GETTING TO AND GETTING AROUND PONDICHERRY

Most people arrive in Pondicherry by road. If you are coming from the north (Chennai/Madras), you can connect with the East Coast Road and be here in less than three hours. You won't find better engineering and scenery anywhere else. And affordable buses connect the city town with all major cities in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

If you love travelling by railway you could consider taking the train from Chennai, via Villupuram junction 36 kilometres away, but it takes about 5 hours!

The nearest terminals, national or international, are at Chennai, 150 km away by road.

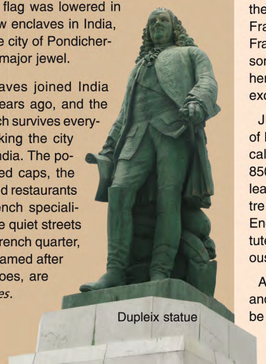
Once in Pondicherry, you may choose various modes of transport, including – best of all – your own feet. The spirit of Pondicherry is best captured in walks through the old town's greenery and charming architecture. The historic old city is small, rectilinear, and easy to get around. And the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has suggested the best routes on the map included in this brochure.

Cycling is another enjoyable way to see things at a slow and steady pace. The even terrain and newly repaved streets make for a cool smooth ride, and you can rent a bike and motorised two-wheelers in many locations. Cycle rickshaws, auto-rickshaws, electric vans, taxis and buses are other choices. Rented cars are subject to a standard tariff. It could not be easier.

THE FRENCH INFLUENCE

French dreams of Indian empire began and ended in Pondicherry. The contest with the British was like a ping pong game that started with the siege and destruction of the town in 1761 and ended in 1815 when the French got it back for good. The British made sure that the French flag was lowered in all but a few enclaves in India, of which the city of Pondicherry was the major jewel.

The enclaves joined India about 50 years ago, and the French touch survives everywhere, making the city unique in India. The police wear red caps, the bakeries and restaurants feature French specialities, and the quiet streets of the old French quarter, many still named after French heroes, are *très agréables*.



Dupleix statue

STREETSCAPES

Old Pondicherry has two distinct faces: the French and the Tamil. The French quarter has buildings in the European classical style, while those of the Tamil quarter are in Tamil Nadu style, with French accents. The borrowing was reciprocal: the French buildings adapted to a semi-tropical climate by taking on local features to keep out the heat.

The street façades of the French quarter are characterised by continuous wall-to-wall construction with high garden walls and elaborate gateways. The façades of the Tamil quarter feature a *thalvaram* (street veranda on the pavement with lean-to roof on wooden posts) and a *thinnai* (a raised platform with wooden columns). These provide a place where visitors can relax with the householder in the cool of the evening.

INSTITUTIONS

The Alliance Française (open to the public for the dissemination of French culture), the Lycée Français, the Institut Français, and the École Française d'Extrême-Orient are all located in handsome buildings and dedicated to the continuing heritage of Franco-Indian scholarship and cultural exchange.

JIPMER, named after Jawaharlal Nehru, is one of India's leading centres for postgraduate medical education and research. It also boasts an 850-bed hospital. The other important seats of learning are the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, the Pondicherry University, the Engineering College and the Pondicherry Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), as well as various private medical colleges.

A visit to the Pondicherry Museum, Bharathiyar and Bharatidasan Memorial Museums can also be rewarding.

MONUMENTS

Pondicherry's charm lies more in its streetscapes comprising rows of traditional homes, than grand monuments. Most of the town's non-religious monumental buildings surround the quiet greenery of Bharathi Park, named after the nationalist poet from the last century.

These include the Ayi Mandapam (a gleaming white structure built during the Second French Empire in the very centre of the park), and Raj Nivas, the handsome residence of French governors from the earliest French period and now the home of the Lieutenant Governor

Ayi Mandapam

Beach road features the 19th century Light House, the French War Memorial and charming statues of the most famous French governor, Dupleix, and of Joan of Arc.

FAITH IN STONE

Pondicherry's French connection saw the construction of a number of churches reflecting the very different architectural styles of the times they were built. The most beautiful are the 18th century Cathedral dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Mary and the 19th century Notre Dame des Anges (Our Lady of the Angels).

Other include the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Our Lady of Lourdes at Villianur which is a major pilgrimage site in April.

