines and railroads.
4. **Productivity and Quality:** This is similar to other service industries. The quality is assessed by time taken for a service, the promptness of the service, reliability and so on.
5. **Promotion and Education:** Like other services, the promotion should address, the accurate and timely information helping to decide whether to visit target audience, the image to be created for the organization, objectives, budget, timing of campaign, media to be selected, and evaluation methods.
6. **People:** People is the centre for Tourism. It is more a human intensive sector. For hospitality and guest relations it is very important to focus on people. It also plays a vital role in quality control, personal selling, and employee morale.
7. **Price and other user costs:** The price of the tourism services depend on business and target market objectives, cost of producing, delivering and promoting the product, willingness of the target, prices charged by competitors offering similar product/service to the same target markets, availability and prices of substitute products/services, and economic climate. The possibility of stimulating high profit products/services by offering related services at or below cost.
8. **Physical Evidence:** In Tourism the physical evidence is basically depends on travel experience, stay, and comfort. Here, the core product is bed in case of stay.

Components of Tourism: Tourism has many components comprising

- Travel experience
- Accommodations
- Food
- Beverage services
- Shops
- Entertainment
- Aesthetics and
- Special events

Purpose of Tourism Marketing

- **To identify your ideal customer:** Your ideal customer will dictate all of your marketing activities, so it is really important to identify this persona BEFORE you decide on what tactics to employ. Without knowing your Ideal Customer, you could be spending time and money targeting those who are not necessarily interested in your product/service, or you may be targeting those who we don't really want to work with. If you aren't specific with your messages, then you aren't optimising your chances of making as many sales as you possibly can.
- **To identify what you want to achieve from your marketing efforts:** Setting goals and objectives is a big part in making your marketing dollars accountable, and also being able to report on your return on investment – which is so important considering tourism businesses have a limited budget to spend on marketing activities.
- **To articulate what sets you apart from competitors:** Knowing what makes your business unique or different from competitors in the industry is a very powerful selling tool, and communicating this in a way that 'speaks' to your ideal customers is a big part of creating sales.
- **To have an action plan to achieve your goals and objectives:** An marketing action plan is literally a plan of what marketing tools and tactics you plan to use to achieve your goals and objectives, which are selected based on your marketing objectives and your Ideal Customer's predispositions.
- **To better understand your marketplace:** A strategic marketing plan allows you to assess your industry's competitive environments, consumer trends and demands and gives you the opportunity to

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reassess and align your offering to suit the ever-changing marketplace and your ideal customers within it.

- To help you focus and hone in on the most important tactics: At the end of the day you have limited resources to get your message in the hands of your ideal customers. A strategy will allow you to feel confident in your actions knowing that they are focussed and strategic, and will avoid making rushed decisions (like agreeing to a print advert in the local visitor guide on the spot without thinking about potential return on marketing investment) that may end up being a waste of resources.
- To measure your return on investment: There is absolutely no point investing in marketing activities if you cannot track the return on investment. A strategy will outline how you intend on holding your actions accountable and will force you to review activities that are not generating a positive ROI.
- To remind you that you're in business to stay in business: At the end of the day, you are in business for a reason. And if you truly want to make a good go of marketing your business properly, then a strategy is an essential part of providing efficiencies and positive outcomes for your business.

MIS (Marketing Information Systems)

A marketing information system (MIS) is a set of procedures and methods designed to generate, analyse, disseminate, and store anticipated marketing decision information on a regular, continuous basis. An information system can be used operationally, managerially, and strategically for several aspects of marketing. A marketing information system can be used operationally, managerially, and strategically for several aspects of marketing.

