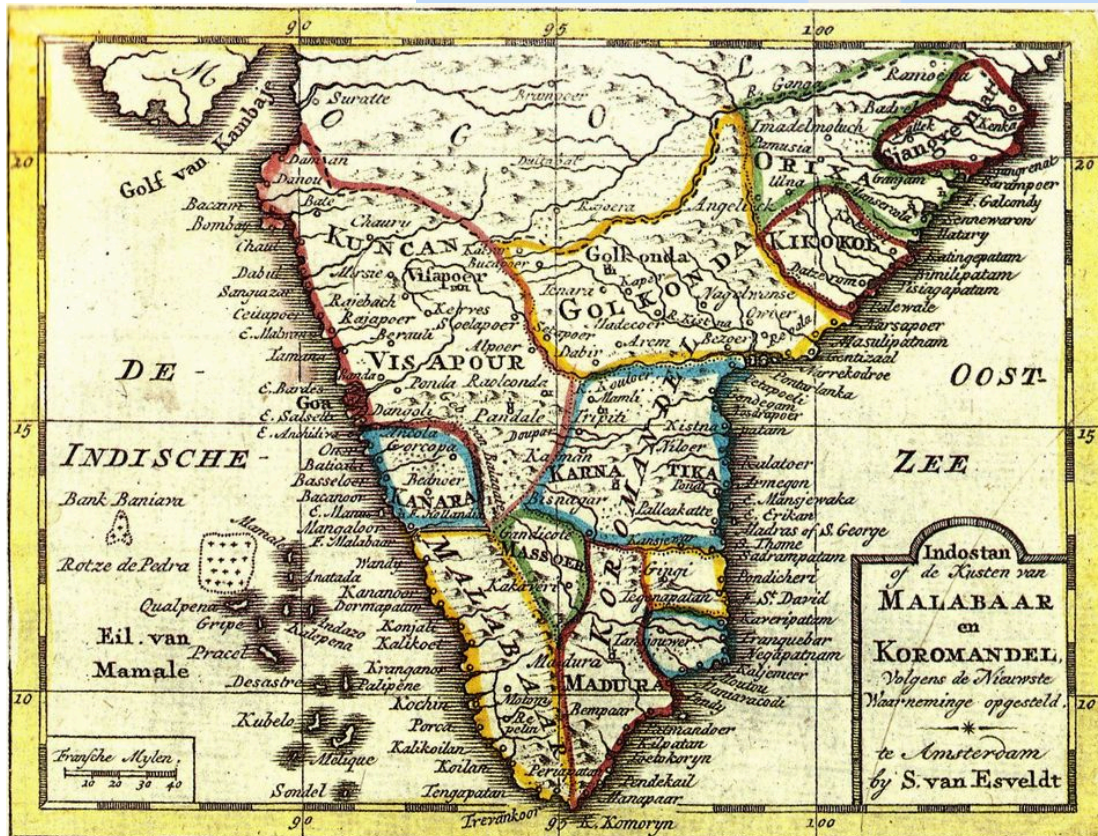
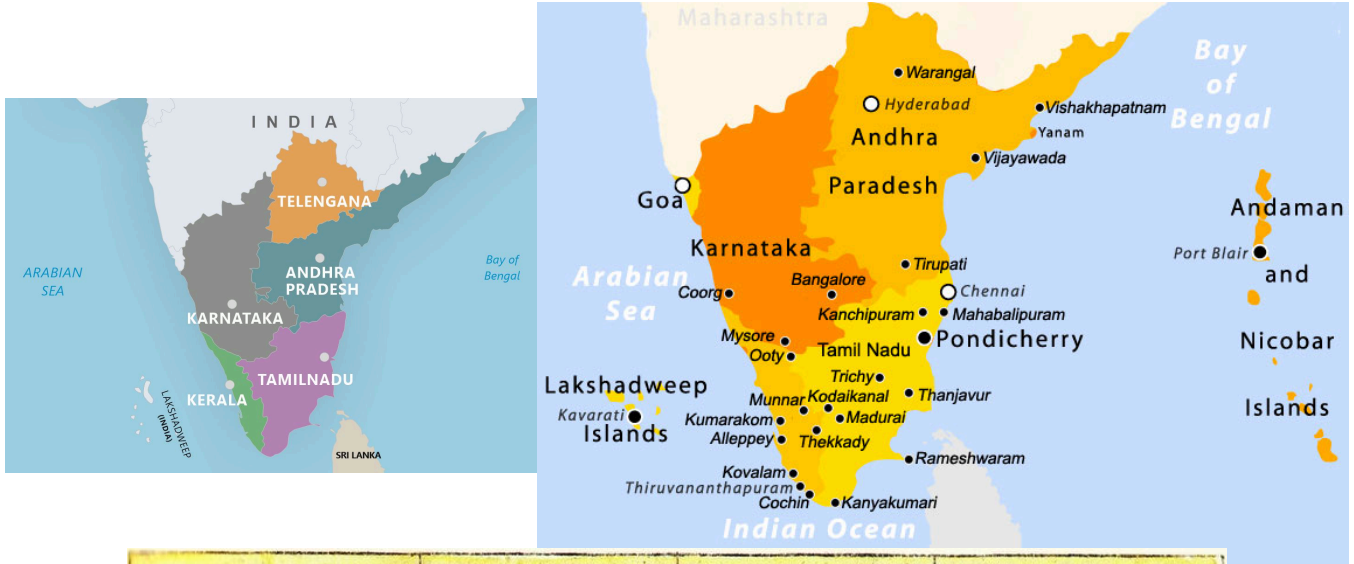