Cathedral

Pondicherry has dozens of Hindu temples – large and small – some exist since the beginning of the town.

Of all its mosques, perhaps the most beautiful is the Kuthba Mosque in the distinctive old Muslim quarter.

BEACHES

Beach Promenade

Pondichériens and visitors take the air on the seaside Beach road, especially in the evening, and most particularly on weekends and holidays, when most of the kilometre long stretch is closed to non-pedestrian traffic. A perfect place to stroll, chat and snack, and to appreciate the charming Town Hall (once Hôtel de Ville), the old Light House,

Gandhi Statue

the old Customs House and Port Office (now *Le Café*), and – right in the middle – a statue of Gandhi surrounded by ancient columns.

Beach

Pondicherry's accessible and uncrowded beaches offer beach resorts, cottages, cafés and bars commanding excellent views of the sea. Perfect for putting your feet up and unwinding from the hectic worlds of work and travel. Chunambar, 7 km away, has charming backwaters with beach huts and boating facilities.

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

Many people feel Pondicherry's aura. Its long history of saints and scholars culminated in Sri Aurobindo, the revolutionary turned scholar, poet and seer, and his spiritual partner, The Mother. Founded in 1926, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, situated in the heart of the city, has grown from a small group to a community of around 1500 members. A visit to the *Samadhi* is highly recommended. You can stroll around the Ashram to observe the daily activities of ashramites – young and old – and of visiting devotees from all around the world.

AUROVILLE

Founded by The Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1968, Auroville is inhabited by some 1700 people from around 35 countries. The Aurovilians are engaged in a wide range of activities which include education, forestry and environmental work, arts and crafts, research and development in appropriate technologies, village development, health, administration, and small-scale industries. At the same time they are making an effort to live up to Auroville's ideal of human unity, following the first point of the Auroville's Charter: "*Auroville belongs to nobody in particular, Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.*"

Located approximately 10 km by road north from the old city of Pondicherry, the "City of Dawn" extends to many beautiful square kilometres in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry states.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram

Pondicherry has it all: a unique French flavour, a big Ashram quarter, great food and accomodation for every taste or budget. The variety available is very remarkable for a still fairly small town. You can stay here for a day, a few days, a week or much longer. You will be spoiled for choice.

EATING OUT

Pondicherry has all kind of restaurants: big and small, on terraces and off carts, elegant and easy on the purse.

South and North Indian food, of course, plus European and Chinese. Seafood! Snacks? Pizza, Bengali and Mumbai sweets, ice creams and fresh juices: you can get it all.

SHOPPING

Pondicherry is a great place to shop. You will find quality pottery, handmade paper, handloom products, leather goods, and antique furniture and curios. All are good value and locally made.

Do not forget to visit the showroom of Anglo French Textiles for the best in cotton textiles. Plus the best of India and the world at Pondicherry's competitive prices. The famed dolls of Pondicherry (in terracotta, *papier mâché* and plaster of Paris) and woven reed mats are village-made and distinctive.

Note that most shops are closed during the heat of the day in the afternoon, and open quite late into the evening.

ACCOMMODATION

Pondicherry has everything from budget to right-now modern four-star hotel, from simple Ashram

accommodation, to sandy beach resort to stylish heritage hotel. All less expensive than what you are used to. It is a reliable promise in a place with no luxury tax.

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EASY DAY TRIPS

Chidambaram is synonymous with Lord Nataraja, the awe-inspiring and wonderful dancing form of Shiva, simultaneously Destroyer and Creator. The temple, spread over 10 acres in the centre of the town, is a must-see. Not far, at 40 kilometres.

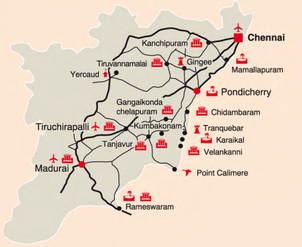
Nataraja temple, Chidambaram

Visit **Karaikal**, also a former French enclave, about 135 km to the south, and enjoy its quiet river promenade and charming backstreets. Admire also the Sufi shrine and Shanishwara temple, the only one in the country. From here you can go to nearby **Tranquebar**, a former Danish colony, and **TR Pattinam**, a charming village.

