

Travel information to visit divya desams in Chozha nadu

My trip to Chozha naattu thirupathi between June 2nd and June 7th, 2004.

In May my wife and I decided to visit all the 40 temples of chozha naattu thirupathi, apart from attending the marriage of a relative at Srirangam. Our initial plan was to visit the temples with Srirangam as the base. However, after studying the map we found that it might be better to start the pilgrimage at Chidambaram and stop at Trichy/Srirangam. The first priority was to visit the 40 divya desams of the 108; only if time permitted we planned to visit the abhimaana sthalams or others temples.

| Near or at | # of kovils |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Chidambaram | 1 |
| Siirkazhi | 13 |
| Mayavaram (Niyiladudurai) | 4 |
| Nagappattinam | 4 |
| Thanjavur | 6 |
| Kumbakonam | 6 |
| Trichy | 6 |

I studied the books published by LIFCO and Sri Varahi Printers to identified the temples in or around the main towns on the route. Several web sites give the pictures of the Lord and the standard details of the moolavar, utsavar and other information. I give below the order in which I visited the temples, distances between temples, the time we took and some contact info. I hope this information helps some of those who plan to visit these temples, to work out their itinerary. I have tried to follow an order of the temples to reduce travel time and cover the most in a limited time. Whenever I had made a mistake I mention it specifically. Keep in mind that this may not be the most optimum, if the order is changed.

I stayed with relatives at Chidambaram and Srirangam. At Kumbakonam, I stayed at the Andavan Ashramam. Apart from my wife and myself, four of my wife's relatives joined us. I find that such trips are more enjoyable when you go as a group.

By the grace of Lord LakshmiNarasimha, we were able to cover all the 40 divya desams as planned. We made sure that we were at the first temple in the morning when it opened and till the last one closed. The temple timings are based on information from archakars, relatives living in the town or others in the temple.

The distances are based on the speedo-meter of the vehicle we hired – Tata Sumo about 3 months old or an Ambassador, several years old.

We spent enough time at each temple to get a good darshan of the Perumal and Thayar and also performed archanai.

Abbreviations:

min = minutes

June 2, 2004

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Took the Sethu Express leaving Tambaram station (Chennai/Madras) at around 1:30 PM, reaching Chidambaram (Thiru Chitrakootam) at around 6 PM. We went to our relatives place to keep our belongings. After freshening up, we walked to the Govindarajan temple, which also happens to be inside the Nataraja temple. The temple is in the heart of the town. We took about an hour to have darshan and go around the temple. It may be ideal to have 2 hours time and also visit the temple during the day to see the sculptures in the temple.

Temple timings: 8 AM to 12 Noon; 4 to 9 PM.

We hired an air-conditioned Tata Sumo at Chidambaram (for June 3rd and 4th), as we knew that it would be hot, compared to Bangalore, where we stay. This can seat 7 adults fairly comfortably and 2 or 3 more if required for short periods of travel.

Contact info:

Name of car hiring company: Kailasanathar
Owner name: M.Muthuraman
Cell #: 98942 06300

Name of driver: Dorai
Cell #: 98942 27896

Hiring charges: Rs.1300 for less than or equal to 250 kms.
Additionally we need to bear the cost of diesel. If the vehicle covers more than 250 kms we pay Rs.5 per kilometer (includes rent and diesel) only for the distance covered beyond 250 kms.

June 3, 2004

The Tata Sumo came in at about 6:40 am.
Started by 6:45 am.

Important Notes

I had called Sampath Battar at Thiru Devanar Thogai (Kiizhachchaalai) the previous night about my visit. He asked me to go to Annan Kovil first, take a guide with the help of Madhava Battar and then reach Kiizhachchaalai to meet him, where he would be. Without a guide visiting these kovils will be tough.

