

Special Programmes including sightseeing and visit to places of historic importance and cultural programme will be arranged.

Places in Chennai

Marina Beach



Image Credit : wikimedia

India's largest beach is right around the corner when one is in Chennai. With an extent from Fort St. George to Besant Nagar, the beach is lined with up palm trees. A view when sky and water meet at both the ends is just visible right in front of the eyes when one stands at the shores.

Attractions: An old lighthouse stands on the southern end of Marina along with several other structures like an aquarium, a swimming pool and a park nearby. The sunrise here is a classy example of breathtaking beauty.

Activities: Entertaining activities are lined up when you are taking a stroll on the sands. The food stalls serve delicious seafood at optimum prices. At the same time, pony rides, beach games, and kite flying activities are also present to make your evening relaxing.

Vellankani Shrine



This grand monument stands off the Elliot's Beach and gives a totally different aura to the whole zone. The pristine white structure of the church having tall towers stands overlooking the Bay of Bengal and is visited by thousands of solace-seekers every day.

One can also attend the mass prayer conducted both in Tamil and English. Annai Vailankanni Shrine has a charm unparalleled amongst the surroundings.

Mylapore



Image Credit : RAJVINOTH JOTHINEELAKANDAN - Flickr

The exotic destination with a distinct culture in the neighbourhood of Chennai is Mylapore. Known for tree-lined avenues, Kapaleeswarar temple, and Ramakrishnan Math as famous attractions, the zone has a combination of thousands of temples, churches, and mosques on its land. San Thomas Basilica and Adi Kesava Perumal Temple have their prominence stand tall. Known as the oldest residential area this place is historically known as Vedapuri.

Apart from the Architecture, the major cultural addition here is music sabha and the musicians. In the month of December, many sabhas are organized to revive the age-old culture of playing music in a group. Also, Mylapore food has its own smell and fragrance of its delicious cuisines.

Mahabalipuram



Also known as Mamallapuram, it is one of the best places to visit near Chennai. Mahabalipuram is an ancient place known for rock-cut built-up architecture with extensive carvings that will just awestruck anyone. The iconic Shore Temple, among the oldest temples of South India, is carved out of a large block of granite. A short distance from this place of worship is 'Descent of the Ganges' or 'Arjuna's Penance'. Among the world's biggest bas-reliefs, it depicts the story of the descent of the River Ganges from Heaven to Earth.

'Pancha Rathas' or the five chariots are again carved out of a single rock and are dedicated to the Pandavas along with one dedicated to their wife. Don't forget to notice Krishna's Butterball as this rock is hanging on a sloping floor and won't fall even if anyone wants it to.

Attractions: Explore and observe the fine sculptures of the various monuments standing in Mahabalipuram. The drive from Chennai to Mahabalipuram along the seashore is quite an experience too. The beach at this tourist place near Chennai is also ideal for spending a day just lounging on the sand, relaxing and clicking perfect shots with friends and families. A perfect getaway is right next to Chennai at this royal place.

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Royapuram Fishing Harbour



Image Credit : Kannan Muthuraman - Flickr

This harbour attracts many people to spend some time in leisure while shopping in one of the biggest fish markets. This amazing harbour can accommodate about 575 fishing boats and one can view fishermen catching for their daily needs even bustling in the nights.

The place offers one of the best photographic locations while fishermen throw their nets, pile up the fishes and organize them in local markets. The best thing about this place are the people who shout at the top of their voice trying to be the best bidder.

Elliot's Beach



Though a less crowded beach than Marina, Eliot has its own catch. Now named at Besant Nagar Beach, it attracts people because of the serene beauty and clean brown sands.

Attractions: The Schmidt Memorial is a huge draw of Elliott Beach which was built in remembrance of a Dutch sailor, Karl Schmidt. This white built-up has given an extra tip to the beach for recognition. Apart from that, on the southern side, the famed AshtaLakshmi Temple and Velankanni Church are present, popular among the residents of Chennai.

