

Eco Tourism

Important Tourist Places in Madurai :

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[Pasumalai](#)

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Important Tourist places around Madurai :

KARAIKUDI

Karaikudi is known as an ancestral home of Chettiyars. It is 80 kilometers away from Madurai. It is famous for its Chettinad Mansion, Temples, Old buildings, Gopura Karai saris and Chettinad's tasty food. Now-a-days it is a shooting spot for the Tamil and Telugu film industries as well as a tourist center. Tourists come in large numbers to explore the history of Chettinad and its wonderful buildings.

MEGAMALAI

Nestled among the tea estates on the slopes of the Western Ghats is Megamalai, an idyllic place to inspire the poet in you. Plan your stay here & unwind amidst the verdant surroundings and beautiful wildlife in the proximity. The nature lovers haven is just 130-km from Madurai.

COURTALLAM

An excellent health resort– about 167-km on the Western Ghats. This place is also known as the 'Spa of the South'. Courtallam has nine superb waterfalls, which attracts a large number of visitors. You can also go for a boathouse type accommodation maintained by TTDC and enjoy the beauty of this region.

PALANI

You can continue your spiritual journey with a visit to Palani, a temple dedicated to Lord Subramanyam, about 118 Kms away from Madurai. The temple is perched atop a hill and attracts millions of devotees.

KUMBAKKARAI WATER FALLS

Serving as the base camp for the trekkers who wish to venture into the hills of Kodai, the waterfall serves an excellent picnic spot. Nestled amidst nature's bounty, the waterfall is 105 kms away from Madurai.

SURULI FALLS

Be a witness to the cascading waters of Suruli falls, just 123 kms from Madurai. An ideal spot for picnics.

SRIVILLIPUTHUR

The temple town of Srivilliputhur alias Thiruvilliputhur is located in Virudhunagar District which is around 74 kilometers from Madurai. This place is surrounded by many temples. The tower (gopuram) of Vadapadrasayi temple, built in the 8th century is 60 meters in height and is one of the tallest in south India. The stone and ceiling of this temple is adorned with miniature figures. A wild life sanctuary, located 10kms away from Srivilliputhur is home to giant grizzled squirrels.

KODAIKANAL

The beautiful hill station of Kodaikanal at an altitude of 2,133 meters, covering an area of 21.45 sq.km. It is located 120 Km away from Madurai, in Dindigul district. Known as the Princess among Hill Stations, Kodaikanal is an ideal place for trekking. The Kurinji flower which blossoms once in 12 years is the pride of the Kodai. The star shaped lake in Kodaikanal famous for boating and fishing is surrounded by mountains. About 3kms from this lake is the Kurinji Andavar Temple, dedicated to Lord Muruga. The major attractions of Kodaikanal include the Wooded hills, Pillar rocks, Coaker's Walk, Suicide point, Brynt Park, Chettiar gardens, Guna caves etc. The solar Physical Observatory built in the year 1898 is situated on top of a hill. The Shenbaganur Museum has a collection of different varieties of birds, butterflies, moths, snakes and mammals. The museum also houses a herbarium having 2500 plants, an orchidarium and a mass garden having 300 species of trees and flower gardens. (Open from 10 am to 12 noon and 3 pm to 5 pm daily (except on Sundays).

TRICHY

Tamil Nadu's fourth largest city, Trichirappalli alias Tiruchinopoly situated on the banks of the river Cauvery is around 142 km away from Madurai. The city, administrative headquarters of Tiruchirappalli district, is surrounded by a rock fort built by the Nayaks of Madurai. The famous landmark here is the Mathrubhuteswarar temple, which can be reached by a steep flight of 437 steps cut into the rock. Along the way to the temple there are several other shrines. Ucchi Pilliar temple dedicated to Lord Ganesh is one of them. A fantastic view of the entire town can be seen from the top. Apart from the fort and temple, there are several churches, colleges and missions dating back to the 1760s.

