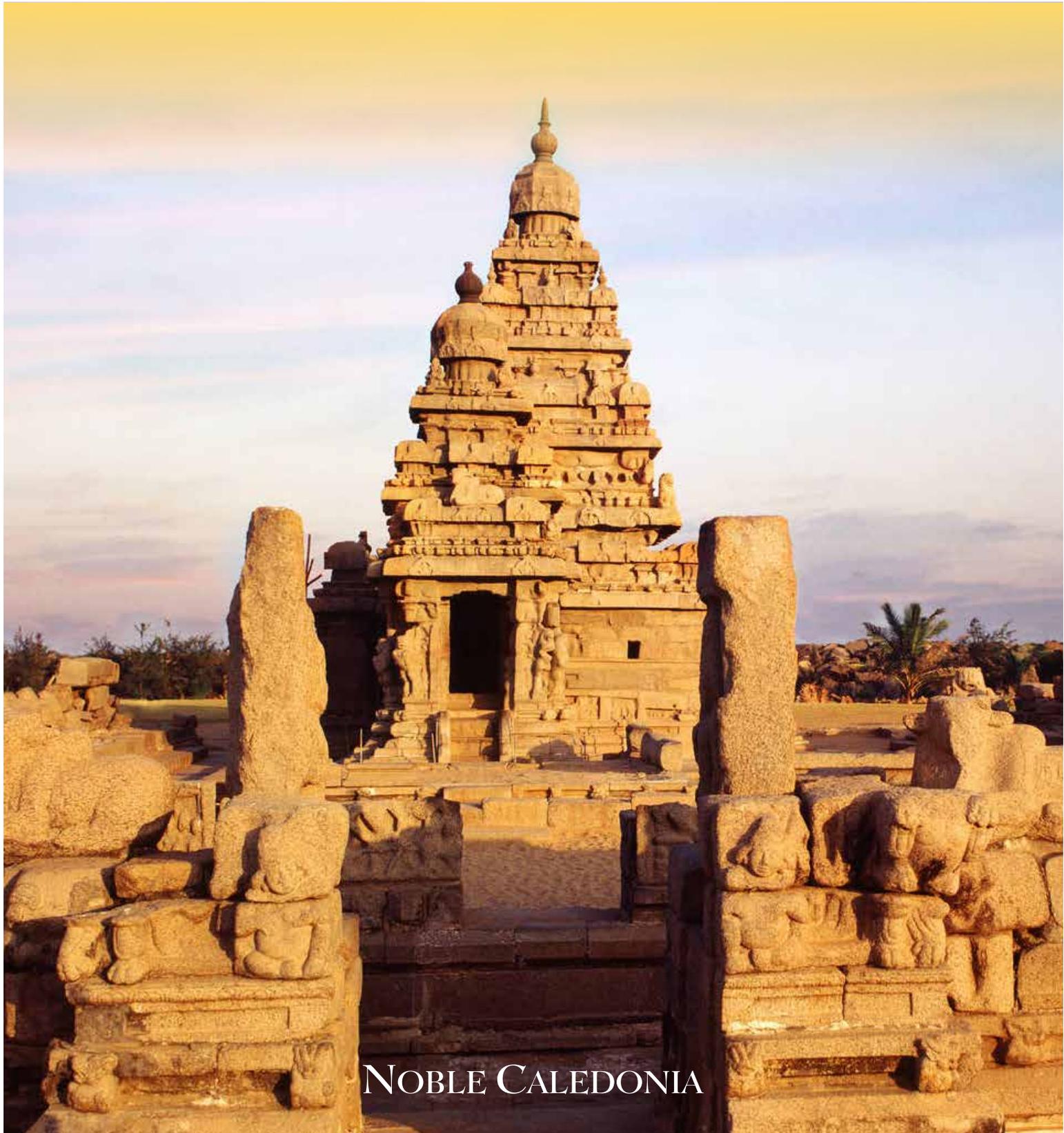


MADRAS MAIL

A JOURNEY ACROSS SOUTHERN INDIA BY PRIVATE TRAIN
ABOARD THE DECCAN ODYSSEY

21ST OCTOBER TO 5TH NOVEMBER 2020



NOBLE CALEDONIA



We are delighted to be working with Golden Eagle Luxury Trains in offering a selection of cabins aboard this private train journey

which has been carefully designed to take in Southern India's most important sites along the stunning coastline between the bustling cities of Chennai and Mumbai. The journey will take us through ever changing landscapes of rolling hills, by beautiful beaches and we will visit ancient temples, shrines and palaces as well as spectacular World Heritage Sites along the way.

