

South India Temple Circuit Itinerary Checklist

A planning checklist for a South India temple circuit across Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, organized by when to book and what to confirm before each temple visit.

WHY A CHECKLIST, NOT JUST AN ITINERARY

Temple visiting has its own logistics — dress codes, entry timing around rituals, and festival calendars that can make or break a visit — that a generic day-by-day itinerary doesn't surface. This checklist is sorted by when to plan for those specifics, not by day of travel.

BEFORE YOU BOOK FLIGHTS

- Pick your route — a classic circuit links temple towns across Tamil Nadu (such as Madurai and Thanjavur) with sites in Karnataka
- Check regional festival calendars — major temple festivals draw huge crowds and change pricing and availability
- Decide if you want a knowledgeable local guide for temple history and ritual context, and look into booking one ahead
- Pick your season — South India stays warm year-round, with the monsoon affecting Tamil Nadu's coast mainly Oct–Dec
- Confirm visa requirements based on your nationality

2-4 WEEKS OUT

- Book hotels in each temple town — options can be more limited than in major cities
- Arrange a driver for the full circuit, since temple towns are often spread out with limited public transit
- Reserve any specialty experiences, like an early-morning ritual viewing, where access may be limited
- Check individual temple rules on photography and non-Hindu visitor access, which vary by site
- Buy any required entry tickets in advance if a site has them

THE WEEK BEFORE DEPARTURE

- Pack modest, temple-appropriate clothing — covered shoulders and knees are expected at most sites
- Confirm your guide and driver bookings directly
- Check each temple's open hours, since many close for a midday period and reopen in the evening
- Save offline maps for temple towns where signage may only be in regional scripts
- Reconfirm any festival-period bookings, which are more likely to shift on short notice

Footwear comes off before entering most temples — pack socks if you'd rather not go fully barefoot on hot stone.

