

PERIYAR TIGER RESERVE

KERALA, INDIA



Area : 778 sq km

Temperature Range : 15 degrees C in winter to 31 degrees C in summer

Best time to visit : October to April



Set high in the ranges of the Western Ghats, in God's Own Country, Kerala, is the Periyar National Park and Tiger Reserve. Periyar wildlife sanctuary has a picturesque lake at the heart of the sanctuary. Formed with the building of a dam in 1895, this reservoir meanders around the contours of the wooded hills, providing a permanent source of water for the local wildlife. Though its a Tiger Reserve, tourists come here to view the Indian elephants in the act of ablution and playfulness by the Periyar lake.

The PERIYAR WILD LIFE SANCTUARY at Thekkady is a preserved stretch of dense, evergreen rainforests that strudels the tiny state of Kerala on the southwestern tip of the Indian peninsula. Sandwiched between the mighty Western Ghat mountain ranges and the shimmering Arabian sea, at over 2800feet above sea level, here's an idyllic retreat that offers an unparalleled opportunity to experience the thrill of close encounters with the wildness.

About a century ago, a British engineer, Col. J. Pennycuick, chalked out a plan to dam the Periyar River, subsequently, a dam was constructed in 1895. Periyar Lake was formed by building of Mullaperiyar Dam. This resulted in the adjoining forests being granted protection, by the Maharaja of Travancore.

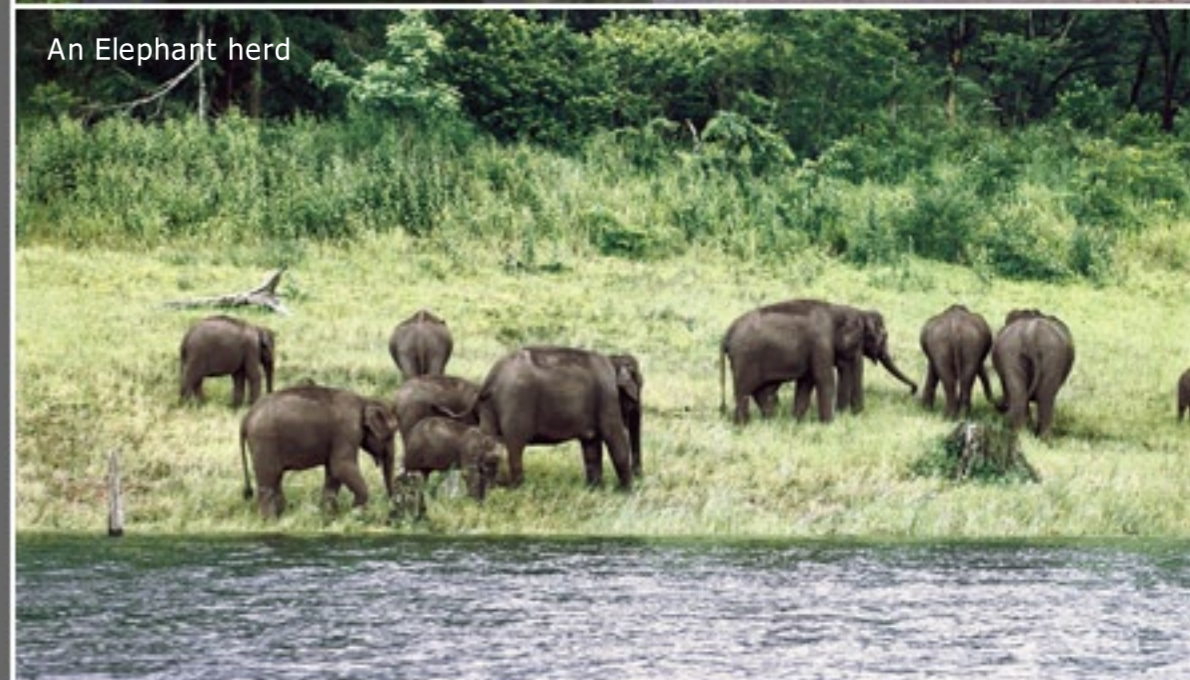
The 55 sq km reservoir and the Periyar River meander around these hills, providing a permanent source of water for the wildlife here. A cruise along the lake is perhaps the best way to watch the wildlife in the Reserve. Exciting trekking trails and other adventure activities like tracking the tiger, jungle patrolling etc. await the tourists at this enchanting Sanctuary.

The scenery around the lake is just amazing. If you are a thrillseeker and a genuine nature lover, you would love to stay here for days and months. Even if you don't cross paths with a tiger, you would still love to enjoy the beauty of nature here.

