



Nilgiri Mountain Rail

edge of cliffs, tea estates, etc. A ride on this scenic train route is a must.

#### FAIRS AND FESTIVAL

1. Pongal Tourist Festival (January)
2. Thaiposam, Elk Hill Murugan Temple (Feb)
3. Mariamman Temple Annual Festival, Bokkapuram (Feb/March)
4. Mariamman Temple, Car Festival, Ooty (April)
5. Mariamman Temple, Car Festival, Coonoor (April)
6. Annamalai Murugan temple festival, Manjoor (April)
7. Summer Festival at Ooty (May)
8. Manjakombai Nagaraja Temple festival (May)
9. World Tourism Day (27<sup>th</sup> September)
10. Tea and Tourism Festival (Dec - Jan)

#### ACCESS

- Air :** The nearest Airport is Coimbatore (104 kms.) which is well connected to Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai, Calicut, Bengaluru, Hyderabad in India and it is connected to Sharjah, Colombo and Singapore in abroad.
- Rail :** Ooty is connected to Mettupalayam by narrow guage Nilgiri Mountain Railway a World heritage site which is directly connected to Coimbatore and Chennai.
- Road :** Udthagamandalam is well connected by road to other Places.



Hotel Tamil Nadu

#### ACCOMMODATION

**Hotel Tamil Nadu, TTDC Ltd.,**

Wenlock Road, Udthagamandalam.

Phone: 0423 - 2444370 / 78 Fax: 0423 - 2444369

**Youth Hostel, TTDC Ltd.,**

Charring Cross, Udthagamandalam.

Phone: 0423 - 2443665.

Apart from wide range of accommodation, facilities are also available from dormitory to luxury suite. Tariff are varying depending upon the season. (Peak season is March to June).

#### IMPORTANT CONTACT ADDRESSES

**Field Director,**

**Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Ooty.**

Mount Stewart Hill, Ooty - 643 001.

Phone: 0423 - 2444098.

**District Forest Officer,**

Mount Stewart Hill, Ooty - 643 001.

Phone: 0423 - 2443968 / 2444083

**Further details contact:**

**Tourist Officer**

Government of Tamil Nadu Tourist Office,

Wenlock Road, Udthagamandalam (Ooty) - 643 001.

Phone : 0423 - 2443977.

**Tourist Information Centre, Gudalur.**



#### DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM

Government of Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu Tourism Complex,

No.2, Wallajah Road, Chennai - 600 002.

Phone : 91-44-2533 3333 / 444 / 857 / 286

Fax : 91-44-25333385 Email : dotdepartment@gmail.com

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**The Nilgiris**  
**TAMIL NADU - INDIA**



Botanical Garden

# THE NILGIRIS

Welcome to Nilgiris - one of the oldest mountain ranges, older than the Himalayas, located at the tri-junction of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Nilgiri is a part of the Western Ghats. Udhagamandalam (Ooty) is the 'Queen of the Hill Stations'. This district is inhabited by the ancient tribes like the Todas, Kothas, Kurumbas, Panias and Irulas. Queen of Hill Stations nestled at an altitude of 2,240 mts. As Ooty or Udhagamandalam which is the headquarter with smaller hill stations, Coonoor 18 kms. from Ooty and Kotagiri 31 kms. from Ooty.

Nilgiri is India's first biosphere. It has been declared one of the 14 'hot spots' of the world because of the unique bio-diversity. Nilgiri presents a truly breathtaking kaleidoscope of visual treats and soul stirring experience. John Sullivan M.C.S., first European official had a strong love of nature and propensity, actively engaging himself in the development of the area in general and Udhagamandalam in particular. His contribution towards the early growth of the Nilgiris is remarkable.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Area        | : 2545 sq.km.  |
| Population  | : 735,394 (2011 census)                                |
| Temperature | : Summer 25° C - 10° C<br>Winter 21° C - 00° C         |
| Rainfall    | : 121 cms. (approximately)                             |
| Season      | : April to June & September to November                |
| Clothing    | : Heavy woolen in winter & Light woolen in summer      |
| Languages   | : Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi, Baduga and English |
| STD Code    | : 0423   |

## UDHAGAMANDALAM (Ooty)

### Government Botanical Garden, Ooty

This garden was laid out in 1847 by the Marquis of Tweeddale, the then Governor of Madras and is spread over 22 hectares ascending the slopes on the hill at an elevation of 2400 - 2500 mts. above MSL.

