

Auroville

Auroville (<http://www.auroville.org>) is a small town 6 km north of Pondicherry. This town was a vision of **The Mother** from *Sri Aurobindo Ashram* at Pondicherry as it's an international town. She envisioned a town where unity will be celebrated and all will have a spiritual vocation. In July 2010, 2200 people from 43 different countries were living in the city. About 40% were Indians (more than 15% are French and 15% are German).

Auroville Handbook is the official guide to Auroville that can be bought in the Visitors' Centre and the bookshops around or Auroville's website. A map of the town can be bought in Pondicherry at the Boutique de Auroville and at the visitors center in Auroville.



Matrimandir

Understand

The city was designed by architect Roger Anger. The township of Auroville is meant to be a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony, above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities. Auroville was founded as a project of the Sri Aurobindo in 1968 by his disciple Mirra Alfassa, popularly called "The Mother". About 2,000 people from 50 countries live in this planned village. Half of them are Indians and there are some 300 French people, 200 Germans and 150 Italians.

Get in

Auroville is 16 km by bus from Pondicherry and 163 km by bus from Chennai. Trains are also available and they take 6 hours. The nearest airports are at Pondicherry, 11 km and Chennai, 142 km.

By rickshaw (₹150-200) or taxi (₹240) from Pondicherry. Many buses between Chennai and Pondicherry pass the turn off to Auroville - you can get down here and into one of the waiting rickshaws at the junction.



Inukshuk Marking at Auroville



Auroville Road

From Allankuppan, Kottakarai village

Every 30 min a bus goes to Pondi over Kootroad, where you can enter a bus to Tindivanam, Tirruvanumalai, Chennai. Often the bus is already full. It's safer to go to Pondi. The bus is ₹5. The same problem you face on the ECR (East Coast Road) if you catch a bus to Chennai.

From Chennai airport

You can also take a taxi from Chennai Airport. It costs ₹170-2500 (price quoted December 2010. If you call a taxi service in advance: +91-413-2622400 AV Transport, +91 413 2623200 Auro Cabs, +91 413 2623586 Om Travel (companies are run by Auroville township near Puducherry), they will be at the Arrivals exit with a sign with your name on it.

Alternatively, take a taxi to Pondicherry bus station for ₹200, then take a regular bus for ₹175 to Tambaram, cross the highway through an underground and get a train connection from there to Chennai Airport for ₹4 (just a few kilometers away).

From Pondicherry

You can also rent scooters in Pondicherry and drive yourself for a day trip or arrange to keep the scooter for a few days or more.

Get around

Best by e-cycle, also possible by motorbike or bicycle. Rickshaws and taxis can be ordered for trips out of the town. If you have a guest card than you can use the community's bus to Pondicherry (for free).

You can hire e-cycles for ₹200 per day (and use free electricity), motorbikes for ₹50-100 per day and in some guesthouses you'll get a bicycle for free or a small daily fee with your rent.

Everything is within a five km distance and walking is one of the best option here.

Auroville is very spread out and large, so if you want to get around freely, rent a e-cycle or motorbike.

