

Volume 02

March 2025 Issue

Hearth & Soul

Pothichoru pages

05

Pothichoru

The art of wrapping a humble staple of Kerala, the true charm of food

The Essentials

Discover the core essentials behind Malayali cuisine- the soul of Kerala

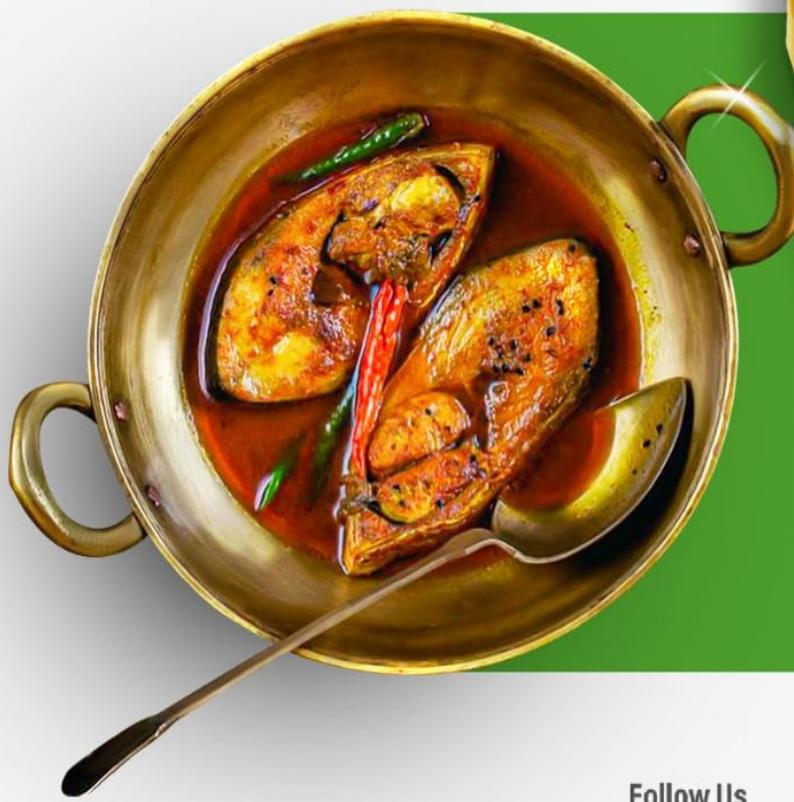
Classic Recipes

A special regional recipe, a timeless favourite. Must-try for your next cook!

The Soul Food of
Kerala



നാട്ടിക്കരണവില്ല ഗുണം ഒട്ടേറ് കുറയാത്ര



www.pavizhamoils.in

Follow Us

PAVIZHAM
nature's goodness.

Hearth & Soul
Issue 02, March 2025

Published by: Diya Biju
Editor-in-Chief: Diya Biju
Design & Layout: Diya Biju
Contributors: Images sourced from the Internet

Email: 202303010235@karnavatiuniversity.edu.in

Printed & Distributed by: Diya Biju

2025, Hearth & Soul. All rights reserved. This magazine is purely meant for academic purposes as required by the curriculum at Unitedworld Institute of Design. All credits and sources have been duly given unless otherwise stated. No commercial interest or gain is intended from the print publication.

Editor's Note

Namaskaram and welcome to Hearth & Soul!

Food in a Malayali home is more than just sustenance—it's a story, a memory, and a tradition passed down through generations. From the aroma of freshly brewed chai to the sizzle of mustard seeds in coconut oil, every dish carries warmth, culture, and a deep sense of belonging. In this issue, we celebrate Kerala's soulful home cooking—the everyday meals that rarely find a place on restaurant menus but define our cuisine.

Experience the nostalgia of pothichoru, the comfort of kappa puzhukku, and the artistry of karimeen pollichathu. Discover Kerala's vegetarian treasures, where coconut, spices, and fresh produce come together in harmony. We also take you inside a Malayali home, where food is not just about taste but about the love and togetherness it fosters.

As you turn these pages, we invite you to step into the kitchens of Kerala, savor its timeless flavors, and perhaps rediscover your own connection with food. Happy reading and happy cooking!

Diya Biju
Editor-in-Chief, Hearth & Soul



Table of Contents



01 The Essentials

Ingredients present in every Malayali's home, the true soul of the cuisine.

