

## The City - TIRUPATI



Tirupati is a city in *Chittoor District* of the Indian State of *Andhra Pradesh*. It serves as the headquarters of *Tirupati (Urban) Mandal* and also Tirupati revenue division. As of 2011 census, the city had a population of 2,87,035 making it the *ninth largest city* in the state in terms of population. It is the *seventh most urban agglomerated* city in the state, with a population of 4,59,985. For the year 2012-13, *Ministry of Tourism* awarded Tirupati as the *Best Heritage City* recognising city's tourism potentiality. Tirupati is one of the most famous temple towns in India.

It is the abode of Lord Venkateshwara, (one of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu), located atop Tirumala hills. It is renowned for one of the most venerated shrines in India that of the ancient temple of Lord Venkateswara on the Tirumala Hills. Tirumala has seven hills, representing the seven heads of a huge serpent, called Sesa Saye, on which Lord Vishnu resides.

According to Varaha Purana, during Treta Yugam, Lord *Sri Rama* resided here along with Sita Devi and Lakshmana on his return from Lankapuri. The town was an established center of *Vaishnavism* around 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. during which it was praised by *Alvars*. The temple rites were formalised by the Vaishnavite saint *Ramanujacharya* in the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. Tirupati survived the *Muslim* and *British* invasions. During the *Muslim invasion* of South India, the deity of *Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam* was brought to Tirupati for safekeeping.

Tirupati is a major educational hub in Andhra Pradesh. There are several peculiar Universities and Colleges including *State Government* and *Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam* sponsored medical, pharmacy, agricultural and engineering colleges in the city. Majority of them are named after presiding deity of Tirupati temple, Lord Venkateswara and his consort Goddess Padmavathi.

### TIRUMALA- Lord Venkateswara Swamy

The Tirumala temple is believed to be as old as 300 BC and is built and developed over time by many kingdoms. The first temple at Tirumala Tirupati was built by King *Thondaiman*(1900 years back), ruler of the ancient *Thondaimandalam*, after he had a dream of Lord *Vishnu*. Thondaiman kings are said to have built the original Gopuram (tower) and the Prakhara in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and arranged for regular prayers to be conducted in the temple.



The temple is considered one of the eight *Sywayambu Kshetras* of Vishnu where presiding deity is believed to have manifested on its own. Seven other temples in the line are *Srirangam Ranganathaswamy temple*, *Bhu Varaha Swamy temple*, and *Vanamamalai Perumal Temple* in South India and *Saligrama*, *Naimisaranya*, *Pushkar* and *Badrinath Temple* in North India.

The seven hills, also called *Saptagiri*, represent the *Saptarishi* (seven sages). They sometimes called the *Sapthagiri*. Hence the Lord is named *Saptagirinivasa*. Tirumala Sri Venkateswara Temple is a famous Vedic temple in the hill town of *Tirumala*, near *Tirupati* in *Chittoor District* of Andhra Pradesh, India. It is the richest temple in the world in terms of donations received and wealth, and the most-visited place of worship in the world. During 15<sup>th</sup> century, *Sri Tallapaka Annamacharya* sung many songs in praise of holy town in Telugu. He compared it to be divine, including the rocks, streams, trees, animals, and adds that it is heaven on the earth.

The Temple is administered by *Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam* Temple will be flooded with Devotees daily where the number reaches to a lakh on festive days. The world famous Tirupati Laddu is given at Tirumala Temple as *Prasadam*. Recently the TTD Trust has taken copy right of Laddu prasaddam, hence, no one can prepare the same Laddu.

**Source:** <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tirupati>