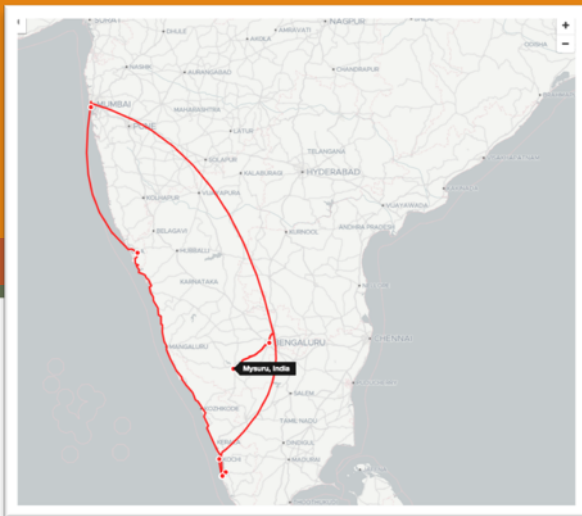


India



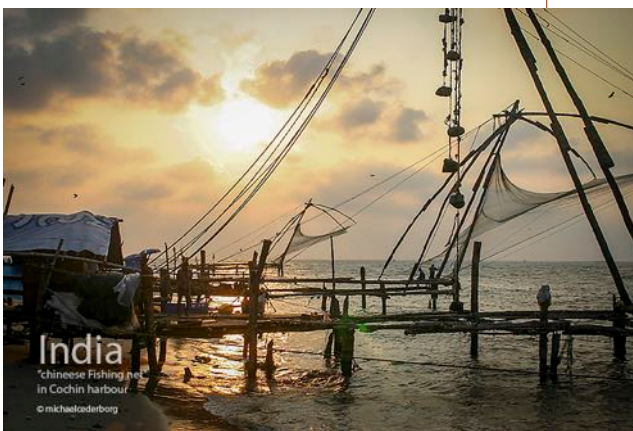
Goa, Kerala and Karnataka March 2007



Roundtrip to India (2007)

During two hectic weeks in late February early march, 2007, the family does a long-awaited combined adventure and on-the-beach trip to India. We begin and end our journey in Goa, but at different places. In between we manage to cover quite a lot of ground in the 16 days we have in total.

We stay with some old friends in Bangalore at their place and get to use their driver and car for a trip to explore region of Karnataka including Mysore and the Mahatma Gandhi National Park. An abundance of animals, but the most elusive of all – the Tiger – was just that: elusive and not to be seen on our visit. We then travel back up to Bangalore to fly to Cochin via Bombay. Cochin the old port & spice base in the south o Kerala. From here we make our way out to Allapetty and Kumarakom “The Backwaters”. We crisscross the canals on our private boat and home for a couple of days.



The Worlds most populated nation

India has a tremendous population growth year-on-year. Back in 2007, when we first visited it was a bit over 1.1 billion. In 2020 the population has grown with more than 300 million to over 1.4 billion, now also surpassing China who has a stagnant growth situation.



Goa South Goa and surroundings

After arrival to Goa we get transferred to south Goa where many of the best beaches are located. We had been recommended Majorda Beach Resort from a good Indian friend www.majordabeachresortgoa.com which we were very happy with. They also arranged the transport to/from airport. Apart from just enjoying the beach life, there are other things to do and see. A walk through the old parts of Goa is quite interesting with many old monasteries, churches and buildings from the old colonial times. Many are listed UNESCO world heritage.

An absolute must is the Anjuna market (north Goa), opened Wednesdays only at our time of visit. A myriad of stalls selling anything from cloth, clothes to souvenirs. Here you will also find lots of "overstayed" hippies from the 70-ies mixed with backpackers. Many bars and restaurants to choose from along the beach. Anjuna beach is approximately 18 km north of Goa. The beach is really nice and just outside the hotel. Try also our local favorite restaurant – Martins Corner www.martinscornergoa.com (ph. 0832-288 00 61). They have a great selection of dishes as well as deserts.



