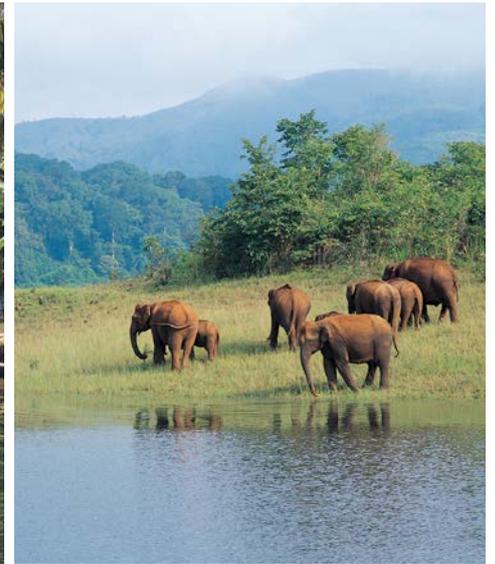
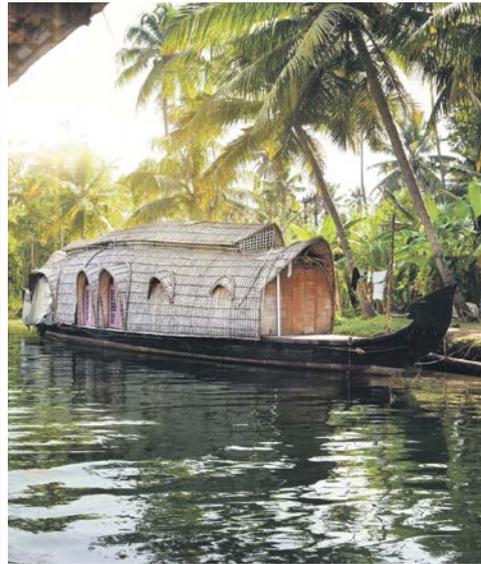


Kerala Explorer



TRIP OVERVIEW

Characterised by winding emerald rivers, exotic wildlife, spice plantations and lush landscapes, the south Indian state of Kerala exudes tranquillity and beauty. Explore the region on this 10 night, 12 day tour, discovering the most captivating areas including an overnight boat cruise on the rural backwaters, tea plantations in Munnar and wildlife spotting in Periyar National Park.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Kerala. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important details such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Cochin

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Cochin, via Dubai.

DAY 2: Cochin D

On arrival at Cochin International airport, you will be met by your guide and transferred to your hotel where you will check in and have dinner. The rest of your evening is at leisure.

DAY 3: Cochin B/L/D

Start your day with a 45 minute Ayurvedic massage and breakfast at your hotel before you begin your tour of Cochin, the historic centre of India's spice trade. See the ancient Chinese influence in the impressive fishing nets, still used daily by locals, and take a ride through the village road in a tuk-tuk. You will also see the Mattanchery Dutch Palace and the oldest European church in India, St. Francis before returning to your hotel in Cochin for the evening.

DAY 4: Cochin to Thrissur B/L/D

After breakfast disembark and journey to the Athirapally Waterfalls which, falling from a height of 80 feet, are one of the highest in the state. Then head on to Thrissur with its strong cultural, religious and spiritual background and visit historical buildings such as the Vadkumnathan and Paramekavu Devi Temples. Continue to your hotel in Thrissur where you will spend the next two nights.

DAY 5: Thrissur B/L/D

Following breakfast, today will be your chance to gain insight into the local culture with 'A Day with the Masters', an introduction to the world of Kerala's traditional performing arts. Learn about traditional Sanskrit theatre, percussion music and the training of each art form, as well as the life of an artist. Retire to your hotel in the evening for dinner and your overnight stay.

DAY 6: Thrissur to Munnar B/L/D

The tour will depart Thrissur in the morning and travel to Munnar, known for its expanse of tea plantations, rolling valleys and mountains. Stopping en route for lunch, the rest of the day will be free time where you may choose to explore the local area or simply relax with a good book at your hotel.

DAY 7: Munnar B/L/D

Today you will have a tour of Munnar, a nature lover's paradise. Visit Mattupetty Lake, Echo Point, Gundala Lake and Jungle Honey Bee Nest, where over 20 nests occupy a single tree. You will then continue to a tea plantation and Rajamalai National Park, famous for its largest surviving population of Nilgiri Tahr (wild goat).

