

There are many fascinating tourist attractions in Chennai. Chennai offers some beautiful beach resorts. Marina Beach is the pride of Chennai. Visit the historical Fort St. George and travel back into time. Chennai also has many spiritual centers, Temples and Churches. The Parthasarthy Temple and Kapaleeshwar Temple were constructed in the 13th century are the example of the Dravidians architectural skills.

Santhome Cathedral was built over the tomb of apostle St. Thomas and has become an important pilgrimage centre. The Snake Park situated in the Guindy National Park in the Raj Bhavan Estate has a large collection of snakes and many other reptiles. Chennai is also the fountainhead of the Theosophical Movement with the headquarters in Adyar founded by Madam Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott in 1882.

Excursions from Chennai will give tourists a variegated experience of this enchanting land of Tamil Nadu. The best place to start a temple tour is Mamallapuram and from there to Kanchipuram, Chidambaram, Kanchipuram, Thanjavur (also famous as the birth-place of Bharatnatyam danceform), Tiruchirapalli and Rameshwaram.

### **Places to See in Chennai**

Government Museum [1]

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[1] **Category :** History & Culture

Established in 1851, Government Museum of Chennai is popular as the Madras Museum. Factually being the second oldest museum of India (after Kolkata's Indian Museum), this museum is a treasure in itself! As a rich repository of finest masterpieces of art, archaeology, anthropology, numismatics and much more, the Madras Museum assures to lure one and all. More... [1]

### Vivekananda House [2]

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[2] **Category :** History & Culture

The year 2013-14 marks the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, the saint who introduced the Indian Philosophies to the Western World. To honor the contribution of Vivekananda towards the Indian society, let me talk about a place which is very closely related to him. Vivekananda house or Vivekananda Illam is a museum in Chennai which is looked upon as an important landmark by the followers of Swami Vivekananda. It is treated as a place of pilgrimage as this is where Swami Vivekananda stayed after returning from his visit to the west in 1897. More... [2]

### Victory War Memorial [3]



[3] **Category :** History & Culture

Chennai or Madras (as most of us call it), is considered as the gateway to south India. Iconic Marina Beach, which is counted among the longest beaches in the world, is a part of the city. Victory War Memorial or the Cupid's Bow in Chennai is one of the two war memorials located here, Madras War Cemetery being the other one. The memorial is situated at the beginning of Marina Beach, near Fort St. George. More... [3]

#### Kattubava Mosque [4]

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[4] **Category :** Religious

Finding a mosque at a place which is best known for housing the maximum number of Hindu temples in the country is a rare possibility. But, since every possibility is an opportunity to discover the unknown, I happened to come across a very old Mosque in a state of temples. Almost 500 years old in its construction, the Kattubava Mosque or Kattubava Pallivasal is a popular mosque in the state of Tamil Nadu. Located on the Padukkottai-Madurai Highways, it is among the notable Islamic Pilgrim Centres in India. More... [4]

## The Big Mosque [5]

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### **Category :** Religious

The Big Mosque Chennai is located in the Janbazar area of Triplicane in Chennai, along Wallajah Road. It is one of the most beautiful mosques in this capital city. The mosque is located a short distance away from the Queiad-e-Milleth High Road. More... [5]

## kandaswamy Temple [6]

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### **Category :** Religious

The Kandaswamy Temple of Chennai is in Cheyyur, 29 kilometers from Madurantakam. You can reach the temple from Chennai either by bus, rail or road. The nearest railway station to Cheyyur is the Chenglepattu. Taxis are available from there. Private cabs and frequent buses can be availed from Madurantakam. More... [6]

## Kapaleeswarar Temple [6]

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### **Category :** Religious

The Kapaleeswarar Temple of Chennai is a very old and revered temple of Mylapore in Chennai. The 'gopuram' (tower) of this edifice is peculiar to all representative specimens of Dravidian architecture. Consecrated to Lord Shiva, this temple contains some beautiful sculptures, among which the bronze idols of 63 Saivite Saints (Nayanmars) decorating the outer courtyard are rare examples. More... [6]

## Dash-N-Splash [7]

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### **Category :** Fun & Entertainment

Dash-n-Splash in Chennai is an amusement park located about 30 kilometers away from the city of Chennai, in Tamil Nadu. The park is on the national highway number 4, which leads to Bangalore. The amusement park is based at Mevallur Kuppam Village in Chennai. The administrative office of the park is situated in the city itself, at Tambu Chetty Street. More... [7]

