

DATASET

1. NORTH KERALA PLACES

1.1 Kannur

Explore the cultural richness and natural beauty of Kannur, a coastal gem in Kerala. With its pristine beaches, vibrant festivals, and historic landmarks, Kannur offers a captivating blend of tradition and modernity. Kannur is dubbed as the City of Looms and Lores

Nearest railway station: Kannur, about 2 km

Nearest airport: Kannur International Airport, about 30 km | Calicut International Airport, about 93 km to the South.

Homestays:

\n*Choice Beach House

\n*Treetop Beach Cottages Homestay

\n*Amban Heritage

Beach Nest Homestay

Seashell-Haris Beach Homestay

Resorts:

Marmara Beach House

Mascot Beach Resort

Kairali Heritage

Hotels:

Hotel Blue Nile(avg Rs 3,056) 4 star hotel

Hotel Rainbow Suites(Rs 1,502-Rs 1,835) 3 star hotel

Green Park Residency(Rs 1,500- Rs 2,000) 2 star hotel

Malabar Residency (Rs 2,436- Rs 3,416) 3 star hotel

KTDC Loom Land Kannur (Rs 2000 & above) 3 star hotel

Broad Bean, Kannur(Starting at Rs 3,404)4 star hotel

Hotel Sky Palace(Starting at Rs 1,604)3 star hotel

1.1.1 Payyambulam Beach

Relax on the sun-kissed shores of Payyambalam Beach, where golden sands meet the azure waters of the Arabian Sea. Long stretch of sandy walkways and recreational facilities of this beach make it a favourite hang out. Close to the beach is the light house, and the children's' park. Visitors can enjoy a good swim or surf in these tranquil waters.

1.1.2 St. Angelo Fort

Built by the first Portuguese Viceroy in India, Don Francesco de Almeida (1505), St. Angelo's Fort is among the most historic sites in Kannur. This massive triangular laterite structure is flanked by gigantic bastions that make for an imposing sight. It changed hands between the Dutch and eventually the British, who would remodel and reequip it into their primary military stronghold in Malabar.

Mopilla Bay and Dharamadam Island are among the primary attractions here. Mopilla Bay is a natural harbour and the fort offers a wonderful view of it along with a sea wall projecting from the fort separating the rough sea and inland water. Dharamadam Island, barely 5 acres in area, is 100 m from the mainland and a favourite haunt of tourists. People come to the fort for relaxing strolls and just a brilliant view of the Arabian Sea.

1.1.3 Arrakal Kettu Museum

Kannur's rich and vibrant landscape is host to the great Arakkal Kettu Museum, former residence of the only Muslim Royal Family in Kerala, the Arakkal Ali Rajas. Step inside this beautiful architectural marvel and be transported to a different era, with heirlooms and artefacts of their reign adorning the entire building.

The museum exhibits artefacts and heirlooms of the royal family which includes the family seal, the pathayam (the wooden box in which grain was stored), document box and so on. The royal copies of the Holy Quran, an old-fashioned telephone, swords and daggers used by the rulers, and a telescope are also on display. Apart from these, there are exhibits that stand as testimonies to the Arakkal rulers' relationship with European colonial powers as well as those relating to their maritime activities and monopoly on spice trade. It is a must visit site in the district, as it helps one gain an understanding of the cultural diversity that helped shape its current form. The museum is closed on Mondays.

1.1.4 Muzhappilangad Beach

Muzhappilangad Beach is famous for being Kerala's only drive-in beach. At about 7km from Thalassery in Kannur, you have a 4 km stretch of sand that awaits you to simply drive along as you soak in the view of the beautiful Malabar Coast. Along the way, one gets to munch on delicacies from a number of shacks that offer authentic Malabar cuisine. It is often considered a swimmers paradise as the black rocks protect the beach from deep currents. This is a perfect way to relax and soak in this clean and well-maintained beach.

Activities: Adventure sports like paragliding, parasailing and micro light flights along with water sports, power boating or a simple catamaran ride.

1.1.5 Thalassery Fort

The Thalassery Fort is a formidable historical monument established by the East India Company as a testament to the might of the imperial rulers. It stands proud in the small town of Thalassery, situated 22 km from the Northern district of Kannur. Once the nucleus of Thalassery's development, the fort was built in 1703 by the East India Company, which had already established its settlement on the Malabar Coast in 1683. The arresting square fort has gigantic walls, massive, intricately carved doors and secret tunnels leading to the sea that make it a delight to explore.

