



THE GEMS OF DECCAN 15N/16D

TOUR SUMMARY

This immersive 15N/16D South India temple tour takes you through the spiritual and architectural heartlands of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka. Begin in Hyderabad, exploring its Nizam heritage and bustling bazaars, before heading to Warangal, home to the majestic Thousand Pillar Temple and the intricately carved Ramappa Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Cross into Karnataka to witness royal splendour in Mysore, architectural brilliance in the temple complexes of Badami, Aihole, and Pattadakal, and the surreal boulder-strewn landscapes of Hampi, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. Enjoy curated experiences including temple rituals, local crafts, and regional cuisines, all while staying in charming heritage accommodations.

Perfect for cultural explorers and spiritual seekers, this tour is a journey through the living legacy of Dravidian art, history, and devotion.

Best time: October – March

Note: While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, this itinerary is intended as a guide and may include unintentional errors or be subject to adjustments due to unforeseen circumstances.



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Detailed Itinerary

DAY 1: Arrive in Hyderabad – Gateway to Deccan Heritage

Welcome to **Hyderabad**, the cultural capital of Telangana and the historical **gateway to the Deccan Plateau**. Upon arrival, you'll be warmly received by our **tour manager**, who will offer a brief **orientation session** outlining the highlights of your **South India heritage tour**.

After check-in at your **hotel in Hyderabad**, you may choose to spend a relaxed evening strolling along **Necklace Road** or enjoying the serene views of **Hussain Sagar Lake**, one of the city's most iconic urban landmarks.

Enjoy a delightful **Hyderabadi dinner** and unwind overnight at your hotel, preparing for the cultural journey ahead through **Telangana and Karnataka's historic heartlands**



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DAY 2: Pochampally Ikat Weaving, Ramoji Film City & Royal Hyderabad

After a hearty breakfast, embark on a day rich in **textile heritage and cinematic grandeur**. Begin with a visit to **Pochampally village**, a **UNESCO-recognized Ikat weaving cluster** known globally for its intricate **double ikat silk and cotton sarees**. Watch master weavers at work and learn about the centuries-old techniques that have made Pochampally a cornerstone of **traditional handloom weaving in South India**.

Continue your journey to the spectacular **Ramoji Film City**, the **largest integrated film studio complex in Asia**. Experience movie magic with a behind-the-scenes glimpse into typical **Indian film shoots**, elaborate sets, and themed attractions. Enjoy a **traditional Indian lunch** at one of the studio's in-house restaurants.

In the late afternoon, explore the historic **Golconda Fort**, once the seat of the Qutb Shahi dynasty and famed for its architectural acoustics, royal palaces, and commanding views over Hyderabad.

As the sun sets, drive to the exquisite **Falaknuma Palace**, once the royal residence of the **Nizam of Hyderabad**, now a luxury heritage hotel. Sip tea in regal surroundings and take in the palace's opulent architecture and serene courtyards.

Conclude your day with **lakeside fine dining at The Water Front Restaurant**, known for its scenic setting on **Hussain Sagar Lake** and delectable local cuisine.



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DAY 3: Discover the Historic Charms of Hyderabad – Museums, Palaces & Bazaars

After breakfast, set out to explore the timeless treasures of **Hyderabad**, a city where **Nizami grandeur meets Indo-Islamic architecture**. Begin your cultural exploration at the renowned **Salar Jung Museum**, one of India's largest art museums, showcasing an eclectic collection of artefacts from around the world — including Persian carpets, Mughal miniatures, and rare sculptures.

Next, step into the regal world of the **Chowmahalla Palace**, the former official residence of the **Nizams of Hyderabad**. Admire its elegant courtyards, grand durbar halls, and a remarkable collection of vintage cars and royal regalia that reflect the opulence of **Hyderabad's royal heritage**.

Enjoy a traditional **Hyderabadi lunch** at a local restaurant, sampling regional favourites like biryani, haleem, or kebabs.

In the afternoon, delve into the heart of **Old Hyderabad** with a visit to the iconic **Charminar**, the city's most famous monument and a symbol of Indo-Islamic architecture. Stroll through the bustling lanes of **Laad Bazaar**, famous for its lacquered bangles, pearls, perfumes, and traditional Hyderabadi souvenirs — a must-visit for lovers of local crafts and shopping.

Return to your hotel for dinner and a restful overnight stay, soaking in the legacy of a city where every street whispers stories of **South India's regal past**.



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DAY 4: Hyderabad to Warangal – Kakatiya Legacy and UNESCO Temples

After breakfast, begin your road journey from **Hyderabad to Warangal**, the former capital of the **Kakatiya dynasty** and a city steeped in **medieval South Indian history**. The scenic drive brings you deeper into **Telangana's cultural heartland**, where temple architecture and dynastic legacies await.

Upon arrival, visit the impressive **Warangal Fort**, a 13th-century citadel known for its intricately carved **Kakatiya Toranas (stone gateways)** and fortified walls. Walk through the ruins that echo tales of warrior queens, ancient battles, and remarkable craftsmanship that shaped the region's identity.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, savouring traditional **Telangana cuisine**.

In the afternoon, drive to the nearby **Ramappa Temple (Rudreshwara Temple)** — a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** celebrated for its floating bricks, intricate carvings, and star-shaped sanctum. Built in the 13th century, this masterpiece of **Kakatiya temple architecture** stands as a testament to engineering brilliance and artistic finesse.

Return to Warangal for dinner and a peaceful overnight stay at your hotel, reflecting on a day immersed in Telangana's glorious past.



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DAY 5: Warangal to Bidar & Gulbarga – Fortresses of the Deccan Sultanate

After breakfast, depart from **Warangal** and drive toward **Bidar**, a historic hilltop city in **Karnataka** that served as a major centre of the **Bahmani Sultanate**. Rich in Indo-Islamic heritage, Bidar is a hidden gem in **Deccan architecture and medieval history**.

On arrival, explore the sprawling **Bidar Fort**, one of the finest examples of **Perso-Turkish military architecture in South India**. Discover its royal palaces, intricate woodwork, underground chambers, and the historic **Rangeen Mahal**, known for its coloured tile work and ornate stucco. The fort offers a unique glimpse into the fusion of Persian artistry and local design that defined the Deccan style.

Enjoy a traditional lunch at a local restaurant in Bidar, sampling regional Karnataka delicacies.

Later, proceed to **Gulbarga (Kalaburagi)**, another key city of the Bahmani Sultanate. Visit the grand **Gulbarga Fort**, known for its massive bastions and the striking **Jama Masjid**, a mosque built in the 14th century with stunning arches inspired by Spanish and Moorish architecture — a rare style in Indian Islamic monuments.

Conclude the day with dinner and an overnight stay at your hotel in Gulbarga, soaking in the atmosphere of Deccan royalty and Islamic architectural splendour.



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DAY 6: Gulbarga to Bijapur – Discovering Deccan Sultanate Marvels

After breakfast, drive from **Gulbarga to Bijapur (Vijayapura)**, a city renowned for its legacy as the capital of the **Adil Shahi dynasty** and home to some of the most stunning examples of **Indo-Islamic architecture in Karnataka**.

Upon arrival, begin your exploration of **Bijapur's historical landmarks**, including:

- **Ibrahim Rauza** – Often referred to as the “Taj Mahal of the Deccan,” this elegant tomb and mosque complex is celebrated for its symmetrical beauty and finely carved details.
- **Malik-e-Maidan** – One of the largest medieval cannons in the world, symbolizing Bijapur's military might.
- **Upli Buruj** – A 16th-century watchtower offering panoramic views of the city's fortifications.
- **Asar Mahal** – A former royal hall used for public meetings and housing sacred relics, featuring Persian-style architecture and intricate frescoes.

These sites offer an immersive dive into **Deccan Sultanate heritage**, showcasing Persian artistry and royal sophistication unique to **North Karnataka's Islamic architecture**.

Enjoy dinner at your hotel in Bijapur, with time to reflect on the city's regal past and the evolution of Indo-Islamic design in South India.

Overnight stay in Bijapur – a treasure trove of **monumental domes, arches, and stonework** that shaped the architectural landscape of the Deccan.



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DAY 7: Discovering the Hidden Gems of Bijapur – A Deccan Sultanate Heritage Trail

After breakfast, continue your immersive journey through the **architectural wonders of Bijapur (Vijayapura)**, the proud **architectural capital of the Deccan Sultanate**. Today's itinerary focuses on three stunning monuments that capture the grandeur and mystique of the **Adil Shahi dynasty**.

Start your morning with a visit to the iconic **Gol Gumbaz Bijapur**, a true marvel of **Deccan Sultanate architecture**. The final resting place of Sultan Mohammed Adil Shah, this structure is famed for its enormous dome—one of the largest unsupported domes in the world—and the intriguing **whispering gallery**, where even the softest sounds are carried clearly across the vast interior. A highlight of **heritage tourism in Karnataka**, Gol Gumbaz is an essential stop for history and architecture enthusiasts.

Pause for lunch at a local restaurant and enjoy the bold, earthy flavours of **authentic North Karnataka cuisine**—a hearty spread that includes jowar rotis, brinjal curry, and spicy chutneys. After lunch, head to the hauntingly beautiful **Bara Kaman Bijapur**, an unfinished mausoleum intended to surpass Gol Gumbaz in scale and ambition. Commissioned by Ali Adil Shah II, the monument consists of twelve massive arches (“Bara Kaman” means “Twelve Arches”) that create a dramatic, skeletal silhouette against the sky. Though incomplete, its raw elegance and tragic history add a mysterious charm to Bijapur's architectural narrative, making it a compelling stop on your **Bijapur heritage trail**. In the late afternoon, visit the historic **Jama Masjid Bijapur**, a masterpiece of Islamic architecture built during the reign of Ali Adil Shah I. One of the largest mosques in South India, it features a vast prayer hall, intricate arches, and a mihrab adorned with exquisite gold inscriptions. This **mosque in Bijapur** remains an active place of worship and a tranquil sanctuary that reflects the city's deep spiritual and cultural roots.

Return to your hotel in Bijapur for dinner and a relaxing overnight stay, concluding a day steeped in architectural splendour and historic insight into **Bijapur's Sultanate-era legacy**.



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DAY 8: Bijapur to Badami – Gateway to Chalukyan Rock-Cut Wonders

After breakfast, depart from **Bijapur** and drive toward **Badami**, a serene heritage town nestled in the rugged red sandstone cliffs of **North Karnataka**. Once the capital of the **Chalukya dynasty**, Badami is famed for its breathtaking **rock-cut cave temples** and ancient Dravidian architecture.

Upon arrival, begin your exploration with a visit to the **Badami Cave Temples**, a complex of four majestic rock-cut sanctuaries carved between the 6th and 8th centuries. These temples are dedicated to **Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism**, showcasing detailed carvings of gods, mythological scenes, and celestial dancers — a true testament to the **Chalukyan artistic legacy**.

Next, enjoy a tranquil walk along the banks of **Agastya Lake**, a scenic, sacred waterbody surrounded by ancient shrines, granaries, and the remnants of a once-thriving capital. The panoramic views of the caves reflected in the water offer a moment of peace and an excellent photo opportunity.

Savour a traditional lunch at a local restaurant, featuring regional specialties from **North Karnataka cuisine**.

Spend your evening at leisure or strolling through the historic lanes of Badami before returning to your hotel.

Enjoy dinner and a restful overnight stay at your hotel in Badami, as you prepare to dive deeper into the ancient Chalukyan trail with visits to Aihole and Pattadakal the following day.



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DAY 9: Badami to Hampi – Chalukyan Marvels at Aihole & Pattadakal (UNESCO World Heritage Site)

After breakfast, check out from your hotel in **Badami** and embark on a scenic drive through the **heartland of Chalukyan temple architecture**, heading toward the ancient city of **Hampi**. En route, explore two of India's most treasured **UNESCO World Heritage Sites** – **Aihole** and **Pattadakal**.

Your first stop is **Aihole**, often referred to as the "**Cradle of Indian Temple Architecture**". This historic site features over **120 stone temples**, including the famous **Durga Temple**, **Lad Khan Temple**, and **Ravana Phadi Cave Temple**, showcasing early experiments in Dravidian and Nagara styles. Aihole offers an intimate glimpse into the **evolution of temple architecture in South India**.

Continue to **Pattadakal**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** celebrated for its unique fusion of northern and southern architectural styles. Key highlights include the **Virupaksha Temple**, **Mallikarjuna Temple**, and **Kashi Vishwanatha Temple**, all adorned with intricate carvings and sculptural excellence – testament to the glory of the **Chalukya dynasty**.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant en route, sampling local North Karnataka delicacies.

Later, continue your journey to **Hampi**, the former capital of the **Vijayanagara Empire**, and check into your hotel.

Enjoy dinner and a relaxing overnight stay in Hampi, where the **UNESCO-listed ruins of a once-mighty empire** await your discovery the next day.



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DAY 10: Exploring Hampi – The Glorious Ruins of the Vijayanagara Empire

After breakfast, start your day with a serene **walk up Hemakuta Hill**, an ancient site dotted with dozens of small temples and shrines, offering panoramic views over the sprawling ruins of Hampi. This peaceful ascent lets you appreciate the spiritual and architectural beginnings of the **Vijayanagara Empire**.

Nearby, visit the impressive **Sasikadu Ganesh Temple**, home to a large and beautifully sculpted **Lord Ganesha statue** carved from granite, a revered pilgrimage spot.

Continue to the imposing **Narasimha Statue**, a massive monolithic sculpture of Lord Vishnu's lion-man avatar, symbolizing the power and divine protection revered in the Vijayanagara period.

After these spiritual and historical highlights, proceed to explore the main monuments:

- **Virupaksha Temple** – The oldest functioning temple in India, dedicated to Lord Shiva, famous for its soaring gopuram and riverfront location.
- **Royal Enclosure** – The royal complex with the King's Audience Hall, stepped tanks, and secret chambers.
- **Zenana Enclosure** – The royal women's quarters featuring the elegant **Lotus Mahal** and fortified watchtowers.
- **Stone Chariot** – The iconic granite chariot at the **Vittala Temple complex**, one of Hampi's most photographed symbols.

Return to your hotel for lunch and rest. In the afternoon, continue to explore:

- **Mahanavami Dibba** – The grand stone platform used for royal ceremonies.
- **Vittala Temple** – Famous for its musical pillars and stunning architecture.
- **Hazara Rama Temple** – Known for detailed friezes depicting the Ramayana.
- **Krishna Bazaar & Temple** – The historic market street adjacent to the Krishna Temple.

Conclude your day with a peaceful stroll along the **Tungabhadra River banks**, soaking in the ancient ambiance. Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight stay in Hampi.



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DAY 11: Scenic Drive from Hampi to Hassan – Experiencing Rural Karnataka

After breakfast, embark on a long yet scenic drive from **Hampi** to **Hassan**, crossing the diverse landscapes of **Karnataka's countryside**. This route offers a unique opportunity to experience rural life and traditional crafts of the region.

En route activities and stops:

- **Visit a traditional jaggery-making village:** Explore the fascinating process of making **organic jaggery (gur)**, an age-old sweetener derived from sugarcane juice. Witness the boiling, stirring, and setting of jaggery in rustic open-air workshops — a cultural treat and a great photo opportunity.
- **Stop at a local millet farm or spice plantation:** Discover the cultivation of **millets**, a staple in Karnataka's traditional diet, or stroll through aromatic spice gardens growing cardamom, pepper, and cinnamon.
- **Interact with local artisans:** Depending on the route, you may visit small villages where crafts like **handloom weaving** or **pottery** are practiced, giving you a glimpse into Karnataka's rich artisanal heritage.
- **Lunch at a countryside farmhouse or local restaurant** serving authentic **Kannada cuisine** featuring farm-fresh ingredients.

After this immersive journey through Karnataka's heartland, continue to **Hassan**, gateway to the stunning **Hoysala temples**.

Dinner and overnight stay at your hotel in Hassan, preparing you for the next day's explorations of Belur and Halebidu.



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DAY 12: Hassan to Mysore – Discover the Exquisite Hoysala Temples of Belur & Halebidu

After breakfast, depart from **Hassan** and drive toward the royal city of **Mysore**, with a culturally rich stop En route at the stunning **Hoysala temples** of **Belur** and **Halebidu** – recently recognized as **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**.

Begin your exploration at **Belur**, home to the magnificent **Chennakesava Temple**, renowned for its intricate soapstone carvings, detailed friezes, and exemplary Hoysala craftsmanship showcasing Hindu mythology and legends.

Next, visit **Halebidu**, the former capital of the Hoysala Empire, and explore the **Hoysaleswara Temple**, a grand example of temple architecture adorned with elaborate sculptures of gods, dancers, animals, and floral motifs that tell stories from the **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata**.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant along the way, savouring authentic **Kannada cuisine** with regional specialties.

Post-lunch, continue your journey to **Mysore**, the City of Palaces, known for its rich history, royal heritage, and vibrant culture.

Dinner and overnight stay at your hotel in Mysore.



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DAY 13: Exploring the Royal Heritage of Mysore – Palaces, Temples & City Views

After breakfast, begin your full-day exploration of **Mysore**, a city steeped in regal charm, architectural elegance, and cultural richness.

Start your day with a scenic drive up **Chamundi Hill**, crowned by the revered **Chamundeshwari Temple**, one of the most important **Shakti temples in South India**. From the hilltop, enjoy panoramic views of Mysore city and see the iconic **Nandi Bull statue**, carved from a single granite block.

Descend to the city to visit the resplendent **Mysore Palace** — an architectural masterpiece blending Indo-Saracenic, Dravidian, and Islamic styles. Its opulent halls, ornate ceilings, and rich interiors reflect the grandeur of the **Wodeyar dynasty**.

Next, head to the **Mysore Rail Museum**, an engaging stop that showcases the history of Indian railways with vintage locomotives, royal coaches, and interactive exhibits.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant featuring traditional **Mysore cuisine**.