## Covelong Beach [8]

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The enchanting Covelong Beach of Chennai is located at a distance of 40 kilometers from Chennai. Covelong Beach is one of the most popular beaches in Chennai marked for its serene beauty and various other beach activities. Covelong Beach of Chennai was built by the Nawab of Carnatic. Covelong Beach in Chennai was once the hub of the French in India. More... [8]

## Arignar Anna Zoological Park [9]

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Arignar Anna Zoological Park of Chennai was first established in 1855. But it was shifted to the southern metropolitan area called Vandalur reserved forests in the year 1979. The Arignar Anna Zoological Park in Chennai was officially opened to public in 1985. The Chennai Arignar Anna Zoological Park covers 510 hectares of land and is one of the biggest in south-east Asia. More... [9]

### St. Thomas Mount

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Historically speaking, the commencement of Christianity in India is credited to St Thomas. Saint Thomas spread the 'Good Word' among the South Indians. However, some critical circumstances led him to take refuge in the fabled Little Mount. Later, while he was on his way to Little Mount, about 3 km away, he was martyred and that place is still remember for him and aptly called St. Thomas Mount. It is located in Parangimalai and happens to be one of the most attractive spots for tourists as well as for religious devotees in Chennai. People on a holy pilgrimage to India include the other churches along with St Thomas Mount on their itinerary. The oil paintings found here are also worth a look, especially the one that St. Thomas brought with him and was drawn by his fellow apostle Luke. The church was reconstructed in the 16th century.

### MGM Dizzee World

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The MGM Dizzee world is strategically located on the East Coast Road. Opened from 10 am to 6:30 pm, it is bustling with people throughout the week. With 35 acre area coverage that comes with a beach, a resort, amusement park, truly makes for a great trip. It is a children-friendly amusement park with an entire section dedicated to kids. The rides include Giant Wheel, Parachute Tower, Kamikaze Ranger, Roller coaster, Rocking Boat, among others. Revolution and Venture rides are hot favourites among teens. If you want to have a good time as well as spend some valuable moments with your family, MGM Dizzee World is the place to be. There are more than 60 rides and about 1,500 people visiting the place weekly. This pushes the overall annual footfall count crosses the 5 million mark.

Address: 1/74, East Coast Road, Muttukadu, Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 603112

Entry fee: Rs 300 (adults), Rs 230 (kids under 12 years)

### Ayyappan temple [10]

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The Ayyappan temple in Anna Nagar was constructed when a group of people living together decided to build a temple to worship the God they were devoted to. This temple started out as a simple and humble establishment but later on proceeded to become something enormous which is now a well-known landmark in Chennai. It has the Panchaloka idol of Ayyappan and also of other deities such as Ganesha, Anjaneyar, Durga and Muruga. More... [10]

VGP Universal Kingdom [11]

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VGP Universal Kingdom, commonly known as VGP, is located on the East Coast Road. It is open from 10:00 am in the morning to 6:30 pm in the evening during weekdays and till 7:30 pm during weekends. This pioneer among amusement parks in Chennai is known for its safety. The place is both affordable as well as holds much promise for fun and entertainment. The Giant Wheel and Rain Dance are its key attractions. The big 'Family Dosa' available at the cafeteria is in itself a major attraction. It also has a beach in close proximity. Rides for kids available here are the best ones available in the city.

Address: State Highway 49, Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 600041

Entry fee: Rs 225 (adults), Rs 175 (kids) More... [11]

St. George's Fort

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This masterpiece by the British speaks volumes about the Neo-Classical construction style the British had adopted earlier. It is open on all days except on Friday. It can be visited from 9:00 am in the morning to 4.30 pm. The entrance ticket costs a meagre Rs. 5 for Indians and \$2 for foreigners. Photography is strictly prohibited in this fort. It has managed to retain its beauty over the years, thanks to the excellent maintenance efforts by the Government. It serves as a library of information, particularly about matters related to the colonial rule in India and ancient Chennai.

Mahalingapuram Sree Ayyappa Temple

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Mahalingapuram Sree Ayyappa Temple is located in the busy Nungambakkam area of Chennai. This temple opens early in the morning for customary rituals and remain open to devotees till 9:00 pm. There are many people who come here hoping to cherish a calm state of mind. The magazine published by this temple is called Pushpabhishekam. This magazine propagates a vast array of well-being and tips related to spirituality, health, education, family, society and more. This temple is beautifully decorated with lamps and flowers on all major festive occasions. Devotees bring turmeric, vermilion, flowers and coconut to offer to the Gods.

## Velankanni Church

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The Annai Velankanni Church is located in Besant Nagar and remains open throughout the week. There are masses in English, Tamil and Malayalam every day. Annual functions and festivals including Christmas and Ascension Day are celebrated with great joy and feasts. Velankanni Church is among the most revered pilgrimage destination visited by people from all around the world. The church also has a museum that displays valuables crafted out of gold, silver and the like that have been offered by the devotees.