1.1.6 Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary

Spread over a 55 sq. km area of forests on the Western Ghats, the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary is among the finest of its kind in Kerala. It plays host to an exotic array of flora and fauna and is among the most picturesque locations in Kannur district. The entire area is covered in tropical and semi-evergreen forests and is a truly riveting sight.

One can catch sight of herds of elephants, gaur, sambar, spotted deer, barking deer, Nilgiri Langur, Hanuman Langur and the Malabar Giant Squirrel. It is also famous for the vast amount of butterfly species found here. Most of these are endemic to the Western Ghats. The forest is peaceful and many trekking options are available as well.

Aralam village itself houses the famous Central State Farm, a government of India initiative built in 1971. This is one of the main production centres of hybrid coconut seeds in the country. A visit to the sanctuary is incomplete without visiting the great Katti Betta, the tallest peak in the area, which is 1145 high.

Activities: Day visit to the sanctuary is the standard activity here, but the place also offers interestingly trekking opportunities like trek to Ambalappara, or to Meenmutty falls. Ambalappara trek is over three days \where overnight stay will be at Ambalappara watchtower. The Meenmutty is a one-day package and you will be taking to the waterfalls in a jeep along with a guide.

1.1.7 Dharmadam Beach and Island

Dharmadam, a tranquil coastal town located in the Kannur district is a dream destination for travellers seeking a calm evening on a secluded beach. The beach and the island remain the key attractions with their coconut palms, green bushes and migratory birds.

1.2 Kozhikode

Discover the rich history and vibrant culture of Kozhikode, a coastal city nestled along the Malabar Coast of Kerala. Renowned for its trade legacy, Kozhikode offers a tapestry of experiences, from its pristine beaches to its bustling markets and historical landmarks. Sink your toes into the golden sands of Kozhikode Beach and witness breathtaking sunsets over the Arabian Sea. Explore the historic significance of the city at the iconic Kappad Beach, where Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama first set foot in India in 1498. Delve into the vibrant flavors of Malabar cuisine at the bustling SM Street, where aromatic spices and local delicacies tantalize the senses. Experience the architectural marvel of Mananchira Square, a sprawling park adorned with fountains and sculptures, offering a serene oasis in the heart of the city.

Nearest railway station: Kozhikode, about 3 km

Nearest airport: Calicut International Airport, about 29 km | Kannur International Airport, about 95 km

Homestays

Harivihar Heritage House

The Stone Vila-Ambadi

Hotels

The Gateway Hotel Beach Road Calicut (A Taj Hotel)

Hotel Marina Residency

Sea Queen Hotel

Hyson Heritage

Westway Hotel

Paramount Tower

The Raviz Calicut

Half Moon Residency

Emerald Hotel, Calicut

1.2.1 Kozhikode Beach

Kozhikode will always have a special place in the history of Kerala as it is here that Vasco-da-Gama first landed and the legendary Spice Route came into existence. This region still has a historic charm to it. Kozhikode Beach is the personification of the numerous characteristics that make Kozhikode so unique.

People flock in large numbers to view the sunset from the beach. One gets a fresh supply of seafood in the shacks that surround the place. Kallumekaya (mussels) is a local favourite. A walk to Dolphins Point at dawn ensures a meeting with playful dolphins. You are also greeted by a majestic lighthouse and two piers opening into the sea. Both have been here for over a hundred years. Children flock to Lions Park and the nearby marine water aquarium which is open on all days from 08:00 hrs to 20:00 hrs.

1.2.2 Kappad Beach

Kappad Beach has historically played an important role in the history of Kerala. On these shores, over 500 years ago in 1498, 170 men led by Vasco-da-Gama first stepped onto Kerala. The entire State, especially the Malabar Coast, would never be the same again.

A visit to Kozhikode is incomplete without a visit to this legendary site. The spice route flourished through this Beach. A walk in and around the place gives one an idea of its historical relevance. The rocks and small hills add to its charm. The nearby shacks are always stocked with excellent local delicacies and tea. Migratory birds can be spotted occasionally as well. Kappad Beach is a truly majestic destination, which will always hold an important place in our history.