Tomb of St Thomas



The sparkling vast white structure of San Thome stands on the tomb of St Thomas. This place is definitely an important one in religious terms but doesn't fail to attract travellers from all over Chennai. This monument is one of the best places to visit in Chennai as it reminds us of the colonial past relations that Indians had.

Attractions: A nostalgia will arise within when this church is viewed from inside out. From stained glass panels of the windows, a sitting statue of St Thomas, museum, library, shops that sell candles and flowers are one of the classy additions in the monument. The highest tip embarked with Cross and the sloping red roof is totally catchy when viewed from outside.

Birla Planetarium



Want to be on the moon and stars at an affordable cost? Well, Chennai has Birla Planetarium, situated near Anna University waiting to generate the gist of Science amongst the young minds.

Attractions: The planetarium runs regular audio-visual programs on astronomy that amazes its visitors. Apart from this, it also exhibits programs on Solar System, Cycle of Stars, Sky and Seasons, Comets and Man on the Moon.

Also, Science Park, Traffic Park, and Science on Wheels are the special highlights of the Science Centre which are of special interest for young visitors and hence, it is one of the best things to do in Chennai.

Timings:10 am to 5:45 pm

Entry Fee: INR 40 for adults, INR 25 for children

Location: Gandhi Mandapam Road in Kotturpuram, Chennai

Distance: 12.3 km from Chennai Airport



Thousand Lights Mosque



Since the architecture has a special corner in the heart of Chennai, Thousand Lights Mosque stands tall in this list. The place has got its name because of a special feature i.e. a total of 1000 oil lamps light up the hall of the mosque. Imagine the beauty!!! Also, it is one of the biggest mosques in the country.

Fort St. George



History of India with the British is a fact that can't be changed. And the live example standing in front is Fort St. George. During British rule, it was made as a centre point for official purposes but now encompasses St. George museum with paintings, coins, silverware, arms, porcelain, and documents.

Nettukuppam



An age-old rusty bridge with its head pointing in the sea is what Nettukuppam is all about. The feeling of self-placement in high waves could be felt at this bridge where one can sit with their legs hanging down. The bridge piers are not advised to explore in the morning due to high tides.

For the photography enthusiast, this is like a double treat where one can click some memorable pictures. This is one of the most famous beaches in Chennai which is visited by a huge number of people all around the year.

Guindy National Park and Snake Park



The city life has a special edition of a variety of species and is the only national park situated in the middle of a city. Guindy has many birds, animals, and reptiles as its residents. The visitors can treat their eyes with the presence of blackbucks, spotted deer, jackals, tortoise etc.

Attractions: The snake park is home to cobras and pythons, while the birds found here include partridge, quail, flycatcher, and buzzards. This place is surely one of the best places to visit in Chennai that make anyone forget the regular city life.

Timings: 9 am to 5:30 pm

Entry Fee: INR 20 for adults, INR 5 for children

Location: Rangeguindy, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 60002

Distance: 12 km from Chennai Airport

Check Out: 25 Popular Team Outing Places in Chennai [1]

Kapaleeshwar Temple



The unique architectural style, in-depth detail of gopuram and temple head and the magnificent height of around 37 meters are what makes this temple best place to visit in Chennai. The Dravidian style of temple construction is most famous in cities of South India and Kapaleeshwar temple is a live example of the same.

Attractions: The temple is home of deities Shiva and Karpagambal, holds a festival in the months of March and April while attracting thousands of devotees in its premises. Asl, a huge tank filled with water is another catchy place having a religious value as well as was used as a store of water in historical times.

Madras War Memorial



Image Credit : chennai tourism

One of the most famous places in Chennai, the war memorial is a tribute to the martyrs during the Second World War. It is a beautiful structure carved out of white marble with inscriptions detailing the names of people who gave up their lives.

Activities: Take a walk in this surreal place and its well-maintained gardens. See the Stone of Remembrance and Cross-of the Sacrifice. Visit on days like Army Day and Vijay Diwas to see special homages paid by the forces.

