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Village tour with Mohanam

The Auroville-based Mohanam Community Centre for Culture and Education is now offering village tours beginning with a customary welcome, a walk to visit sculptors, potters, candle makers and other artisans. This is followed by another walk through a coconut grove (or a cultural performance), and ending with a traditional meal.

Lessons in cooking and silambam (the Dravidian martial art) are also arranged on request. Auroville is neither a place for budget tours nor is it a luxury destination, says Mohanam mentor Nick Klotz. But it is a lifestyle venue for people who want to explore sustainable environments, community activity, workshops and therapies. Mohanam also provides in-bound services for groups, including itinerary planning, transport, accommodation, food and tours.

The information

Minimum contribution of Rs 400 per person requested; every Thursday, 10.30am-12.30pm; starting at Lively Boutique, Kottakarai Plaza; register by calling 2623806 or email mohanamprogram@gmail.com; there's also a daylong Bioregion Tour on Saturdays

More information

A good place to discover how Pondy became such a fantastic collaboration between conservation and tourism is **Intach Pondicherry**. Pondy doesn't have a collection of landmark heritage structures but is rather an ensemble of domestic architecture — I discover such and other things at their office, itself a pleasing example of restoration, which also doubles up as a permanent exhibition space for the heritage movement here.

Pick up their excellent map and sign up for their **Heritage Trail** (Rs 2,500 for small group; individual requests are combined; 62, Rue Aurobindo; 2225991/2227324; intachpondicherry.org).

Pondy ART (pondyart.org) uses public spaces around Pondy to mount magnificent thematic photo exhibitions. Do look out for their line up of shows in November and December.

If you are in Auroville on a Saturday (alternate weeks but best to check locally) browse by the sun...

happening around town, with colourful and inviting posts right up on the home page and a handy