1.2.3 Pazhassi Raja Museum & Art Gallery in Kozhikode

A veritable treasure trove for historians and connoisseurs of art, the Pazhassi Raja Museum is located in Kozhikode. The Pazhassi Raja Museum & Art Gallery adjacent to the museum displays the acclaimed paintings of Kerala's cherished artists, Raja Ravi Varma (1848 - 1906) whose works brought international repute to the State and his uncle Raja Raja Varma.

The museum is managed by the State Archaeology Department and has on display mural paintings, antique bronzes, ancient coins, models of temples, umbrella stones, dolmenoid cists (quadrangular burial chambers with capstones), and similar megalithic monuments.

The museum and the art gallery are named after the great Pazhassi Raja, born Kerala Varma of the Padinjare Kovilakom of the Kottayam Royal Family. The famous 'Pazhassi Revolt' (against the British East India Company during the second half of the 1700s) was led by Pazhassi Raja. Nicknamed the Lion of Kerala, Pazhassi Raja is also credited with introducing guerrilla warfare in the hills of Wayanad

to resist the increasingly intolerable British colonialism. This great freedom fighter was shot dead in an encounter on 30 November 1805.

Visiting Hours: 09:00 - 16:30 hrs.

Break 13:00 - 14:00 hrs.

Closed on Mondays and other public holidays.

1.2.4 Kadalundi Bird Sanctuary, Kozhikode

A cluster of scenic islands, beautiful hills and rare avian species would intrigue and entice every birdwatcher on the planet. This is exactly what the Kadalundi Bird Sanctuary has to offer its visitors. One is greeted by the Kadalundi River flowing into the Arabian Sea while migratory birds casually flit about.

This untouched land has over 60 species of migratory birds from across the planet that visits it during different times of the year. One can see seagulls, terns, sandpipers, sand plovers, red and greenshanks, turnstones and so on with November to April being the ideal viewing time. A small hill nearby gives you a panoramic view of the entire region. You can sit back and relax, with the odd otter peeking out at you playfully. This is indeed a paradise designed especially for bird lovers.

1.2.5 Sarovaram Bio Park

Located near Kottooly region, this eco-friendly space composed of wetlands and bird habitats has been developed in stages to protect the many species of mangroves and other flora. Witness the 7 mangrove species, 29 associated species and 34 species of birds, check out the musical fountain, aquarium and an open-air theatre, and enjoy boating along the canal connecting Korapuzha and Kallayi rivers.

Visiting Hours: 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Consider exploring the otter park and butterfly park.

Don't forget to check out the floating rafts and the board-walk.

1.2.6 Mananchira Pond & Gardens

Initially built as a bathing pool by the feudal lord of Calicut, this freshwater pond now caters to the drinking needs of the city. The surrounding park built in 1994 acts as a playground for football tournaments.

Take a stroll in the garden, check out the colonial-style lamp posts, laterite sculpted walls and musical fountains and picnic with your gang while absorbing the beauty of the pond.

The timings are 3.30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

You could also visit the public library nearby to check out an impressive collection of books.

Don't miss out on the Town Hall and Kerala Lalithakala Academy Art Gallery in the vicinity.

1.3 Wayanad

Lying amidst the majestic western ghats, Wayanad is a famous tourist destination that quenches the thirst of all kinds of travelers with its evergreen landscapes and blissful weather. Not only does it boast unparalleled tranquility with magical ambiance and a picture-perfect backdrop you need to satiate your emotional as well as physical state of mind but also has countless options for adventure junkies to test their hidden adventurous skills.

Hotels

The Coffee County Resorts (Starting at Rs 5,975) 3 Star Hotel
Vythiri Stream View (Starting at Rs 2,278) 3 Star Hotel
Karapuzha Village Resort (Starting at Rs 4,520) 3 Star Hotel
Banasura Hill Resort (Starting at Rs 3,919) 4 Star Hotel
The Serenity Resort (Starting at Rs5,299) 4 Star Hotel
Mount Xanadu Resort (Starting at Rs 11,088) 4 Star Hotel
Vythiri Village (Starting at Rs 6,477) 5 Star Hotel
Mountain Shadows (Starting at Rs25,900) 5 Star Hotel
Great Trails Wayanad by GRT Hotels (Starting at Rs 12,600) 5 Star Hotel

1.3.1 Eddakal Caves

Edakkal Caves are situated about 16 km from Sulthan Bathery and tourists have to trek up the Ambukuthi Hill to reach the caves. The trek up the hill, peppered with coffee plantations, is worth an experience and it takes almost 45 minutes to climb the hill. The lush greenery and scenic landscape around and the cool breeze that carries the aroma of coffee will surely make your journey an unforgettable one.