02 Maveli Breakfast

Spicy, savory, and comforting Malayali breakfasts to start the day right, iconic combinations and more.

05 Pothichoru Pages

Unraveling a tradition in a dish- pothichoru, peeling the banana leaf; layer by layer.

07 Vegetarian Treasures

Explore the hidden gems of Kerala's Vegetarian meals and recipes of dishes like Avial and Erissery.

09 Karimeen & the sea

Karimeen, Kerala's favourite fish and other local seafood dishes, along with a Karimeen fish fry recipe.

11 Home cook's day

A talk with a home cook, from Kerala about the experience of Malayali food.

12 Classic Recipes

A feature for a traditional and timeless recipes, loved by all from Kerala, a must-try for your next cook.

13 Oru Chaya Kada

Kerala's chaya kada is a cultural hub for tea, snacks and conversations. A second home for malayalis.

The soul Essentials

Ingredients present in every Malayali's home, the true soul of the cuisine.



Homemade Masala Mixes

Every Malayali home has its own signature spice blends, passed down through generations. They include Garam Masala (cinnamon, cardamom, cloves), Meen Masala (Fish masala), and Sambar Powder (a blend of lentils, coriander, and chilies).

Coconut (Thenga) - The heart of Kerala Cuisine

Coconut is to a Malayali kitchen what salt is to the sea—it's everywhere! Coconut oil not only flavors dishes but is also used for tempering and skincare. Freshly grated coconut enhances stir-fries (thoran) and chutneys (chammanthi), while coconut milk lends its signature creaminess to stews, payasams, and fish curries. No wonder a Malayali kitchen is incomplete without a stocked coconut supply!

From everyday cooking to festive delicacies, coconut defines Kerala's flavors. For the richest taste, try extracting fresh coconut milk at home—it elevates any dish, especially a good payasam (kheer) with its natural sweetness and depth.



Tamarind: The Soul of Kerala

Also called “pulli” in malayalam. The tangy, a slightly sweet flavor of the Malabar Tamarind is what gives many dishes their signature taste. From Pulissery (buttermilk curry) to Rasam, this ingredient balances flavors beautifully.



The Uruli – A Cooking Vessel with History

The uruli, a traditional Kerala brass vessel, is used for slow-cooking curries, payasam, and Ayurvedic medicines, enhancing flavor and authenticity. Beyond ingredients, the uruli holds a special place in Malayali kitchens. This heavy-bottomed brass or bronze pot has been used for centuries in homes to cook everything. The uruli embodies Kerala's deep-rooted connection with brass cookware and time-honored cooking techniques. The uruli isn't just cookware, it's a symbol of tradition, nostalgia, and culinary artistry in Kerala homes.

Why Use an Uruli?

- Even Heat Distribution – Perfect for slow-cooked curries and desserts
- Enhances Flavors – The metal interacts with food to deepen taste
- Timeless Charm – A kitchen heirloom that connects generations

Pro Tip: Season your uruli with oil before first use to prevent food from sticking!

The Magical Trio – Curry Leaves, Mustard Seeds & Shallots

Curry Leaves: The Aroma of Kerala

The unmistakable fragrance of curry leaves spluttering in hot oil is a sensory experience every Malayali relates to. More than just a flavor booster, curry leaves are packed with health benefits and are often grown in home gardens.

Mustard Seeds: The Art of Tempering for an earthy flavour punch

A simple teaspoon of mustard seeds popping in a pot of hot oil can elevate a dish instantly. It's the first step in most Kerala recipes, adding an earthy nuttiness that defines the cuisine.

Shallots: Small But Mighty Flavourful

Locally known as "cheriya ulli", these tiny pink-hued onions pack a punch. Whether caramelized in fish curry or ground into a paste for a rich masala base, shallots bring sweetness and depth, along with a rich aroma to Kerala cooking.

Pro Tip: Soak shallots in warm water for 10 minutes to make peeling easier!





Puttu & Kadala Curry

A Maveli Breakfast

Spicy, savory, and comforting—Malayali breakfasts start the day right!

