



ALAPPUZHA

Alappuzha is all that you come looking for. Shy and conservative in its conduct, the district doesn't have to take any effort to garner extra attention. Caressed by the Arabian Sea in the west and a vast network of lakes and freshwater rivers criss-crossing it, this backwater country shelters some of the most exotic bird life. Alappuzha town too has an irresistible old-world charm with its colonial factories, warehouses and coir retting firms. The singularity of this land however is the region called Kuttanad - a land of lush paddy fields referred to as the 'Rice Bowl of Kerala', one of the few places in the world where farming is done below sea level. Watch the breeze ruffle green waves on the paddy fields, laud along during the annual boat races, build sand castles on the unblemished Allepey beach, buy a chunk of fresh fish from the local fisherfolk and learn how to wrap a plantain leaf to make the perfect 'fish pollichathu'.

Tourist Map of Alappuzha District

Not to scale



ACCESSING ALAPPUZHA

Telephone Access Code: +91-477

Air: Nearest International Airports:

- Thiruvananthapuram (150 km)
- Nedumbassery, Kochi (85 km)

Rail: Railway Enquiry Ph: 2253965

Road: KSRTC Enquiry Ph: 2252501

Ferry Services: Enquiry Ph: 2252015

- SWTD (public boat service) enquiry Ph: 2252510

Tourist Information Offices:

- **District Tourism Promotion Council**

Boat Jetty Road, Near KSRTC Bus Station

Alappuzha - 11 Ph: 2251796 / 2253308 Fax: 2251720

Email: info@dtcalappuzha.com www.dtpcalappuzha.com

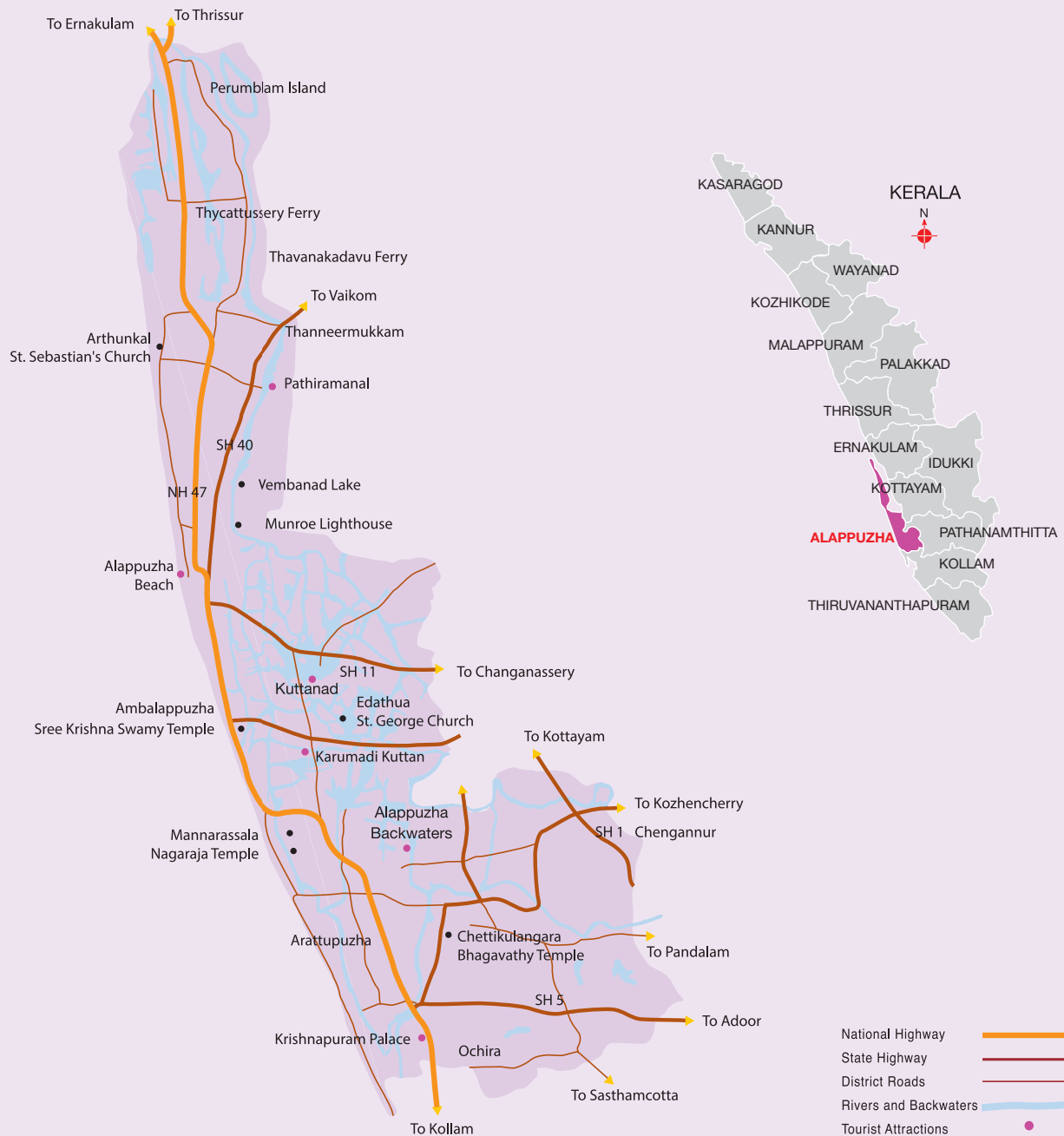
- **District Office**, Dept. of Tourism, House Boat Terminal