Parthasarathy Temple



Dedicated to Lord Vishnu and his various avatars, this 100-year-old temple gets devotees from all over the country.

It is one of the special attractions in Chennai because it is one of the 108 Divya Desams existing in the country. The architecture is beautiful and has Dravidian influences.

Activities: See the beautiful idols of Rukmini, Balaram, Satyaki, Prathymnan, and Anirudhan along with those of Parthasarathy. See the 8th-century Dantivarma Pallava inscriptions.

Valluvar Kottam



Chennai's love for literature & culture is evident in this monument dedicated to the great Tamil saint, philosopher, and writer Tiruvalluvar. This monument, created by 3000 stone blocks, is in the shape of a chariot. The auditorium inside is considered to be the largest in Asia and is one of the most interesting places to visit in Chennai.

Activities: See the 133 chapters of Tiruvalluvar's work Thirukkural inscribed in the monument. See exhibitions on handicrafts held regularly. Don't miss to see the plants planted by Mother Teresa in 1984.

Connemara Public Library



Libraries are definitely storehouse of books but Connemara library has its unique style of placement of books and flanked broad arches which makes it stands apart from others. Constructed in the late The 19th century, Connemara library is a treasure house of centuries-old publications.

Attraction: With a collection of over 600,000 books, it is one of Asia's largest libraries. Be it avid readers or scholars doing research work, one could easily get lost in this enchanting world of books as they immerse themselves in their favourite activity.

Vadapalani Murugan Temple



This 125-year-old Hindu Temple is one of the most important worship places in Chennai. Dedicated to Lord Murugan, the architecture of the temple is traditional South Indian with lots of colours and carvings. The Murugan idol is shown to be wearing footwear, which is not a common sight.

Activities: Visit the samadhis of Annasamy Thambiran and Bagyalinga Thambiran inside the temple. See the legends of Skanda Purana at the Gopuram located at the entrance.

Breezy Beach



Lying in the quiet suburbs of Valmiki Nagar, this charming beach provides the perfect seaside escape away from the other busier beaches. This is one of the cleanest beaches in Chennai and is great for a family day out.

Covelong Beach



The Coromandel coast in the proximity of Chennai is blessed to have Covelong Beach on its laps that shines brightly under the sun and stars due to plenty of activities it offers to its travellers. Known for its serene beauty of the surroundings, this beach was once a major port for the ships on the voyage.

Covelong Beach has been a rising star in terms of providing activities like watersports with windsurfing and swimming as the highest chosen option. In fact, people opt for Beach camping with the bonfire in the sands here. At the same time, this place is most popular for fishing and this activity has been going from generations while attracting thousands every day.

Attractions: Apart from providing pristine natural beauty studded with a line of palm trees, the beach has a closeness to ancient monuments like forts, churches and mosques and of course, the ancient town of Mahabalipuram as one definitely comes across this Covelong or Kovalam beach while on the way to Mahabalipuram. Also, the crocodile farm is also a major attraction to the people here.

Golden Beach



This pristine beach is famous for the vast expanses of golden sands framed by the striking blue waters. It is a private beach belonging to the VGP Universal Kingdom and one of the cleanest in Chennai. It is one of the best places in Chennai to keep the whole family engaged with its attractions.

Activities: Visit the VGP Amusement Park's Universal Kingdom, Aqua Kingdom, and the Snow Kingdom for exciting rides & games. Visit the VGP 2000 Millennium Tower and Statue Man. There are facilities for surfing here.

Akkarai Beach



An enthralling seafront in Chennai, Akkarai Beach is famous for its luxuriant greenery and serene expanses. The beach is less crowded therefore very clean and tranquil.

Activities: Take a long walk on the beach enveloped in the cool sea breeze and soothing sounds of the water. Children can spend time in the play area. Visit the beach house for a family getaway.

Distance: 23 kilometres from Chennai Airport.

Location: Injambakkam, Chennai.