Please note: Rajamalai National Park will be closed during the breeding period of Nilgiri Thars. During affected tours you will watch a Kalarippayattu show instead. Kalarippayattu is the traditional martial art practiced in Kerala. Famed as the mother of all martial arts, this ancient art-form is believed to have been adapted into various martial art forms like karate, kung-fu and judo.

DAY 8: Munnar to Thekkady B/L/D

The tour will then journey to Thekkady, a stunning area located high in the Cardamom hills containing tea gardens, rubber, coffee and pepper plantations. Following lunch, a visit to a plantation and spice market awaits you.

DAY 9: Thekkady to Alleppey B/L/D

This afternoon enjoy a traditional lunch of Sadhya, a delicacy in Kerala served on a banana leaf. A highlight of Thekkady is the Periyar National Park, India's largest wildlife sanctuary. Board a boat at Periyar Lake where you will have the chance to spot some elephants, or one of the park's 25 Bengal tigers amongst other birds, reptiles and mammals. Board a traditional houseboat which will be your transport and accommodation. This leisurely cruise takes you through the winding backwaters of Kerala, enjoying the local food and stunning rural scenery of the surrounding Kerala villages and waters. Meandering through the beautiful lagoons, rivers and canals is truly an amazing experience like no other.

Please note, an overnight bag is required for your 1 night houseboat stay

DAY 10: Alleppey to Trivandrum B/L/D

Following breakfast travel to Trivandrum and ride a cable car at the Jatayupara Earth Centre to the Jatayu Sculpture, a rock theme park with the world's largest bird sculpture. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before continuing to Trivandrum. Enjoy the evening at leisure.

DAY 11: Trivandrum B/L/D

Depart in the morning for a half day city tour. Witness the magnificent Kanakakunnu Palace, one of the last architectural relics of the colonial era, then see the famous Sri Padmanabha Swami Temple, one of the principle places of worship of the deity of Vaishnavism. You will then return to your hotel to enjoy another Ayurvedic massage before your farewell dinner.

DAY 12: Trivandrum to the UK or Extension B

Transfer to the airport for your flight to the UK, via Dubai, or continue on to your chosen extension.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to house boats. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Kerala. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed.

Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. If you have booked a triple share please note that your room will be a twin room with a rollaway bed or sofa bed added. This may limit the floor space in the room.

Please note: the hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast will be served in the hotels and is generally local cuisine with western options available. Lunch and dinner will be taken in local Kerala restaurants. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.

Alcoholic drinks

Please note that Kerala has strict laws regarding the governance of the sale of alcohol in public places including hotels and restaurants. The sale and consumption of alcohol is therefore often restricted in hotels, varying from one establishment to another. You may however bring your own alcohol with you for private consumption in your room.



ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Cochin you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Jayasree Travels & Tours**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/Jayasree Travels & Tours representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be able to answer any queries. However, if you need to contact Jayasree Travels & Tours during your stay the details are:

Jayasree Travels and Tours

TC No:TC84/2248(4), 2nd Floor
Building Name: An-Nur,
Enchakkal, Vallakadavu-695008
Contact number: 0091 471 2505067

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for Jayasree Travel and Tours

Contact	Telephone number
Ms Jayasree Vikraman:	0091 974 700 5888
Mrs Samitha Azhar	0091 974 471 3380
Mr Biju Unnikrishnan	0091 952 618 8860
Mr Harish Kumar	0091 952 618 8859
Mr Amit Bhardwaj	0091 995 898 8719

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

A visa is required for entry into India. British Citizen Passport Holders will need to obtain an e-Tourist Visa (eTV) for travel to India. We work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be able to arrange your visa on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250 590 and quote "Mercury Holidays". The cost of the visa is approximately £134 per person. The Travel Visa Company can only apply for this 120 days before your proposed travel date and takes around 10 working days to issue. It is only valid for a 60 day single entry stay from the date of arrival. When calling the Travel Visa Company they will advise you of any changes to the fees or the procedure, they will also advise you of all information they will require in order to apply for the visa.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote "WK830" for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. Our tour paces are marked with dots out of 3, with the differences being as follows:

- 1 Dot the tour is Easy-Going
- 2 Dots the tour is Intermediate
- 3 Dots the tour is Advanced

Kerala Explorer is rated as 2 Dots meaning that the tour pace is Intermediate. A good level of fitness is required as you may be on your feet for approximately four hours in a day, though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and will vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, and may be getting on and off coaches, trains and boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. You will stay in variety of hotels throughout the tour.