The garden is divided into six different sections:

1. Lower Garden
2. New Garden
3. Italian Garden
4. Conservatory
5. Fountain Terrace
6. Nurseries

Lush green well maintained lawns, rare tree species (like the cork tree which is probably the only such tree in India, the paper bark tree and the monkey puzzle tree - monkeys cannot climb this tree) a 20 million year old fossilized tree (presented by the Geological Survey of India, from the National Fossil Park Tiruvakkarai, Viluppuram district, Tamil Nadu) an Italian - style garden bordering a clear pool a vast variety of flowering bushes and plants in myriad hues (exotic and ornamental) fern house with a vast range of ferns and orchids, are some of the highlights of this garden. A Flower Show along with an exhibition of rare plant species is held every year in the month of May at this Garden. This garden is maintained by Tamil Nadu Horticulture Department.



Rose Garden

### Rose Garden

To commemorate the Centenary Flower Festival, the Rose Garden was established at Vijayanagaram in Udhagamandalam covering an area of 4 hectares in five terraces. The Rose garden is situated in the lower slopes of the Elk Hill and on the North - Western side, facing the Udhagamandalam town. It is about a kilometer from Udhagamandalam Railway Station and bus stand has easy access with motorable roads.

The rose varieties planted in this park were assembled from different sources and 4800 varieties have been planted. The 'Nila Maadam' is located in a spot from where viewers can see the entire rose garden. This garden is maintained by Tamil Nadu Horticulture Department.

### Ooty Lake

The Ooty Lake is the pride of the Blue Hills. It is the central and strategic attraction. Mr. John Sullivan formed



Ooty Lake

this artificial lake in the year 1824, the then Collector of Coimbatore. The Ooty lake which extends to an area of 65 acres. Earlier the entire lake was used for fishing as a major activity. The Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation took the possession of the lake for pleasure boating facilities in the year 1973. Other attraction of the lake are the Mini Train and Amusement Park.

#### Arboretum

'Arboretum' is defined as a living collection of trees and other woody plants. Various tree species of natives and exotics are grown in Arboretum. The Arboretum maintained by the Department of Horticulture is situated near the Central Bus stand on the way to Fern hill Palace



adjoining Ooty lake. It was started in the year 1992 with the aim of introducing exotic tree species and studying their performance. The tree species are *Alnus nepalensis*, *Callistemon*, *Lanceolatus*, *Cupressus Macrocarpa*, *Eugenia apiculata*, *Hypericum hookerianum*, *Poocarpus elongate*, *Populus deltodes*, *Quercus macrocerpa* *Salix babylonica*, *Taxodium mucroinatum*, *Prunus Pissodii*. etc.

#### Deer Park

The Deer Park is a unique wilderness situated on the fringes of the Ooty lake. It is one of the high altitude animal parks in India. The park is a beautiful place and offers a unique opportunity to observe and study wildlife in near natural habitat. It was inaugurated in the year 1986.



The total area of Deer Park is 22 acres, out of which an area of 6 acres has been developed and is open to the public. This park is maintained by Tamil Nadu Forest Department.

#### Art Gallery - Lalit Kala Academy

It is situated about one km. from Ooty bus stand at Old Dairy Complex, Ettines Road. In order to promote the contemporary art and cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu, State Lalit Kala Academy has set up a permanent Art Gallery in Ooty. It has contemporary works of art consisting of paintings, drawings, sculptures and graphics created by eminent artists who are either National or State award winners are displayed. The Gallery provides a glimpse of the present art movement of Tamil Nadu and the artist contribution to the contemporary techniques and concepts of art to the visitors.