The name of Edakkal Caves literally means 'a stone in between'. As the name indicates, it seems that one boulder miraculously wedged in between two bigger ones to create a cave.

There are many legends associated with the gigantic fissure at Edakkal. People believe that Lord Rama, one of the earlier visitors of this area, shot an arrow which pierced the mountain and created a deep cleft there. The name of the hills, Ambukuthy too is derived from this legend. (In Malayalam, Ambu means arrow and kuthy means 'to pierce' and hence the name.)

Visting Hours: 9:30 am to 4:30 pm

Best time to visit: No:cmbrí to Maíck

1.3.2 Lakkidi View Point

Lakkidi is the gateway of Wayanad as it is located at the crest of the serpentine Thamarassery ghat pass. There are nine hairpin curves from Adivaram (Downhill) to Lakkidi through steep mountains and a journey through the serpentine ghat pass is worth an experience. It is about 2296 ft (700 m) above the sea level and the major town nearby is Vythiri which lies five km away.

The lush greenery of the hills, gorges and streams seen on both sides of the passage up the hill are sure to linger in the visitors' mind for a long time. Tourists often stop by Lakkidi View Point, the vantage point which offers dazzling views of the surrounding cliffs and valleys.

Lakkidi has also emerged as a popular hill destination with many expensive resorts and plantation stays providing stay facility for foreigners and other affluent tourists.

Visting hours: 12:00 am to 11:59 pm

Best time to visit: One should visit Lakkidi View Point at the time of early morning or early evening to get the best views.

1.3.3 Soochipara Waterfalls (Sentinel Rock Waterfalls)

Soochipara Waterfalls is a 3 tiered waterfall, dropping from a height of about 200 meters. The waterfall cascades down into a large pool, which is a good place for swimming and bathing. The name Soochipara given from the words soochi means rock and para means needle. One can see

needle-shaped rock here hence the name Soochipara. The water from Soochipara Falls later joins Chaliyar River after Vellarimala Hills near Cherambadi in Tamil Nadu.

This waterfall, surrounded by dense green forest, is one of the best waterfalls in Wayanad. Visitors have to trek down for about 2 km to reach the falls from the road point through well laid path. The trekking is of easy level, which takes about 30 minutes one way. There are high chances that visitors may get a glimpse of wildlife like Deer.

Timings: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Best time to visit: One should visit Soochipara waterfall is during monsoon season as you can see the waterfall at its fullest.

1.3.4 Meenmutty Waterfalls, Wayanad

Imagine water crashing onto the ground from over 1,000 ft. in three separate levels while an entire rainforest plays its role as the patient, supporting audience. This and much more await you at Meenmutty Falls, one among Wayanad's delightful treasures. It can be only accessed after an arduous 2 km jungle trek, the visuals on display at the summit are worth the effort. One has separate viewing points for each of the three decks of the waterfalls and due to its location this is one of the few natural wonders in the world that can be experienced in near seclusion. You feel at ease, while the lush greenery gently washes away all that ails your soul, as the roaring water gently soothes your senses. A masterpiece, the waterfalls lie on the Ooty route in Wayanad.

Visiting Hours :9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

1.3.5 Chembra Peak

Chembra is the highest peak in Wayanad district and lives up to its billing of being a picturesque location. It has managed to maintain its pristine nature over the years. Situated 2,100 m above sea level, this peak offers a breath-taking view of rare flora and fauna. One can come across many exotic species in these parts. The route to the peak itself has a brilliant view along with a heart-shaped lake, waterfalls and lush greenery the whole way. It is a prime spot for trekking but prior permission needs to be taken before going on these treks. Guided tours are available and can help in enhancing the entire experience.

Trekking trails

A full-day trekking package to Chembra peak is organized by the forest department. The moderate trekking path through tea plantations will take you the hridayasarassu. The best time to visit is during August-May and those who wish to take trekking must reach before 02.00 pm. Trekking starts from 07.00 am. Know more about Chembra peak trekking

1.3.6 Pookode Lake

A perennial freshwater lake near Lakkidi in Wayanad district, Pookode Lake is surrounded by a lush evergreen forest and resembles the shape of India's physical map. Kayaking and boating facilities, a freshwater aquarium, a children's park and a handicrafts and spices emporium are among the attractions in this major tourist hotspot of the district. Another big attraction of Pookode Lake is the widespread presence of wild animals and birds who can be spotted around the lake.