Puttu & Kadala Curry

Puttu, a tall, cylindrical tower of soft rice flour and coconut, gently crumbling onto a banana leaf, with a side of warm black chickpea (kadala) curry—this is the ultimate comfort breakfast for many Malayalis. Light yet filling, it pairs well with banana and sugar, fish curry, or a teaspoon of ghee and papadam.

It's classic companion, Kadala curry, features black chickpeas slow-cooked with coconut, shallots, and garam masala, finished with a drizzle of coconut oil for aroma, creating a rich and comforting dish.

The debate continues—puttu with kadala curry or puttu with banana? Which do you prefer?

Idiyappam & Egg curry

Idiyappam, or **noolputtu**, (string puttu) is a delicate and satisfying breakfast choice, made from rice flour dough pressed into thin strands and steamed to soft perfection. These light, airy string hoppers are ideal for soaking up rich, flavorful gravies, making them the perfect match for Kerala-style egg curry.

Kerala-style egg curry is a rich, flavorful dish that pairs perfectly with idiyappam. Hard-boiled eggs are simmered in a spicy, aromatic gravy made with onions, tomatoes, chilies, and Kerala spices. A touch of coconut oil and a splash of coconut milk enhances its authentic taste, making it a comforting pair



Malabar Pathiri



Dosa v/s Pathiri

The classic Malayali breakfast debate—Dosa or Pathiri? **South Kerala favors dosa**, a crispy, fermented rice-lentil pancake, best with sambar and coconut chutney while the fluffier set dosa is often served with some hot, comforting vegetable stew.

North Kerala's Malabar region favors pathiri, a soft, thin rice flour flatbread made without fermentation, giving it a uniquely light texture. Traditionally it is also enjoyed with mutton curry, mutta roast, or coconut milk. Pathiri also comes in variations like deep-fried neypathiri, fish-stuffed meen pathiri and erachi pathiri.



Pothichoru Pages

The word pothicoru comes from “**pothi**” (wrapped) and “**choru**” (rice), translating to “*wrapped rice*.” It is a simple yet flavorful meal, where rice and a variety of traditional Kerala curries are neatly packed inside a banana leaf. The moment you unwrap a pothicoru, you are hit with the earthy fragrance of banana leaf fused with the spices of the curries—a sensory experience that no plastic container can offer.





1. Kerala Matta Rice: The base of any pothichoru is Kerala matta rice (red parboiled rice), which has a slightly chewy texture and a nutty flavor. It absorbs the flavors of the curries beautifully and remains non-sticky, making it ideal for packing.

2. Chammanthi (Coconut Chutney) & Pickle: No pothichoru is complete without a side of chammanthi (coconut chutney) or a dollop of spicy pickle. The chammanthi is usually made with roasted coconut, red chilies, tamarind, and shallots, giving it a smoky, tangy kick.

3. Thoran (Stir-fried Vegetables with Coconut): A classic side dish, thoran can be made with vegetables like cabbage, beans, or carrot, stir-fried with mustard seeds, curry leaves, and coconut. It adds texture and mild sweetness to balance the spicy elements of the pothichoru.

4. Mezhukkupuratti (Spicy Stir-fry): It is a dry stir-fry of vegetables (like raw banana or yam) sautéed in coconut oil, chili, and turmeric. This simple yet flavorful dish enhances the overall flavours of the meal.

5. Parippu Curry (Dal Curry) & Sambar: A ladle of parippu curry (dal with coconut) is often added to the rice for extra creaminess. Some variations include sambar, which adds a tangy-spicy kick to the meal.

6. Spicy Fish Fry or Egg Curry: For non-vegetarians, pothichoru is incomplete without a crispy fish fry (often sardine or mackerel, marinated in spices and shallow-fried in coconut oil). Some prefer a boiled egg with spicy masala, while others enjoy a thick, coconut-based egg curry.

Pothichoru, a humble yet flavorful meal wrapped in a banana leaf, is deeply rooted in Kerala's culinary heritage. More than just food, it carries nostalgia—reminding many of school days, train journeys, and home-cooked comfort. Once a staple for workers and travelers, it has seen a revival in homes and restaurants due to its simplicity and sustainability.

The banana leaf not only serves as packaging but also enhances the meal's flavor with earthy, smoky notes. It is biodegradable, antibacterial, and naturally aromatic, making it a sustainable alternative to modern lunchboxes. For Malayalis, pothichoru is more than a meal—it's an emotion tied to tradition and family. Whether enjoyed at home or in a restaurant, unwrapping it is like unfolding a piece of the past, bringing comfort and a taste of Kerala's timeless flavors.