After reaching Annan kovil we requested Madhava Battar to arrange for food in the afternoon at around 3 PM. When we returned at 3:30 PM we ate the delicious prasadam which was served by Madhava Battar – Puliyodarai with Appalam and Thayir saadam with oorugai. Both Sampath Battar and Madhava Battar were extremely helpful and nice. The Battars of all other kovils were also very helpful though each of them manage 2 or 3 temples; they came and opened the temples any time of the day. The kovils of these 11 Divya Desams around Thiru Nangoor are very flexible in terms of timings. The archakars were happy to open the kovils any

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time after they open in the morning till around 8 pm; nowhere else in this trip were kovils opened in the afternoon between 12 noon and 4:40 pm.

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| From | To | Distance | Travel time | At the temple | Contact person |
|--|--|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|--|
| Chidambaram | Sirkazhi (Thiru Sirkazhi) | 20 kms | (6:45 to 7:15 am) 30 min | 25 min | |
| Sirkazhi | Thiru Vellakulam (Annan Kovil) | 10 kms | 7:40 to 8:05 am 25 min | 35 min | S.R Madhava Battar Tel: 04364-266534 |
| Thiru Vellakulam (Annan Kovil) | Thiru Devanar Thogai (Kiizhachchaalai) | 4 kms | 8:40 to 8:50 am 10 min | 20 min | Sampath Battar Tel: 04364-266542 |
| Thiru Devanar Thogai (Kiizhach chaalai) | Thiru Vaali | 1.5 kms | 9:10 to 9:15 am 5 min | 10 min | |
| Perfect village kovil with calm surroundings. Had breakfast we had taken with us. There was a tap to wash and a mantapam to sit and eat. 25 mins break. | | | | | |
| Thiru Vaali | Thiru Nagari | 7 kms | 9:50 to 10:00 am 10 min | 30 min | |
| The next 2 kovils were closed and the archakar was not found; so we went around a bit for the next half hour. The kovils were Thiru Kaavalampaadi (5 km) and Thiru Vanpurushothaman (4 km) | | | | | |
| Thiru Vanpurushothaman | Thiru Vaikunta Vinnagaram | About 250 meters | Reached 11:05 am 2 min | 20 min | |
| Thiru Vaikunta Vinnagaram | Thiru Manikkoodam | 1 km | 11:20 to 11:25 am 5 min | 10 min | |
| Thiru Manikkoodam | Thiru Kaavalampaadi | 3 kms | 11:35 to 11:45 am 10 min | 10 min | |
| Thiru Kaavalampaadi | Thiru Vanpurushothaman | 3 kms | 11:55 to 12:05 pm 10 min | 15 min | |
| Thiru Vanpurushothaman | Thiru Manimaadakkoil | 1 km | 12:20 to 12:22 pm 2 min | 16 min | |
| Thiru Manimaadakkoil | Thiru ArimeyaVinnagaram | 1 km | 12:38 to 12:42 pm 4 min | 8 min | |
| Thiru ArimeyaVinnagaram | Thiru Thetriambalam | 200 meters | 12:50 to 12:51 pm 1 min | 13 min | |
| Thiru Thetriambalam | Thiru Semponsei Kovil | 500 meters | 1:04 to 1:07 pm 3 min | 12 min | |
| Thiru Semponsei Kovil | Thiru Paarthanpalli | 2.5 kms | 1:19 to 1:30 pm 11 min | 40 min | |
| Thiru Paarthanpalli | Thiru Thalaichchangadu | 11 kms | 2:10 to 2:37 pm 27 min | 23 min | |
| Initially we had planned to visit only the kovils at Sirkazhi and near Thiru Nangoor. Since we had finished early we decided to see the 4 temples near Mayavaram also. | | | | | |
| Thiru Thalaichchangadu | Thiru Vellakulam (Annan Kovil) | 11 kms | 3:00 to 3:30 pm 30 min | | |
| Had lunch at Annan kovil as mentioned above. Paid the guide Rs.100. Paid the Battar also for the lunch. | | | | | |
| Thiru Vellakulam (Annan Kovil) | Thiru Sirupuliyur | 40 kms | 4:15 to 5:15 pm 60 min | 30 min | |
| Thiru Sirupuliyur | Thiru Vazhundoor (Thaer Yezhundoor) | 17 kms | 5:45 to 6:15 pm 30 min | 35 min | |
| Thiru Vazhundoor (Thaer Yezhundoor) | Thiru Indaloor | 14 kms | 6:50 to 7:20 pm 20 min | 30 min | |
| Thiru Indaloor | Chidambaram | 41 kms | 7:55 to 9:15 | | |

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Important: Thiru Kannapuram is 5 kms from Thiru Sirupuliyur, we heard the next day; so you may want to check and include this after Thiru Sirupuliyur.

