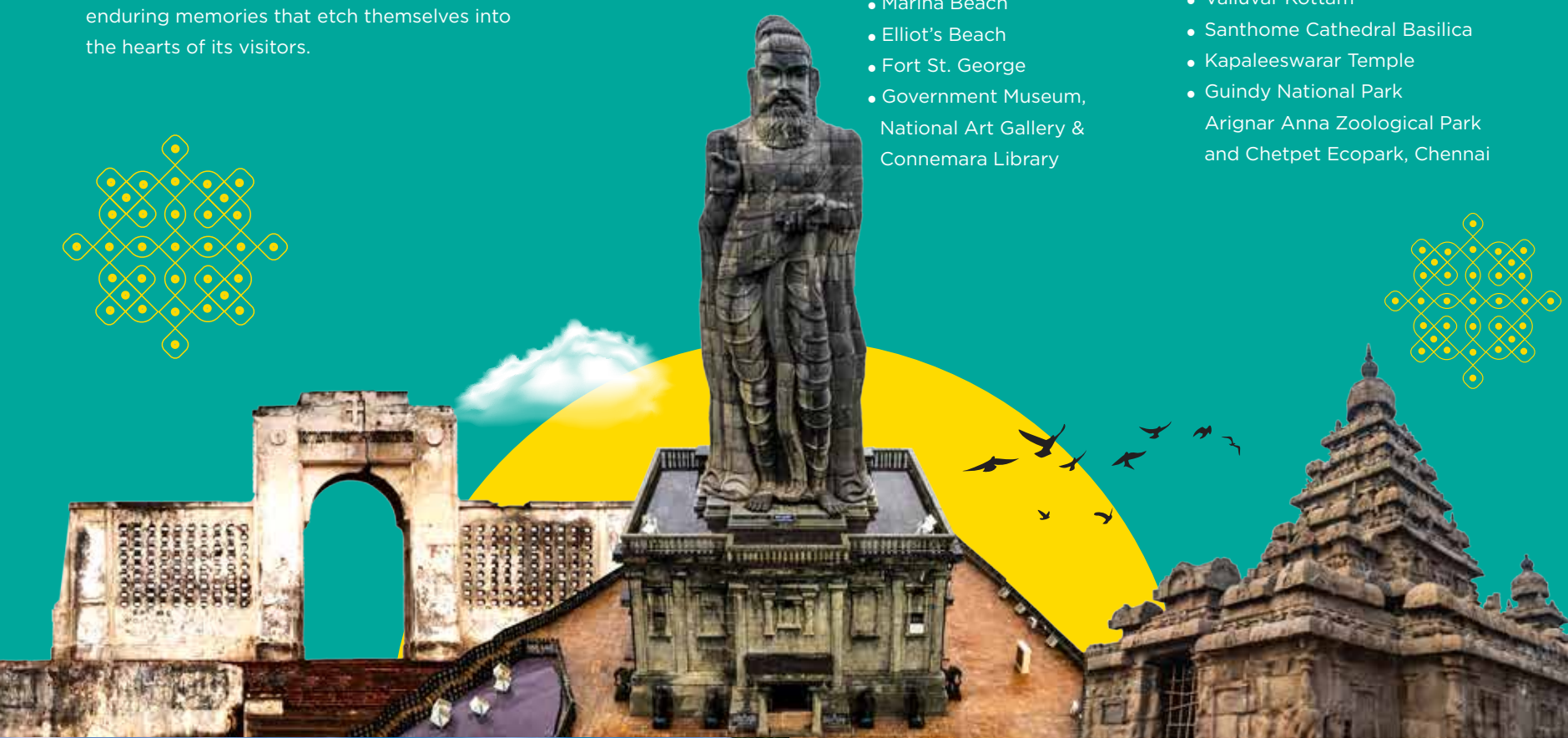
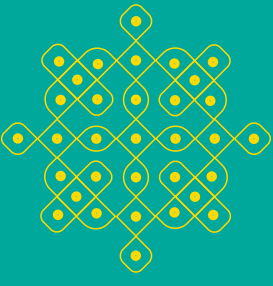


TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu, nestled along the Bay of Bengal, epitomizes an ancient civilization & enduring legacy. With UNESCO World Heritage Sites like Mamallapuram and the awe-inspiring Great Living Chola Temples, it showcases an opulent heritage. The state's vibrant culture thrives through festivals like Pongal and Navaratri, while its diverse topography, from biosphere reserves to adventure-filled coastlines, beckons nature enthusiasts. Enriched by a spectrum of arts, diverse cuisines, and a treasure trove of handicrafts, Tamil Nadu's allure extends to captivating domestic and international tourists alike. Rooted in the essence of "Where stories never end" it guarantees enduring memories that etch themselves into the hearts of its visitors.



Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Ariyalur

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Tamil Nadu is home to six UNESCO World Heritage Sites, each representing a unique facet of its rich history and culture.

Group of Monuments, Mamallapuram

Mahabalipuram (or Mamallapuram), is an old port on the south-east coast, just over 50km south of Chennai. This group of monuments, founded by the Pallava kings, was carved out of rock along the Coromandel coast in the 7th and 8th centuries. It is known especially for its Rathas (temples designed in the form of chariots), mandapas (cave sanctuaries), giant open-air reliefs.

Major attractions include Arjuna's Penance which is a huge rock that is an amazing work of art featuring an impressive bas-relief sculpture (29m x 13m). Another attraction is Krishna's Butterball, a huge boulder, just a small tip of which rests on the ground, creating an impression that the boulder may roll over any minute!

Brihadeeswara Temple, Thanjavur

This temple is popularly known as Thanjai "Periya Koil" (Big Temple). The Great Chola Emperor Raja Raja Cholan I dedicated this temple to Lord Shiva in the year 1010 AD. This temple celebrated its 1000th year of existence in the year 2010. The Tower above the Sanctum Sanctorum is 216 feet tall. This tower is one of the tallest towers of its kind in the whole world. The Shiva lingam or the idol is covered by the tower and is built with stones that are bonded without the use of mortar. Yet another wonder can be seen above - the stone at the top which weighs nearly 80 tons.

Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Ariyalur

A temple that is much more than a place of worship; a living tribute to the rich history the legacy of the Cholas. One of the largest temples in India, the



Surfing at Kovalam

COASTAL

Tamil Nadu has the second longest coastline in India (1,076 kms along the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean), decked with serene beaches, historic monuments and breath taking landscapes. Some of the prominent beaches include:

Marina Beach, Chennai

The Marina Beach is a landmark that Chennai has been proudly showcasing before the world. A splendidly serene strip of coast along the Bay of Bengal, the Marina Beach is considered to be one of the finest beaches in India. Marina Beach is one of the largest urban beaches in the world. Stretching across 13 kms from Fort St. George to the northern part of Besant Nagar, it also has a 50 m high lighthouse on the beach.

Kovalam (Covelong)

Kovalam is a fishing village en route to Mahabalipuram. This beach is known to provide the perfect ambience for "surfing", and is known to be one of the few spots in the eastern coast where "wind surfing" is frequently undertaken. Home to unblemished natural beauty, the Beach has been awarded the renowned Blue Flag accreditation.

Mamallapuram

Mamallapuram (or Mahabalipuram), is an old port on the south-east coast of the country. The 7th century UNESCO-listed temple is becoming a hotspot for surfers. Mamallapuram with its consistent waves and calm area has something for everyone.

Rameswaram - Gulf of Mannar & Palk Bay Marine Biosphere

A small island and major pilgrim centre in the Gulf of Mannar, it is connected to the mainland by the Pamban bridge. Apart from the famed

Anamalai Tiger Reserve

Indira Gandhi National Sanctuary, locally known as Anamalai Tiger Reserve is a bewildering strip of forest land that will fascinate you beyond limits. As the name suggests, Anamalai Tiger Reserve is primarily a sanctuary for the preservation of tigers. However, the area is home to a wide variety of fauna and flora which include the Indian Elephant, Leopard, Nilgiri Tahr, Lion-tailed Macaque, Gaur, Langur, Sambar Deer, Sloth Bear and so on. It also hosts a number of bird species like Cormorant, Teal, Duck, Quail, Jungle Fowl, Hornbill, Asian Barbet, Hawk Eagle, Kingfisher etc.. Apart from these, amphibians and reptiles like snakes, lizards, frogs, turtles etc. are also commonly found in this region.

WATERFALLS

Tamil Nadu has numerous breath-taking waterfalls that welcomes you with beautiful scenery and a picturesque ambience. Some of the popular cascades include:

Courtallam

Popularly called as the "Spa of South India", Courtallam is home to numerous waterfalls and cascades which are known for their curative properties. The 60 ft Peraruvu (Main Falls), Chitraruvu (Small Falls), Shenbaga Devi Falls, Thenaruvu (Honey Falls), Aintharuvu (Five Falls) and Puli Aruvi (Tiger Falls) make up the falls found in the Courtallam area.