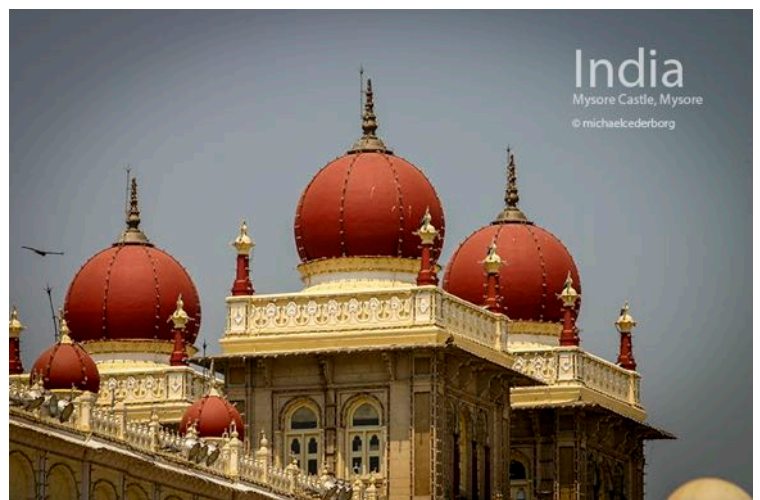


Karnataka region

Visiting Bangalore, Mysore and much more

As India is a continent in itself with huge distances, we decide to fly to Bangalore from Goa via Bombay. **Bangalore, the regional capital of Karnataka** is a center for Data/IT with many foreign companies present. The city has some 8-10 million inhabitants. We choose Bangalore as the base for travelling south. We also have good friends living here, with whom we stay during our visit. We explore a few good restaurants and the local and very colorful market.

We have a car/driver which makes our travelling around much easier going south. The traffic is congested, so it is good to have extra time set-aside. We are **headed south to Mysore** and stop along the way to see some temples and try good food. Just before coming into Mysore, we **make a stop at the Somnathpur**, a temple sight with an interesting history and splendid architecture. In Mysore itself there are many sights. The most spectacular is **the Mysore Palace** which needs to be visited during opening hours in the day as well as in the evening, when it is all lit up with thousands of lights. **Chamundi Hill**, is also worth a top with a splendid view overlooking the city and surroundings. We are **staying at The Village in Mysore** with its own history. www.thevillagemysore.com An enormous well-kept garden and spacious nice rooms.



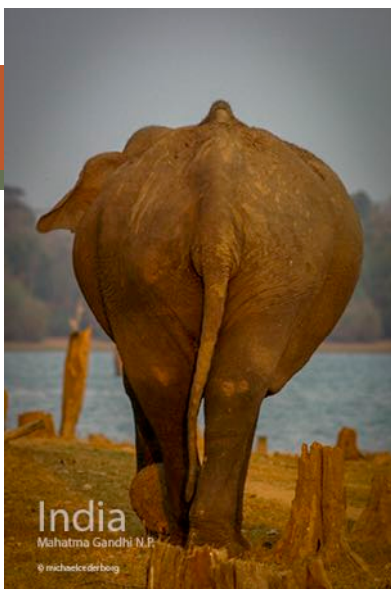


Karnataka (II)

Mysore and Mahatma Gandhi National Park

We continue our journey from Mysore to Mahatma Gandhi National Park and Kabini River Lodge www.kabiniriverlodge.com some 80 km south of Mysore. The last 20-30 km are on poor roads, but we got there in the end. This game park and lodge is well established and has been around for many years. The quarters as well as the food is very good. There are, as always, a number of different safari activities to choose from. We were positively surprised by the large number of different mammals to be seen. We did see some footprints from Tigers, but..... that was as close as we got this time. Our guide kept talking about a "Spotted bear" – which we did not actually see. He insisted that there were many around. Eventually he announced: See – there they are. It turned out to be a Spotted Deer, and yes these were in abundance of course 😊

We saw a couple of herds of Elephants with baby elephants – these were really nice to see. Especially at sunset.



Mahatma Gandhi National Park





Karnataka (III)

...more of the national park, Mysore and Bangalore

After a few very intensive and amazing days at the National Park, we travelled back up to Bangalore again and stayed one more time with our friends. This time we get to see more of the city and also visit some of the best restaurants in town.