Best Time to visit: August to May are the best months to visit here.
Timings: The opening hours are from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

1.3.7 Banasura Hill Trekking

Head out for an enthralling trekking session in Banasura hill which is famous for being the highest mountain range in the Western ghats. The elevation of Banasura peak being 6800 ft above sea level makes the Banasura hill trekking truly astonishing and worthy to be availed when you look forward to some great adventures.

The Banasura hill trekking lets you witness a wide set of unique animals when you pass through the charming trails like wild boars, elephant and deers. The trail of Wayanad's second-highest peak contains some spectacular aspects such as lush green hills, thick forests, steepy rock terrain and plain grasslands. Trek for about 9 km and reach the peak to enjoy the breathtaking views of such a brilliant landscape of green hills and floating clouds.

Starting/End Point - Banasura Hill resort
Activity Timing: 7 hours (Between 10 AM to 5 PM)

1.3.8 Kanthanpara Waterfalls, Wayanad

Kanthanpara is a quaint little waterfall in Wayanad which is famous for its secluded and serene vibe. The cool, sparkling waters at this lesser-known destination are sure to soothe all who wish to rejuvenate in a silent environment. Surrounded by beautiful greenery on all sides, it is worth spending a day picnicking in the calming embrace of nature.

Visiting hours: 09:00 hrs. to 17:00 hrs.

1.4 Kasaíagod

Kasargod is a district located in the state of Kerala, India. It is situated in the northernmost part of Kerala and shares its borders with Karnataka, and lies on the coast of Arabian Sea. Kasargod is known for its beautiful beaches, backwaters, and historic forts. Some of the popular tourist attractions in the district include Bekal Fort, Ananthapura Lake Temple, Chandragiri Fort, Kappil Beach, and the Valiyaparamba Backwaters. The district is also known for its unique culture, which is a blend of Malayalam and Tulu traditions.

1.4.1 Bekal Fort

Kasargod boasts of the largest and best preserved Fort in the whole of Kerala, bordered by a magnificent beach. Shaped like a giant keyhole, the historic Bekal Fort was built in the 17th century. This historic monument offers a superb view of the Arabian Sea from its tall observation towers, which were occupied by gigantic cannons till a few centuries ago.

Near the Fort is an old Mosque that is said to have been built by Tipu Sultan of Mysore. Originally constructed by the rulers of the ancient Kadampa Dynasty, the Fort changed hands over the years to the Kolathiri Rajas, the Vijayanagara Empire, Tipu Sultan and finally, the British East India Company.

Today, the Bekal Fort and its scenic surroundings are fast becoming an international tourist destination and a favourite shooting locale for film makers.

Enjoy the captivating vistas of the Arabian Sea from the Observation Tower, and explore the unique water tank featuring a flight of steps, coastal artillery and more.

The fort remains open for visitors from 8 :00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

1.4.2 Chandragiri Fort & River

Seeped in history, the Chandragiri Fort in Kasaragod lies at the confluence of the Payaswini River and the Arabian Sea. This 17th century fort was built by Sivappa Naik of Bedanore. Situated atop hill ruins. People come here to watch the sunset from the ancient Kizhur Siva Temple at Chandragiri. While the nearby Bekal Fort is a tourist hotbed, those visiting this more serene location will be rewarded with a panoramic view of the lush landscape on display below.

Attractions Here:

Chandragiri Cruises: Boat trips to nearby islands and palm groves. Boarding Point - Chandragiri Bridge.

Chandragiri Boat Club: The Boat Club offers speed boat rides, houseboat cruises, island camping and wildlife tours in the hinterlands. Fishermen near the Chandragiri Bridge will give you a ride on the backwaters and arrange trips to nearby islands.

Best Time to visit: March to August are the best months to visit here.

Timings: The opening hours are from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.

1.4.3 Ranipuram Peak

Ranipuram is a peak and a major tourist attraction in the Kasaragod district of the Indian state of Kerala. The trek takes you to the highest peak of the Kasaragod district.

Ranipuram is located in the Western Ghats, a mountain range along the western coast of India. It is approximately 85 kilometers away from the district headquarters, Kasaragod, and around 320 kilometers from Bangalore.