Distance covered was about 196 kms.

June 4, 2004

Temple Timings: Several temples below are under the Hindu Religious and Endowment Board; so they work like government offices. Timings are 8 to 12 Noon and 4:30 to 8:30 pm as per locals.

| From | To | Distance | Travel Time | At the temple | Contact person |
|---|----------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Chidambaram | Thiru Nagai (Nagappattinam) | 86 km | 5:45 to 7:40 am 1 hr 55 min | 40 min | |
| Thiru Nagai | Thiru Kannangudi | 11 km | 8:20 to 8:37 am 17 min | 20 min | |
| Thiru Kannangudi | Thiru Kannamangai | 31 kms | 9:00 to 10:00 am 1 hr. | 10 min | |
| Thiru Kannamangai | Thiru Kannapuram | 20 kms | 10:10 to 11:00 am 50 min | 1 hr 30 min | |
| Ate the Pongal given at the temple and the Thayir sadam we had brought. Travelled to Thanjavur. At Thanjavur ate some tiffin at Arya Bhanvan, which was good. | | | | | |
| Thiru Kannapuram | Thiru MaamaniKovil | 88 kms | 1:00 pm to 3:35 pm about 2 hrs. | | |
| Thiru Maamanikovil is made up of 3 kovils about 200 meters apart, although it is treated as 1 divya desam. The kovils were supposed to open only 4:30 pm; however they were not open even when we moved from one to the other. Finally got the 3 kovils opened at about 5:15 pm. Since the Battar was not available, we could not do archana. | | | | | |
| Thiru MaamaniKovil | Thiru Kandiyur | 5 kms | 5:45 to 5:55 pm 10 min | 20 min | |
| Thiru Kandiyur | Thiru Kudaloor | 15 kms | 6:15 to 6:47 pm 32 min | 13 min | |
| Thiru Kudaloor | Thiru Kapisthalam | 7 kms | 7:00 to 7:15 pm 15 min | 15 min | |
| Thiru Kapisthalam | Thiru Pullaboothamgudi | 9 kms | 7:30 to 7:48 pm 18 min | 22 min | |
| Thiru Pullaboothamgudi | Thiru Aadanoor | 2 kms | 8:10 to 8:15 pm 5 min | 15 min | |
| Thiru Aadanoor | Thiru Vinnagar Uppiliappan Kovil | 18 km | 8:30 to 9:15 pm 45 min | 5 min | Andavan Ashramam Tel: 0435-2463138 R.Raman Tel: 0435-2463595 for food. |

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Important: I was told during the travel and later I checked with the map at srivaishnavam.com that Thiru Kannapuram is closer to Nagappattinam than Thiru Kannamangai.

Notes

1. We were just in time for the Viswaroopa Sevai at Thiru Nagai kovil. See the Dwarapalakai here. Wherever you stand they seem to be looking at you.
2. We were just in time for the Thirumanjanam of the moolavar at Thiru Kannapuram
3. We were just in time for the Saynaothsavam at Uppliappan kovil.
4. At Thiru Kannamangai, there is supposed to be a beehive in the Thayar sannadhi, which is one side for 6 months and the other side the next 6 months. Unless requested the archakar will not show this it seems. Since the Battar was not there when we went we could not see this.
5. **Thiru Pullaboothamgudi and Thiru Aadanoor are really at remote locations and the temples close early** by around 7:45 pm or so. So plan to be early. We got darshan because the Battar was waiting for a trustee who was supposed to come and was late.
6. At Thiru Vinnagar (Uppliliappan Kovil) you can stay at Andavan ashramam; call up and reserve rooms; they will arrange for coffee and meals.
7. For lunch or dinner (regular unlimited meals on banana leaf, around Rs.24) or to take packed food (puliodarai, vaththa kuzhambu, thayir sadam, etc) at Thiru Vinnagar (Uppliliappan Kovil), contact Raman mami (also called Shobha mami) at 0435-2463585.