#### Government Museum

The Government Museum situated near to the Government Arts College has items of tribal objects, district's ecological details, sculptural arts and crafts of Tamil Nadu. It is 2 kms. from the Bus stand.

#### Tea Park

The Tea Park located very near to Doddabetta which is about 10 kms. from Ooty. With a view to increase the awareness of the process of Tea making amongst the

tourists and also to promote TEA as a healthy drink. This park having facilities of Tea trekking path inside the Tea garden with display of tea history and its origin, entry to China, India and to the Nilgiris by providing display materials engraved in granite stones at regular intervals with musical arrangements on the path which attracts

#### Wenlock Downs

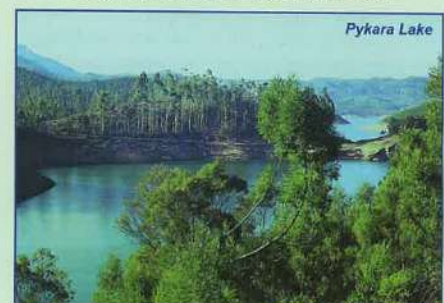
It is 8 kms. away from Ooty Railway Station on Gudalur road covering an area of about 5104 sq.kms. This grassy undulating landscape interspersed with small sholas is a feast to the eyes. The 'downs' was named after Lord Wenlock, a former Governor of Madras. The Ooty Golf links are on the downs.

#### Elk Hill

In the olden days there was quite a number of sambars in this area and the earliest European arrivals on the hills used to call these animals as 'Elks'. The hills is about 500 ft. above the town and is less than an hour's walk from Charring Cross and one gets a panoramic view of Udhagamandalam and its environs.

#### Pykara Lake and Waterfalls

It is situated about 21 kms. from Ooty. On the Ooty - Mysuru Road of well protected fenced shoals, toda settlement, undisturbed meadows and also a good wildlife habitat. The Pykara Dam, the reservoir, waterfalls and the boat house (run by T.T.D.C.) attracts many tourists.



Doddabetta



### Doddabetta

It is the highest Peak in South India (2636 mtrs.) in the Nilgiris and is about 10 kms. from the Ooty bus stand. The name Doddabetta literally means 'big mountain' which is so in reality. It lies at the junction of Western and Eastern Ghats and offer beautiful vistas of Nilgiri Hills range. It is surrounded by dense sholas. One can have a magnificent panoramic view of landscape and the whole of the District and even beyond through the Telescope House run by T.T.D.C., which is an added attraction.

### Avalanche

Located at a distance of 28 kms. from Ooty. There is a beautiful lake surrounded by very good forest. It is a Nature Lover's Paradise. There is thick shola where even sunlight cannot penetrate. Avalanche is home to a wide variety of birds in great abundance. Spotting and identifying them could be a very rewarding experience for bird lovers. The road leading to Lakkidi and Upper Bhavani from Avalanche is an ideal wildlife habitat and has vast stretches of undisturbed sholas.

### Kalhatty Waterfalls

It is located on the Kalhatty slopes at about 14 kms. from Ooty on the Ooty - Mysuru Kalhatty ghat road (Masinagudi Road). The height of the waterfalls is about 100 ft. Kalhatty - Masinagudi slope is rich in wildlife such as panthers, bisons, wild buffalos, wild dogs, spotted deers, sambars and different types of hill birds.

### Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya

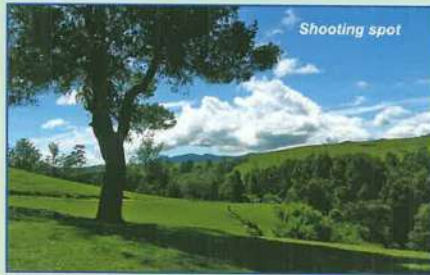
Prajapita Brahmakumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya was founded in the year 1936-1937 by Incorporeal Supreme God Father, the Father of all souls through the corporeal medium of Adidev Prajapita Brahma. It's



international head quarters is situated in mount Abu, which is in the lap of Aravalli hills in Rajasthan. The natural and spiritual atmosphere of Abu facilitates to spread spiritual vibrations around the world.