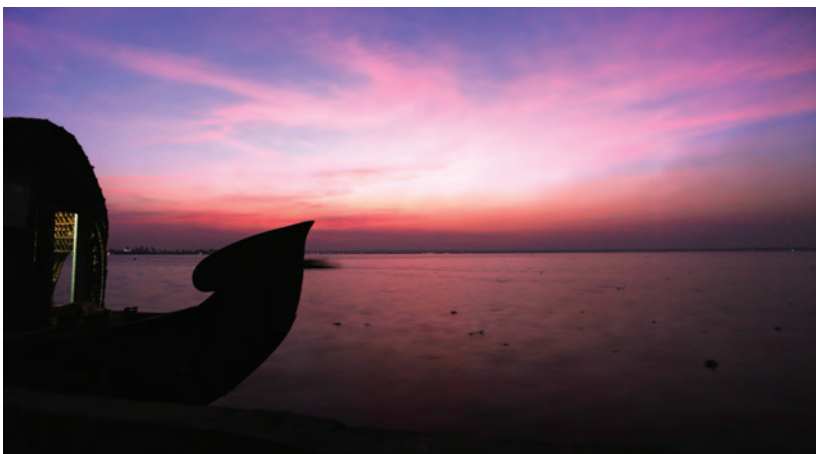
Building, Finishing Point, Thathampally P.O.,

Alappuzha 688013 Ph: 2260722

Email: ddalp@keralatourism.org

- **Tourist Information Office** Ph: 2238170





Alappuzha Backwaters: The Kettuvallam was once just a floating rice barge. It was the British rule that brought along with it a steady inflow of tourists, thus marking the commercialisation of the Kettuvallam. Everything authentic became part of the selling dynamics and the houseboats were employed for various sightseeing ventures, much notably for the snake boat races, where tourists huddled in deluxe vallams to watch the excitement live. Today over 400 houseboats dot the Alappuzha backwaters; most of them equipped with furnished rooms, toilets and a long strip of a verandah. However, one thing that remains untouched through these makeovers is the assurance of witnessing the best dawn of your life. The tender green of paddy fields, and the far-flung Chinese fishing nets add to the resplendent charm of the sunrise. With its labyrinth of waterways, Alappuzha, extolled by travellers as the 'Venice of the East', is one of Kerala's most exotic backwater destinations. Dig into scrumptious seafood specialties like karimeen pollichathu, squid thoran and neymeen fry along with a swig of freshly tapped toddy. If you periodically spare a glance up above, you are likely to catch sight of a man wearing a checkered lungi with an earthen pot and knife strapped onto his hip, clambering higher onto the head of the coconut palm in quest of some fresh toddy.

Kuttanad: Transport yourself into an everyday bucolic moment of Kuttanad. Here,

green is the monochrome. Paddy, sown by hands onto water clogged fields, is harvested two seasons later and brought to the table with an earthy undertaste often accompanied with pot-tamarind based fish curry. Banana, cassava and yam peep out of every backyard. Boats ply past, some with curious visitors and others with fishermen hurling their nets onto the lake for the day's catch. Toddy tappers and rubber tappers go nudging the trees, and birds glide past the lotus blooms and water hyacinths in search of insects. Kuttanad, called the 'Rice Bowl of Kerala' for its wealth of paddy crops and unique usage of inland waterways, is at the very heart of the backwaters. This perhaps is the only region in the world where farming is done 1.5 to 2 m below sea level. While you are here, do explore Champakulam on the banks of the Pamba river popular for its Moolam boat race and St. Mary's Forane church, one of the oldest churches in India.

Marari Beach: Marari Beach, located in Mararikulam, a sleepy little village, is an idyllic destination for a vacation. The nearest attraction to the beach is Mararikulam, which is known as the Fishermen's Village. This beach is ideal for sunbathing.