The trek to Ranipuram is a 5-kilometer trail that goes through a blend of dense shola forests and stunning grassy expanses. The excitement of reaching the summit, where you trek amidst the clouds, is an unforgettable experience that should not be missed.

Timings: 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM

1.4.4 Kappil Beach

Beaches are about feeling one's own heart beat frantically as a mighty being pulsates right in front of us. The ebbs and flows of our existence become one with sea, and that is why the few who make the trip to Kappil Beach, swear by it at all times. It is famous for its seclusion and rightly so. Large spaces of pristine sand and a divine water body in front with no other disturbance whatsoever is something people seek in growing numbers these days. Among the finest and cleanest beaches in God's Own Country, this is a destination perfect for those who seek solitude and a place to face their own selves in peace.

By Road

Bekal Fort Bus Stand, about 4.1 km

By Rail

Kasaragod Railway Station, about 13.3 km

By Air

Mangalore International Airport, about 70.7 km

1.4.5 Thaikadapuram Beach

Thaikadappuram Beach is located in the small village of Nileshwaram, 40 km from Kasargod town. The beach is situated in the middle of the Arabian Sea and the Thejaswini River. This serene beach is famous for the appearance of the rare species of Olive Ridley turtles which come to the shore in the monsoons to lay eggs in its breeding season. The non-governmental organisation called 'Neithal' runs an Olive Ridley breeding centre to ensure that the species does not go extinct.

The project was established in 2001 in order to save sea turtles and spread awareness among the inhabitants of the place about the importance of protecting the creatures. This tourist spot, lined with palm trees, is best for a laid-back vacation. Visits during the evenings are a must to enjoy a beautiful sunset. Relatively unexplored and so not crowded, it is an ideal spot for unwinding at.

By Road

Nileshwar Bus Stand, about 4.8 km

By Rail

Nileshwar Railway Station, about 6 km

By Air

Kannur International Airport, about 81.3 km

2. SOUTH KERALA

2.1 Alappuzka

Also known as Alappuzha, Alleppey will take your breath away with its emerald green backwaters, palm-fringed lakes and beautiful stretches of lush paddy fields in the heart of Kerala.

2.1.1 Alappuzha Beach

The Alappuzha beach, also known as the Alleppey Beach, is famous for local getaways, its intrinsic beauty and a 150 years old pier which stretches into the sea. Relaxing under the palm groves and picnicking beside the beach are fantastic options available to those visiting the beach. Alleppey Beach is a host to many festivals like Sand Art festival and Alappuzha Beach Festival.

In addition to the pristine beauty of Alleppey Beach, some exciting activities and attractions are present in and around this destination. Vijaya Beach Park has amusement amenities which acts as a plus point for the people visiting the beach. The Nehru Trophy Boat Race which takes place every year in August gives this beach another reason to become the most famous attraction in Kerala.

Activities:

1. Water Sports
2. Yoga & Meditation
3. Shopping
4. Eat Out
5. Vijaya Beach Park

2.1.2 Alappuzha Light House

Located on the golden shores of the Arabian Sea, the Alappuzha lighthouse in Alappuzha district is the oldest on the southwest coast of India, and dates back 150 years. It offers stunning panoramic views of the beach.

Do climb up the staircase of the lighthouse to see the stunning scenery from the top.

Visiting Hours: The lighthouse is open all days of the week from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. only, so plan your visit accordingly.

2.1.3 Marari Beach

Marari Beach in the Alappuzha district is a go-to destination for beach bums who want to laze around in a peaceful, serene and pristine environment. The name 'Marari' is short for Mararikulam, which is a beautiful fishing village lying along this coast.

The swaying coconut palms and golden sands of the beach are perfect companions for those who want to escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. Take a long beach walk and, if you so desire, pamper yourself with a bout of traditional Ayurvedic wellness treatment. Tourists have the option to rent beach chairs and umbrellas but don't expect any water sports or beach shacks. You can also go on a tour through the neighbouring villages. Stroll around or cycle and observe the slow pace of life in the village. Watching the fisherfolk engaged in their daily chores is an interesting sight.

2.1.4 Krishnapuram Palace

Built during the period of King Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma (1729-1758 AD), Krishnapuram Palace in Alappuzha district houses the largest single band of mural painting so far discovered in Kerala. The three-metre high mural depicts 'Gajendra Moksham,' the Puranic story of Lord Vishnu rescuing the elephant Gajendra from the clutches of a crocodile. Covering an area of 1.87 acres, the palace-turned-archaeological museum showcases burial urns, stone sculptures, bronze antiquities, swords, measuring vessels and cannonballs from the late medieval period.