We all know that no marketing activity can be carried out in isolation, know when we say it doesn't work in isolation that means there are various forces could be external or internal, controllable or uncontrollable which are working on it. Thus to know which forces are acting on it and its impact the marketer needs to gathering the data through its own resources which in terms of marketing we can say he is trying to gather the market information or form a marketing information system. This collection of information is a continuous process that gathers data from a variety of sources synthesizes it and sends it to those responsible for meeting the market places needs. The effectiveness of marketing decision is proved if it has a strong information system offering the firm a Competitive advantage. Marketing Information should not be approached in an infrequent manner. If research is done this way, a firm could face these risks:

- Opportunities may be missed.
- There may be a lack of awareness of environmental changes and competitors' actions.
- Data collection may be difficult to analyze over several time periods.
- Marketing plans and decisions may not be properly reviewed.
- Data collection may be disjointed.
- Previous studies may not be stored in an easy to use format.
- Time lags may result if a new study is required.
- Actions may be reactionary rather than anticipatory.

The total information needs of the marketing department can be specified and satisfied via a marketing intelligence network, which contains three components.

- Continuous monitoring is the procedure by which the changing environment is regularly viewed.
- Marketing research is used to obtain information on particular marketing issues.
- Data warehousing involves the retention of all types of relevant company records, as well as the information collected through continuous monitoring and marketing research that is kept by the organization.

Depending on a firm's resources and the complexity of its needs, a marketing intelligence network may or may not be fully computerized. The ingredients for a good MIS are consistency, completeness, and orderliness. Marketing plans should be implemented on the basis of information obtained from the intelligence network.

A Marketing Information System offers many advantages:

- a) Organized data collection.
- b) A broad perspective.

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- c) The storage of important data.
- d) An avoidance of crises.
- e) Coordinated marketing plans.
- f) Speed in obtaining sufficient information to make decisions.
- g) Data amassed and kept over several time periods.
- h) The ability to do a cost-benefit analysis.

The disadvantages of a Marketing information system are high initial time and labour costs and the complexity of setting up an information system. Marketers often complain that they lack enough marketing information or the right kind, or have too much of the wrong kind. The solution is an effective marketing information system. The information needed by marketing managers comes from three main sources:

- Internal company information – E.g. sales, orders, customer profiles, stocks, customer service reports etc.,
- Marketing intelligence – This can be information gathered from many sources, including suppliers, customers, and distributors. Marketing intelligence is a catchall term to include all the everyday information about developments in the market that helps a business prepare and adjust its marketing plans. It is possible to buy intelligence information from outside suppliers (e.g. IDC, ORG, MARG) who set up data gathering systems to support commercial intelligence products that can be profitably sold to all players in a market.
- Market research – Management cannot always wait for information to arrive in bits and pieces from internal sources. Also, sources of market intelligence cannot always be relied upon to provide relevant or up-to-date information (particularly for smaller or niche market segments). In such circumstances, businesses often need to undertake specific studies to support their marketing strategy – this is market research.

Tourism Marketing Strategy

The term “tourism marketing strategy” is often used incorrectly to describe the individual tactics a destination uses to promote themselves. Instead, your tourism marketing strategy is your master marketing outline. Yes, it includes the individual tactics you’ll be using in your marketing, but it also contains so much more.

Your destination’s tourism marketing strategy will also include:

- Buyer Personas
 - Age
 - Income
 - Job Title
 - Location
 - Interests Challenges
 - Wants/Needs
 - Goals
- Goals
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Achievable
 - Relevant
 - Timely
- KPIs (key performance indicators)
- Website Optimizations
 - Website
 - Blog
 - Landing Pages
 - Forms
 - Calls-to-Action
 - Offers/Conversion/Lead Magnets
- Paid Marketing Guidelines
- Content Creation Calendar
- Etc.,

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Tourism planning

There are several processes or analysis of a plan for tourism development. It is very important that these processes are properly adhered to. The description of these planning processes as given here can only be briefly indicative and limited to mere suggestions of the topics or steps without entering into detailed analysis. Any plan must take into account these processes if it is to attain objectives in a given period of time. The main steps or phases in the planning process are as follows:

1. Assessment of tourist demand and supply;
2. Establishing objectives;
 - Statement of objectives
 - Selection of site
 - Requirements of various facilities
 - Supplementary attractions
 - Land use allocation and control
 - Budgets and
 - Legislative requirements.
3. Territorial planning;
4. Basic infrastructure;
5. Financial planning;
6. Human resource planning;
7. Administrative structure;
8. Marketing and promotion
9. Monitoring progress; and
10. Time factor.