Hogenakkal Falls

The River Cauvery which gathers speed by mingling with other rivers at Hogenakkal forms these falls. Hogenakkal translates as "Smoky Rocks" in Kannada. Situated on the borders of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, myriad of streams gushing down the rocky terrain seem to emanate a smoky pattern and hence the name smoky rocks. One can also enjoy a coracle ride to drift along gently in the river.



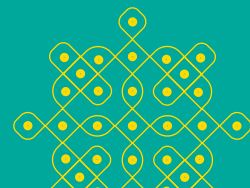
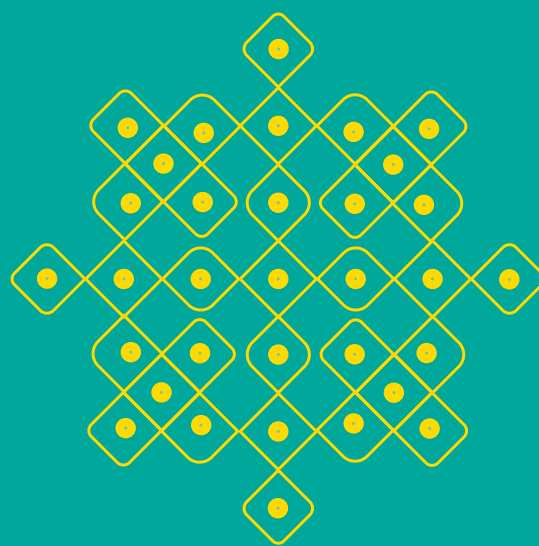
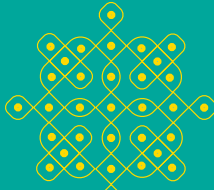
Courtallam

CHENNAI

Chennai, formerly known as Madras, is the capital city of Tamil Nadu. Often hailed as the "Detroit of India" due to its thriving automobile industry, Chennai offers a myriad of attractions. From stunning beaches to modern sea ports and airports, the city boasts convenient multi-transport systems and impressive theme parks. Alongside industrial and hi-tech software parks, Chennai is adorned with sophisticated multi-specialty hospitals, world-class universities, and towering business and residential complexes, making it a bustling metropolis of both commerce and culture.

The attractions include:

- Marina Beach
- Elliot's Beach
- Fort St. George
- Government Museum, National Art Gallery & Connemara Library
- Valluvar Kottam
- Santhome Cathedral Basilica
- Kapaleeswarar Temple
- Guindy National Park
- Arignar Anna Zoological Park and Chetpet Ecopark, Chennai



For more information, contact
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HOME TO DIFFERENT FAITHS

Tamil Nadu stands as a shining example of diverse religious traditions that coexist peacefully. Some of the most popular religious destinations include:

Meenakshi Amman Temple, Madurai

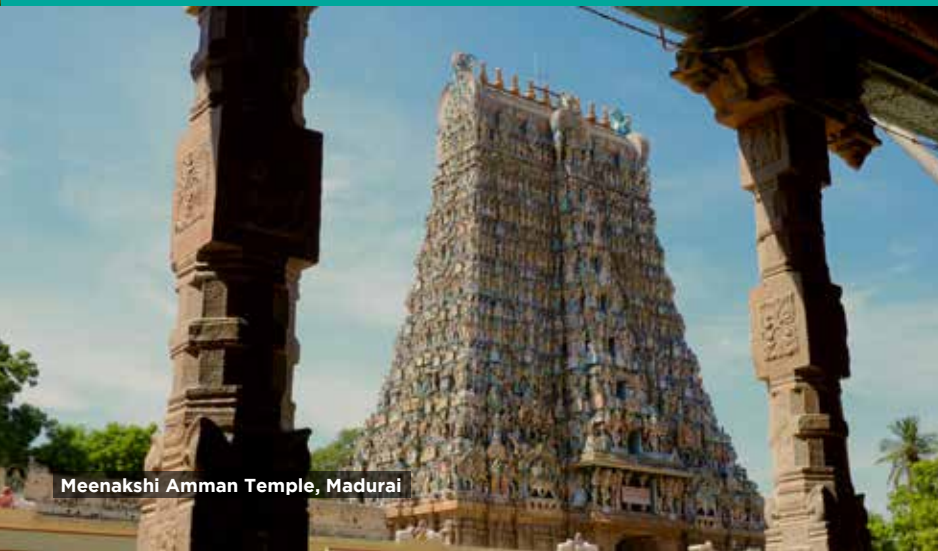
Madurai called as *Thoonga Nagaram* that translates into a city that never sleeps. Historically it is also called as the *Athens of the East*. Meenakshi Amman Temple is an elegant twin temple of Sundareswarar and Meenakshi; the life of Madurai City revolves around this temple. The construction process of the temple began 2500 years ago. Four nine-tier gopurams, One seven-tier chittirai gopuram, Five numbers of five-tier gopurams, Two three-tier gopurams and Two golden gopurams make up the majestic towers of the temple. It houses the Hall of Thousand Pillars, when viewed from any angle fall in a straight line. The musical pillars carved out of stone, decorate the corridors of the outer courts.