Mysore has a lot to offer



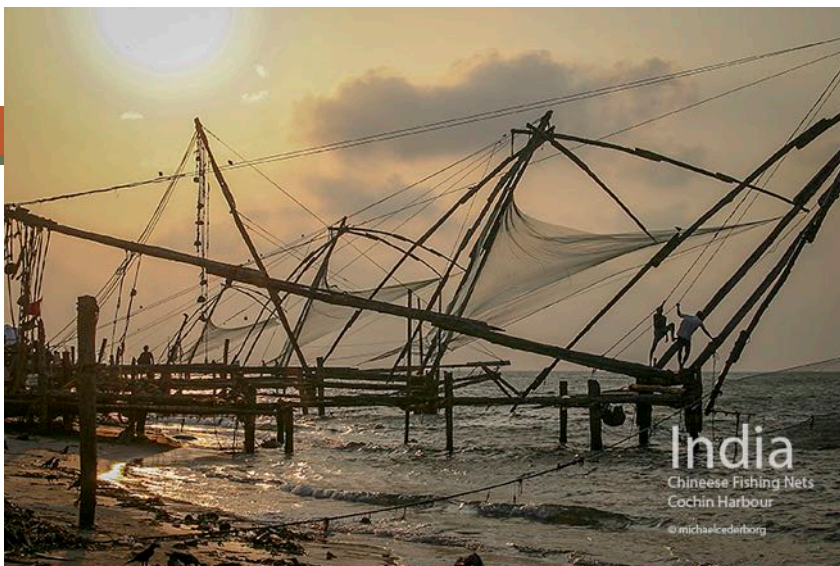
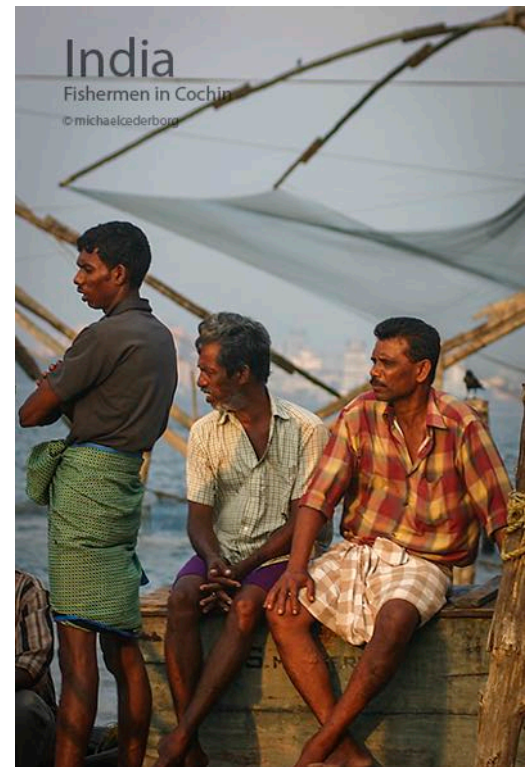


Cochin

The old Spice export center in India

After a flight from Bangalore down to Cochin we check in to our **hotel on the waterfront -the five-star Taj Malbar** www.tajhotel.com with an amazing view overlooking the old parts of Cochin out on the island. The old cochin has some very old colonial buildings. Many of them destroyed, but some still standing. The city is built around the inlet in order to protect from enemies arriving from sea. Here are both Portuguese, Dutch as well as British remains. This is very much of the export of spices took place. Here is also a more than 100-year old Chinese inheritance – the very special so called “Chinese fishing nets”. Excellent for many photo opportunities.

We enjoyed walking the old streets up-and-down just to take in the feeling from older days. Many restaurants and smaller hotels. **Don't miss the Santa Cruz cathedral or the church of Vasco da Gama, both located in the old part of Cochin.**



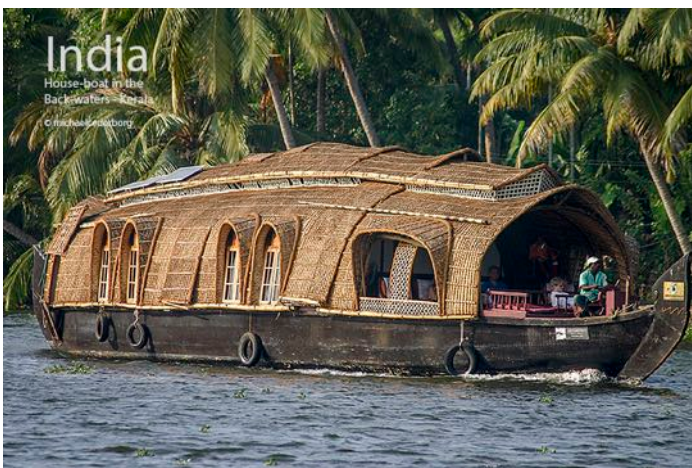


House boat journey

Alleppey to Kumarakum by boat

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Kumarakum

Taj Garden, Kumarakum

After two full days on the house-boat we eventually arrive to Kumarakum and get to stand on firm ground again. We check into the lovely hotel Taj Garden in Kumarakum www.tajhotels.com (it is the same hotel chain which we stayed at also in Cochin). This hotel is a nicely restored old country mansion from the 19th century. It is said to have been owned by a rich British count who used as a vacation retreat when coming to India. It is located at a nature reserve on an island with hundreds of different species of birds and other animals. Again, a good time to take out the camera and go for walk-about, while the kids enjoy themselves at the pool. The food is delicious.

We bid farewell to Kumarakum and are driven to a nearby airport in Cochin to Goa. We end our vacation with a few more days resting up at Goa after having visited Kerala and Karnataka. We stayed this time at the Heritage Village hotel which is more of a tourist hotel (all-inclusive) with theme evenings (yikes) not a place where we would stay again. There are however loads of top-class hotels to choose from, one just has to be careful and selective.

India is more like a continent with some 27 regions, and has to be visited in parts. We were however very taken with the people, culture and food and agreed to come again. There have been many visits again after this first trip and more to come.