Vegetarian Treasures

Explore the hidden gems of Kerala's Vegetarian meals

Kerala's vegetarian traditions go beyond food, reflecting sustainability, local produce, and a balanced way of life. While Kerala is known for its seafood and meat dishes, many communities have followed a rich plant-based diet for many generations. From the Brahmin households in Palakkad to temple traditions in Travancore and agrarian communities across the state, vegetarian cuisine has played a vital role in these regions.

The region's tropical climate provides a very vast abundance of coconut, yams, raw bananas, some gourds, and leafy greens, forming the foundation of its diverse dishes. Simple yet flavorful cooking methods, using coconut oil, mustard seeds, curry leaves, and fresh spices, make Kerala's vegetarian meals both nourishing and inspiring.

Kerala's vegetarian cuisine is a rich blend of tradition, flavor, and sustainability. The grand Sadya feast, served on banana leaves, includes dishes like avial, olan, thoran, and pachadi, made with seasonal vegetables and coconut. Temple cuisine offers prasadams like kadala curry with puttu and parippu payasam, prepared without onion or garlic, following Ayurvedic principles.

Palakkad Iyer cuisine, influenced by Tamil Brahmin traditions, features comforting dishes like molagootal, kootu, and rasam, while everyday nadan home cooking includes favorites like kumbalanga moru curry, cheera thoran, and pachakkari stew. For spicy palettes, kappa ularthiyathu stir-fries tapioca with onions, red chilies, and coconut, simple and flavourful meals.

Onam Sadhya





Avial

Avial is a thick, mildly spiced curry made with a medley of vegetables and coconut. It is a staple in Kerala's sadya (feast) and is enjoyed with rice.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of vegetables (raw banana, yam, carrot, beans, ash gourd; chopped into long pieces)
 - ½ cup of grated coconut
 - 2 long green chilies
 - 1 teaspoon of cumin seeds
 - ½ cup yogurt (or tamarind for a vegan version)
 - 1 teaspoon of turmeric powder
 - 1 teaspoon of coconut oil
 - 1 sprig of curry leaves
 - Salt to taste
4. Turn off the heat and stir in yogurt (or tamarind for a tangy flavor) to the vegetables mixture.
 5. Once it's fully cooked, drizzle with coconut oil and add fresh curry leaves before serving.

Tip: Serve hot with steamed rice and a side of sambar for a complete meal

EriSSERY

EriSSERY is a mildly sweet and spicy dish, made of pumpkin and black-eyed peas with coconut.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup yellow pumpkin, chopped
- ½ cup black-eyed peas (cowpeas/karamani)
- ½ cup grated coconut
- 2 green chilies
- 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 teaspoon mustard seeds
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 2 dried red chilies
- Salt to taste

Method:

1. Soak the black-eyed peas overnight and then in a pan with water, cook them until soft.
2. Cook the pumpkin with salt, turmeric, and green chilies and some water until tender.
3. Mash the pumpkin lightly and add this mixture with the cooked peas and combine them.
4. Grind half of the grated coconut with cumin.



5. Add this to the pumpkin and pea mixture.
 6. Heat coconut oil in a pan, splutter mustard seeds, red chillies and curry leaves.
 7. Add the remaining grated coconut and fry until it becomes golden brown in colour.
 8. Pour this tempering over the curry and serve it.
- Pro tip: EriSSERY pairs beautifully with Kerala matta rice and papadum for a satisfying meal.*

Karimeen & the Sea

Keralas' favourite fish and the Untold Seafood Dishes of Kerala



Njandu Peera

The Seafood Varieties

Kerala's coastal cuisine offers unique, home-cooked seafood delicacies beyond restaurants

1. **Njandu Peera** (*Crab Stir-Fry with Coconut*) is a fragrant crab stir-fry with coconut, turmeric, chilies and curry leaves, which allows the crabs natural sweetness to shine.
2. **Kakka Irachi Ularthiyathu** (*Clam Roast*) features clams roasted with coconut, black pepper, and Malabar spices paired with rice.
3. **Chooda Varuthathu** (*Sardine Fry with Tamarind*) crispy, flavorful sardine fry where fresh fish is marinated in a tangy blend of tamarind, red chilies, and black pepper before being shallow-fried to perfection.
4. **Meen Thala Curry** (*Fish Head Curry*) brings richness with fish heads that are slow cooked in a gelatinous, spicy coconut gravy
5. **Unakka Meen Chammanthi** (*Dried Fish Chutney*) For a bold, rustic touch this dish blends dried fish, shallots, tamarind, and chilies into a punchy chutney.