Thiruvannamalai is the site of the Ramana Maharshi Ashram and of the Arunachaleshwara temple, one of the most famous in India. On the way you can stop to see or picnic at **Gingee** (Senji), once the most contested fortress in South India. Thiruvannamalai is just over 105 kilometres, two hours by road from Pondicherry. You can be back before dark.

Mamallapuram (also known as Mahabalipuram) was the 7th century port of the seafaring Pallava dynasty, which ruled from inland Kanchipuram. Mamallapuram was where Tamil temple architecture began, in temples carved from caves and huge boulders. The Shore Temple and Arjuna's Penance, the world largest and awe-inspiring rock relief, are particularly beautiful.

Mamallapuram is located 98 kilometres north of Pondicherry on the splendid East Coast Road. On the way don't miss a visit to the ruins of **Alamparey** Fort on the shore.



DESTINATION
PONDICHERRY

Walk or cycle through the quaint streets of the French town with its elaborate gateways... or the talking streets of the Tamil town.

Give time a break.

PARTNERS IN TOURISM

PEACEFUL
Puducherry
Give time a break.

Directorate of Tourism
40, Goubert Avenue, Pondicherry - 605 001
Ph.: 91-413-222 7276, Fax: 222 1022
E-mail: pondy_tourism@yahoo.co.in
Website: http://tourism.puducherry.nic.in

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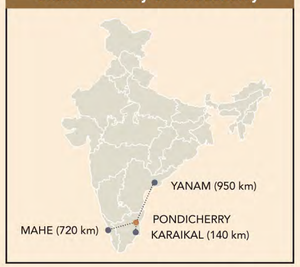
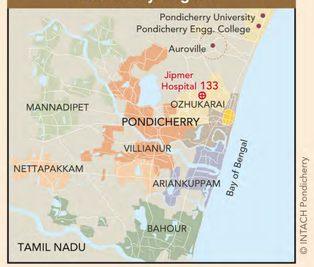
Union Territory of Puducherry



Puducherry is one of India's few Union Territories. It is comprised of four formerly French seaside enclaves in South India: the towns of Pondicherry and Karaikal, Yanam on the Bay of Bengal and Mahé on the Arabian Sea (*distances from Pondicherry in brackets*).

Puducherry Region



Pondicherry town is an "archipelago" of communes floating in the "sea" of the state of Tamil Nadu, which includes Oulgaret, Ariankuppam, Villianur, Mannadipet, Bahour and Nettapakkam. They are scattered within the state of Tamil Nadu.

