

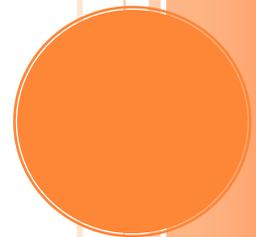
## Western Ghat Expedition-5



2 to 11 Sep 2009

1500 km

(cumbum-thekkadi-munnar-  
marayur-attapadi-silent valley-  
idukki-peermade-jatayupara)



A 'full-circle' circuit, covering places I had left out in the previous expeditions, had been on my mind for quite some time. But a route covering cumbum, marayoor, attapadi(silent valley) and idukki would span around 1500 km and I had only 10 days at hand. An average of 150 km per day. Ok so here I go.



***Near kulathupuzha...almost every trip starts here***



***Change of scenario on other side of western ghat – near tenkasi***

I was always of the opinion that the best of munnar occurs after munnar itself. My previous expeditions had covered places like poopara, bodimeedu and devikulam. This time it was marayoor.



***My favourite stretch of road near cumbum – had seen it once during my childhood and was actually chasing a distant memory .***



***Near lockhart gap – munnar***



Marayoor followed by chinnar wildlife sanctuary kept me so pre-occupied that I had forgotten all about reaching some place before nightfall. Around 6 pm I realised that I had to do some serious cycling to reach some place safe for the night. Ignorance of what lie beyond chinnar saved me from panicking. After around 2 hours of cycling in absolute darkness, I got a shock of my life when I emerged near udumalpettai from Anamalai tiger reserve. Good I did not know as I had indeed seen several moving creatues in the dark!



***Marayoor***

Had reached coimbatore by 4 pm next day and was left with the choice of going to attapadi the regular way – through palghat and manarkaad or the lesser known route via aanakati and agali. In spite of the scare I had got the previous night I found myself merrily heading for aanakati. Luckily I had reached a lone hotel in the midst of aanakati forest by 8 pm.



*attapadi & silent valley*



Even though I had had enough excitement for an expedition. And even though I could have ended the journey at trichur I kept rolling and rolling and rolling. Destination painav. This was an expedition of scary nights I should say. Now painav is the district capital of idukki. So I had certain expectations when I reached kulamaav around 5 pm. But warnings from passing vehicles about wild animals on the roads had me a bit scared. To top it painav happens to be the least inhabited (and most scary!) district capital of kerala. Sadly it had no hotels and I had to go further to cheruthoni to put up for the night.



*In and around painav*

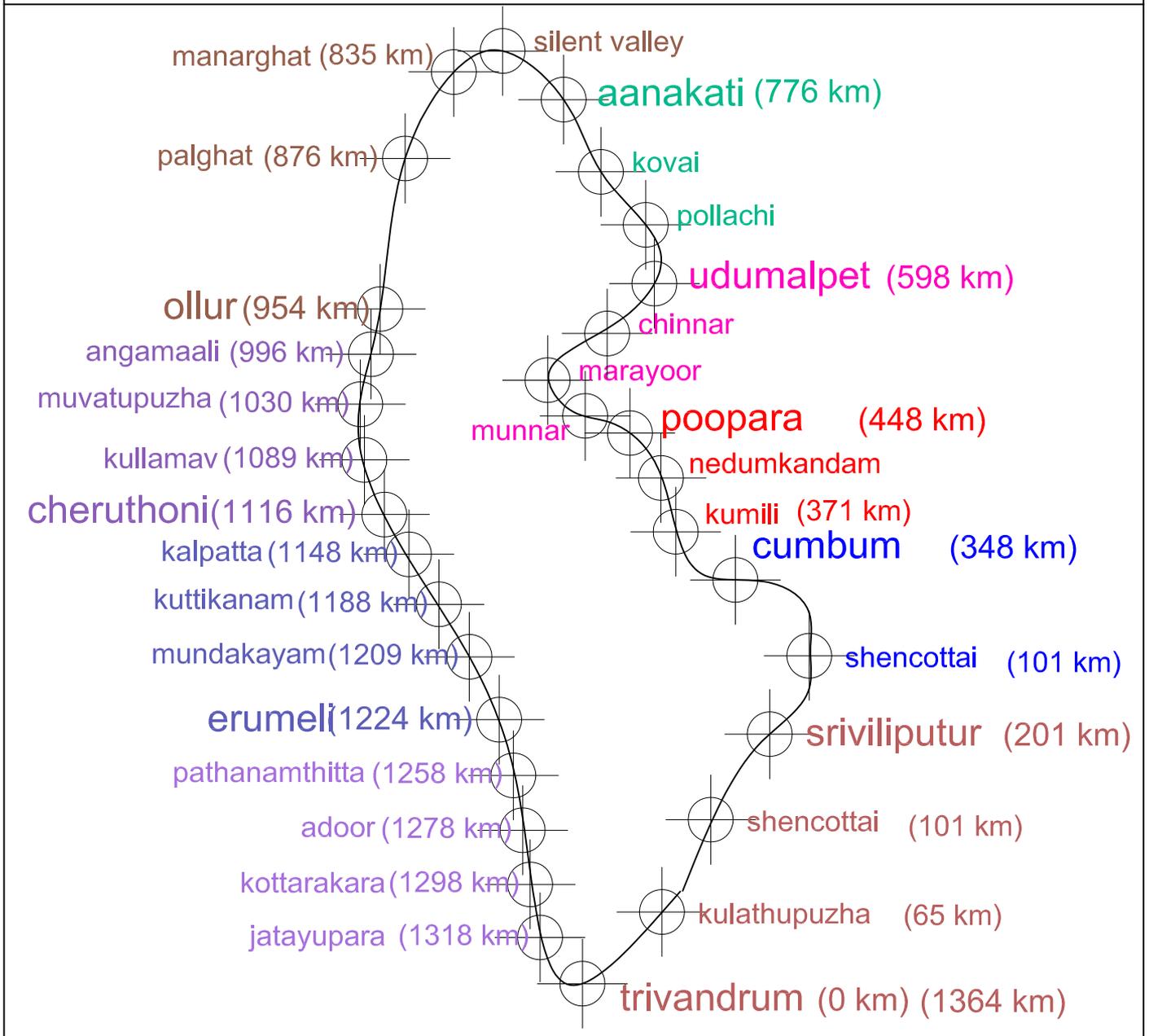
Had halted at a hilltop named jatayupara on the way back to Trivandrum. The weather was pleasant and I could take some beautiful snaps.



*jatayupara*



## western ghat expedition-5 - distance & time map



day	destination	km
1	sriviliputtur	201
2	cumbum	147
3	poopara	100
4	udumalpet	150
5	aanakati	178
6	ollur	178
7	cheruthoni	162
8	erumeli	108
9	trivandrum	140