There is nowhere like India for observing the colourful day to day life with its markets, traders and general hubbub of the towns and cities, and contrastingly few places that offer a peace and tranquility which can be found around its temples, holy places and countryside. Whilst the north of India has long enjoyed tourism fame, in the less well known lands of the south you will find a beauty and diversity to rival yet with a much gentler atmosphere. The intricate nature of its religions and cultures, together with its rich and absorbing history will be brought to life by the knowledgeable local guides who will accompany us.

If you have promised yourself that one day you will visit India, but the thought of the various hazards that road, local transport or air may bring your way in this vast sub-continent is too much, then we may have the answer. A journey by private train is the ideal way to see something of this magical land. After a morning or afternoon exploring, you can return to your air-conditioned suite aboard the Deccan Odyssey and enjoy the considerable luxury of its accommodations, food and service.



Gateway of India, Mumbai



Elephanta Caves



Se Cathedral, Old Goa



Mumbai



Ooty

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Mumbai, India. Fly by scheduled flight.

Day 2 Mumbai. Arrive today and transfer to a five-star Taj hotel for a two-night stay. This flagship Taj hotel offers you splendid views of the Arabian Sea and Gateway of India, alongside refined centuries-old hospitality.

Day 3 Mumbai. This morning we take a short cruise, weather permitting, to Elephanta Island, a lush island densely wooded with palm, mango and tamarind trees. The atmospheric and fascinating cave complex, which dates back to the 3rd to 5th centuries, was designed to honour the life of Lord Shiva, one of the most auspicious Hindu gods and is now a World Heritage Site. Marvel at the many statues and works of art dedicated to Lord Shiva. We return to the city for lunch at the Khyber Restaurant (or similar) and in the afternoon you are free to explore Mumbai independently or visit one of the colourful local markets. Alternatively, as part of the Freedom of Choice programme, a visit will be offered to the famous Jehangir Art Gallery as well as the Prince of Wales Museum, which houses 50,000 exhibits in a landmark building close to the Gateway of India. This evening a welcome drinks reception is followed by dinner at the hotel where you can get to know your fellow travellers who be joining you for this Indian odyssey.

Day 4 Mumbai. This morning we visit the 'Dhobi Ghats', an intriguing outdoor laundry. The dhobi is a traditional laundryman who collects your dirty linen, washes it and returns it neatly pressed. The Ghats are the laundries where they practice this historic tradition. Our

tour then takes in Fort Bombay and Gandhi's House, now a fascinating museum depicting his inspirational life. In the mid-afternoon we will board our private train the Deccan Odyssey. Settle into your beautifully appointed cabin and enjoy the hospitable atmosphere of the Bar Car before experiencing fine Indian or western cuisine in one of the restaurant cars. With the Freedom of Choice touring option, you may instead wish to take a full day tour to the 100-year old line from Neral to the hill station of Matheran (at 800 metres), two hours drive south of Mumbai. As the little train climbs up into the clear mountain air you can view the scenic vista of hills and plains below; the total lack of motorised traffic at Matheran makes it an unusual and peaceful retreat. Join the Deccan Odyssey at Pavel Junction after descending from Matheran.

Day 5 Goa. Goa, renowned for its beaches, temples and world heritage architecture, was the capital of the Portuguese Empire in the east and displays much of this heritage in its architecture today. We take a morning tour to view Basilica De Bom Jesus and Se Cathedral of Santa Catarina, a towering white structure with a grand Baroque interior and the most imposing church in Old Goa.