South India Yoga & Ayurveda Retreat

Kanyakumari Excursion | January 15, 2026

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Padmanabhaswamy Palace

The Padmanabhapuram Palace is a stunning 16th-century wooden palace located in Kanyakumari district, Tamil Nadu, though it is traditionally associated with Kerala's Travancore royal family. It's about 65 km from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala's capital. Nestled at the foot of the Velimalai Hills, it's known for its exquisite wooden architecture and historical significance.



Kerala Architectural Style: The palace is a masterpiece of traditional Kerala architecture, featuring intricate woodwork, sloping tiled roofs, and elaborate carvings. It was built primarily from teak and rosewood.



Historical Significance: The palace served as the royal headquarters of the Travancore kingdom until the capital shifted to Thiruvananthapuram in the late 18th century. Maharaja Marthanda Varma, one of the most prominent Travancore rulers, is credited with its expansion.

Durbar Hall: The Durbar Hall is a highlight, with a gleaming black floor made from a unique mix of burnt coconut shells, egg whites, and lime, which gives it a polished marble-like appearance.

Murals and Frescoes: The palace is adorned with ancient murals depicting stories from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and other Hindu scriptures. These artworks are some of the finest examples of Kerala's mural tradition.

Queen Mother's Palace (Thaikkottaram): This part of the palace is particularly famous for its ornately carved wooden ceilings and floral designs.

Clock Tower: The palace houses an ancient mechanical clock installed over 300 years ago, which still works today.

Museum and Artifacts: The palace complex includes a museum showcasing royal artifacts, including ancient weapons, traditional furniture, murals, and ceremonial utensils used by the Travancore kings.

Cultural and Historical Experience: Padmanabhapuram Palace offers a glimpse into the grandeur of Kerala's royal past. It's not just an architectural wonder but also a symbol of the region's artistic and cultural heritage.

Padmanabhapuram Palace Visiting Information

Location: Near Thuckalay, Kanyakumari district, Tamil Nadu (about 65 km from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala). **Timings:** Open daily (except Mondays) from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. **Entry Fee:** Foreigners: ₹200. **Camera Fees:** ₹50 for still cameras, ₹1500 for video cameras.