Tourism advertisement strategy

- Invest in tactics that align with your Ideal Customer.
- Only invest in tactics that your Ideal Customers trust.
- Tactics that influence your Ideal Customers in the 'planning' stage of the purchase funnel.
- Tactics that increase repeat visitation.
- Tactics that you can measure return on investment.

Tourist publicity

Tourist publicity in the beginning developed in an empirical way under the pressure of the growth of international travel, and to the extent that information had to be supplied to an ever-increasing number of tourists. Thus, at its outset, it was simply informational publicity. With the growth in volume of commercial tourist publicity, particularly in the sphere of transport, and great increase in the number of tourists, various countries realized the importance of tourism in the national life. They recognised it especially in economic terms earning of foreign exchange. This necessitated the countries to organize their institutional tourist publicity with a new approach and employ experienced commercial publicity technicians to draw up a long-term publicity strategy. For successful tourist publicity, one important factor is to be placed at the top of all considerations. In the field of tourism, motive forces and effects lie on different planes. The motive forces of tourism lie mainly on a plane which is outside the scope of economic factors, while the results of tourism are represented in a series of economic processes.

Methods of Tourist Publicity: The methods of tourist publicity in their evolution have lagged behind in comparison with the developments of the publicity methods of other branches of economy which utilize applied psychology and sociology. They are still mainly based on experience, instinct, routine and technique. Publicity still proceeds from the object with a more or less arbitrary combination of rational and emotional appeals perhaps in consideration of the results obtained by research in publicity media, but in utter disregard of the person to whom the publicity is addressed. It is not yet clear at all how tourism, whose fluctuating character was proverbial, has now grown into a phenomenon almost impervious to crises, why the tourist need has undergone a re-classification to other needs in order of importance, as also why, despite the fundamental, universality of the tourist need, different human groups have different conceptions about its composition and the urge for experience.

Coordination of Measures: Rising demand and expanding supply characterize the present day situation of the travel market with its publicity competition. In this competition, two methods stand out which are

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quite suitably designated as the methods of the advanced tourist countries and those of the developing tourist countries.

The advanced tourist countries show a constantly increasing tendency towards a graded publicity beginning with the publicity of the individual travel trade firms, of resorts, areas, provinces and finally countries, while the developing tourist countries begin with the country's publicity to which regional and travel trade publicity is added. As yet the differentiation between tourist institutions is too limited for them to enter into competition with each other. However, in the well-known tourist countries this competition takes place inside the country and finally between corresponding tourist resorts and enterprises. This carries in itself the danger of a frittering away of the forces and since the percentage of the ineffective residual part of local publicity is relatively large, it is necessary to undertake campaigns in a manner which is more than proportionate. This has special relevance to publicity abroad, where the desire for the most extensive possible coverage of the demand is somewhat restricted by the available financial means. This reason alone points to the necessity of concentration and coordination of all tourist publicity measures.

The Brand Concepts: Each country is a travel mosaic composed of a variety of distinctive features. These features however spread uniformly over the whole country but are very frequently regional or even characteristic of a place. Detail, but there must be single goal to put national tourism to the fore and the regional and local features on the second plane. A tourist publicity programme for a country may be conceived in the following way:

1. The creation of concepts of satisfaction which, taken together, could form the tourist brand of the country;
2. A coordination of all publicity measures of the economic, cultural and tourist institutions of a country in conjunction with a coupling of the brands; and
3. Constant analysis of satisfactions, market observations and research, as well as publicity effectiveness.