Our guides will always endeavor to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 35. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Tour Guides - National Guide

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival by your national guide who will remain with you for the duration of your trip. You will also be joined by a local guide in each of the cities which you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

Tipping

It is customary to tip your guide and driver. This is at your discretion, but we recommend you allow approximately £3 per person per day. It is asked that you tip in pounds and not local currency, please do not give coins as these are difficult to exchange.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Kerala is the Indian Rupee or Rs. The Rupee is a closed currency and officially you are not allowed to take any cash out of India. US Dollars and GBP are also widely accepted in India should you wish to keep an alternative currency. There are restrictions on taking Indian rupees into India. Visitors, including tourists, are not permitted to take any amount of Indian currency into the country. You can take cash or travellers' cheques (in pounds sterling or another foreign currency) and/or a bank card with you and exchange or withdraw rupees once in India.

We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £100- £200 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

WHAT TO PACK

- Sunscreen and hat in summer
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Warm clothing and thermals in winter
- Camera and charger
- Loo paper for public WCs
- Travel plug adapter - the electricity supply in India is 240V. You will need a 2 or 3 round pin plug adapter.

- Binoculars
- Antibacterial hand gel
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Your initial flight is to **Cochin Airport** via Dubai with **Emirates (EK)**, departing from **London Heathrow Terminal 3**.

IMPORTANT: Final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Baggage Allowance

Baggage allowance (per person): Each passenger is entitled to 30kg of hold luggage plus 1 item of hand luggage not exceeding 55cm x 38cm x 20cm in size or 10kg in weight. Weight restrictions will be finalized on E-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check - in.

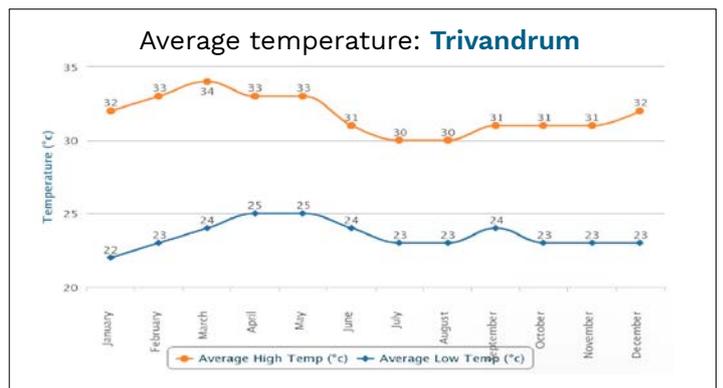
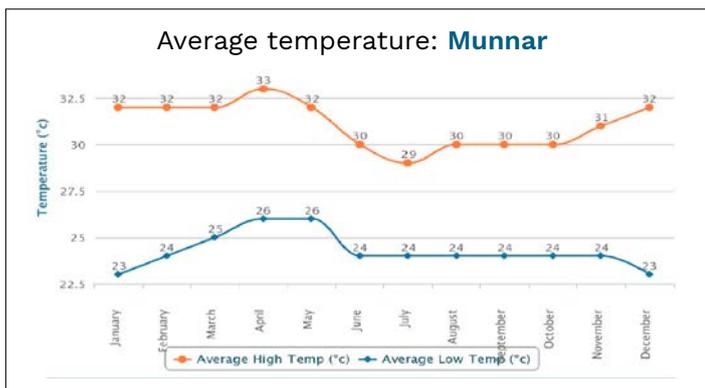
Check-In should be at least 3 hours before departure.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Ayurvedic Treatment, Kovalam

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0843 224 0723



TRIP OVERVIEW

With a personalised consultation and treatment schedule, experience the widely recognised benefits of Ayurveda, the oldest and most complete healing system in the world. Now gaining in popularity throughout the West, this holistic treatment involves various types of massage, oil applications, inhalations, diet and natural medicines, all provided in a stunning lake and beach location.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your ayurvedic add-on to Kovalam.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 12: Trivandrum to Ayurvedic Resort D

Transfer to the Beach and Lake Ayurvedic Resort, Kovalam. Start with a doctor's consultation and personalised assessment to address your specific requirements, followed by two treatments.