TIRUNELVELI

Tirunelveli, also known as Nelli is a 2000 year old city located on the west bank of river Tamraparni. It is the administrative headquarters of Tirunelveli district located around 150kms to the south of Madurai. Pandya kingdom had this city as capital for some time. The picturesque Pothigai hills in the Western Ghats and the Courtallam water falls are the special features which make Tirunelveli unique as a tourist place. Krishnapuram, Tenkasi, Sankarankoil, Panchalamkuruchi, Ottapidaram, Kalugumalai, Vettangudi bird sanctuary, Kumbakkarai and Courtallam waterfalls are some of the tourist spots worth visiting around Tirunelveli.

TUTUCORIN

Tutucorin is around 150 Kms south of Madurai and its is the ancient port Trust of all Tamil rulers. Bussiness trade towards south East countries flourished during the days of Cholas and Pandyas. The pearl of Tutucorin is world famous and attracted the east Indian Company. Her Royale British Queen is very fond of these pearls to decorate her costumes. Salt,spices, dry fish, coconuts, betel leaves, Jaggery were also exported in those days. The salt of Tutucorin should be ever in our memories as it makes tasty dishes of India. Port Trust, light house,Church, small resort Islands at sea are tourist attraction. Vallanadu forest range extending from Tutucorin about 30 kms away is natural habitat for Black Bucks,Bison,Mountain goats,langurs etc...

TIRUCHENDUR

Tiruchendur is a famous pilgrimage situated around 200 kms south of Madurai in the shore of Bay of Bengal. There is an ancient temple of Tamil deity, Lord Muruga built by Pandyas. The sea shore and the long beach is a beautiful sight seeing for tourist attraction. Veerapandiapatnam church and Kayalpatnam mosque are of importance. Ammanpuram is an natural pool with natural forest about 15 kms from Tiruchendur.

RAMESHWARAM

The holy city of Rameswaram also known as the 'Varanasi of the South'. In Ramanathapuram district, is an island paradise of golden sand, situated 164 kilometers south-east of Madurai. This pilgrim center has two famous temples namely Ramanathaswamy Temple and Kothanda Ramaswamy temple. Ramanathaswamy temple which is 264 meters in length and 200 meters in breadth is on the eastern side of the island, close to the sea. The temple is known for its long corridors with pillars having beautiful sculptures. It also has a big tower measuring to a height of 38.4 meters. The Kothanda Ramaswamy temple is situated about 3 kilometers from the extreme tip of the island. Rameshwaram is one of the major Marine habitat in India.

KANYAKUMARI

Kanyakumari, also known as 'Cape Comorin' is situated 242 km from Madurai on the southernmost tip of the Indian Sub Continent. This place is the meeting point of the three Sea that surround India- i.e. Bay of Bengal in the east, Arabian Sea in the west and the Indian Ocean in the south. Bordered by hills, sea shores, coconut trees and paddy fields, Kanyakumari is an ideal place to watch the sunrise and sunset. Bay wax museum, Theme park, Gandhi Mandapam etc. are the tourist attractions here. There is also a memorial dedicated to Swami Vivekananda built in 1970, on a rocky peninsula where he sat in deep

meditation. A statue of Vivekananda has also been installed in this memorial. Kalikesam, kumarakoil, Tirparappu Falls, Ulakaruvi and Thottipalam are of tourists attraction around Kanyakumari.

BANYAN TREE FARM

Explore the deep dense hinterland of South India at a farm-stay that keeps you as close to nature as possible. 'The Banyan Tree' holds the promise of 'Off-the-beaten-track' experience. Whatever your Passion... exploring nature, trekking in the woods, sitting on top of a tree-house to track wildlife, frolicking at the stream, sinking in the luxury of a waterfall or driving in an army-release jeep through deep jungle tracks, 'The Banyan Tree', situated near Pollachi, is picture perfect and a great experience .