Alappuzha Beach: At the Alappuzha beach, you can literally walk into the sea. The waves dash under your feet and the sandy shores are left far behind, thanks to the 140-year old pier built by Captain Crawford.

In the distance, the white-washed lighthouse stands tall as if waiting to be captured into a photograph. On a good day, the beach is extremely active with a host of interesting activities like an impromptu game of football and street vendors selling piping hot steamed chana. During the New Year the beach brims with festive charm, thanks to the Sand Art Fest and the Beach Fest. The beach is a favourite amongst children owing to the toy train that chugs in the Vijaya Park and the countless water sports and boat rides in the adjacent Sea View Park which has a chunk of the backwater canal in its property.

Sea View Park: (3 km from Alappuzha)

The park offers boating facilities and a swimming pool. Boat rentals for 10 minutes: • Round boat (4 seater): Rs. 10 • Pedal boat (2 seater): Rs. 15 • Pedal boat (4 seater): Rs. 25 • Photography permit: Rs. 15 • Videography permit: Rs. 100.

The Vijaya Beach Park:

(3 km from Alappuzha) A picnic spot with a children's park and boating facilities, this park is a favourite leisure centre among children. Entrance fee: Rs. 2 per person; free entry for children below 5 years. Boating charge: Rs. 10 for 10 minutes. Other facilities for children: toy train, bicycles. Video permit: Rs. 25, Camera permit: Rs. 5. (Open during 1500 - 2000 hrs.)

Krishnapuram Palace:

(47 km from Alappuzha) The dark damp walls of the Krishnapuram Palace flaunts a

three-metre high mural, depicting the story of *Gajendramoksham* (the salvation of Gajendra, a mythological elephant). Dating back to the 18th century, this exquisite piece of art is one of the largest murals in Kerala. Situated in close proximity to the Krishnapuram temple, up above a miniature hillock, nestled between the terraced gardens and ponds, is the Ettukettu Palace built by King Marthanda Varma. This palace at Karthikapally in Kayamkulam is famous for its antique sculptures, paintings and bronze artefacts. With dormer windows, red-oxide floors and gabled roof, the architecture of the palace is faintly reminiscent of the Padmanabhapuram Palace. Padippuras, doors that have cached plans, conspiracies, and treasons welcome you further. Long corridors lead you into rooms that belonged to men who ruled the land. Their riches are now spread out on shelves and cases. Somewhere in the glimmer of the double-sided sword once used by the Kayamkulam kings, you rediscover your childhood fascination for stories. (Open 0900 hrs to 1630 hrs. Monday holiday)

Nehru Trophy Boat Race: The year was 1952. Jawaharlal Nehru, the late Prime Minister of India was at Kuttanad watching the snake boats slither into the backwaters, their oars rowing in concurrence, the tempo of the *vanchipattu* (boat song) in high spirits complementing the enthusiastic cheering from the crowd. Forgoing his security concerns the Prime Minister decided to get on one of these *vanchis* for a spur-of-the-moment ride. Such is



the spirit of the Nehru Trophy Boat Race. It helps you forget the harsh realities of life and drags even the most tepid person and infuses a sense of zest and zeal in them. A snake boat made using anjili wood, around 100 foot long, can hold almost 100 rowers in it. Held in the Punnamada lake, on the second Saturday of August every year, the winner of the Nehru Trophy Boat Race takes home a replica of the original snake boat in silver.

Q, S, T and R Block Kayal: A testimony to the engineering prowess of the Keralites, the Q, S, T and R blocks are few of the many pieces of land reclaimed from the backwaters of Kuttanadu, and transformed to lush paddy fields where cultivation is made possible much below the sea level. Visit the Q, S, T and R blocks to witness the process that started 100 years ago. Here, cultivation and habitation happen four to ten feet below sea level. R Block, nearly 850 acres, is the largest among the reclaimed areas.

Andhakaranazhy Beach:

(30 km from Alappuzha)
Located in Cherthala, the stunning Andhakaranazhy beach is a confluence between Arabian Sea and backwaters of Kerala. The intersection of Arabian Sea with the backwaters leads to the sandy sedimentation called 'Azhi' (isthmus). Striding through the soft sands and getting into the cool water is the ideal way to explore the beach. A lighthouse is located nearby.

Thottappally Beach:

(22 km from Alappuzha)
Thottappally beach is located close to the NH 47 between Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram. It is especially renowned for Thottappally Spillway, one of the spillways which is strategically important to maintain the water level in the paddy fields of Kuttanad. The other spillway is at Thanneermukkom. The Thottappally Spillway splits the Thottappally lake with the fresh water part to the east and the saline Thottappally river mouth to the west merging with the Arabian Sea.