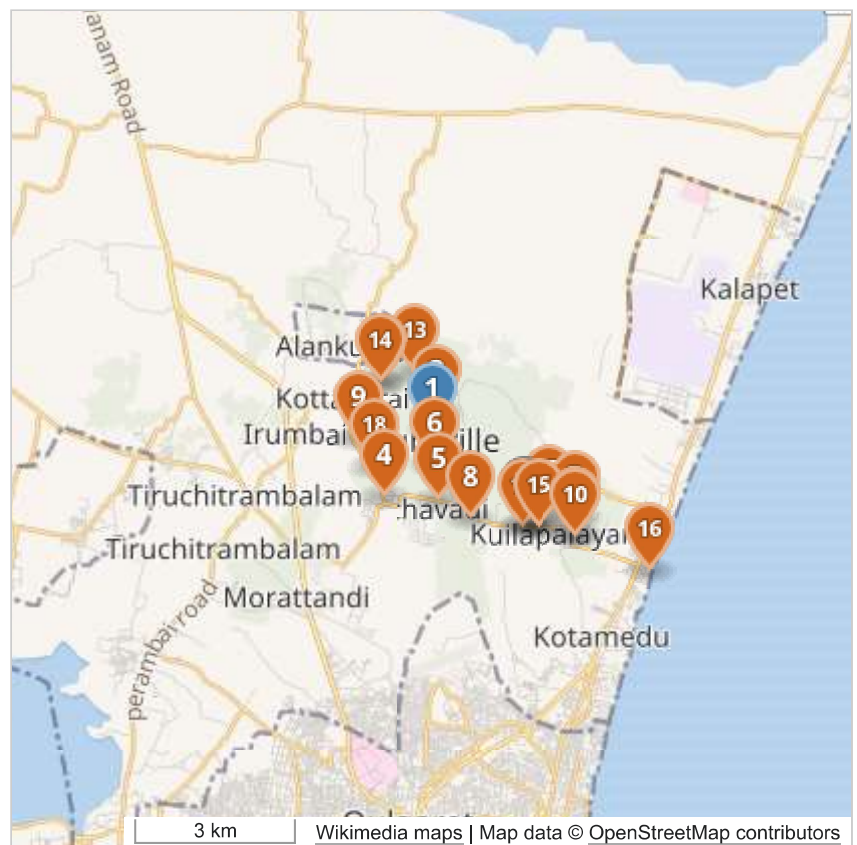
The challenging part is navigating the busier roads in around the village of Kaluipalayam, the largest Tamil village in or near Auroville. In addition to other motorbikes, you will encounter pedestrians, bicycles, cows, dogs, small tour buses, and the occasional ox cart loaded with hay. Traffic can be heavy at dusk, when the herds of cows head home and everybody else seems trying to get some place else.



Tibetan Centre @ Auroville



The Great Banyan Tree of Auroville





Map of Auroville

Remember to stay on the left and look both ways before turning or crossing a road. If you make a right turn, be sure to end up on the left side of your new road.

The nearest petrol station is on the sea front road (aka the Beach Road) just north of the Auroville turnoff. If you find yourself low while in Kaluipalayam village, a few of the shops have 1 liter water bottles filled with petrol for sale. Petrol goes a long way, but keep an eye on the level because running out can be very inconvenient and possibly unsafe. With e-cycles, no more petrol seek and you help to keep Auroville green and clean!

Always travel with a charged cellphone, and know how to use it to call your moped supplier, your guest house, and your fellow travellers. Motorbikes have a way of breaking down or not starting, so it's better to travel in pairs or groups. That way you can always catch a ride on the back of someone else's bike.

See

- **1 Matrimandir** (http://www.auroville.org/thecity/matrimandir/mm_main.htm). Meaning "Temple of the Mother" in Sanskrit, this is the geographical and spiritual heart of Auroville. The outside is plated with gold, while the inside is stark white with a gigantic crystal in the center.  



Savitri Bhawan

This is circular structure with a golden metallic sphere in the center. Inside the Matrimandir, a spiraling ramp leads upwards to an air-conditioned chamber of polished white marble referred to as "a place to find one's consciousness". Matrimandir is equipped with a solar power plant and is surrounded by manicured gardens. When there is no sun or after the sunset, the sunray on the globe is replaced by a beam from a solar powered light.

Check with the visitor center if you're interested in seeing the inside of the temple - the rules can be very strict, and it may take 2 days or so before you get inside (you've been warned!). You'll first need a visitors pass for a little guided tour of one of the meditation chambers, and once you've done that you qualify to visit the inside of the main temple the following day. Saturday and Sunday can be particularly busy and you may need to wait in line for 30-40 minutes. Bags, cell phones and cameras are not allowed in the temple.

If you have a guest card you can get a pass valid for all the days of your stay, otherwise you'll get a one day pass. Aurovilians can also take you in as a guest, though this isn't likely unless you have friends there.

- **Auro Beach** - Walking distance from the Auroville Busstop on ECR (East Coast Road), Auro Beach is considered one of the best beaches on India's Eastern Coastline although it is still very polluted. Most of the people found on the beach are either Europeans or Tamils.
- **Organic Farms.** Run by the inhabitants. (updated May 2015 |)



Auroville's birthday celebration

- **The Radiating City.** Radiating from Matari Mandir, are four "zones" of the City Area: the "Residential Zone", "Industrial Zone", "Cultural (& Educational) Zone" and "International Zone". Around the City or the urban area, lies a Green Belt which is an environment research and resource area and includes farms and forestries, a botanical garden, seed bank, medicinal and herbal plants, water catchment bunds, and some communities. (updated May 2015 |)
- **Repos,** Private beach of Auroville. (updated May 2015 |)
- **Tibetan Centre.** A beautiful building with a Dalai Lama seat (updated May 2015 |)
- **Town Hall.** A beautiful building in a green surroundings. (updated May 2015 |)