Ramanathaswamy Temple, Rameswaram

The Ramanathaswamy Temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is also one of the twelve Jyothirlinga temples. It is renowned for its magnificent corridors and massive sculptured pillars. With its magnificent, imposing structure, long corridors, aesthetically carved pillars, the temple is adorned by a towering 38-metre 'Gopuram'. The acclaimed corridor of Ramanathaswamy Temple is the longest corridor among Hindu temples in India.

Thillai Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram

Situated at the world's magnetic equator, the temple embodies cosmic symbolism and spiritual philosophy in its architecture and rituals. Its roof adorned with 21,600 gold sheets signifies the number of breaths a human takes daily, symbolising life's transient nature. The temple structure is



Meenakshi Amman Temple, Madurai



Avalanche Lake, Ooty

Kodaikanal

Located 7000 feet above sea level on the Western Ghats, the meadows, long stretches of forests, wood slopes, mighty rocks, bowers, creeks and slopes charm the tourists. Kodaikanal is magical for its Kurunji flowers that blossoms once in 12 years. The brightly illuminated 9 Km circular cycle and walkers path around the Lake is an added attraction now.

Valparai

Valparai is located 3500 feet above sea level on the Anaimalai Hills range of the Western Ghats. With its winding hairpin bends and canopied trees, tea plantations, trails and incredible bio-diversity, Valparai is a perfect sojourn and a feeling to be experienced.

Yercaud

Located in Salem District at an altitude 1515 metres, Yercaud is a hill station visited by tourists, throughout the year. Places of interest include the Yercaud Lake, Anna Park, Orchardium, Lady's Seat, Pagoda Point, Bear's Cave and the Shervaroyan Temple.

Meghamalai

Meghamalai, popularly called High Wavy Mountains, is a cool and misty mountain range situated in the Western Ghats in Theni district. With its teeming forests and misty peaks, Meghamalai is all about pristine natural sceneries, treks, tea estates and reclusive wildlife sighting.

Yelagiri

Yelagiri is one of the popular hill stations of Tamil Nadu. A winding ghat road with 14 hairpin bends takes you to the Yelagiri hilltop. The hairpin bends offer panoramic, breath taking views of the hills and its surroundings.

is larger than its body, and it moves like a pendulum without falling sideways. Thanjavur dolls are basically made using terracotta and are purely handmade and painted by skilled artists.

Nachiyar Kovil Kuthu villaku

A kind of traditional lamp, Kuthu villaku are common sights at festivals and events in Tamil Nadu. Nachiyar Kovil Kuthu villaku refers to traditional brass oil lamps crafted in the design style of Nachiyar Kovil temple in Kumbakonam. These exquisite lamps, adorned with intricate engravings, serve as both functional lighting elements and ornamental pieces.

Veena

The Veena is India's national instrument, and one of our most ancient ones. And Thanjavur is arguably the epicentre of Veena industry. It takes a high level of craftsmanship to make veenas and this is handed over from one generation to the next of the artisans.

Kancheepuram Silk Saree

Kancheepuram Silk sarees are known for their opulence, intricate zari work, and rich silk fabric. Woven in Kancheepuram, these sarees feature bold and striking designs inspired by traditional motifs, making them highly sought-after for weddings and special occasions.

Swamimalai Bronze Idols

These idols are renowned for their exquisite craftsmanship and artistic detailing, created using the ancient lost wax technique. Crafted by skilled artisans in Swamimalai, these idols depict Hindu gods and goddesses with intricate precision, embodying centuries-old traditions of bronze casting and sculpting in Tamil Nadu's cultural heritage.