Motivation Publicity: The motivating factors of tourism originate in their preponderant majority from the emotional sphere. Consequently, tourism stands out prominently in the world of experience-seeking ideas and conceptions and it can be said that the holidaymaker lives between imagination and reality and the relationship between the two determines his judgment on the land visited. This will be positive in proportion to the extent that reality corresponds to the world of imagination. It may be inferred from this how very important it is for publicity to steer the formation of imagination towards facts as they really exist. This is easiest in the field of comparable satisfactions whereby guiding information on trends may be obtained through a planned investigation of judgments and criticism in other words, public opinion research. This publicity based on motivation forces and influencing the imaginative world of the tourists can be referred to as motivation publicity or the irrational approach. Within the framework of this method a relatively larger importance is conceded to landscape publicity for relaxation and pleasure travel. In this connection the importance of this subject, insofar as it does not relate to a particularly beautiful landscape or one especially suited for the practice of certain sports, is too much exaggerated. Each region of the globe has a landscape to offer and every one of these landscapes has a particular charm, especially for those whom its special features make it seem strange and therefore worth the experience. To the primary motivations of holiday and pleasure travel, the pressure of the rhythm of our life has added other factors like the escape from the everyday life, freedom from ties and commitments, the urge to adventure, etc. The second method of tourist publicity is the "reason why" publicity or the rational approach. It extols in the first place the merits or the arguments in favour of visiting the country on behalf of which the publicity has been undertaken and acts in accordance with the principle of suggestion. The form of expression it assumes is the slogan. It is appreciably more strongly competitive which makes it easily liable to fall into the blunder of superlative forms which we come across constantly in tourist publicity.

Tourist Publicity Media: The publicity itself is carried out through media whose scope is that there are constantly new possibilities. This is of particular relevance in respect of tourist publicity whose new forms and scientifically based planning in publicity media seem to be constructed as a result of the fact that in general their publicity effect is limited to the visual and additive senses. Illustration, copy and the spoken word are therefore the primary publicity media for tourism. They are multiplied through the media compounded out of them. The greatest importance appertains to illustration, for it can achieve emotional effects in the reproduction of a landscape and its atmosphere and is also universally understood. Even if one is inclined to accept the psychological argument that every human being only projects his own personality in every consideration, the illustration retains from this standpoint also considerable publicity effectiveness because it is viewed and perceived differently by different persons. Given the differences of individual tastes, the illustration motivation plays a decisive role, for the illustration should be bearer of the emotional contents

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which it should radiate on the viewer. Consequently, the best illustration is just good enough for tourist publicity. With copy as a publicity factor, the urgent necessity for originality with the object of giving expression to the publicity idea also arises. The purpose of every publicity media is to arouse and sustain attention. Illustration and copy must therefore create desires. In tourist publicity the tendency towards schematisation is extremely strong and counteracts the necessity for publicity originality the similarity of the printed publicity material of hotels, travel agencies, tourist resorts, areas and even countries furnishes proof of this. The spoken word is of decisive importance in the case of personal publicity. The proper use of the spoken word is difficult but effective. "Words are not only conveyors of thoughts and ideas, but also of emotional contents and consequently they reach not only the intellect but also the psychism of the recipient and are expressed to this end."

Domestic tourism

Domestic tourism is travel within your own nation. For example, if a Canadian from Alberta decided to spend a few days at Niagara Falls, as you're staying in your own country of residence, this is domestic or internal tourism. The domestic tourism economy around the world is lucrative and has been boosted by the growing trend of staycations. An internal holiday can be a cost-effective option for individuals and has other benefits, such as making residents aware of the history and culture of their country. This type of tourism is likely to be less of a hassle for visitors, as visiting another part of your own country will lead to no language differences, currency/food changes or etiquette differences. However, domestic trips tend to be significantly shorter than cross-border trips and wider statistics on this activity are under-reported compared to international tourism.

International tourism: International tourism is what it says on the can. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourism as 'traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes'. International tourism has increased due to people around the world having more money in their pocket, as well as the impact of greater globalisation. Global tourism has the greatest impact upon developing nations, where the sector is much-needed to provide a big source of income. Tourism is responsible for one in every ten jobs on the planet and global economies spend a lot of money on boosting their tourist sector. It's good to bear in mind that it can be difficult to compare domestic and international tourism as states vary in size and activities. For example, Americans wishing to go on holiday in their own state will likely have a greater amount to see/do, compared to internal visitors in Belgium.