### Shooting spot

It is located about 9 kms. from Ooty, on the Ooty - Mysuru Road. It is a green and very lengthy shooting spot which is surrounded by forest and mountains. This place is called as 'Shooting Medu'. It is a very calm place and very good for picnics.



### Tribal Museum (Tribal Research Centre)

Tribal Museum is located at Muthorai Palada, 10 kms. away from Ooty town. Tribal Museum is placed on the hillock depicting rare artifacts and photographs of primitive tribal groups of Tamil Nadu as well as Andaman and Nicobar islands and developed on the interests of Anthropological and Archaeological primitive human culture and heritage. Tribal Museum is also having an open air tribal houses belongs to Toda, Kota, Paniyan, Kurumba and Kanikaran. Popular six sculptures are exhibited inside the museum depicting the life size physical models of Todas, Kotas and Paniyas.

### Mudumalai Tiger Reserve

Mudumalai Tiger Reserve is one of the important sanctuaries in India and is a major tourist attraction of the Nilgiris. A large number of tourists from all over the world visit this sanctuary every year. The sanctuary lies at an elevation of 1000 mts. in the junction point of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and extends over an area of 321 sq.kms. A variety of habitats ranging from tropical ever green forest, moist teak forest, secondary grass lands and swamps are found. The wildlife includes elephant, gaur, tiger panther, sambar, spotted deer, barking deer, wild boar and porcupine, etc.

The avifauna is varied with minivets, fairy blue birds, jungle fowls, etc. and reptiles like python, monitor lizard, flying lizard, etc. It is approachable by road via Kalhatty 36 kms. and the other route is via Gudalur which is 67 kms. from Ooty. It can also be approachable from Mysuru which is at a distance of 91 kms.

The other picturesque scenic spots in the sanctuary include the Moyar Waterfalls, Watch Tower, Ombetta swamp, Theppakadu Elephant Camp, etc.

One can have an elephant ride or vehicle ride along designated visitor's route inside the jungle organised by the Forest Department. Accommodations are available for tourists, and it can be booked in advance from the Forest Department.

### Moyar Waterfalls

The Moyar is the main river of the sanctuary which provides perennial water flow, satisfying the need of all animals, for drinking, wallowing and bathing. Further



down this river, the Moyar power house is constructed for generating electricity. It is located inside the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, 22 kms. from Gudalur and 43 kms. from Ooty via Masinagudi, too is full of scenic beauty.

### Upper Bhavani

It is about 10 kms. from Korakundah and about 20 kms. from Avalanche. This is Naturalist's Paradise. Some of the best Shola lies enroute. The area is a rich and undisturbed wildlife habitat.

### Cairnhill Eco - Tourism Site

The Cairnhill is located 5 kms. away from Udhaga mandalam, along the road leading towards Nanjanad, Avalanche, Manjoor and it is in Reserve Forest has one of the oldest Cyprus plantation in the Nilgiris (planted in 1868). Cairnhill is an old renowned place of beauty to visit and enjoy the nature. The natural landscape of this place with a hanging bridge and a small garden in the center has attracted many people to have a peaceful and calm spending time here. The wildlife includes Gaur, Sambar Deer, Leopard, Nilgiri Langur, Barking Deer, Porcupine, etc. This site is also good for watching some interesting birds.

### The Mukurthi Peak and Mukurthi National Park

Mukurthi Peak is about 40 kms. from Ooty. The Mukurthi National Park is located on the south eastern corner of the Nilgiris plateau. The area contains a viable population of Nilgiri Tahr (*Hamotragus hilocrius*). The Kollaribetta and the Nilgiri Peak are other major peaks



around. The area is chained by innumerable beautiful and perennial little streams, which falls into Bhavani Puzha. The Silent Valley in the Western Ghat is located on the western side of the ranges. The fascinating feature of the Mukurthi Sanctuary is its endemism and relationship with Himalayan Flora and Fauna.

