

## About Chennai

**Marina Beach (9.2 kms from CEG)** is a 13-km-long urban beach along the Bay of Bengal that runs from Fort St. George in the north up to Foreshore Estate in the south. It is India's longest beach and one of the world's longest beaches and attracts around 50,000 visitors during weekends. Attractions at the Marina include the Chennai Lighthouse, MGR Memorial, Anna Memorial and Jayalalitha Memorial. The Marina's 6 km promenade includes statues of several historical figures including Mahatma Gandhi, Annie Besant, Robert Caldwell, Thiruvalluvar, Bharathiyar and Kamrajar.



**Elliot's Beach (5.6 kms from CEG)**, also known as Besant Nagar beach begins where the Marina ends. The beach is famous for its calm atmosphere and is preferable among morning walkers. The iconic Karl Schmidt memorial, named after the Dutch sailor who lost his life in the process of saving others from drowning is located at the heart of Elliot's beach.

**Adyar Eco Park (4.6 kms from CEG)**, locally known as Tholkappia Ponga is an ecological park set up in the Adyar estuary area to restore the vegetation of the freshwater eco-systems of the Coromandel Coast, especially the fragile ecosystem of the Adyar estuary and creek. A total of 143 species of fish, amphibians, birds and reptiles have been seen in the park and the number is expected to go up to 200. More than 85 different kinds of birds, including rare black bittern, cinnamon bittern, black-winged kite, white-bellied sea eagle, pied kingfisher, yellow wagtails and black-winged stilt have been spotted by ornithologists in the green expanse.

**Birla Planetarium (1.3 kms from CEG)**, a modern planetarium that provides a virtual tour of the night sky and holding cosmic shows on a specially perforated hemispherical aluminium inner dome.



It is located inside the Periyar Science and Technology Centre campus at Kotturpuram which has 8 galleries showcasing over 500 exhibits. The planetarium conducts sky shows including Solar System, eclipses, Earth, Man on Moon, comets, shooting meteoroids, stellar cycle and the deep sky every day at different times.

**Mahabalipuram: (On East Coast Road, 46.5 kms from CEG)** Famed for its ancient mountains, Mahabalipuram, also known as Mamallapuram, is one of the places to visit near Chennai. 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. Explore and observe the fine sculpture 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 and relaxing

**Arignar Anna Zoological Park (25.6 kms from CEG)** (better known as '**Vandalur Zoo**') is located south-west of the city and covering an area of 1490 acres is India's largest zoo.



It has about 2200 animals belonging to 170 different species including of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. The zoo also has a lion safari, an elephant safari, a nocturnal animal house, walk-through aviary, butterfly house, reptile house and a crocodile enclosure. The park has tree-lined paved paths for long treks inside the campus, enabling the visitors to walk 15 to 20 kilometres (9.3 to 12.4 mi) during a visit. Battery-operated vehicles with a range of up to 80 kilometres (50 mi) are available for rent.