Day 6 Ooty. The Nilgiri Mountain Railway, a World Heritage Site, starts from the town of Mettupalayam and takes us on a journey full of twists and turns as this narrow gauge steam train ascends 30 kilometres along India's only Rack and Pinion Railway with gradients as steep as 1:12 to the town of Coonor, from where for the final 16 kilometres the train picks up speed on its way to the hill resort at Ooty at 2225 metres,

famous for its pretty cottages and beautiful botanical gardens. The steam-hauled 'Toy Train' heads through tea and coffee plantations and forest-clad hills and, with no less than 16 tunnels and tall bridges along with the breathtaking views, makes a journey to Ooty an extraordinary experience.

Day 7 Cochin. Cochin's beautiful natural harbour and scenic backwaters has meant its history has been rich and varied. The British, Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch and Chinese have all left indelible marks on the architectural development of this city. We will visit the Dutch Palace and the Jewish Synagogue and then see the Giant Chinese fishing nets that billow from massive teak and bamboo poles which dot the entrance to the harbour and are still in use today. The day ends with a visit to the 500-year old Fort Cochin where we will walk through the historical Dutch and Portuguese buildings. In the evening there is the opportunity to witness a Kathakali Dance performance where the dancers are elaborately made up with paint and masks accompanied by drummers and musicians as they act out a dance drama.

Day 8 Trivandrum & Kanyakumari. The Deccan Odyssey arrives in Trivandrum in the early morning. After breakfast we visit the Napier Museum and the dominating Padmanabhaswamy Hindu Temple. Following lunch, we head to Kanyakumari which is mainland India's southernmost point, where the three seas - Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal - meet and where the shore temple to the Virgin Goddess Kanyakumari stands.

Day 9 Madurai. One of the oldest cities in India situated on the River Vaigai, the Temple City of Madurai

was the capital of the Pandya Kingdom but it was during the reign of the Nayaks that the magnificent Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple was constructed, which is one of India's greatest cultural and architectural landmarks. In the evening we will return to the temple to witness a Hindu ritual, an Aarti Ceremony before we continue our journey towards Chennai.

Day 10 Pondicherry. Pondicherry, located on the Bay of Bengal, is the former capital of the French territories in India. To this day there still remains a rich French cultural heritage and French is widely spoken. Landmarks include Raj Nivas, the residence of the Lt Governor of Pondicherry - a handsome 200-year old building which faces Government Park with its paths and lawns, fountains and sculptures as well as the wide and vibrant beaches and beautiful promenades. Tonight, we have our final dinner aboard the Deccan Odyssey.

Day 11 Chennai. We arrive in Chennai (formerly known as Madras) in the morning and transfer to our luxurious beachfront property of Taj Fisherman's Cove for a three night stay. Fisherman's Cove, once an impressive Dutch Fort, is now one of the finest beach resorts in Southern India. It is located on a beautiful white sandy beach, lapped by the waters from the Bay of Bengal and offers a perfect setting for relaxation at the end of our journey through Southern India. Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, is located on the legendary Coromandel Coast with a marvellous tradition of music and dance. This city of four million people has a pronounced colonial heritage dating back to the 17th century when the British East India Company built a small fort on the banks of the Cooum River and called it Fort St. George.



Days 12 & 13 Chennai. In Chennai we will visit highlights of the city including Fort St. George and the National Art Gallery. Situated south of Chennai, we will also visit Mahabalipuram, a beautiful coastal resort classified as a World Heritage Site. The rock-cut temples and caves situated here are amongst the finest in the world and originated between the 7th and 9th century. The highlight is a visit to the Shore Temple, which is renowned for its intricate carvings and skilled craftsmanship and is one of the oldest temples in southern India.

Day 14 Chennai to Hyderabad. Today we travel by air from Chennai to our final destination, Hyderabad and stay for two nights at the luxury Taj Falaknuma Palace. Elevated 2000 feet above Hyderabad, this luxurious property features a blend of colonial and Indian designs. It houses a heritage walk with beautifully crafted objects from the world over and a first-rate spa.

Day 15 Hyderabad. Today we enjoy a city tour of Hyderabad. Steeped in history, thronging with people and buzzing with commerce, the Old City of Hyderabad is one of India's most evocative ancient quarters. We will explore the lanes of this district, with its many spice merchants and chai shops. Looming over the Old City is also some of Islamic India's most impressive architecture. In the evening we will enjoy a farewell Gala Dinner in the most magnificent of venues, the 101 Dining Hall of the Taj Falaknuma Palace.