Timings: Accessible throughout the day.

Entry Fee: There is no entry fee.

Historical Tourist Places in Chennai

Prakasam Salai



One of the most iconic places to visit in Chennai is this magnificent structure which was built in 1795. It is an archaeologically important site and a major tourist attraction. This huge redbrick structure and its impressive Roman-style architecture can be seen from a distance

Ripon Building



Amongst the most famous tourist places in Chennai, Ripon building is a behemoth government building.

The beauty of Ripon building, built-in 1913, lies in its stark white colour and Roman-style architecture. It is named after Lord Ripon, the Governor-General of British India.

Madras High Court



When in Chennai, one can't miss an opportunity to visit Madras High Court. Madras High court is one of the highest courts in India. The court exercise original jurisdiction over the whole city. While you are at the court, get amazed by the majestic architecture of the building.

The red built-up under the blue sky is very catchy. And decorated ceilings in the interior with the stained glasses are in itself a masterpiece here. The tallest tower in the center of the building gives a gist of Dravidian Architecture which was used in ancient temples of South India.

Vivekanandar House



Image Credit : Srinivasan G - Flickr

A place to get inspired and relish a totally the new knowledgeable experience will bring any individual to Vivekananda House where they can get a good tour of Swami Vivekananda's life.

His utmost significant teachings can be received by visiting the gallery, meditation room, and Vivekananda Park. This historic place houses a permanent exhibition on Indian Culture and Swami Vivekananda's life and will give a positive vibe when one is on its tour.

This place is one of the best places to visit in Chennai as Swami Vivekananda spent a few days at this place after his return from West.

Besant



Located on the East Coast of Bay of Bengal and bounded by Thiruvannamiyur to the South lies this amazing place Besant. On vacation or a day out, this option can be kept high on the list because of attractions like Elliot's beach in the basket.

For those, who love to visit religious places, this is a double treat as they can visit the Annai Velankanni Church and the Ashtalakshmi Temple along the shore which is very famous among the people of Chennai. Named after the famous personality Annie Besant this place is best known for its serene and tranquil setting which attracts visitors from all over the world.

Timings: Always Open

Entry Fee: No entry fee

Sri Parthasarathy Temple



Image Credit : Aj Photography - Flickr

The temple is an old sculpture dedicated to Lord Krishna and is placed comfortably in the city of Chennai. Known for its historic presence, Sri Parthasarathy temple has its own charm with gopuram rising high and studded with carved sculptures in beautiful and bright colours topped with 'amalkas'.

Attraction: The temple is easily noticeable from distance and hence attracts hundreds of devotees and tourists at the same time.

Location: Narayana Krishnaraja Puram, Triplicane, Chennai

Timings: 4 am to 11:30 pm

Entry Fee: None

Distance: 20 km from Chennai Airport



Places to Visit in Chennai with Family & Kids

Arignar Anna Zoological Park



A little away from the city centre, Arignar The zoological park is home to more than 500 species of wild beings were some of which are endangered.

An aviary, lion safari, deer safari, and an elephant safari form the most popular sections of the zoo. Apart from this, a separate section for nocturnal animals could be reached too. An aquarium, butterfly house, reptile house, amphibian house, crocodile enclosure are part of the premises which makes it one of the best places to visit in Chennai.

Semmozhi Poonga



Semmozhi Poonga Park is a botanical garden in the Chennai city covering an area of over 20 acres. With family and friends, this place can be visited to explore the exotic and rare flora and fauna. Not just this, medicinal herbs are also found here and we know, how much they matter to all of us. Visitors can relax on the park grounds that are subdivided into the rock garden, butterfly garden, fern garden, sunken garden and many more themed gardens on its laps. The sights of natural beauty with ducks swimming in ponds, dancing lights, and well-maintained tree lines energize anyone with fresh air and breath of flowers.