Karumadi Kuttan Stupa:

(3 km east of Ambalappuzha)
Karumadi kuttan (literally 'the boy from Karumadi') is an endearing name given to one of the oldest installations of Buddha known in the region. Many fascinating legends are associated with this 11th century statue

of Lord Buddha, protected by the State Archaeological Department. The locals regard the Kuttan with affection, and he is credited with many healing powers.

Kumarakodi Asan Smarakam:

(20 km south of Alappuzha)
Mahakavi N. Kumaran Asan was one of the greatest poets of Malayalam literature. He was also a great philosopher, thinker and a social reformer. His smarakam (final resting place) is situated at Kumarakodi, on the banks of the Pallana river. There is a library, which houses the poems written by the great poet.

Kunchan Smarakam:

(10 km south of Alappuzha)
Kunchan Nambiar, the renowned bard and satirist of Kerala, is known for the art form of Ottan Thullal, which he single-handedly developed. The smarakam, established in September 1967, serves as a memorial and aims to promote and popularize traditional folk arts. It also imparts training in Thullal to children. The centre conducts public performances on 'Kunchan Day', held on May 5th every year. Kunchan Nambiar has the rare distinction of having two memorials in the state - the other being at his birthplace in Palakkad.

Pathiramanal: *(1 1/2 hrs by motor boat/30 min. by speedboat from Alappuzha)*

Spread over 10 acres, this little island on the backwaters is a favourite haunt of hundreds of rare migratory birds from different parts of the world. Lying between the backwaters of Thaneermukkom and Kumarakom, a boat ride through the serene waters will take you to the island. According to mythology, a young brahmin dived into the Vembanad Lake to perform his evening ablutions and the water made way for land to rise from below, thus creating the enchanting island of Pathiramanal (sands of midnight).

Thakazhi Museum and Smrithimandapam:

(22 km from Alappuzha)
This museum-cum-memorial hall is dedicated to the memory of the late Thakazhi Sivasankaran Pillai (1912-1999), the famous writer who won the Jnanpith award in 1984, and whose writings include 35 novels and 600 short stories. Ph: 0477-2274243.
(Open during 0930 - 1630 hrs except on Mondays)



Vayalar Rama Varma

Smrithimandapam: *(26 Km from Alleppey)*

Vayalar Rama Varma, often known as Vayalar, was a modern Malayalam language poet and lyricist from Kerala. His famous works include Sargasangeetham, Mulankaadu, Padamudrakal, Aayisha and Oru Judas Janikkunnu. The memorial to the poet is at his home Raghava Parambu in Vayalar.

Revi Karunakaran Memorial Museum:

(2 km from Alappuzha)
A remarkable personality, the late Revi Karunakaran played a pivotal role in the development of the coir industry. An avid collector of exquisite works of art, he eventually became the custodian of many fabulous masterpieces from around the world. Among the items displayed in the museum are crystal wares, especially those from the world-renowned Swarovski, ivory and Tanjore paintings. The museum also has a space dedicated for decor and architectural marvels called 'Kerala Room'.

Ph: +91-477-2242923, www.rkkmuseum.com
(Open 0900 hrs to 1700 hrs on all days except Mondays & national holidays)

Locals: Rs. 150/- Foreigners: Rs. 350 per head

A.R. Rajaraja Varma Smarakam:

(44 km from Alappuzha)

The A.R. Rajaraja Varma Memorial, located behind the Sree Krishna Temple, Mavelikkara, was established in 1990. A.R. Rajaraja Varma was a great poet who wrote widely in Sanskrit and Malayalam. The memorial includes the house at Mavelikkara where he lived and his

tomb. The memorial organises academic activities and literary workshops to promote Malayalam language and literature.

Alappuzha Canal: *(3 km from Alappuzha)*

The vast network of canals and its promenades lined with eateries, shops selling ethnic artefacts and so on are a major tourist attraction. The Punnamada Nehru Trophy Finishing Point Boat Terminal Complex is one of the major backwater tourism attractions in Alappuzha.

Pandavan Rock: *(46 km from Alappuzha)*

Situated at a distance of around one kilometre from the Chengannur bazaar, this place has a great historical significance. The Pandavan rock is the only historic place at Alleppey, which has been mentioned in the mythological stories of the Mahabharata. It is believed to be the same place where pandavas took shelter in the caves, while wandering in the jungles during exile. The place, historic as well as beautiful, is a great picnic spot where you can go for a trek as it has many exceptional view points.

Alleppey Beach Festival:

The Alleppey Beach Festival is jointly organised by the District Tourism Promotion Council and Alappuzha Municipality as part of the New Year celebrations. A host of cultural programmes and activities are conducted during the fest. The beach sky adorns a zillion kites in the daytime and fireworks bloom over the calm sea at night, marking the New Year.