Swamimalai Bronze Idols



TAMIL NADU TOURIST MAP & INFORMATION



Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health, Velankanni

based on the concept of nine entrances, symbolizing the nine openings of the human body, connecting architectural design with spiritual philosophy.

Ekambareswarar Temple, Kancheepuram

Spread over 25 acres of land, Ekambareswarar Temple is one of the largest temple complexes in India. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, the temple also houses Nilathaling Thundam Perumal Temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu, which is also one of the 108 Divya Deshams. Four majestic gateway towers are built with the southern tower being one of the tallest of its kind in the country. This ancient temple is believed to have been in existence since 600 CE and finds mention in the classical Tamil Sangam literature.

Arulmigu Annamalaiyar Temple - Tiruvannamalai

Tiruvannamalai is very famous place both spiritually and historically. The temple is very unique as it is one among Pancha Bootha Sthalams (five elements). The temple was built before 1100 years and the architecture of the temple has its contribution from various dynasties. The temple is very enormous with an area of around 25 acres and the East gopuram with a height of 217 ft which is the second tallest gopuram in Tamil Nadu.

Nagore Dargah

The Dargah is located in Nagpattinam and is built over the tomb of the Sufi saint Shahul Hameed. It is visited not only by followers of Islam but also of other faiths throughout the year.

Velankanni

Velankanni is one of the most famous Christian pilgrim destinations in India and is home to the Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health. History has it that Velankanni was once an important port town in the past. The town used to have direct trade relations with empires as far as Rome and Greece.

The seventh bend is significant, since it offers a view of the slopes of the mountain and the green forests that carpet the hill.

WILDLIFE

Tamil Nadu is renowned for its rich and diverse flora and fauna. The State's geographical variations, ranging from coastal plains to lush mountains, have given rise to a vibrant ecosystem that supports diverse plant and animal life. The Kurinji flowers that bloom once every 12 years, are a striking example of Tamil Nadu's unique floral treasures. Tamil Nadu's varied landscape is home to a diverse range of fauna, avian and aquatic life.

Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary

It is located at an elevation of 1140 mtrs at the border of the tri point junction of the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Its area is around 321 Sq.Kms. Tropical Evergreen forest, moist deciduous forest, moist Teak forest, dry Teak forest and secondary Grassland swamps are found here. This sanctuary is part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve which was the first biosphere reserve of India. The reserve encompasses 4 tiger reserves, 2 national parks and 1 wildlife sanctuary covering 3 states with an area over 5,500 sq.km

Mukurthi Peak & Mukurthi National Park

It's 40 Kms ride from Udhagamandalam. The silent valley is located on the western side of this range of mountains. Nilgiri Tahr is found in reasonably large numbers here. This peak is compared to the peaks of Himalayan ranges in terms of the presence of flora and fauna, unique to a geographical location.



Kurunji Flowers



Nanjil Cuisine

CUISINES OF TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu is renowned for its vibrant and diverse food culture. From the tempting Madurai street food to the spicy Chettinadu cuisine, get ready to tantalize your taste buds with diverse culinary delights. Some of the popular cuisines include:

The Breakfast

Predominantly vegetarian, the classical Tamil breakfast is a wholesome meal. Idli, pongal, dosa and crispy medu vada dunked in spicy sambar, soothing coconut chutney and washed down with a steaming 'filter' coffee is how the Tamils typically start their day.

Chettinadu Cuisine

The darling of non-vegetarian palates, Chettinadu cuisine has captivated many food lovers from around the globe with its rich, spicy and distinct textured flavour. Drool-inducing Nattukozhi Kozhambu (country chicken), Aatukari Kozhambu (lamb), Karaikudi Eral (prawn) masala are popular dishes.

Nanjil Cuisine

Nanjil Nadu cuisine is a delicious blend of the rich culinary traditions of Tamil Nadu and Kerala that you can experience in Kanniyakumari and its surroundings. Nanjil Nadu cuisine has a distinct and authentic flavour that reflects the residents love for fish and coconut.

Pandiya Nadu Cuisine

Madurai is also called the food capital of Tamil Nadu with a culinary tradition that goes back to the 12th century. The lanes of Madurai also host a variety of street foods like Jigarthanda (milk dessert), Bun Parotta, Kothu Parotta, Mutton Chukka, Kari Dosa (dosa topped with choice of meat), Kola Urundai (meatballs), Elumbu Roast (made using goat bone), and Paruthi Paal (milk extract from cotton seeds),