Timings : 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM (closed on Monday)

2.1.5 Kuttanad Backwater Cruise

There is a reason why the world lauds the backwater experience of Kerala. Picturesque, calm, serene and offering the rarest of experiences, these backwaters are truly a source of fascination and delight. Among a handful of these that flow into our hearts, the Kuttanad backwaters indeed top the list. Considered to be among the finest water worlds in the planet, Kuttanad attracts visitors from all

parts of the world. Landscapes draped in mind-blowing greenery, coconut palms, backwaters, and amazing village life experiences – it's a package that will win your hearts.

Known as the 'Rice Bowl of Kerala', Kuttanad stretches across an area of 500 sq. km. The enchanting waterways in the region consist of lakes, canals, rivers and many rivulets. One of the unique features of Kuttanad is that farming is carried out here below sea level, which is rare. A boat ride across the Kuttanad backwaters is a must-have experience on your trip to the area.

By Road

Ambalappuzha Bus Stand, about 10.8 km

By Rail

Ambalappuzha Railway Station, about 9.5 km

By Rail

Ambalappuzha Railway Station, about 9.5 km

2.1.6 Punnamada Lake

Punnamada lake is a charm that definitely needs to be explored on your visit to Alleppey. Part of Vembanad, the largest lake in Kerala, Punnamada is a backwater beauty that has found mentions in folk and film songs in Kerala. Punnamada is one such lake where the famous Nehru trophy boat race takes place annually. The enthralling race is one of the most awaited events by both locals and foreigners alike where the people get fiery watching the snake boats glide past in style through the backwaters. During the Onam festival, people from near and far gather here to celebrate with music, dance and feasts.

The lake extends from Alappuzha in the south to Azhikode in the north, covering the three main islands of Pathiramanal, Perumbalam and Pallippuram. Travellers can take a scenic boat tour around the lake and taste the delicious local cuisine where fresh seafood is prepared in the traditional Kerala style. The place is also rich in history and heritage as it is bounded by numerous temples, churches, museums and other cultural landmarks.

2.1.7 Kumarakom

A labyrinth of backwaters with shimmering water, the brilliant green of mangrove forests, coconut palms lining the embankments, blue skies, flocks of migratory birds skimming the water – that is Kumarakom, a veritable dreamland! Every year, more than seven million tourists visit Kerala, a place that the National Geographic Magazine has described as one of the must-see places in a lifetime. Kumarakom is an important stopover for a majority of these tourists. This famous tourist backwater hub is a cluster of islands on the eastern banks of Lake Vembanad. Compared to adjacent villages, the lake has its maximum length and breadth near Kumarakom - about eight km. With the huge lake on one side and with a network of calm canals running through it, Kumarakom, a masterpiece created by man and Nature together, enjoys a unique position on the map of Kerala.

2.2 Kochi

Surrounded by Western Ghats on the east and the Arabian Sea on the west, Kochi is famous for its iconic fishing nets, historic museums and ancient mosques.

Hotels

Ibis Kochi City Center -An Accore Brand (Starting at Rs 3,500) 3 Star Hotel

Hotel Aiswarya (Starting at Rs 1,321) 3 Star Hotel

Hotel Arches (Starting at Rs 2,148) 3 Star Hotel

Presidency Airport Hotel (Starting at Rs 4,838) 4 Star Hotel

Ginger Hotel Kalamassery (Starting at Rs 2,899) 4 Star Hotel

Keys Select by Lemon Tree Hotels, Kochi (Starting at Rs 3,967) 4 Star Hotel

Taj Malabar Resort & Spa,Kochi (Starting at Rs20,500) 5 Star Hotel

Radisson Blu Kochi (Starting at Rs 5,868) 5 Star Hotel

Holiday Inn Cochin (Starting at Rs 7,190) 5 Star Hotel

2.2.1 Mattancherry Palace

The Mattancherry Palace, also known as Dutch Palace, is one of the finest examples of the Kerala style of architecture interspersed with colonial influences. Located at around 12 km from Ernakulam, it was built around 1545 C.E. by the Portuguese as a present to King Veera Kerala Varma of Kochi dynasty. It came to be known as the Dutch Palace as it underwent major repairs at the hands of the Dutch. It is famous for its long and spacious halls along with its central courtyard. It is also the home of the deity of the royal family, Pazhayannur Bhagavathy (the Deity of Pazhayannur).