The terrain is basically hilly, and the only flat areas of the sanctuary are the grasslands, at the edges of the lakes. Impregnable forests and open grasslands make for a sustaining environment, for both the carnivore and herbivore population of the reserve.

Abounding in evergreen flora, trees entwined with pepper vines graciously reaching up towards the sky, a veritable orchestra of birdcalls and animal cries, this exotic resort is ideal nature lover's paradise. A wholly back-to-the-basics experience.

The stimulating aroma of spices, the mating call of a bull-elephant, the unceasing tempo of trilling crickets, the honey-dewed perfection of vivid wild flowers, the noisy frolic of babbling baboons and fairy lights of millions of fireflies lighting up the night.



Today, Periyar is undeniably, one of the most impressive wildlife sanctuaries in the world.

Famous for its pachyderm population, which is around 800 in number, Periyar is probably one of the few places, where one can observe the elephants in their natural surroundings, uninterrupted, and approach to within 20 metres of them, fearlessly. Unlike their African counterparts, Indian female elephants have no tusks. Very few of the all - bulls, too, have tusks, a sad comment on the intense level of poaching in the country.

Wild bulls and various species of deer wander down to the lake-side for water, and can be observed from launches cruising upon the lake. The big cats - tigers and leopards - are more elusive but can be glimpsed in the dry months. Apart from apx. 800 wild elephants, the other animals in the sanctuary are gaur (Indian wild buffalo), wild pigs, sambar deer, barking deer, mouse deer, dhole (Indian wild dog), the lion-tailed macaque, the Nilgiri langur, and an estimated 40 tigers. Monitor lizards, pythons, king cobras, flying lizards, flying squirrels, flying snakes and even flying frogs are the other inhabitants of this amazing sanctuary.

The birdlife comprises of darters, cormorants, kingfishers, great hornbills (the great Malabar hornbill) and racket-tailed drongoes. The reptilian population boasts of monitor lizards, that can be spotted basking in the sun, on the rocks along the lakeshore, especially in the cooler months. Pythons, king cobras, flying lizards, flying squirrels, flying snakes and to top it all, flying frogs are the other inhabitants of this amazing sanctuary.

Boat Cruise

Enjoy the exciting boat cruise on Periyar lake and observe the exotic scenic beauty of the surrounding jungle. The amazing sight of herds of elephants, playing with each other, roaming in groups and bathing in the lake side can truly be an rewarding experience. Apart from the elephants other animals often come to the lake for water.

Elephant Safari

Elephant safari is the best and safest way to explore the remotest and densest areas of the park's forest. If you are more keen in combing denser areas of the forests and search for some fierce creatures, then Elephant Ride is the best option.

Indian Gaur



Great Cormorant



Frog, that looks like a leaf



Trekking adventure



Nature walk



Elephant ride



The elephant moves slowly and steadily, that's why this type of safari is ideal in and around the wild regions, where riding the elephant can give you an easy access for viewing the unknown wildlife. Moreover, an elephant safari tour in the Periyar National Park gets you up, close and personal with these majestic animals.

Nature Walk

Different nature trails traversing diverse habitats, generally 4 to 5 km in length are available for wildlife enthusiasts. This is an interpretive programme offering excellent opportunity to watch birds, butterflies and other wildlife. The trails often pass through evergreen and moist deciduous forests interspersed with marshy grasslands.

The programme is offered between 7.00 am. and 10.30 am. and between 2.00 pm. and 3.00 pm. and lasts for about 3 hours. A maximum of 5 persons can go for trekking at a time along each nature trail, accompanied by a trained tribal guide. The Nature walk is the right programme to experience nature in her full glory, hear her whispers and smell her flowers.

Trekkin Adventure

A three night trek around Periyar takes you through thick tropical rain forests and grasslands and offers opportunities to see elephant, gaur bison, deer, Nilgiri Tahrs and many species of birds and rare butterflies, as well as the rare and endangered Lion Tailed Macaques. A qualified naturalist or specialist guide may accompany you for an additional payment. The trek also gives you an aerial view of the famed Sabari Mala temple, one of the holiest shrines of Hinduism which is visited by millions of devotees in December each year. The first two nights are spent camping and the final night in a forest lodge.

Night Jungle Patrol

This is a patrolling programme in the fringe areas of the forests for the tourists with the protection and guidance of the armed forest guards. This programme is part of the regular night patrolling in the fringe eco-development zones of the tiger reserve. The trekking could be at any time between 7 pm and 4 am and could be taken by persons having proper physical and mental fitness to trek the wilderness at night.