Location: Cathedral Rd, Ellaiamman Colony, Teynampet, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Timings: 10 am to 8 pm (except Tuesday)

Entry Fee: INR 15 for Adults, INR 10 for Children(Below 10 yrs)

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Express Avenue



One of the top shopping destinations in Chennai, Express Avenue features some of the best brands in apparel, footwear, electronics, automobiles, and departmental stores.

Explore the huge range of fine dining options like Elixir- the Lounge Bar, Kapila Dosa, Orange Wok, etc. Catch a movie at Escape and Pix 5D Cinema. Explore the Fun City gaming zone.

Marundeeshwar Temple



One of the most revered places in Chennai, this temple dates back to the times of the 11th century Chola kings. It is dedicated to Lord Marundeeshwar and his knowledge of medicinal properties of herbs. Locals have a belief that the prasadam here comprising of ash and milk can cure any disease. There is a shivalinga inside along with statutes of Lord Muruga & Vinayaka.

Spend tranquil time amidst the beautiful architecture with Dravidian & Chola influences and the 36 intricately carved pillars. Visit during Shivratri, Ganesh Chaturthi, and Panguni Brahmotsavam.

VGP Universal Kingdom

This award-winning amusement and theme park is one of the first ones in Chennai. Some consider this massive 45-acre park with a private beach to be the largest amusement park in India. Loved by children and adults alike, the park is one of the most interesting places to visit in Chennai.

Get up and close with goats, ponies, and sheep at Petting Zoo. Interact with the Statue Man dressed in the traditional Chola empire dress. Try thrilling rides like Tornado, Viking, and Wave Swinger.

crocodile Bank



Started as a research station and conservation centre, the bank is first in Asia for crocodile breeding. The Crocodile Bank even houses alligators, gharials, muggers, snakes, sea turtles and water birds in its premises.

In all, there are around 2500 creatures within the boundaries of the Bank and one can spot crocs as well as gharials basking themselves on the edge of the water body during the day. There is also a souvenir shop where one can purchase books and memorabilia related to these reptiles including the famous research and awards.

Chennai Sangamam



Immerse yourself in folk storytelling, theatre, dance, films, and reverberating sounds of traditional musical instruments at this week-long open festival. One of the most popular symbols of Tamil art & culture, the festival welcomes everybody to enjoy the performances.

Enjoy regional cuisines at the festival. Meet renowned artists, craftsmen, and even traditional botanists. See rare and ancient visual art forms, and performances.

Dakshina Chitra



Also known by the term 'Living-history museum', the museum is built in order to explain the historical aspects of Tamil culture to the present generation. Built in an area of 10 acres, DakshinaChitra is a small village has been recreated using replicas of traditional South Indian houses dating back to the 19th and 20th centuries.

The exhibition has a plethora of living beliefs of art, folk performing arts, craft, and architecture of India and in particular of South Indian traditions. From a typical Tamil house to basic utensils, a fisherman's life to various fabrics is all depicted in the museum. Regular events of classical dances and musical concerts also take place to attract the tourists.

MGM Dizzee World



Image Credit : wikimedia

Dizzee World is an amusement located in the city with a themed style to attract its visitors, from young to old.

With several thrilling rides like spider spin, roller coaster, the funny mountain, the place also has an amphitheatre for performances. The water park in the premises has a wave pool apart from many other rides and slides and magnetizes hundreds every day.

Ashtalaxmi Temple



Lying on the gorgeous expanse of the Besant Beach, this is the only temple dedicated to Goddess Mahalakshmi on Tamil Nadu's east coast. You can see the idols of Dashavatara, Ganesha, and Guruvayoorappan. The magnificence of the architecture lies in its 'OM' shaped design, making it one of the most enchanting places to visit in Chennai.

Visit during festivals like Navaratri, Diwali, and Pongal to see the temple in its full splendour. Don't miss to attend the evening puja, a beautifully serene experience accentuated by the enveloping cool sea breeze.

Cholamandal Artist Village



Image Credit : wikimedia

This artists' commune is a platform for the resident painters and sculptors to showcase their creations to the visiting guests. This place is actually famous for bringing modernity in the artistic creation.