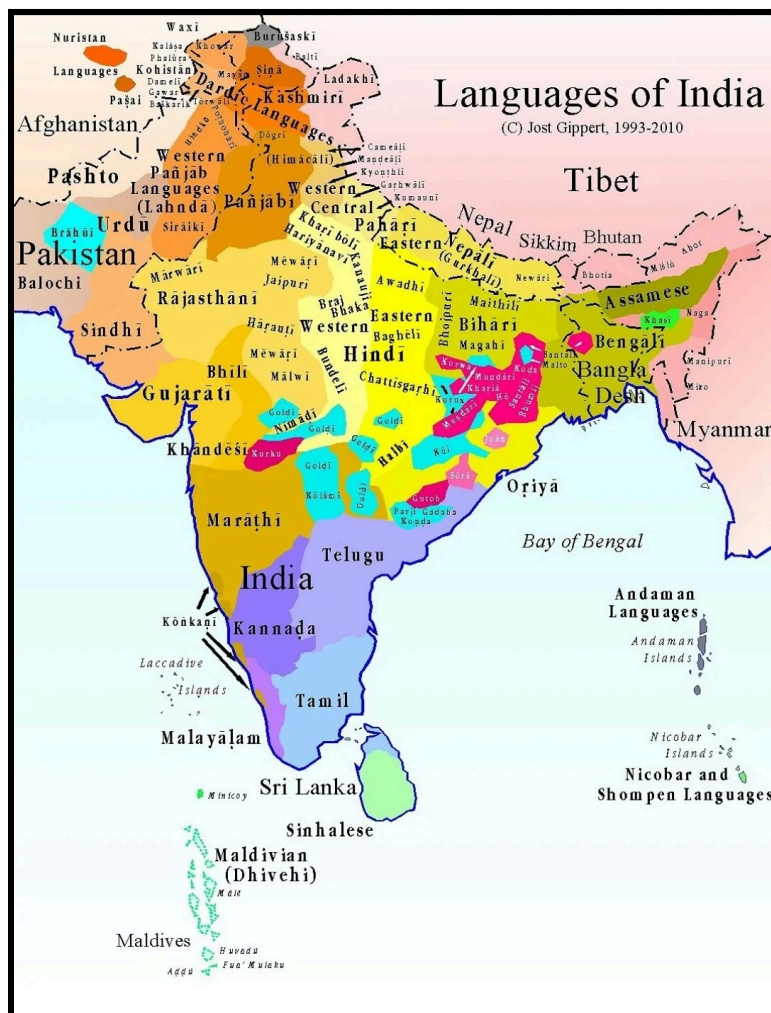
Sri Kumaraswamy Temple

The Velimalai Sri Kumaraswamy Temple, also known as Kumarakoil, is a revered Hindu shrine dedicated to Lord Murugan, situated near Padmanabhapuram in Tamil Nadu, close to the Kerala border, perched on the slopes of the Velimalai hills.

The temple's origins are steeped in legend, particularly the tale of Lord Murugan's marriage to Valli, which is believed to have occurred at this very site. This association has led to the hill being referred to as Velimalai, Manamalai, or Kalyanamala, all names reflecting the divine wedding. murugan.org

Architecturally, the temple faces east and is accessible via a flight of thirty-eight steps. The main deity, Lord Murugan, stands impressively at eight feet and eight inches tall, accompanied by an idol of Goddess Valli measuring six feet and eight inches. The temple complex also houses shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva (Mahadevar), Goddess Parvati (Shivakami Ammai), Kalyana Vinayagar, Sri Dharma Sastha, and Ilaya Naynar. A unique feature of this temple is the presence of a shrine for Daksha, the maternal grandfather of Lord Murugan.

The temple is renowned for its annual festivals, with the Panguni Uthiram festival being particularly significant. During this event, the celestial wedding of Lord Murugan and Goddess Valli is grandly celebrated, attracting numerous devotees. Surrounded by lush greenery, including paddy fields, banana plantations, and coconut groves, with the Velimalai hills as a backdrop, the temple offers a serene and picturesque setting for worshippers and visitors alike.



Devi Kanyakumari Temple

The Kanyakumari Bhagavathy Amman Temple, also known as the Devi Kanyakumari Temple, is a renowned pilgrimage site located at the southernmost tip of mainland India, where the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, and Indian Ocean meet. It is dedicated to Goddess Kanyakumari, a form of Parvati depicted as a young virgin girl who undertook penance to marry Lord Shiva.



History and Significance

Age: The temple is believed to be over 3000 years old and is mentioned in ancient texts like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas. **Deity:** The presiding deity, Goddess Kanyakumari, is depicted with a garland of beads, symbolizing her eternal penance. **Legend:** According to legend, Devi Kanyakumari was set to marry Lord Shiva, but the wedding was interrupted by divine intervention. The rice and grains prepared for the wedding feast were scattered on the beach, turning into stones, which can still be seen today. **Symbol of Purity:** The temple is considered a powerful Shakti Peetha, where Goddess Parvati's back is said to have fallen, making it a significant center for Shakti worship.

Architecture

The temple showcases traditional Dravidian architecture, with intricately carved gopurams (tower gateways) and a sanctum sanctorum facing the east, overlooking the sea. The main idol is made of blue stone and is adorned with a dazzling diamond nose ring, said to be so bright that it has guided sailors safely for centuries.

Key Attractions and Rituals

Special Poojas: Devotees participate in rituals for blessings related to purity, prosperity, and spiritual growth. Special poojas are conducted during Navaratri and Chaitra Purnima.

Vivekananda Rock Memorial: Located just offshore, the memorial is dedicated to Swami Vivekananda, who meditated there in 1892 before delivering his famous speech at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago.

Temple Timings

Morning: 4:30 AM – 12:30 PM | Evening: 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Nearby Attractions

Thiruvalluvar Statue: A towering 133-foot statue of the famous Tamil poet-saint Thiruvalluvar, symbolizing virtue and wisdom.