Location: Elliots Beach, Odaimanagar, Besant Nagar, Chennai

Timings: 5.00 am to 9.00 pm.

## Marina beach

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Marina Beach is the longest urban beach in India and second longest in the world running along the Bay of Bengal. The beach stretches over 13 km and is a major attraction of Chennai. Though bathing and swimming are strictly prohibited at the beach, but it has a lot more to lure its visitors. It offers best scenic views of sunset and sunrise and is famous for its shops and food stalls where you can relish best of delicacies. A stroll or a pony ride along the beach is simply mesmerising.

## Golden Beach

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Located at the East Coast Road, the VGP Golden Beach borders the Bay of Bengal and it takes about half an hour to go from Marina Beach to the Golden Beach. It is a resort that has a amusement park offering rides like go-karting, water chute, roller coaster, among many others. There are also cultural shows being organised by the resort.

## Parthasarathy temple <sup>[12]</sup>

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The Parthasarathy Temple, also known as Arulmigu Parthasarathyswamy, is a Vaishnavite temple dedicated to Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna is in the form of 'parthasarathy', the charioteer for Arjuna in the Mahabharata war. The temple is most widely renowned as one of the 108 sacred places where Lord Vishnu is worshipped. The temple is said to be unique as it has four different incarnations or forms of Lord Vishnu, namely, Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Lord Narasimha and Lord Varaha. More... <sup>[12]</sup>

## Vadapalani Temple <sup>[13]</sup>

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The Vadapalani temple, also called as "Arulmigu Vadapalani Andavar Thirukoil", is a temple dedicated to Lord Muruga and is known for its powers in blessing those who pray to him. This temple was built during the 17th century and has gained popularity as the years have passed. This temple also houses

other gods besides the main deity, Palani Andavar, and hence is a place where one can worship many gods under a single roof. The other gods present here include Lord Shiva, Lord Ganesha, Goddess Paravathi and Lord Hanuman. Anjaneyar / Hanuman's image is inscribed on a pillar and the devotees offer him butter as a gift in order to get their wishes fulfilled. The temple is known for its significance in the film industry as it has featured in a number of films and the location around the temple is home to many famous celebrities as well. More... [13]

## **Tourist Destinations Near Chennai**

### Sriperumbudur

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Among the favorite weekend getaways from Chennai is Sriperumbudur. Situated at a distance of 40 kms from the city Sriperumbudur is located in the Kancheepuram District of Tamil Nadu. Although the city is an industrialized area it still is home to numerous gardens and parks that are refreshment from the fast paced city life.

### Yelagiri Hills

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Yelagiri Hills is one of the most frequented nearby gateways from Chennai. Yelagiri is a 3-4 hours drive from Chennai. A hill station engulfed in tranquillity Yelagiri is actually a cluster of small villages, spread around hills. Untouched by the evils of pollution and globalization Yelagiri Hills is home to several green valleys, orchards and rose-gardens set amidst the serenity of Mother Nature. Some of the famous sightseeing options in Yelagiri include Velvan Temple, Punganoor Lake, Swamimalai Hills and the Jalagamparai Waterfalls.

### Tirupati

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If you want to club your vacation along with a pilgrimage then Tirupati is the ultimate destination. Tirupati is located in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh and is situated at a distance of 152 kms from Chennai. Tirupati is regarded as one of the eight most important places of worship of the Hindu's. Tirupati houses a 2m high standing idol of Lord Vishnu on a lotus flanked by his partners Bhudevi and Sride. This statue is said to grant any wish made in front of it. A masterpiece of south Indian architecture Tirupati is believed to shelter a host of other temples as well.

### Sadras

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Another popular tourist spot near Chennai is the beautiful little city of Sadras. Situated along the Coromandel Coast, Sadras lies at a distance of 69 kms from Chennai. Steeped in history this fort city was declared a Dutch Colony in the 17th century. Sadras offers a number of sightseeing options. Apart from its various forts and naval battlefields the city boasts of some of the most beautiful moments of the bygone eras of the country.

## Mahabalipuram

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An ancient port city lying on the Coromandel Coast of Tamil Nadu, Mahabalipuram is located at a distance of 60 kms from Chennai. This city is among the popular nearby gateways of Chennai. Having a strong historical backdrop, Mahabalipuram is home to some of the rarest historical monuments that were built during the Pallava Dynasty. Most of the temples are in the form of rock cut caves. One of the city's prime attractions is its beautiful and unspoilt beaches which offer a host of activities like fishing and boating.

Source: mapsofIndia

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