The wildlife parks around Madurai are:

Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary & National Park

The Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Nilgiri Hills, at a point where the Western Ghats meet the Eastern Ghats. This sanctuary has a mix of flat land, undulating parkland, open grassland, swamp, valleys and nullahs. The **Mayyar River** forms a series of spectacular cascades on its 65 kms route on the Udhagamandalam-Mysore highway. This sanctuary can be reached from Mysore too.



Location	In the Nilgiris district 65 kms from Ootacamund on the Ooty- Mysore Road.
Area	321 Sq Kms
Forest type	Primarily moist deciduous. Tends to become the dry deciduous variety towards Bandipur. Mainly mixed forests with bamboos.
Animals found	Elephant, gaur, sambar, chital, dhole pather, tiger, sloth bear, Python, barking deer, four-horned antelope, common langur, Otter, crocodiles and a variety of birds and reptiles.
Annual rainfall	About 2300 mm.
Nearest airport	Coimbatore – 160 kms away.
Nearest Railway station	Udhagamandalam – 64 kms away. Mysore – 95 kms away .
Best season	Throughout the year (Except June to August)
Accommodation	Forest Rest Houses at Abhayaranyam, Kargudi, Masinagudi, and Teppakadu. Catering arrangements are provided.
Other facilities	Motor Vehicles and riding elephants available hire.
For greater	The Wildlife Warden, Mahalingam Buildings, Coonoor Road,

details	Udhagamandalam – 643 001. This forms part of the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve, which is the first biosphere reserve formed in India. The Biosphere reserve portion extends to the adjoining states of Kerala and Karnataka also. The 2537.6 sq. kms of NBR in Tamil Nadu covers all the forests of the Nilgiris district and a part of Coimbatore and Periyar districts.
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Vallanadu Black Buck Sanctuary

It is a scrub forest area that is spread over 16.41 sq km. This sanctuary is situated in the Thuthukudi District.



Location	Thoothukudi District
Area	16.41 Sq Kms
Forest type	Scrub forests
Animals found	Blackbuck, spotted deer, macaques, jungle cat, mongoose, wild hares, and other animals
Annual rainfall	758.0 mm
Nearest airport	Madurai – 165 kms away
Nearest Railway station	Tirunelveli Junction – 20 km away
Best season	Throughout the year
Accommodation	Hotels at Tirunelveli
For greater details	The district Forest Officer, Tirunelveli Division, Kokirakulam, Tirunelveli – 627 009.

Indira Gandhi National Park

Spread over 958 sq kms, this sanctuary can be reached from Top Slip in the Anamalai Hills in the Western Ghats. An ecological Paradise, this sanctuary is a National Park with an area covering 108 sq kms. About 800 species out of 2000 South Indian flora and fauna are distributed here.



Location	The Anamalai Ranges in Coimbatore District
Area	108 Sq. Kms
Forest Type	Varies from the dry deciduous to the semi-evergreen, evergreen and the wet temperate containing teak, rose wood and many miscellaneous tropical species.
Animals found	elephant, gaur, tiger, panther, sloth bear, wild boar, wild dog,

	Nilgiri langur, lion-tailed macaque, sambhar, four, horned antelope, chital, etc. and a host of birds, notably the pied horn bill and several species of eagles.
Annual rainfall	500 mm to 5000 mm, least rainfall is on the eastern slopes and most rainfall is on western slopes.
Nearest airport	Coimbatore – 75 kms.
Nearest Railway station	Pollachi 35 kms away.
Best season	Throughout the year (Except June to August)
Accommodation	There is a Forest Rest House at Topslip Varagaliar, Amaravathi, Sethumadai. Catering arrangements are available. The Public Works Department (PWD) Rest houses at Udumalpet and Amaravathi, Electricity Board (TNEB) Rest House at Attakatti.
Other facilities	Motor Vehicles and riding elephants available for hire.
For more details	The Wildlife Warden, 178, Meenakarai Salai, Pollachi - 642001.