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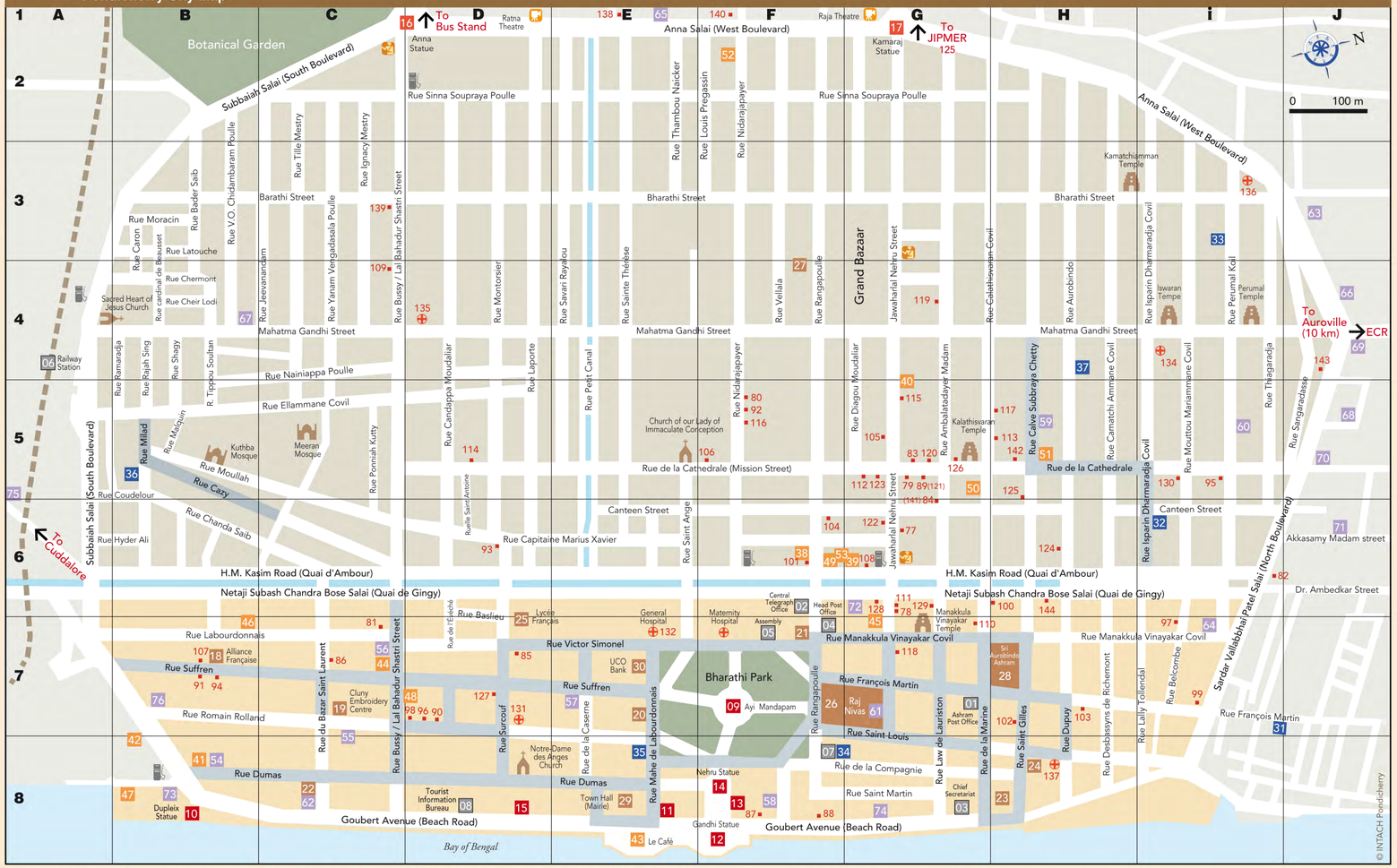
Pondicherry and Suburbs

© INTACH Pondicherry

Pondicherry City Map



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Legend

- Temple
- Church
- Mosque
- Streetscapes
- Petrol pump
- Hospital
- Police Station
- Theatre

General

01	Ashram Post Office	G7
02	Central Telegraph Off.	F6
03	Chief Secretariat	G8
04	Head Post Office	F7
05	Legislative Assembly	F7
06	Railway Station	A4
07	Romain Rolland Library	F8
08	Tourist Information	D8

Landmarks

09	Aayi Mandapam	F7
10	Dupleix Statue	B8
11	French War Memorial	E8
12	Gandhi Statue	F8
13	Old Lighthouse	F8
14	Nehru Statue	F8
15	Statue of Joan of Arc	D8
16	Anna Statue	D1
17	Kamaraj Statue	G1

Heritage Buildings

18	Alliance Française	B7
19	Cluny Embroid. Centre	C7
20	Chambre of Commerce	E7
21	Cercle de Pondichéry	F7
22	École Fr. d'Ext.-Orient	C7
23	French Consulate	H8
24	French Institute	H8
25	Lycée Français	D7
26	Raj Nivas	F7
27	Ranga Pillai Mansion	F7
28	Sri Aurobindo Ashram	H7
29	Town Hall (*Mairie*)	E8
30	UCO Bank	E7

Museums, Galleries

31	Aurodhan Art Gallery	i 7
32	Barathi Museum	i 6
33	Barathidasan Museum	i 3
34	Pondicherry Museum	F8
35	Pondicherry Art Gallery	E8
36	Le Rêve Bleu	B5
37	Intach	H4

Restaurants

38	Cottage Restaurant	F6
39	Hot Breads	G6
40	Hotel Aristo	G5
41	Le Club	B8
42	La Terrasse	B8
43	Le Café	E8
44	Rendez-vous	C7
45	Adayar Anandha Bhavan	G7
46	Satsanga	B7
47	Sea Gulls	B8
48	Pizza Hut	D7
49	Daily Bread	G6
50	Energy Home	G5
51	Sri Krishna Sweets	H5
52	China Restaurant	F2
53	China Town Restaurant	G6