Day 16 Hyderabad to London. Early morning transfer to Hyderabad airport for the scheduled flight to London.



FREEDOM OF CHOICE TOURING

In select locations, in addition to the main excursions, it is possible to choose from a range of activities or tours at no extra cost. Please note that these options are subject to availability, minimum numbers, location conditions and timings.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

CATEGORY	
Deluxe Class	£12795
Presidential Suite	£24595
Deluxe Class for sole use	£18695

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Internal flight from Chennai to Hyderabad • Two nights hotel accommodation in Mumbai • Seven nights aboard the Deccan Odyssey • Three nights hotel accommodation in Chennai • Two nights hotel accommodation in Hyderabad • Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily except lunch & dinner on day 2 • Wine with lunch and dinner • Excursions • Services of a Train Tour Manager • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes • Portage.

Not Included: Travel insurance, visas, lunch & dinner on day 2.

Please note: A 20% deposit is required when booking this tour. Please also note that a visa is required for travel to India along with at least six month's passport validity from the date of arrival into India and two blank passport pages. Applications can begin 120 days before entry and the application form must be completed online. This information is correct at the time of printing and should the information change, we will be in touch with booked passengers with updated guidelines.

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DECCAN ODYSSEY

To travel aboard the Deccan Odyssey is to experience the finest traditions of rail travel and it is the perfect way to experience the colour, character and amazing diversity of India in comfort and style. We are delighted to be working with Golden Eagle Luxury Trains in offering a selection of cabins aboard this private train which was specially built to cater for the demands of today's most discerning traveller, accommodating a maximum of 62 guests in modern, air-conditioned sleeping carriages. On board, the spacious and comfortable cabins, the exceptionally high-quality dining and the attention to detail of the staff combine to create what is effectively a rolling luxury hotel.

Your Suite/Cabin

There are two categories of compartment on board the Deccan Odyssey, the Presidential Suites and Deluxe Class Cabins, and facilities in both include air-conditioning, television screen with USB and HDMI ports, complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water and a hairdryer. A laundry service is also available throughout the tour for a fee. All of the accommodation is relatively spacious, thanks to the generous proportions of the country's broad-gauge railway.

Presidential Suites: These are the most spacious cabins available, measuring 191 square feet and benefiting from a large and luxurious king-size bed, separate lounge/seating area with writing desk and two private en-suite bathrooms with shower.

Deluxe Class Cabins: These cabins measure 95 square feet and are well proportioned with a twin or a queen-size bed and a private en-suite bathroom with shower.



Presidential Suite



Presidential Suite Lounge



Deluxe Double Cabin



Deluxe Twin Cabin



Restaurant

Your Space

The well-appointed Bar Lounge Car offers the perfect surroundings for a quiet drink with your fellow passengers. A wide selection of both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks is served, with the bar staying open until the last guest leaves. There is also a dedicated Spa Car where you can enjoy a traditional Ayurvedic massage, work out in the gym, visit the onboard hairdressing salon or enjoy the heat of the sauna while the train is underway. Alternatively, you can utilise the facilities in the Reception Car which has a library and reading area, and a fully-equipped business centre.



Lounge

Your Dining

Your private train includes two splendid Restaurant Cars, offering a wonderful variety of international cuisine. Prepared and served in one sitting with the highest attention to detail, the Indian and international food offered is to the highest culinary standard. For lunch and dinner, you will be served by the restaurant staff in traditional Maharashtrian attire and accompanying both meals will be a selection of complimentary local wines and beer. Traditionally decorated, these beautifully designed cars offer a superb and relaxed setting in which to enjoy your meals and watch India's remarkable scenery unfold.



Spa



Food on board

Life On Board

The Deccan Odyssey is designed with inspiration taken from the imperial carriages used by the Maharajas when travelling through India and throughout your tour you can expect a service which is attentive, friendly and discreet. Your car attendants provide housekeeping and bedding turndown services and your Train Tour Manager is there to coordinate all of the elements, ensuring a personal service and informative tour. On board there is a Wi-Fi box in each cabin to provide internet connection though coverage may be limited when travelling through more remote locations. For your comfort, the dress code on board is casual.



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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
 Cover image: Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram