

CHENNAI



Tamil Nadu is a land of infinite cultural richness, colossal temples, attractive rock carvings, and ornate bronze sculptures. Chennai, formerly known as Madras, is the capital city of Tamil Nadu and is often called the cultural capital of India for its deep-rooted traditions and long heritage. The city is the gateway to the rest of South India. It has the 2nd longest seashore in the world, located on the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal. Chennai is India's fourth largest city with a population of around six million.

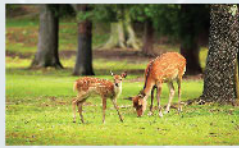
Chennai's economy has a broad industrial base in the automobile, technology, hardware manufacturing, and healthcare industries. The city is India's second largest exporter of software, information technology (IT) and IT-enabled services (ITeS). A major chunk of India's automobile manufacturing industry is based in and around the city. Chennai accounts for 60 percent of the country's automotive exports and is referred to as the Detroit of South Asia.

While you are in Chennai for the International Spice Conference 2023, grab a Chennai special strong filter coffee and stroll through the British-era buildings, flower-filled bazaars and taste the city's iconic cuisine.

Don't forget to catch a glimpse of the resplendent classical dance form of Bharatanatyam. Also, a trip to Chennai is incomplete without shopping for Silk Sarees. Get the feel of the sheer dazzle of an authentic, legendary Kanchipuram Silk Saree, and take back home memories that last forever.



PLACES TO VISIT IN CHENNAI



Guindy National Park: Sprawling over 2.70 KM square of land, Guindy National Park has been ranked the eighth smallest national park of India. The park successfully houses more than 350 species of vegetation along with 150 species of birds and 14 species of wild animals. You can also spot more than 60 species of butterflies and spiders as well as numerous amphibians and reptiles. Timings: 09:00 am to 05:30 pm on all days of the week. The Park is just walkable distance from the venue hotel, ITC Grand Chola, Chennai.



Chennai Snake Park: India's first reptile park, Chennai Snake Park is situated right next to the Children's Park in the Guindy National Park. It is loaded with a variety of reptiles and amphibians which are a sight to behold.



Gandhi Mandapam: As a symbol of praising and honouring the sacrifice of Mahatma Gandhi, the Government of Tamil Nadu has established Gandhi Mandapam and Museum in Guindy. The monument is situated opposite to the Guindy National Park.



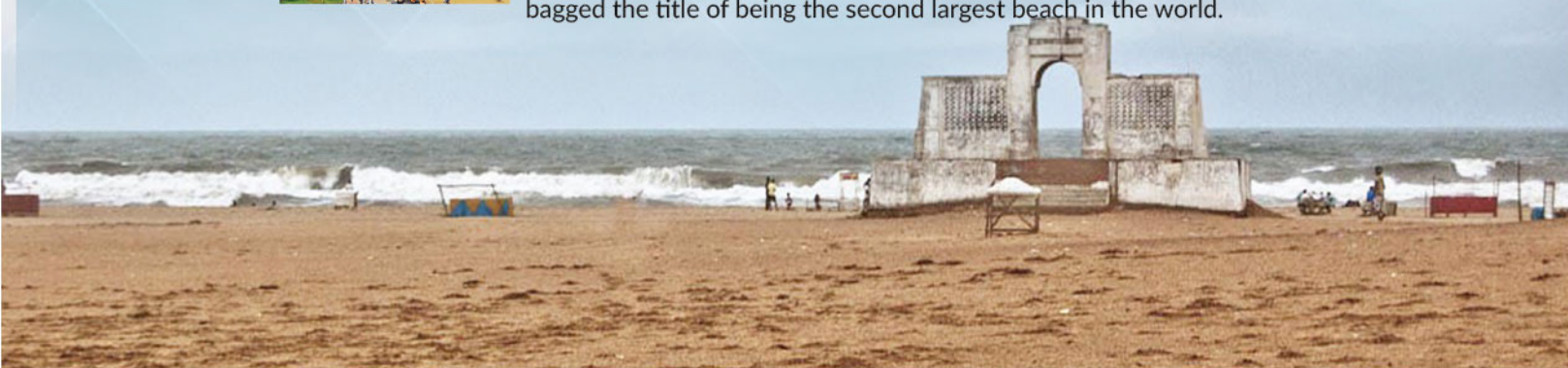
B M Birla Planetarium: The Planetarium is considered in the modern world as an Indoor - Universe. The Planetarium has provisions to execute diurnal, annual, latitudinal and precessional motions. The special effect projectors inside the Planetarium recreate some of the most awe-inspiring astronomical phenomena on the specially perforated aluminium inner dome. For Planetarium Programmes in English, visit the place between 10.00 am to 03.45 pm.



St. Thomas Mount National Shrine: St Thomas Mount Church is a significant religious sight that looms majestically on St. Thomas Mount. You will reach the shrine after climbing around 134 steps made of granite. There are plenty of rocks and a banyan tree above the shrine where you can climb up and enjoy the entire view of the bustling city.



Marina Beach: One of the famous coastlines of Chennai, Marina Beach is best known for its breath-taking view and serene surroundings. With a coastline of around 13km, Marina Beach has bagged the title of being the second largest beach in the world.





M.G.R Memorial: Spread over 8.25 acres, the memorial complex built on the Marina beach in memory of former chief ministers of Tamil Nadu who died in office. The memorial is surrounded with open areas of grass, beautiful pathways, and a splendid water fountain with the long stretch of Marina Beach as the backdrop.



Elliot's Beach: Named after Edward Elliot, the then Governor of Madras; Elliot's Beach is another exciting beach destination in Chennai. Also known as the 'Bessie' or 'Besant Nagar Beach', this stunning beach marks the end of Marina Beach and is located in Besant Nagar. A walk along the long stretches of Eliot's Beach will take you to the 'Schmidt Memorial' that serves as a major landmark to the city.



Phoenix Marketcity: Phoenix Marketcity or Phoenix Mall is a one-stop-shop for international and national retail brands, food and beverage joints, play arenas and local shopping. The mall is located at a distance of just 3.5 kilometres from our venue hotel.



Semmozhi Poonga: Semmozhi Poonga is a botanical garden in Chennai set up jointly by the Horticulture and Agricultural Engineering department of the Government of Tamil Nadu. The garden is located in the Cathedral Road–Anna Salai junction, opposite the American Consulate. Encompassing an area of 20 acres, the park is home to more than 500 species of plants and 80 trees, some of them being more than 100 years old.



Kapaleeshwarar Temple: Located in Mylapore, Chennai, Kapaleeshwarar temple is one of the oldest temples in Chennai and is an exemplary example of Dravidian-style architecture. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati, and the temple conjoins both the spiritual and religious worlds to reflect the vivacious culture of the city. The temple is located just 10 kms away from the venue hotel.



San Thome Cathedral: Built during the Portuguese rule in Chennai, San Thome Cathedral is one of the most popular shrines in Tamil Nadu. Built in the neo-gothic style, this church is believed to be built on the grave of St Thomas. It was recently declared as a 'National Shrine' by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India.



Mahabalipuram: A weekend getaway near Chennai, Mahabalipuram is a hub for the history, culture, architecture and archaeology enthusiasts. It is mainly a seaport, which lies 58 km away from the capital city Chennai. Mahabalipuram is famous for its temples and monuments, especially the very famous Shore Temple and the Pancha Rathas.



Shopping in Chennai

The best place to shop in Chennai is T Nagar. Thyagaraya Nagar, commonly known as T. Nagar, is a very affluent commercial and residential neighborhood in Chennai. You can take a stroll on the narrow roads of T Nagar, which has a plethora of retail shops lined up on every main road and arterial streets selling traditional south Indian textiles and gold jewellery shops. Usman Road is famous for its stretch of jewellery shops, while the Pondy Bazaar area has a number of famous apparel stores selling silk saris and other garments, as well as roadside shops. T. Nagar is the perfect place for pavement shopping. You will get everything, from safety pins to shower curtains, on the sidewalks.

George Town has the quintessential Chennai feel with its markets and is one of the oldest areas in the city. The market is bustling and offers the best sarees all over the place. The Burma Bazaar is a great place to check out sarees and there are several other items available here as well.

Pantheon Road is one of the best places where you can find good quality cotton garments at affordable prices. Cotton Street is a modest lane in Chennai, rendering stalls of nearly 60 vendors on each side of the lane and the starting price per meter of fabric is as low as INR 25!

Check the Ranganathan Street for accessories, apparel, and household articles Chennai silks. Some of the most popular stores here include Jayachandran Textiles, Saravana Stores, and Ratna Stores.

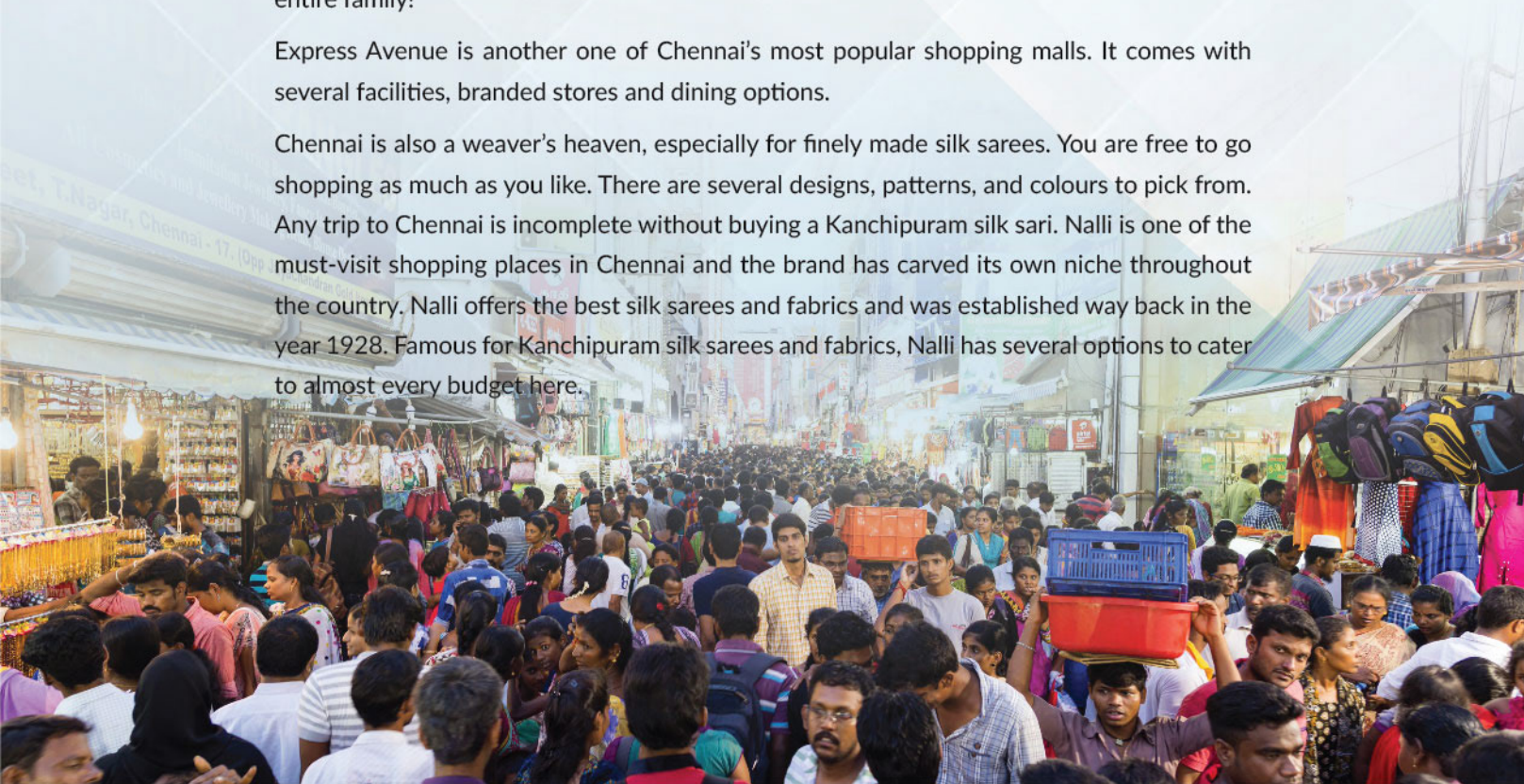
Parry's Corner is a shopping place in Chennai that functions like a wholesale bazaar in itself, selling almost everything from handicrafts and household items to steel utensils and more.