This double storied palace has a lovely collection of murals. These depict some of the great Indian epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata along with revered Gods of the Hindu faith like Lord Krishna of Guruvayur Temple. The great works of Sanskrit poet Kalidasa have also been depicted. The mural paintings cover an area of almost 300 sq. km. One gets an idea of the lives of the royal family with some of the other exhibits. These include the life-size portraits of the Kings of Cochin since 1864, sheathed swords, daggers and axes besides ceremonial spears decorated with feathers. Royal caps, coins issued by the Kings of Cochin along with plans laid out for Cochin by the Dutch can also be viewed here.

Visiting Hours: 10:00 - 17:00 hours on all days except Fridays.

2.2.2 Cherai Beach

Around two dozen kilometres from the industrial district of Ernakulam and to the side of the Vypeen Island lies every swimmer's paradise, Cherai Beach. It is a favourite haunt of those looking for a relaxing swim with the backdrop of coconut groves being the added incentive. It provides a wonderful view of the famous Chinese Fishing Nets or Cheena Vala well. The nearby shacks provide you with fresh cuisine that fills you up perfectly after a delightful swim.

The seashells found here are unique and one often runs into dolphins in this area. It is the ideal blend of both the backwaters and the sea. The area itself has seen many new resorts and hotels crop up, which have facilitated the increase in tourist activity. Today it is amongst the most visited beaches in Kerala with a view that make it near impossible to tear yourself away once you get there.

2.2.3 Fort Kochi

Set foot into Fort Kochi and you will be instantly transported to a different time period. This place is steeped in the history and culture of all who have occupied it through the ages. Its roots and essence are unique in its diversity.

While walking through K. J. Herschel Road, one gets a glimpse of Fort Immanuel. This former Portuguese bastion, built in 1503, is a sign of the strategic alliance between the Maharaja of Cochin and the Portuguese Monarch. Further along the road one can see the Dutch Cemetery, housing the graves of former Colonists. People also love visiting the nearby Thakur House, a bungalow built in typical colonial era style.

Vasco House is another must visit landmark as it is said to have been the explorer's actual residence. It is among the oldest Portuguese buildings in Kochi. A visit to the legendary Bishop House is an enriching experience and many more.

The streets, shops and the residents operate at their own pace. Time is rather abstract in Fort Kochi, and visitors will feel instantly transported into another era altogether.

2.2.4 Jew Town

Jew Town, a narrow street between Mattancherry Palace and the Synagogue, is a favourite haunt of antique hunters. Some of the most pristine and historically relevant artefacts of our times have been unearthed by our visitors here. While a huge bronze vessel catches your eye first, each of the shops here contains beautiful items with quirky and interesting stories. They are like fractions of history, waiting for the right person to come and finally claim them.

2.2.5 Marine Drive

Marine Drive is among the most beautiful and popular destinations in Kochi. It is frequented by locals and visitors alike due to the magnificent view of the backwaters and Kochi Harbour available here. The walkway is perfect to enjoy a relaxing stroll at any time of the day. Around the location, numerous restaurants and malls have come up which make it the de facto stop for shoppers as well. There are several boat jetties along the way and the International Boat Jetty Complex is situated here as well.

At night, the great Rainbow Bridge comes to life with vibrant lights and viewing it at this time is highly recommended. The entire area is a unique specimen of manmade wonders interspersed with natural gifts right in the midst of a sprawling metropolis.

2.2.4 Paradesi Synagogue

The Paradesi Synagogue, nestled in Kochi, India, stands as a testament to centuries of Jewish heritage in the region. Built in 1568 by Sephardic Jews fleeing persecution in the Iberian Peninsula, this architectural marvel blends traditional Jewish design with local Kerala influences.

Upon entering, you'll be greeted by the synagogue's exquisite blend of traditional Jewish architecture and local Kerala influences, evident in its intricate hand-painted Chinese porcelain tiles and elegant Belgian chandeliers. As you explore the interior, ancient Torah scrolls and religious artifacts offer a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Jewish heritage preserved within its walls. Beyond its architectural marvels, the synagogue stands as a testament to the multicultural fabric of Kochi, inviting visitors to delve into the city's vibrant history.

The timings are from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The synagogue remains closed on Fridays, Saturdays and Jewish Holidays.