Auro Beach

Do

There are a lot of activities in Auroville like Yoga, Tai-Chi, Watsu, different kinds of alternative healing and courses. The variety is wider during the visitors' season from December to March. There is a plethora of social/economic/environmental/agricultural projects going on regularly. Many of them welcome tourists, and many tourists welcome the opportunity to spend a week or more volunteering to get a much more intimate look at what goes inside Auroville. There are at least 14 farms in Auroville, any of which will take daily volunteers. There are also many schools that can accommodate volunteers, environmental restoration projects, and village action initiatives. Kottakarai Organic Food Processing Unit is a small little shop that makes things like cookies and pasta from local and organic ingredients in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. It is located next to Ganesh Bakery, a cafe/restaurant that is popular with tourists.



One of the various architectural experiments

- **One-day Yoga programme,** Savithri Bhavan., ☎ [+91 413 2622922](tel:+914132622922). 9AM to 4:30PM (with a break from noon to 2PM). (updated May 2015 |)

Buy

- Hand woven hammocks
- Hand carved stone sculptures, including some erotic works
- Cool hippy clothing, but be sure to bargain hard on them as prices are set high in Auroville.
- LED Headlights, Parasite Zapper, Mind machines with Innovation unlimited, Silence.
- Books about Auroville - the idea, the architecture, the mother,... (Bookshop at the Visitor's Center). "Auroville in a nutshell" is a great booklet to start with for about ₹50.
- **AuroVelo** Bicycle spares, service, Decathlon products, coffee and cakes
- **Mira Computers, Aurelec** Computer, laptop, smartphone service and sales
- **Maroma, Kalki** Natural home fragrance and body care products (Incense, Reed Difusers, Soaps, Perfumes, Candles, Bath Salts, Shampoos, Body Lotions, Creams, Massage Oils and

Essential Oils.)

- **La Ferme Cheese.** Artisanal dairy products. (updated Mar 2016 |)
- **Films on Auroville.** *City of the Dawn*, 80 minutes. *Auroville - A Dream of the Divine*, 20 minutes. (updated May 2015 |)
- **Handmade Paper.** Made in Auroville. (updated May 2015 |)
- **Incense Sticks.** Made in Auroville. (updated May 2015 |)
- **Spiritual Books.** Books of Aurobindo and the Mother. (updated May 2015 |)

Eat

Budget

- **1 Ganesh Bakery**, Kottakarai Road. Very popular, serving full meals and baked goods, vegan food, snacks, tea, coffee, and fresh juices. Wifi available with a well-stocked market attached. (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **2 Le Morgan.** At the Town Hall is this French restaurant which is open for lunch and also some dinners, please check. They often serve delicious fresh fish. (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **3 Aurelec Cafeteria** (<https://www.facebook.com/aurelec.cafeteria>), Auroville Road, ☎ +91 413-2622416. Daily 8:30AM - 5PM. It serves breakfast and a wonderful buffet lunch for a fixed price of mainly north Indian food. It is also an art gallery. (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **4 The Secret Garden Restaurant**, Auroville Road. South Indian cuisine (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **5 Sustenance Farm & Cafe**, Auroville Main Road. South Indian restaurant (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **6 The Solar Kitchen**, Crown Road. The main cafeteria and most popular place to eat. Everyone pays the same price - no matter how much you actually eat. The food is really yummy and it's a great place to meet people! Upstairs you can find the cafe **La Terrace** serving coffees, salads, sandwiches and changing international dishes. **Neither accepts cash:** you must apply for a guest card at the visitor's centre, fill it with credit, and pay using that account. Both, La Terrace and the Solar Kitchen try to use organic products whenever they can! At *La Terrace* try the delicious mushroom pasta with egg and don't miss out on the amazing ice-cream! (updated May 2022 |)