DAY 13: Ayurvedic Resort, Kovalam B/L/D

Enjoy two Ayurvedic treatments and the rest of the day at leisure.

DAY 14: Ayurvedic Resort, Kovalam B/L/D

Following two further Ayurvedic treatments, you will have the rest of the day to relax in the beautiful surroundings.

DAY 15: Ayurvedic Resort, Kovalam to UK B

Depart after breakfast for your return flight to the UK.

Hotel Information

Kerala, Kovalam (3 nights) on Full Board

4★ Beach and Lake Ayurvedic Resort

Address: Pozhikkara Beach, Pachalloor, Kovalam,

Contact number: 0091 471 238 2086

Tour Guides

Your ayurvedic extension is **not escorted**. After the Kerala Explorer tour you will be transferred to the resort and will receive transfers to the airport at the end of your stay.

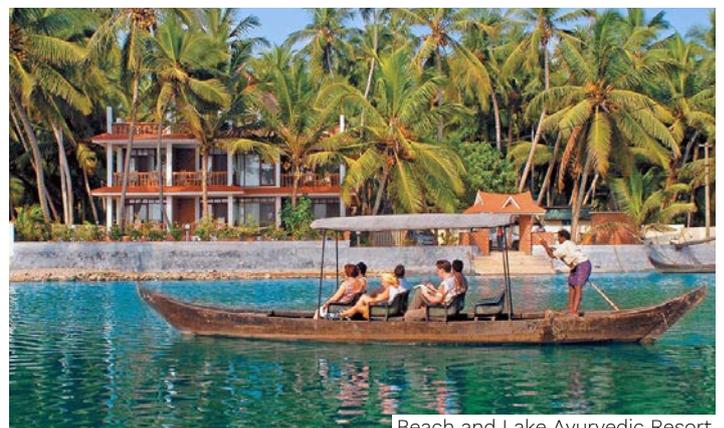
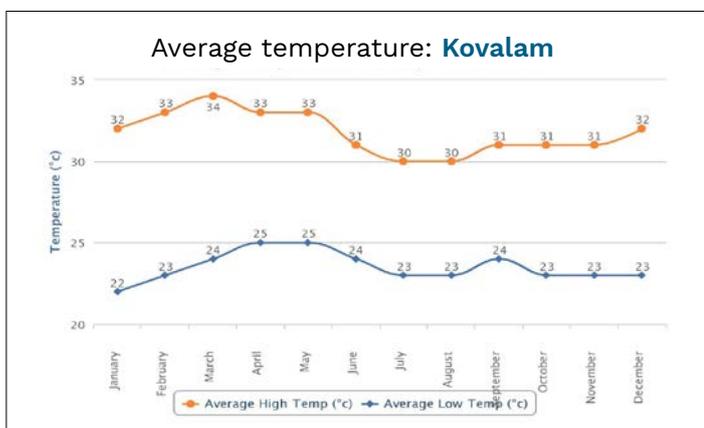
Currency Exchange

The currency in Kerala is the Indian Rupee or Rs. The Rupee is a closed currency and officially you are not allowed to take any cash out of India.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry, snacks and drinks. Your Full Board stay includes your breakfast, lunch and dinner daily.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE



Beach and Lake Ayurvedic Resort

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0843 224 0723**

Kerala Beach Stay

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0843 224 0723



TRIP OVERVIEW

Extend your trip in India with a 3 night stay on Kerala's beautiful coast. Famous for its extensive backwaters and stunning beaches, tropical Kerala is the perfect destination to relax, unwind and slip into the local rhythm of life.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your Beach Stay add-on in Kerala.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 12: Trivandrum to Beach Stay resort

Transfer to your chosen resort.

DAY 13 & 14: Beach Stay resort

Enjoy two full days at your leisure, the perfect opportunity to unwind on the beach, bathe in the pool and reflect on your tour memories.