The well-decorated interiors are embarked with interesting art and craft with two galleries, an open-air theatre, a bookstore and a craft shop in the premises. For people interested in aesthetics, they can enjoy the work of artists in a serene ambience surrounded by optimum vegetation around the village.

Kolli Hills



One of the most interesting pilgrimages and religious places in Chennai is Kolli Hills or the 'Mountain of Death'. Standing tall at 4265 ft. this picturesque mountain range, located in the Eastern Ghats, offers the perfect weekend escape.

Attractions: Amazing scenes alongside road make it an amazing place for drives

Activities: See the magnificent 1st-century Arapaleeswarar Lord Shiva Temple. Visit the Tampacol Medicinal Farm to see the beautiful expanses of planted medicinal herbs. See the Agaya Gangai Waterfalls, boat ride at Vasalorpatty Boat House and visit the centuries-old Siddhar Caves.

Distance: 335 kilometres from Chennai Airport.

Location: Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu.

Best Time to Visit: Throughout the year.

Muttukadu



Muttukadu is one of the tourist places near Chennai at the backwater of Bay of Bengal. This place offers a relaxing aura in nature with fun-filled activities for its visitors.

The Boathouse in Muttukadu is where all the action is. Apart from this, the beach at Muttukadu draws a sizeable crowd during trips to this area. Get a glimpse of various species of birds at the backwaters during migratory season.

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Activities: Rowing, water skiing, speed boat riding, windsurfing and paddle boating are exciting activities that can be availed at Muttukadu. Also, birdwatching is one of the passionate activity for the bird lovers here.

Sadras



The coastal town of Sadras was once a Dutch fortress which was taken over by the British in later years. It is currently in ruins but a few structures within can still be viewed.

Attractions: The glorious Sadras Fort was constructed by the Dutch as a post for exporting goods. It has a vast compound which contains a large granary, stables, and structures used to mount elephants. Picturesque tombs, cannons and carved pieces of stones could be viewed here. A history buff would love to be a part of this place.

Activities: A picnic with family or friends could cheer anyone up after the fort tour.

Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, Kanchipuram



This bird sanctuary is inundated with thousands of birds of varied species during the migratory season. The lake within the sanctuary is the all-important source of water for these creatures, around which they build their nests and thrive.

Attractions: Birds of diverse origins are what you can see at this place to visit near Chennai. While some birds like cormorants, egrets, moorhens, and terns are found at other places in India, others like snake bird, ibis, stork, heron, and spoonbill come all the way from Europe to make Vedanthangal their home for a few months.

Activities: Bird watching and capturing the experience with your cameras is the major activity to be carried on here.

Tiruttani



This small town is known for the temple dedicated to Murugan that stands on top of a hillock here. One can reach the temple by climbing up the 365 steps that take you to it. A few religious festivals are celebrated here during which many devotees visit the temple.

Attractions: This pilgrimage center has a number of temples located here apart from the famous Murugan temple. Some of them are Shivan temple, Bajan Kovil, Vinayagar Kovil, and Eswaran temple.

Activities: A trek to the temple hill to boost your energy high.

Distance: 90 km

Location: West of Chennai

Best time to visit: October to March



Pulicat Lake & Bird Sanctuary



Formed at the backwaters of the Bay of Bengal, Pulicat is the second largest lagoon in India that has brackish water. And the bird sanctuary stands on a piece of land in the middle of this lake.

Attractions: The spectacular sight of thousands of pink Flamingos flocked together can be viewed only at this place. Besides, you can also spot pelicans, herons, kingfishers, storks and many more at the sanctuary. There are quite a few fishing villages on the lake's edge which one can visit if interested.

Activities: Boating in the lake where one can see birds splashing in the water. Photography by the birdwatchers can be done here and is a treat to the eyes of professionals.

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[1] <https://www.thrillophilia.com/team-outing-places-in-chennai>