

Ensemble Experience

COCHIN, INDIA

Ship/Sailing:	Seabourn Spirit	April 12, 2008
Tour Date:	April 20, 2008	
Ship Time in Port:	7:00 am	- 6:00 pm
Tour Name:	<i>The Cultures of Cochin & Backwaters with Lunch</i>	
Full-Day Tour:	Depart: 10:00 am	Return: 3:45 pm

Discover historic old Cochin today. A trading port since Roman times, its seaport lifestyle has changed little over the centuries. See the commercial bustle of the city's "godowns" or warehouses, and the open courtyards heaped with betel nut, ginger and peppercorns as you pass by. Absorb the heady scent of exotic spices permeating the air and the shouts of vendors pushing carts. It is a vision of an earlier time. Drink in similar sights as you head for Fort Cochin.

Constructed by Portugal's Alfonso de Albuquerque, Fort Cochin holds many of the city's historic buildings including the first European church in India, St. Francis Church, and reflects the influence of the Portuguese, Arabs, Dutch and British. Enjoy the short, pleasant walk along green and leafy streets to a typically English village green, marked by the simple Church of St. Francis on one corner. Inside handsome floor tiles line the main aisle and, in a holdover from colonial days, large swinging cloth fans called punkahs that are suspended over the congregation and operated manually from outside the church.

Admire the huge, graceful Chinese fishing nets cantilevered over the harbor around Fort Cochin. Set on bamboo poles and operated by a system of weights and levers the nets are periodically raised to check the catch. Perhaps the single most familiar image of Kerala, they are said to have been introduced to the area by traders from the court of Kublai Khan between 1350 and 1450.

Then it's on to the Mattancherry quarter surrounding the Pardesi Synagogue, a small but lovely structure built in 1568. It is closed to the public on Fridays but enjoy some time exploring the area with its intriguing blend of antique shops, warehouses and spice auction rooms before heading to the Taj Malabar Hotel for lunch. Afterwards experience another aspect of Kochi, as it's now called, on an idyllic journey by small boat through the city's extensive network of rivers, lakes, canals and lagoons. See magnificent scenery, villages, Fort Cochin and Old Cochin as your boat navigates around small islands and past traditional longboats loaded with spices and goods headed for market. This delightful adventure will end at the pier and your ship.

Ensemble *Experience* shore excursions are capacity controlled, subject to change without notice and require a minimum number of participants. All times are approximate. Your Ensemble Traveler host onboard will advise final details.