### Glenmorgan

It is about 17 kms. from Ooty and an ecologically rich forestry spot and there is view point. Prior permission of E.B. authorities should be obtained to enter the view point zone. There are about ten Toda (tribal) settlements. On the way to Glenmorgan, one can see Eucalyptus, Wattle plantations and sholas rich in Rhododendrons.

### Kamaraj Sagar (Sandynallah Reservoir)

The Kamaraj Sagar Dam is a good picnic spot and can be reached via Kandal amidst very old trees and green shrubs of various terrains. It is a very good picnic spot on the slopes of the Wenlock Downs. Apart from studying nature and the environment, fishing provides excellent game in Kamaraj Sagar Dam.

## COONOOR

It is located on the way from Coimbatore to Ooty, about 18 kms. from Ooty. It is the second largest hill station in the Nilgiris. It stands on a lower ridge of the plateau at an altitude of 1,858 mtrs. Coonoor has a railway station on the Mettupalayam - Udhagamandalam route. There are regular bus services from Ooty and Coimbatore to Coonoor.

### Sim's Park

This garden was laid out in 1874 by J.D.Sim, the then Secretary to Government and Major Murray acting Superintendent of Forest and Park was named after the former. Though this was started as a pleasure resort for the residents and visitors, the park has now developed into a garden. This garden is spread over 12 hectares of undulating land and possesses a number of natural advantages at an elevation of 1768 - 1798 mts. above M.S.L.

The park cum botanical garden contains many species of trees and shrubs not found in Ooty. Annual Fruit Show is held every year in May, attracts tourists in large numbers. Pomological research station located near Sim's Park can also be seen which do research on nursery plants and fruits. The Pasteur Institute may also be seen just across Sim's Park which produces the anti-rabies vaccine, DTP, DT and TT.



### Dolphin's Nose

It is about 12 kms. from Coonoor bus stand situated near Tiger Hills. It is a unique rock of tremendous proportions, jutting out of the face of the hill side in the formation which its name suggests. Enjoy the microclimate of the



shola forest criss - crossed by the winding road; you can also take a glimpse of the St. Catherine Waterfalls from here. The area is also abundant with wildlife.

### Lamb's Rock

It is about 8 kms. from Coonoor bus stand and it falls under reserve forest. It is a point on the way to Dolphin's Nose and the seat was so called by the then Collector Mr.E.B.Thomas, after one Captain Lamb who made earnest attempt to open a path to the place. The Lamb's Rock is a sheer precipice of several hundred meters and commands a good view of the Coimbatore plains. There is a good view point from where stretches of forests and the plains below can be seen. Between January and March, the trees become extremely colourful.

### The Droog

17 kms. from Coonoor. One has to go up to Nonsuch Estate and trek down about 4 kms. In this spot a dilapidated fort is there which was said that Tippu Sultan used this fort as an outpost. The peak stands at an elevation of about 2,000 mtrs. and directly overlooks the plains.

### Law's Falls

It is about 7 kms. from Coonoor, set inside the Coonoor forest range with vast stretches of undisturbed shoals, the Law's falls is a paradise for naturalists, is very wild and rocky.

### Lady Canning's Seat

Lady Canning's Seat is about 8 kms. from Coonoor bus stand and further along the same road leads to Lamb's Rock. It is perhaps the loveliest point in the heart of the woods. Lady Canning, wife of the then Viceroy was fond of this spot, which commands a panoramic view of the numerous tea estates, Lamb's Rock, the Droog, the Lampton's Peak all could be seen one above the other and even Mettupalayam is visible at a distance.

### Katery falls

About 3 kms. from Coonoor, on Mettupalayam road take a right diversion and proceed on Kundah road up to Kundah Village. From there one km. distance, one of the highest falls of Nilgiri can be seen.