Mundanthurai Sanctuary

Situated in the Thirunelveli district, this sanctuary has dry deciduous to tropical wet evergreen forests and patches of reeds in an area of 567 sq. kms.



Location	Tirunelveli District.
Area	567 Sq Kms
Forest type	Dry deciduous to tropical wet evergreen forests with patches of reeds.
Animals found	Tiger, bonnet macaque, langurs, slender loris, sloth bear, sambhar, chital, wild dog etc. Excellent area for bird watching.
Annual rainfall	Varies from below 1000 mm in lower reaches to nearly 4000 mm in the hills.
Nearest airport	Madurai – 200 kms away.
Nearest Railway station	Ambasamudram 6 kms away.
Best season	October to January
Accommodation	Forest Rest House at Mundanthurai with catering arrangements. Public Works Department Rest House at Ambasamudram. E.B. Rest House at Papanasam camp.
For more details	The Field Director, Project Tiger, NGO 'A' Colony Tirunelveli – 627 007.

Kalakkadu Sanctuary

Kalakkadu Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in an area of 223 sq kms in the Thirunelveli District, at the foothills of Western Ghats and the adjoining areas. The flora ranges from forests of the tropical wet evergreen to the tropical dry deciduous and thorn forests in the lower hills.



Location	Tirunelveli District
Area	223 Sq Kms.
Forest type	Tropical wet evergreen forests changes to tropical dry deciduous forests in the foothills and to thorn forests further down.
Animals found	Famous for lion-tailed macaque. All the four species (common langur, nilgiri langur, bonnet macaque and lion tailed macaque) can be seen. Other animals include Nilgiri tahr, sambar, sloth bear, gaur, elephant, tiger, flying squirrel, panther, wild dog, pangolin and a variety of birds and reptiles.
Annual rainfall	Varies from below 1000 mm in lower reaches to nearly 4000mm in the hills.
Nearest airport	Trivandrum – 140 kms away. Madurai – 200 kms away.
Nearest Railway station	Cheranmadevi 20 kms away.
Best season	September to March
Accommodation	Forest Rest House at Sengaltheri with catering arrangements.
For more details	The Field Director, Project Tiger, NGO 'A' Colony Tirunelveli – 627 007.

Srivilliputhur grizzled squirrel wildlife Sanctuary

Located in the Virudhunagar District, 45 kms off Virudhunagar Town, this sanctuary has a composition of dry deciduous forests, moist mixed deciduous forests and grasslands. It is the home of the Grizzled Giant Squirrel. Other interesting species that can be found here are the Flying squirrel, Tree Shrew, Elephant, Lion-tailed Macaque, Nilgiris Tahr, Mouse Deer, Barking Deer, and many species of birds. This sanctuary can be visited all through the year.



Location	45 kms from Virudhunagar town
Forest type	Mainly dry deciduous with patches of tropical evergreen forests, Semi-evergreen forests, moist mixed deciduous forests and grassland.
Animals found	Grizzled giant squirrel, flying squirrel, tree shrew, elephant, lion-tailed macaque, nilgiris tahr, mouse deer, barking deer, many species of birds.
Annual rainfall	849.1 mm
Nearest airport	Madurai – 100 kms.
Nearest Railway station	Srivilliputhur – 15 kms.
Best season	Throughout the year
Accommodation	Forest Rest House at Mudungiar, Pudupatti, Mudaliaroothu, P.W.D. Rest Houses at Srivilliputhur.
For greater details	The Wildlife Warden, Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary, 118, North Veedi, Srivilliputhur.

Mukkurthi National Park

The Mukkurthi National Park is located in the high altitudes of the Nilgiris, and is made up of rolling downs interspersed with sholas and woodland. This park is also a part of Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve and is situated 40 kms from Udthagamandalam.