Hôtels & Guest Houses

Heritage Hotels

54	Hôtel de Pondicherry	B8
55	Hôtel de l'Orient	C8
56	Villa Helena	C7
57	Le Dupleix	E7
58	La Promenade	F8
59	Calvé Hotel	H5
60	Maison Perumal	i 5
61	Hôtel du Parc	G7

Other Hotels

62	Ajantha Sea View	C8
63	Ananda Inn	J3
64	Executive Inn	i 7
65	Ram International	E1
66	Hotel Surguru	J4
67	Ram Guest	B4
68	Aruna Guest House	J5
69	Athiti Hotel	J5
70	Lotus Hotel	J5

Guest Houses (Ashram)

71	Garden Guest House	J6
72	International Guest H.	G6
73	Park Guest House	B8
74	Sea Side Guest House	G8

Guest Houses (Others)

75	Govt. Tourist Home (Uppalam)	A5
76	New Guest House	B7

Outside City Map

Annamalai International
Hotel Mass
Kailash Resort
Jayaram Hotel
Ashok Hotel
Yatri Niwas

Shops and Services

Arts & Crafts

77	Boutique d'Auroville	G6
78	Boutique d'Aurohari	G6
79	Casablanca (Café)	G5
80	Cottonwood	F5
81	Calico	C7
82	Handmade paper	J6
83	Kalki	G5
84	L'art naturel	G6
85	La Tienda	D7
86	Le Décor	C7
87	Pudumal	F8
88	Splendour	F8
89	Souvenir	G5
90	Via Pondicherry	D7
91	Fabindia	B7
92	Touchwood (Café)	F5
93	Kasha Ki Asha (Café)	D6
94	Creart	B7

Antiques & Furniture

95	Art Antiqua	i 5
96	Art Colony	D7
97	Coromandel Collectibles	i 7
98	Curio Centre	C7
99	Versailles	i 7

Incense & Candles

100	Auroshikha	H6
101	Cottage Industries	F6
102	Fleurs en Flacon	H7

Leather Products

103	Auroform	H7
104	Auromirayan	F6
105	Hidesign	G5

Books

106	Focus	F5
107	French Book shop	B7
108	Higginbothams	G6
109	Librairie Kailash	C4
110	Sabda	G7
111	Vak	G6

Foreign Exchange

112	LKP-Forex Ltd.	G5
113	Trade Wings	H5

Internet Cafés

114	Coffee.com	D5
115	Citinet Internet	G5
116	I-way	F5

Travel Agencies

117	Amsham Travels	H5
118	Auro Travels	G7
119	Bonjour Bonheur	G4
120	La Concorde	G5
121	Souvenir Travels	G5
122	Chetak Travels	G6

Two-wheelers Rental

123	Muthu Enterprises	G5
124	Vijay Arya	H6
125	Valli Finance	H5

Bicycle Rental

126	VK Nakkeeran	G5

Banks

127	State Bank of India	D7
128	Canara Bank	G6
129	Central Bank	G6
130	ICICI Bank	i 5

Hospitals & Clinics

131	Cluny Hospital	D7
132	General Hospital	E7
133	JIPMER	
134	Nallam Clinic	i 4
135	New Medical Centre	D4
136	Sedhu Nursing Home	i 3
137	Tresor Nursing H.	H8

Photo Labs

138	Foto Fast	E1
139	Image Color Labs	C3
140	Konica	F1
141	Souvenir Color Lab	G5

Taxi Service

142	BVJ Travels	H5
143	Ganesh Travels	J4
144	Rajaram Tourist Cab	H6

The Heritage Trail of Pondicherry

To experience the spirit of Pondicherry it is essential to walk through the Old Town and discover the blend of its architectural traditions. Walk the Heritage Trail marked in grey on the map!

For guided tours, contact:

Tourism Information Center - PTDC
40, Goubert Avenue, Pondicherry - 605 001
Ph. : 91-413-233 9497 or 222 6744

Directorate of Tourism
40, Goubert Avenue, Pondicherry - 605 001
Ph. : 91-413-222 7276

INTACH
62, Aurobindo Street, Pondicherry - 605 001
Ph. : 91-413-222 5991 or 222 7324