In the afternoon, explore the elegant **Jaganmohan Palace**, now a fine art gallery that houses works by **Raja Ravi Varma** and other masters, along with exquisite artefacts, musical instruments, and royal memorabilia.

Return to your hotel for a short rest.

Later in the evening (on weekends and public holidays), revisit the **Mysore Palace** to witness its magical illumination — glowing with over **97,000 electric bulbs**, transforming the palace into a glittering vision of royalty.

Dinner and overnight stay at your hotel in Mysore.



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DAY 14: Mysore to Bangalore – Tracing Tipu Sultan’s Legacy & Experiencing Karnataka’s Craft Traditions

After breakfast, set off on a heritage-rich drive from **Mysore to Bangalore**, with fascinating cultural stops along the way.

Your first halt is at **Srirangapatna**, the island fortress capital of **Tipu Sultan**, also known as the Tiger of Mysore. Explore key historical sites linked to his rule:

- **Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple** (exterior view) – A revered **Vaishnavite temple** known for its Dravidian architecture.
- **Srirangapatna Fort** – Once the stronghold of Tipu Sultan, still retaining its strategic gateways and bastions.
- **Gumbaz** – The elegant mausoleum of Tipu Sultan and his father Hyder Ali, known for its Persian-style domes and latticework.
- **Bailey’s Dungeon** – A chilling reminder of British captivity under Tipu's rule.
- **Tipu’s Summer Palace (Daria Daulat Bagh)** – Set amidst manicured gardens, this teakwood palace features ornate frescoes and Indo-Islamic design.
- **Water Gate** – The historic riverside entrance tied to Tipu’s final moments during the siege of 1799.

Enjoy lunch En route (optional stop based on preference and timing). Continue your drive toward **Bangalore**, with two optional but enriching stops (subject to local availability):

- **Ramanagara Silk Market** – Witness the vibrant trade of **mulberry silk cocoons**, central to Karnataka’s famous **Mysore silk industry**.
- **Channapatna Toy Workshop** – Visit a traditional **lacquer toy-making unit**, where colourful wooden toys are handcrafted using techniques passed down for generations. This UNESCO-recognized **GI-tagged craft** is a must-see for lovers of heritage and sustainable artistry.

Arrive in **Bangalore**, the dynamic capital of Karnataka, and check in at the Hotel.

Optional evening: Head out to experience **Church Street** or **UB City** – two of Bangalore’s most vibrant urban hangouts, ideal for a relaxed dinner, café-hopping, or boutique shopping.

Return to your hotel for overnight stay in Bangalore.



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DAY 15: Exploring Bangalore – Gardens, Heritage & Grandeur

After breakfast, set out to explore the vibrant and cosmopolitan city of **Bangalore** – also known as the **Garden City of India** and Karnataka's bustling capital.

Begin your day with an **exterior view of Vidhana Soudha**, an iconic seat of the Karnataka State Legislature. This imposing granite structure, built in Neo-Dravidian style, is one of the largest legislative buildings in India and a striking symbol of post-independence Indian architecture.

Next, step back into the 18th century with a visit to **Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace**, a beautifully preserved teakwood structure with ornate arches and floral frescoes, reflecting the grandeur of the **Mysore Sultanate**.

Continue to the nearby **Bull Temple (Dodda Basavana Gudi)**, one of Bangalore's oldest temples, famous for its massive granite **Nandi bull** statue — one of the largest in India. This temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva's vahana, blends cultural vibrancy with spiritual serenity.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, where you can savour **Bangalore-style vegetarian meals**, South Indian thalis, or fusion fare depending on your preference.

In the afternoon, stroll through the lush **Lal Bagh Botanical Garden**, spread across **240 acres** and home to over 1,800 species of tropical plants. Don't miss the 19th-century **Glass House**, modelled on London's Crystal Palace, which hosts seasonal flower shows and horticultural exhibits.

Return to your hotel to relax. Dinner and overnight stay at Hotel, Bangalore.



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DAY 16: Exploring Bangalore – Gardens, Heritage & Grandeur

After a relaxed breakfast, check out from your hotel and enjoy some **leisure time for last-minute shopping**. Bangalore is a great place to pick up souvenirs — from fragrant **Mysore sandalwood products** and **Channapatna toys**, to elegant **silk sarees** and locally made **coffee and spices**.

Depending on your flight schedule, you may also explore a nearby **craft emporium** or café before heading to the airport.

Later, transfer to **Kempegowda International Airport, Bangalore** for your onward journey.

Bon voyage and thank you for joining us on this enriching South Indian heritage journey!

TOUR ENDS



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