Location	It is located in the high altitudes of the Nilgiris Mountains. The landscape is extremely picturesque. This forms part of the Nilgiris biosphere reserve. From Udthagamandalam there are four different entry points to reach this sanctuary.
Area	7846 ha. of reserved forests, the entire area has been declared a National Park.
Forest type	Primarily grassland, characteristically interspersed with numerous isolated, compact, sharply defined wet temperate mixed forests locally termed 'sholas' with beautiful brooks cutting through the mountains.
Animals found	Nilgiris tahr, sambhar, barking deer, Nilgiris marten, otter, jungle cat, jackal etc. Avifauna consists mostly of varieties of hill birds like the laughing thrushes, whistling, thrushes, woodcock, wood pigeon and black eagle may also be seen. Butterflies with Himalayan affinity like the Blue Admiral, Indian Red Admiral, Indian Cabbage white, and many others can be found here.
Altitude and Annual rainfall	Average elevation is around 2400 mts. Precipitation about 1300 mm.
Nearest airport	Coimbatore – 140 kms.

Nearest Railway station	Udhagamandalam – 45kms.
Best season	February to May, September to November
Accommodation	Forest Rest House at Avalanche, Pykara and trekking sheds.
Other facilities	Mainly for the tourist interested in adventure, trek routes have been formed for trekking and camping.
For greater details	This Wildlife Warden, Mahalingam buildings, Coonoor Road, Udhagamandalam – 643 001.

Manner Marine National Park

This is a Marine Biosphere, and it runs along with coasts of Ramanathapuram and Thuthukudi (Tuticorin) Districts. The entire Gulf of Mannar abounds in marine life and the area covers 21 islands and 623 hectares. This National Park is full of coral reefs, the dugong, turtles, dolphins and balanoglossus. The Kurusadai Islands, off Manadapam boasts of a vast expanse of shallow waters. The coral reef, flora and fauna here are in their virgin form. Dolphins create a carefree atmosphere for tourists.



Location	Located in the areas of Thoothukudi and Ramanathapuram districts near Mandapam – 150 kms away from Madurai
Area	623 ha. (21 islands)
Marine species	Characteristic tropical flora and fauna, coral reefs, dugongs, turtles, dolphins and balano-glossus.
Nearest Railway station	Mandapam Thoothukudi
Best season	Throughout the year
Accommodation	Hotels at Mandapam
Other facilities	Boats
For greater details	The Wildlife Warden, Gulf of Mannar, Marine National Park, 76/1, Madurai Salai, Mandapam, Ramanathapuram District 623 501.

Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary

Periyar sanctuary is also called the Tekkadi wildlife sanctuary. Here the lofty ranges of Western Ghats are wrapped in dense, evergreen, moist deciduous forests and savannah grassland. Spreading across 777 Sqkm, the sanctuary is a tiger reserve. You can enjoy a majestic elephant ride through the dense greenery. The splendid artificial lake formed by Mullaperiyar dam across the Periyar River adds charm to the park.



Location	Located in the areas of Cardamom hills and pandalam Hills of South Western Ghats. Mjor portion of the reserve forms the catchment of the river Periyar and the rest that of river Pamba.
Area	777 sq.km
Forest type	Mix of tropical ever green and semi evergreen forest
Species Found	Tiger, leopards, elephants, bison, gaur, liontail macaque, Nilgiri langur, the Malabar giant squirrel, porcupine, wild dog, sloth bear, jungle cat, sambar, palm civet, wild boar and jackals. Only place of high spotting the rarest Great Indian Hornbill. Other than that Grey herons, kingfishers, egrets, darters, coots, fish-owls, grackles and cormorants can be commonly seen.
Nearest Railway station	Madurai, Cochin
Best season	Throughout the year
Accommodation	Hotels at Tekkady, Munnar
Other facilities	Tourist jeeps, Boats
For greater details	The Wildlife Warden, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Tekkady, Kerala.