Karimeen (Pearl Spot)

One of the most prized fish in Kerala is Karimeen (Pearl Spot), found in the state's backwaters.

1. **Karimeen**, Kerala's prized pearl spot fish, is prepared in various flavorful ways.
2. **Karimeen Pollichathu**, the most famous dish, involves marinating the fish in a spicy masala, wrapping it in banana leaves, and slow-cooking it for an aromatic, smoky taste.
3. **Karimeen Mappas** offers a milder alternative, with the fish gently simmered in coconut milk, green chilies, and turmeric for a deep flavour.
4. **Karimeen Nirachathu**, popular in Christian households, features fish stuffed with a spiced coconut filling and shallow-fried just right.
5. **Karimeen Fry** is for a crispy taste; where it is marinated with aromatic spices and fried in coconut oil, delivering bold flavors and crunch. Served with slices of onion and lemon.



Karimeen Polichathu

Karimeen Fish Fry

Ingredients

For the Marinade:

- 2 whole karimeen (pearl spot fish), cleaned and slit
- 1 tbsp red chili powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp Kashmiri chili powder (for color)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp black pepper powder
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 1 tbsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1 tsp lemon juice or vinegar
- 1 tsp rice flour (for extra crispiness)
- Salt to taste
- 1 tbsp coconut oil (for marinade)
- For Frying:
 - 3-4 tbsp coconut oil
 - A few curry leaves (for extra flavor)

Instructions

1. Prepare the Marinade:

- Mix red chili powder, Kashmiri chili, turmeric, pepper, coriander powder, ginger-garlic paste, lemon juice, salt, and coconut oil into a spicy thick paste.
- Apply generously over the fish, ensuring the slits are well-coated to soak it in.
- Let the fish marinate for at least 30 minutes (or longer for deeper flavor).

2. Fry the Fish:

- To fry the fish, heat 1 tbsp of coconut oil in a tawa or pan over medium heat.
- Add a few curry leaves to infuse the oil with aroma and flavour of them.
- Place the marinated fish and fry on medium-low heat for 5-7 minutes per side, until it becomes crispy and golden brown.
- Baste with hot oil generously. Do this occasionally for even cooking.

3. Serve & Enjoy:

- Garnish with fried curry leaves, lemon wedges, and some slices of onion.
- Serve hot with Kerala matta, rice, kappa (tapioca), or Kerala parotta. A crispy, spicy, and flavorful Kerala delicacy making this a perfect seafood fried dish.



A Home Cook's Day

A talk with a home cook, from Kerala about the experience of Malayali food.

Entering a malayali's home is a true blend of aromas, spices and the warmth of chaya brewing come together in a perfect blend of harmony. To truly understand the soul of malayali food, we travelled to the depths of **Kollam**, to a small village called "**Channapetta**" to meet **Amini aunty**, a seasoned home cook and grandmother of 3 in her cozy kitchen filled with copper-bottomed pots, hanging bunches of dried red chilies, and shelves lined with homemade pickles.

"A Malayali kitchen is never quiet. We start our mornings with the sound of grinding fresh coconut chutney, and by evening, there's always something frying in the pan."

As she prepares kappa meen curry (mashed tapioca with a tangy, spicy fish curry), she recalls how food in a Malayali home isn't just about eating—it's about tradition. She believes every meal is an emotion, to be fully savoured with loved ones.

"When I was a child, my mother would wake up before sunrise to grind masalas on the ammi kal (traditional grinding stone). Now, we have mixers, but the taste is never the same! In Kerala, food is truly a love language. We don't ask 'How are you?' We ask, 'Did you eat?'"