Distance covered was about 396 kms, including the return trip from Uppliappan koil to Chidambaram. I paid Rs.2030 (base cost upto 250 kms is Rs.1300 plus extra 146 kms at Rs.5/km is Rs.730).

June 5, 2004

Had Viswaroopa Sevai at Uppliappan koil. Went at 5:45 am to the temple.

Hired an Ambassador to visit 6 temples at Rs.600.

Before leaving we told Raman mami that we would be having lunch.

| From | To | Distance | Travel Time | At the temple | Contact person |
|---|---|------------|-----------------------------|---------------|--|
| Thiru Vinnagar (Uppliliappan Kovil). Had Viswaroop Sevai. Spent about 1 hr. | | | | | |
| Thiru Vinnagar | Thiru Velliyangudi | 18 kms | 7:30 to 8:25 am 45 min | 20 min | S.Ramamoorthy Battachariar Tel: 0435-2456656 |
| Thiru Velliyangudi | Chakrapani kovil | 18.5 kms | 8:45 to 9:20 am 35 min | 25 min | |
| Chakrapani kovil | Adivarahar sannidhi | 100 meters | 9:45 to 9:46 am 1 min | 14 min | |
| Adivarahar sannidhi | Thiru Kundanthai (Sarangapani Kovil) | 1.5 kms | 10:00 to 10:05 am 5 min | 25 min | |
| Thiru Kundanthai (Sarangapani Kovil) | Thiru Nandipura Vinnagaram (Nathan Kovil) | 10 kms | 10:30 to 10:45 am 15 min | 20 min | |
| Thiru Nandipura Vinnagaram (Nathan Kovil) | Thiruchcherai | 11 kms | 11:05 to 11:35 am 30 min | 15 min | |

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|--------------------------------------|--|-------|----------------------------------|--------|--|
| Thiruchcherai | Thiru Naraiyur (Nachchiyar kovil) | 5 km | 11:50 to 12:00 noon 10 min | 20 min | |
| Thiru Naraiyur (Nachchiyar kovil) | Thiru Vinnagar (Uppliliappan Kovil) | 7 kms | 12:20 to 12:40 pm 20 min | | |

We had lunch at Raman mami's house and rested for some time. At 2:30 pm we went to Kumbakonam bus station and took a bus to Trichy, from where we went to Srirangam.

June 6, 2004

Went to Ranganathar kovil at 5:45 am for Viswaroopa sevai. Bought special ticket for Rs.10/- so that you can go closer. Had a darshan of the Lord and later visited other sannidhis. To see this temple one needs about 2 hours, as it is a huge temple. May be more if one wants to see the architecture also. The rest of the morning session I attended a marriage.

Afternoon, we went to see the kovils around Trichy.

| From | To | Distance | Travel Time | At the temple | Contact person |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Thiru Arangam (Srirangam) | Thiru Anbil | 26 kms | 3:30 to 4:30 pm 1 hr. | 25 min | |
| Thiru Anbil | Thiru Vellarai | 36 kms | 4:55 to 6:00 pm 1 hr 5 min | 30 min | |
| Thiru Vellarai | Thiru Karambanoor (Uththmar kovil) | 15 kms | 6:30 to 7:00 pm 30 min | 25 min | |
| Thiru Karambanoor (Uththmar kovil) | Thiru Uraiyyur | 7 kms | 7:25 to 7:45 pm 20 min | 15 min | |

If we had started earlier we could have visited Thiru Paernagar (Koviladi) also. Though it is about 3 to 4 kms from Thiru Anbil and across the Kollidam river, since there is no bridge close by, one has to retrace the route for about 20 kms to cross the bridge and go forward for about 20 kms. This should have been visited after Thiru Anbil and the others as per the same order. Since we did not have the time, we visited the temple on June 7, 2004.