Spencer Plaza is one of the oldest and best shopping malls of Chennai which was built back in the year 1863. The mall offers several branded stores and has almost everything that you would desire. The collection of Pashminas from Kashmir here is a treat to say the least.

Phoenix Mall in Chennai is the largest mall which offers several top brands, cafes and restaurants for a complete experience. This is a one-of-a-kind shopping experience for the entire family!

Express Avenue is another one of Chennai's most popular shopping malls. It comes with several facilities, branded stores and dining options.

Chennai is also a weaver's heaven, especially for finely made silk sarees. You are free to go shopping as much as you like. There are several designs, patterns, and colours to pick from. Any trip to Chennai is incomplete without buying a Kanchipuram silk sari. Nalli is one of the must-visit shopping places in Chennai and the brand has carved its own niche throughout the country. Nalli offers the best silk sarees and fabrics and was established way back in the year 1928. Famous for Kanchipuram silk sarees and fabrics, Nalli has several options to cater to almost every budget here.



CUISINES



The aroma of freshly brewed filter coffee welcomes you to Chennai, Arabica and Robusta coffee beans grown in the country's hill stations are combined in this blend. If you need a quick boost of energy, a cup of invigorating Madras Filter Coffee will do the trick. Filter coffee is distinguished not only by its flavour and aroma, but also by its perfectly frothy texture. The filter coffee making process is also an interesting one - you need to watch how the coffee is made and what makes it so frothy while serving.

A typical Tamil breakfast meal consists of idli (steamed rice-cake) or dosa (crispy pancake) with chutney. Lunch includes Rice, sambar (mixed vegetable curry), curd, kuzhambu (tamarind-based dish), and rasam (spicy south Indian soup).

There are several Biryani recipes in India, but Ambur Biryani is a cut above the rest. It originated in the town of Ambur, which is about two hours from Chennai, and is made with locally available spices, rice, and meat.

Pongal is a traditional cuisine where rice is cooked in a matki (an earthen pot) with water and milk. Pongal is a typical Tamil cuisine made during special occasions.

Paniyaram, a dumpling shaped dish made using dosa batter, is also very popular in Tamil Nadu.

Another special cuisine variety is the Chettinad Cuisine, which is the cuisine of the Chettinad region of Tamil Nadu. Cuisine of Chettinad uses a variety of freshly ground spices including cumin, fenugreek, fennel, clove, bay leaf, turmeric and tamarind. The cuisine is well known for the complexity of flavours. The Chettinad cuisine uses dried flower pods, and kalpasi (black stone flower). Chettinad cuisine is loaded with distinct aromas and flavours.

Puliyodarai is a very common dish in Tamil Nadu which is prepared using tamarind, coconut and rice. It is a special dish and is generally made during festivals and special occasions.



Jigarthanda literally means "Cool Heart", is a cooling drink, which has ingredients such as milk, Badam Pisin (edible almond gum), root syrup, sugar syrup and ice-cream.

Best Places to try the Chennai special cuisines

Chennai is all about street food. A trip to the city is incomplete without visiting the streets of Sowcarpet, Marina Beach, Anna Nagar, Burma Bazaar, T Nagar, Pondy Bazaar etc.

Sarvana Bhavan for dosas, Ambur Briyani saidapet for Ambur biryani, Murugan Idli for breakfast, Dindigul Thalappakatti Restaurant for the sumptuous Thalapakkkatty variety of biryani, Madras Coffee House for Paniyaram, Jigarthanda Factory for the Cool Heart drink, Dakshin - Crowne Plaza Chennai or Paatti Veedu for Puliyo darai, Sangeetha Chettinadu Mess or Sri Muniyandy Vilas for Chettinad special dishes, and Vishranthi Besant Nagar, Vivekananda Coffee House at Adyar, Vijayaram's Coffee Company at South Usman Road in T Nagar (don't forget to try their Madurai bun-sugar-jam) and Madras Coffee House outlets across the city for Filter Coffee.