### Katery Park

This park is under the control of the Horticulture Department of Tamil Nadu. This place is located at a distance of 8 kms. from Coonoor on Mettupalayam to Coonoor main road. There are many fascinating flowers and trimmed bushes. There are varied collections of cactus, shrubs, ornamental flowers etc. One can go here for the sake of peace of mind. This is a must visit place if you are planning to visit Coonoor.

### KOTAGIRI

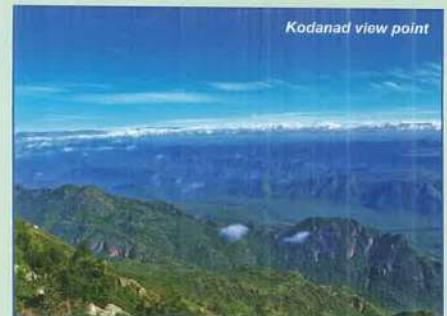
Kotagiri which is about 30 kms. east of Ooty. It is situated at an height of 1,983 mtrs. above M.S.L. It is protected by the Doddabetta Range from the violent southwest monsoon and is not affected by mists which are so common at Coonoor. The place was known in the past as 'Kota-keri or (Kota-gherry) the street of Kotas'. One can enjoy a pleasure ride on road covers green tea beds on either side.

### Longwood Shola

Longwood Shola is the only major pocket of natural shola forest left in the immediate vicinity of Kotagiri in the Nilgiris. This shola is an integral part of the very fragile Nilgiri eco system with an area of 116 hectares. The preservation of this shola forest is very vital. It plays a vital role in Kotagiri's microclimate, attracting and regulating rainfall. There is a very picturesque trekking path, which goes through this serene shola.

### Kodanad view point

It is about 18 kms. from Kotagiri on the eastern edges of Nilgiri. On either side of the road one can see the panoramic view of the tea estates and the river Moyar, is



breathhtaking. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka State border and the actual point where the eastern and western ghats meet can be distinctly seen. A watch tower is there to view the panoramic view of Rangasamy peak and pillar.

### Rangasamy Peak and Pillar

Rangaswamy Peak is a conical peak at a height of 5855 feet and is a most sacred hill on the plateau. On the north west of Rangaswamy Peak is found the Rangaswamy Pillar which is an extraordinary isolated rocky pillar rising in solitary grandeur to a height of some 400 feet and has sheer sides which are quite unclimbable. One can see this peak from Kodanad view point.

### Uyilatty waterfalls

This waterfall is 8 kms. from Kotagiri town and surrounded by the tea gardens. The waterfall full with splashing water during monsoon time.

### John Sullivan Memorial Building

John Sullivan Memorial is a site recreated in remembrance of John Sullivan, a British civil servant responsible for establishing Ooty as a hill station in the Nilgiris Mountains. Situated at Kannerimukku village in Kotagiri, this memorial was originally the residence of John Sullivan and was known as 'Pethakal Bungalow'.

A tribute to John Sullivan who introduced the European way of life and suggested that the British cultivate tea here, this memorial holds a treasure trove of material belonging to Sullivan and his family, the role of the British in the Nilgiris and the traditions of the local tribes. Located at a distance of 2 kms. from Kotagiri, The memorial remains open from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm.

### St.Catherine waterfalls

Dolphin's Nose, one can have a magnificent view of St. Catherine waterfalls, which is about 250 ft. height. But it can be reached from Kotagiri at a distance of 8 kms. To reach the top of the falls, tourists should take a diversion at Aravenu on Kotagiri - Mettupalayam road.

### GUDALUR

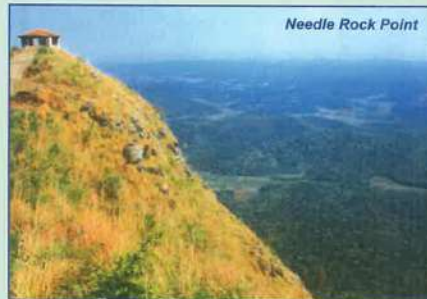
Ooty, Coonoor and Kotagiri lies in the upper plateau of Nilgiri and Gudalur lies in lower plateau. It is the head quarter of the taluk and lies about 51 kms. west of Udthagamandalam below the ghats at an elevation of 1,180 mts. above M.S.L. on the way to Mysuru. The name of the place means junction village. Most of the Gudalur area is green carpeted.

