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## Coonoor, Tamil Nadu

Experience the slow pace of life at this quaint hillstation in the Nilgiris. **BY PALLAVI PASRICHA**

IT WAS ONCE known as the poor cousin of the Queen of the Nilgiris, Ooty, but Coonoor's quiet charm has captivated so many that few remember this title. The gently rolling hills, the emerald green tea plantations and the languid pace of life cast their spell almost immediately. Watch mist-shrouded mountains, as you sip a cup of tea or take long walks.

A visit to one of the tea factories should top your itinerary in this hillstation, which is dotted with tea gardens. Here, you can observe the entire tea manufacturing process, right from leaves being plucked, pruned, and finally turned into the brew that you sip each morning. If you want to buy, you'll be spoilt for choice—from flavoured, powdered to coarse tea leaves.

If you love nature, make your way to Sim's Park, which dates back to

1874 and has a variety of plant species. Remember SRK and Malaika Arora dancing on the top of a train to the *Chhaiyan Chhaiyan*? Well you could do the same in Coonoor. The Nilgiri Mountain Railway runs from Mettupalayam to Ooty, passes Coonoor so you can hop on for a ride till Ooty. Chugging through lush green hills, going through tunnels and picturesque tea plantations (the

maximum speed is at 40 kmph), it gives a true flavour of life in the slow lane. After all that is what Coonoor is all about.

### AT A GLANCE

A GREAT WEEKEND BREAK FROM BANGALORE.

GETTING THERE: 300 km from Bangalore, about six hours by road. Otherwise you can take the Ernakulam Express till Coimbatore and then drive two hours to Coonoor.

STAY: MGM Hillworth Resorts; Mount Pleasant Road; tel: (0423) 223 4995; <http://mgm-hotels.com>

Cost: ₹2,250 onwards per person

**HOT DEAL**

**VISIT NILGIRIS**

Stay at Hotel Sinclairs Ooty for 3 nights/4 days at ₹18,200 for two with breakfast & sightseeing in Coonoor & Ooty.

Tel: (0423) 244 4309



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1. The Nilgiri Mountain Rail chugging through hills 2. Tea gardens at Coonoor