Distance covered was 90 kms. Paid Rs. 590.

June 7, 2004

Since the others had left, myself and my wife decided to visit this temple by bus. It was a great experience that we would remember. The kovil is 26 kms from Srirangam. From Srirangam took an auto to Thiurvanikaval at about 8:30 am. From here took a bus to Anaikarai (The Grand Anicut). From Anaikarai there are 2 routes. We took the one to Koviladi paadai. This is across the Cauvery river from the temple. We walked across the sandy river bed (except for a small patch of 6 inch water) and reached the temple on the other bank. Reached by about 9:30 am.

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Sat on the temple foot steps since the Battar had gone to his house just then. This is an ideal village. Calm, peaceful, sounds of birds chirping, breeze blowing and clean air. Meanwhile we asked the watchman if we could get some prasadam to eat; he went to the madappalli cook's house (4 houses from the temple; the next one is the battar's) and said they had one appam. I went and took it. They told me they make only 5 a day as not many come. If someone wants appam they can call the madappalli cook and inform them; if one wants lunch they could inform too. At around 10:15 am the archakar came and we had darshan all alone. A great *ekantha* sevai. We also had darshan of Thayar. The special archana (taking your chain and or ring and placing it on the Lord) by this Battar has been described in one of the tour reports in srivaishnavam.com. After the darshan we waited for the bus and returned to Srirangam at about 12:30 pm.

Afternoon, my brother's in-laws told us that we could have a darshan of Ranganathar if we go early. The temple opens around 2:30 pm it seems. We went at about 3:30 pm and had a good darshan of Lord Ranga.

Contact info:

V.Rangarajan or V.Varadarajan (Appakudathan sannidhi at Koviladi)
04362-281421 (Next house is Battar's)

Some further information:

Divya Desams around some of the cities or towns you can visit while you are there.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Kumbakonam 1. Thiru Vinnagar (Uppiliappan kovil) 2. Thiru Velliangudi 3. Thiruchcherai 4. Thiru Kudanthai 5. Thiru Naraiyur (Nachchiyar kovil) 6. Thiru Nandipura Vinnagaram (Nathan kovil) | Mayavaram or Mayiladudurai 1. Thiru Sirupuliyur 2. Thiru Thalaichanga Nanmadhiyam (Thalaichangadu) 3. Thiru Indaloor 4. Thiruvazhundoor (Thaer Yezhundoor) | Chidambaram 1. Thiru Chitrakootam |
| Siirkazhi 1. Thiru Vaali & Thiru Nagari 2. Thiru Vellakulam 3. Thiru Kazhi Cheerama Vinnagaram 4. Thiru Manimaadakkovil 5. Thiru Vaikunta Vinnagaram 6. Thiru Arimeya Vinnagaram 7. Thiru Devanaarthogai 8. Thiru Vanpurushothamam 9. Thiru Semponseikovil 10. Thiru Thetriambalam 11. Thirumanikoodam 12. Thiru Kaavalampaadi 13. Thiru Paarthanpalli | Thanjavur 1. Thiru Thanjai Maamanikovil 2. Thiru Pullamboothamgudi 3. Thiru Aadhanoor 4. Thirukkandiyur 5. Thirukkoodalur 6. Thiru Kapisthalam | Nagapattinam 1. Thiru Nagai 2. Thirukannangudi 3. Thirukkannamangai 4. Thirukkannapuram |

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| Trichy 1. Thiruvarangam (Srirangam) 2. Thiru Uraiyoor 3. Thiru Anbil 4. Thiru karambanoor (Uththamar kovil) 5. Thiru Vellarai (Vedagiri) 6. Thiruppaernagar (Koviladi) | | |
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