### Horse racing

A very popular sport during the summer months of April, May and June. The race course is located in the heart of Ooty town, is about 2.4 kms. long and is one of the best courses in India.

### Needle Rock Point

It is 8 kms. on Gudalur - Ooty road, this view point gives you a 360 degree view. The sunset from here on clear days is guaranteed to take your breath away. A panoramic view of the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and Gudalur town far below, is a visual treat from this view point.



Needle Rock Point

### Fishing in the Nilgiris

Both fly fishing and spinning methods could prove and adventure to fish hunters. Trout fishing is available in Avalanche lake. For fishing, prior permission has to be obtained from the Fisheries Department, located near the Ooty bus stand.

### Frog Hill view point

It is about 12 kms. on Gudalur - Ooty road. From here one can see frog shape of a hill view.



Frog Hill view point

### Santhanamalai Murugan Temple

The temple, where you can realize the wonders of nature is 19 kms. from Gudalur. It is surrounded by valleys, streams and water falls which sound is very soothing and mesmeric effect. One can enjoy by seeing cardamom, clove, pepper, tea and coffee plantations on the way to the temple.

### Trekking

There are excellent opportunities for trekking in the Nilgiris with a country rising from 300 mtrs. in the North and South to 2,600 mtrs. in the West. It is possible to enjoy some of the most magnificent sceneries in the world; observe wildlife in its many forms: study a great variety of tropical plants and trees; in a wide range of usually favourable climatic conditions.

Trekking area is divided as per the geographical regions with very different climatic conditions like the western area with a temperate climate consists of mundane wet temperate forests, the North and Eastern region with a tropical climate consists of dry deciduous broad leaved and scrub forest.

For more details and permission one can contact the District Forest Officer and Field Director, Mudumalai Tiger Reserve.

### Snooker

Snooker was introduced in the Nilgiris at Ooty Club. It is available at Coonoor Club, Gymkhana Club, the Lawley Institute and the bigger hotels, quite a few snooker parlors in town offers good entertainment.

### Golfing

The Ooty Golf Course is unique and playing on it, is an exceptional experience. It is 18 hole natural golf course located at a height of 7,400 ft. above M.S.L. and is spread over an area of 193 acres. It is said that if you can play to a single digit handicap on this course, you can play under par anywhere in the world. Distance: Ladies -5,125 yards, Gentlemen - 6,074 yards.



### The Tea

Akin to the nectar of the Gods is the *Camellia Sinensis* a bush that gives fragrant amber ambrosia - a refresher and Stimuliser. In other words, TEA.



Commercial Plantations came into existence in the Nilgiris around 1853 though tea plants were thriving in Tamil Nadu earlier to this. South Indian Tea has gained recognition far and wide. India is one of the largest tea producing country in the world after China. The major tea growing areas though, in the South are the Nilgiris and Anamalai high ranges, Peermadu - Vandiperiyar belt and Wayanad in Kerala and a few in Karnataka.

Tea and Tourism Festival is celebrated in the Nilgiris by the Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu every year with Cultural programme, visit to tea estates and factories, fun and frolic, etc.

### Nilgiri Mountain Rail

The Railway Station belonging to early twentieth century the NMR has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The line from Mettupalayam to Coonoor was thrown open in June 1889, and was operated by the Madras Railway Company on behalf of the Government for some time till the South Indian Railway purchased the line. Adopting the Swiss Rack system, special Rack bars are provided between the rails and forms a special ladder, up which the Locomotive pulls the train from Kallar to Coonoor. One of the most picturesque train rides of India, the train goes through several tunnels, over waterfalls,