Amini Aunty, Kollam

The essential ingredients in her kitchen? "Coconut, curry leaves, mustard seeds, tamarind, and shallots," she lists without hesitation. "Without these, our food wouldn't have its true taste. Even a simple thoran (stir-fried vegetable with coconut) depends on these flavors." "We may live in different places, but the heart of every Malayali home remains the same," she says, as she serves us a plate of steaming dosa with a generous spoonful of chutney. A malayali home is truly an experience.



Classic Recipes

A feature of the timeless recipe from the region, a must-try!

Amachi's Classic Nadan Egg Roast

No Malayali breakfast spread is complete without a spicy, rich, and flavorful egg roast served alongside soft palappams or fluffy porottas. This is a dish that speaks of home slow-cooked onions caramelized to perfection, tomatoes reduced into a thick, luscious gravy, and hard-boiled eggs coated in a fragrant spice mix along with the gravy. It truly is a timeless recipe. Almost every home across the different regions of Kerala have their own recipe of motta roast that have been passed down from generations. So here is ours, happy cooking!

Ingredients:

- 4 hard-boiled eggs (slit lightly)
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tomatoes, finely chopped
- 3 green chilies, slit
- 1 teaspoon ginger-garlic paste
- 1 teaspoon mustard seeds
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 teaspoon red chili powder
- 1 teaspoon Kashmiri chili powder
- 1 teaspoon black pepper powder
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- 1 teaspoon coriander powder
- Salt to taste
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

1. **Prepare the Masala Base:** Heat coconut oil and splutter some mustard seeds, then to this, sauté curry leaves, green chilies, and onions until golden brown.
2. **Build the Gravy:** Add ginger-garlic paste, followed by tomatoes, salt, turmeric, chili powders, pepper, and coriander powder. Cook this paste until the oil fully separates.
3. **Finish the Dish:** To this, add water to thicken the gravy and season this with some aromatic garam masala.
4. **Coat the Eggs:** Make small slits in boiled eggs and simmer them in the masala for 5 minutes to cook fully.
5. **Serve with appam, porotta, kerala matta rice or idiyappam.**



Oru Chaya Kada Scene

Kerala's chaya kada is a cultural hub for tea, snacks and conversations

There is something deeply comforting about a chaya kada (tea shop) in Kerala. These humble roadside stalls, often bustling with locals engaged in lively conversations, are more than just places to grab a cup of tea—they are cultural landmarks where stories are shared, friendships are forged, and time slows down.



Art of Kerala's Chaya

Kerala's love for chaya (tea) is unmatched. Black tea, fondly known as kattan chaya, is the warm way to every malayali's heart. A chaya kada's tea is strong, sweet, and perfectly balanced between creamy and bold. Made with fresh tea leaves, milk, and just the right amount of sugar, the tea is often prepared with dramatic flair—poured back and forth between glasses to create a signature frothy top. Among the many variations, some favorites include:

- 1. Kattan Chaya** – Strong black tea, perfect for those who prefer a bold, black brew.
- 2. Sulaimani Chaya** – A lightly spiced, black tea with a hint of lemon, popular in Malabar.
- 3. Normal Chaya** – The classic milk tea, sweet, strong, and deeply satisfying.



Kattan Chaya

Timeless Chaya Kada Snacks

No chaya experience is complete without a plate of snacks, freshly fried and served hot. Malayali's take great pride in their timeless combo of their snacks along with their iconic chaya. Some of the all-time favorites include:

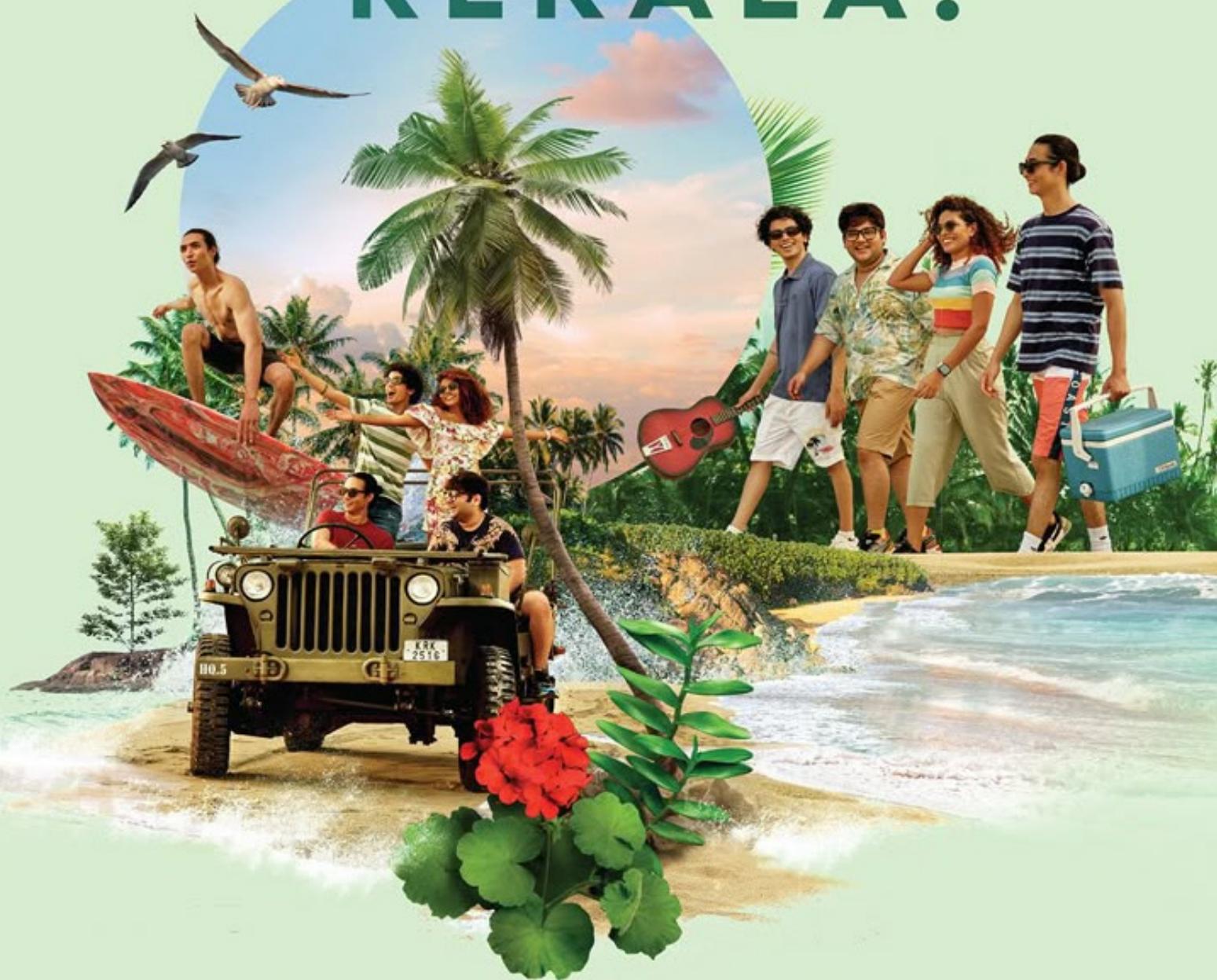
1. **Parippu Vada** – Crispy lentil fritters, golden brown on the outside and soft inside.
2. **Pazham Pori** – Sweet banana fritters, deep-fried in a light, crunchy batter, perfect sweet.
3. **Uzhunnu Vada** – Soft, spongy medu vadas with a crispy crust and a hint of a spicy touch, best enjoyed with coconut chutney.
4. **Motta (egg) Puffs** – Flaky pastry filled with spiced egg masala, a chaya kada classic.
5. **Kalakkis and Mutta Roast** – Soft and spicy scrambled eggs or thick egg curry served with buttery soft and fluffy buns.

A chaya kada in Kerala is more than just a tea shop—it's a cultural experience and a hub for conversations, news, and nostalgia. Whether in a village or city, these tea stalls unite groups Malayalees of all backgrounds. A true Malayali never skips a chaya break, often paired with a crispy motta puff for non-vegetarians. This simple yet soulful tradition continues to bring warmth and connection, making tea a timeless part of Kerala's everyday culture and life.



Motta Puffs

**GEAR UP FOR
GOOD TIMES.
PACK UP FOR
KERALA.**



WhatsApp 'Maya'
and explore Kerala

Gear up for the hearty laughs and heartfelt smiles, evergreen moments and everlasting memories... Pack up for the beaches, backwaters, hill stations and jungles of Kerala.