Mid-range

- **7 New Creation Corner**, Auroville Road. on the main round from the beach to Matrimandir and serves great vegetarian dishes, crepes and has a great atmosphere. (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **8 Paradise Pizza**, Auroville Road. An amazing pizza restaurant where the pizzas are cooked on a clay oven and taste delicious. They also offer some daily specials of pasta. (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **9 Solitude Farm of Auroville.** offers a vegan meal cooked from produce on the farm. This is available at lunch times and you must book in advance and make a donation. (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **10 Kofibar**, Kuilapalayam Main Rd. A sweet and funky little cafe near the Auroville Bakery (just ask). It's a locally driven project that works with the Sapney Permaculture Farm and is locally minded. They serve fresh food and have wifi. Ask for Snehal if you want to get involved. (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **11 Happy Food** (<https://www.facebook.com/happyfood.auroville>), Opp. Tanto, ☎ +91 413-2622876. Tu-Su 8:30AM-10PM. South Indian style meals, including thalis and vegan dishes. Snacks, fresh juices, lassis, ice cream, tea, and coffee. (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **12 Marc's Coffees** (<https://www.marccoffees.com/>), Main Road, ☎ +91 413-2623119. Tu-Su 8AM-6PM. Coffee, juice, ice cream, popsicles, vegan milk, cookies, and cakes. (updated Jun 2022 |)

- **13 Naturellement Garden Cafe** (<http://www.naturellement.in/index.php/cafe/about-our-garden-cafe>), Udyogam, ☎ +91 413-2622034. Tu-Su 9AM-5PM. With children's play area. (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **14 Raw Food Restaurant**, Near Ganesh Bakery, ☎ +91 413-2622778, +91 7639655833. Daily noon-2 PM, 5:30-7:30PM. Smoothies, fresh soups with coconut milk, flax crackers, sunflower seed bread, nut cheese, pumpkin pies, banana mousse, chocolate bars, mango bars. (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **15 Tanto Trattoria Pizzeria** (<https://www.facebook.com/TantoPizzeria?rf=202083759845642>), 21, ECR Road, ☎ +91 413-2622368. W-F 12:30-3PM, 6:40-9:30PM. (updated Jun 2022 |)
- **16 Repos Guest House**, Mariyamman Koil Street. A cafe is situated on the beach and has amazing salads, check out sunbliss salad or the houmous platter. It is open to people staying in Auroville and is closed on Mondays and open til 5PM every other day. (updated Mar 2022 |)
- **17 Farm Fresh Cafe**, Main Road, ☎ +91 413-2622669. 9AM - 9PM. Dosa, burgers, pastas, pizza, quiches, tarts, pies and cookies. IT also has organic and vegan options. (updated Feb 2022 |)
- **18 Visitor Centre**. It has an excellent cafe with daily specials and a wide range of Indian and European food including great vegetarian food, drinks and desserts.

Splurge

Drink

- **Pour Tous Café**. (updated May 2015 |)
- **1 The Smoothie Bar** (<http://www.smoothiebar.in>), Auroville Main Road, Kuilapalayam, Opposite to Purple Resorts, ☎ +91 9840923352. Tu-Su 8AM - 8PM. Smoothies, cold-pressed juices, sorbets and quick bites (caprese sandwiches made with fresh pesto, other sandwiches and burgers). Vegan friendly. (updated Jun 2017 |)

Sleep

There are more than 450 beds in different guesthouses in Auroville, and many more in the non-Aurovilian hotels around the township, which are generally less expensive. The best way is to go to the Visitors' Centre (<http://www.aurovilleguesthouses.org>) in Auroville and browse through their book in which you can see the rooms and get details about them. Prices range from ₹150-4100 per person per day.

Some well known guest houses include Aspiration (with great food), Shranga, Verite, Youth Camp(cheap), Gratitude(with about 40 peacocks in the garden).

Overnight guests in Auroville's guest houses are expected to pay a daily contribution of ₹100 (₹30 for students), which is often included in the guesthouse rate. For this contribution you receive a Guest Card which allows you to use the services of Auroville, like the Solar Kitchen, classes and some shops.



Bharat Niwas

December through February is the guests' season - the busiest time in Auroville. Plan your trip in advance for this period.

- **Beach Guest House**, Pondicherry to Chennai ECR, near Auro beach, Periyamudaliyarchavady (*2 min walk from Auro beach*), ☎ [+91 9944319891](tel:+919944319891). Check-in: 24 hours, check-out: 24 hr after check-in. Large, clean resort. All rooms are with TV with English, Tamil, Hindi, and Kannada channels. Single AC US\$350, double US\$750. (updated May 2015 |)

Go next

- [Bangalore](#) - 372 km
- [Chennai](#) - 163 km

Retrieved from "<https://en.wikivoyage.org/w/index.php?title=Auroville&oldid=4466008>"

This article is partly based on Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Licensed work from other websites. Details of contributors can be found in the article history.

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.