Gandhi Memorial Mandapam: A memorial dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, where his ashes were kept before immersion in the sea.

Triveni Sangam: The sacred confluence of the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, and Indian Ocean, believed to have spiritual significance.

Vivekananda Rock Memorial

The Vivekananda Rock Memorial is a majestic and spiritually significant monument located on a rocky island off the coast of Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu. It was built to honor Swami Vivekananda, who is believed to have meditated on the rock in December 1892, achieving enlightenment before embarking on his mission to promote Vedanta philosophy in the West. The memorial was inaugurated in 1970 and has since become a major pilgrimage site for spiritual seekers and tourists alike.



Historical and Spiritual Significance

The Rock's Importance: According to local legends, the rock is considered sacred because it is believed to be the spot where Devi Kanyakumari performed austerities. **Swami Vivekananda's Visit:** Swami Vivekananda swam to the rock in 1892 and meditated there for three days. This experience is said to have played a crucial role in shaping his vision of spreading Indian spiritual wisdom globally. **Construction:** The memorial was built in 1970 under the guidance of the Ramakrishna Mission and involved significant efforts from devotees and well-wishers across India. It symbolizes national unity and spiritual awakening.

Architecture and Design

The Vivekananda Rock Memorial is an exquisite blend of modern architecture and traditional Dravidian style, incorporating elements from various Indian temple traditions.

Shripada Mandapam contains a footprint believed to be of Devi Kanyakumari, symbolizing the divine presence on the rock. **Vivekananda Mandapam** houses a life-size statue of Swami Vivekananda in meditation posture. It serves as a meditation hall for visitors seeking peace and inspiration. **Omkar Shape** - the monument is designed in the shape of Om, the sacred sound in Hindu philosophy. **Panoramic Views** - the memorial offers breathtaking views of the Triveni Sangam, where the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, and Indian Ocean merge, and the sunrise and sunset are particularly mesmerizing. **Meditation Hall** - the Dhyana Mandapam (meditation hall) within the memorial is a serene space designed for meditation and quiet contemplation. Visitors often experience a deep sense of peace and connection while sitting here.

Visiting Details

Timings: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM | Entry Fee: ₹30 for adults (additional charges for the ferry ride to the memorial)

How to Reach: The memorial is accessible by a ferry service that operates from the Kanyakumari mainland. The ferry also stops at the nearby Thiruvalluvar Statue.



Thiruvalluvar Statue

The Thiruvalluvar Statue is one of the most iconic landmarks in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu. Standing at an impressive height of 133 feet (40 meters), this monumental statue is dedicated to Thiruvalluvar, the legendary Tamil poet-saint, and philosopher, best known for authoring the Tirukkural, one of the most revered texts in Tamil literature.



Historical and Cultural Significance

Thiruvalluvar's Legacy: Thiruvalluvar lived between 2nd and 4th centuries CE, and his work, Tirukkural, is a timeless guide to ethical living, philosophy, and morality. It consists of 1,330 couplets covering topics like virtue, wealth, and love, and has been translated into numerous languages. **Symbolism:** The statue was constructed to honor his contributions to Tamil literature, culture, and philosophy. It represents the moral and spiritual values that Thiruvalluvar imparted to humanity.

Architecture and Design

Height: The statue stands at a towering height of 133 feet, symbolizing the 133 chapters of the Tirukkural. **Pedestal:** The statue stands on a 38-foot-high pedestal in the form of a lotus flower, representing purity. The pedestal is also inscribed with parts of Thiruvalluvar's work. **Material:** The statue is made of granite and is designed in such a way that it can withstand the harsh coastal climate of Kanyakumari. **Aesthetic Appeal:** The design of the statue follows the traditional Tamil art style, with intricate details, reflecting the cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu.

Location and Views

Situated on the Rock Memorial Island: The statue is located on a small island off the coast of Kanyakumari, making it visible from afar and offering spectacular views of the surrounding seas. **Panoramic Views:** The statue provides a sweeping view of the Triveni Sangam, where the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, and Indian Ocean converge. Visitors can enjoy both the sunrise and sunset from this vantage point.

Visiting the Thiruvalluvar Statue

Ferry Ride: To reach the statue, visitors take a ferry ride from the Kanyakumari mainland, which also stops at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial. **Timings:** The statue and the surrounding area are open to visitors from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM daily. **Entry Fee:** The entry fee to visit the island is ₹20-30, and there may be additional charges for the ferry ride.