DAY 15: Beach Stay resort to the UK

Depart after breakfast for your return flight to the UK.

Hotel Information

Kovalam or Poovar (3 nights)

Your chosen hotel will have been confirmed at booking. Please talk to our reservations department should you need any further information.

The hotels include the following:

5★ Uday Samudra Leisure Beach Hotel & Spa, Half Board

Address: GV Raja Road, Samudra Beach, Kovalam

Contact number: 0091 471 248 1654

5★ Vivanta by Taj - Green Cove Kovalam, Bed & Breakfast

Address: GV Raja Vattapara Road, Kovalam

Contact number: 0091 471 661 3000

Tour Guides

Your Beach Stay extension is not escorted. You will be transferred to your hotel after the Kerala Explorer tour and will receive transfers to the airport at the end of your stay.



Isola di Cocco Hotel



Vivanta by Taj - Green Cove Kovalam

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0843 224 0723**

Dubai City Stay Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0843 224 0723



TRIP OVERVIEW

An extension to Dubai and its Emirates is the perfect place to relax and soak in the Arabian sun which shines out of a clear blue sky day after day. The United Arab Emirates offer a kaleidoscope of attractions from bustling city centres to rugged mountains and idyllic beaches.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension in Dubai.

Hotel (2 nights)

Your stay in Dubai will take place at one of the following hotels:

5★ Carlton Palace Hotel on Bed & Breakfast.

Hotel Information

Address: Al Maktoum Rd Deira, Dubai 56262 United Arab Emirates
 Contact number: 00971 4 227 0000

4★ Marco Polo on Bed & Breakfast.

Hotel Information

Address: Al Mateena St, Al Muteena, Deira, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
 Contact number: 00971 4 272 0000

5★ Stella Di Mare on Bed & Breakfast.

Hotel Information

Address: Al Mattla'ee Street - Dubai - United Arab Emirates
 Contact number: 00971 4 563 5555

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

Please note: the hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Visas

All UK passport holders do not require a visa.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs and laundry plus any meals and drinks that are not included.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Dubai is not escorted by a tour guide. All internal transfers are included.

Currency

The currency in Dubai is the UAE Dirham.

Festivals

Ramadan will fall for a 1 month period sometime in May/June. Please be advised that restaurants, bars and facilities may close during this period. Please ask Reservations for details.

Tourist tax

The Emirates of Dubai have introduced a compulsory tourist tax on all hotel accommodation, to be paid by guests at the hotel before departure. Please ask Reservations for details.

Please note

This extension takes place after your main tour.

On your arrival

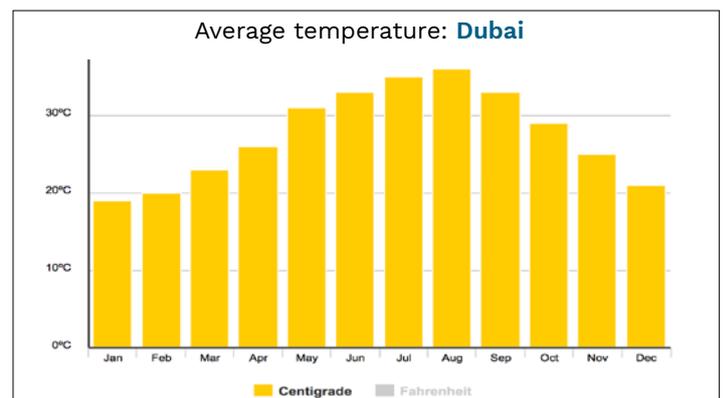
On your arrival in Dubai you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Desert Gate**, holding a sign displaying: "Guest Name". The Mercury Holidays/ Desert Gate representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. This stay is not escorted, however if you need to contact Desert Gate during your stay the details are:

Desert Gate Tourism

Address: 16E1, IRise Tower, Tecom, P O Box19271, Dubai Office number: 009714 442 1155
 Email: premium@desertgate.ae

Emergency Contact details

Tel (24hr): 00971 52 750 2173
 Jiri (Representative): 00971 52 332 4356
 Romina (Representative): 00971 52 614 7659
 Airport Representative (24hr): 00971 52 7502173



FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0843 224 0723**