



KERALA TRAVEL GUIDE

Experience the exotic paradise

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KERALA

Kerala is one of the smallest states in India. It is located at the southernmost tip of the Indian subcontinent. One can feel the threads of history, culture and hospitality interwoven in all walks of Kerala life!

Kerala offers you a great deal but what makes it truly remarkable is its character - how geography, people, art, and cuisine, all merge to form a unique personality of its own. The green valleys, tranquil backwaters, and golden sandy beaches present unlimited possibilities for leisure, adventure, romance and rejuvenation.



ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT KERALA

Kerala state was officially formed on Nov 1st 1956 with its capital at Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum).

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : KERALA STATE

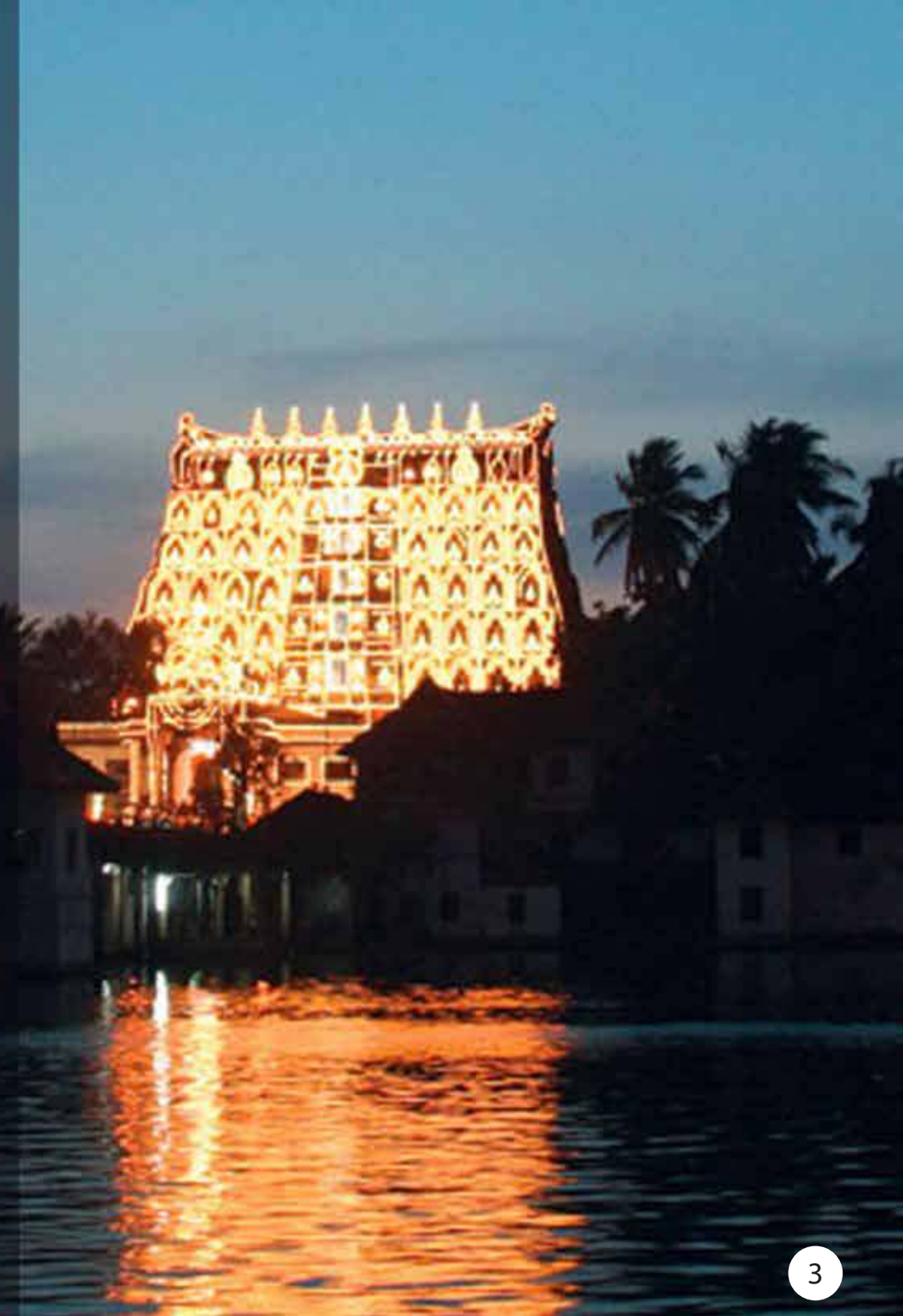
Population	: 52,490 (2011 Census)
Area	: 2192 km ² .
Taluks	: 4
Pincode	: 695 xxx
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)471 xxx xxxx
Major Towns	: Neyyattinkara, Nedumangad, Attingal, Varkala.
Website	: www.corporationoftrivandrum.in



DISTRICT OF THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

It is the southernmost district of Kerala. It has an area of 2912 sq km, divided into four administrative units or taluks. It is the most densely populated district after Malappuram district. The city of Thiruvananthapuram is the capital of Kerala. It is a corporation; the district has 4 municipalities - Neyyatinkara, Varkala, Nedumangad and Kattakada.

The name Thiruvananthapuram denotes that it is the abode of the Lord Vishnu, referring to the 16th century Sripadmanabha Swamy Temple located in the city. It is an iconic landmark of the city and the district. Land's end of India, Kanyakumari, lies 56 km south of the southern end of the district.





Rajah Marthanda Varma is regarded as the father of modern Travancore. During his rule, the place, became a great center of learning and art. It was he who dedicated the kingdom to the Lord and reigned as His servant and representative. From his time The tradition has been followed from his time. This has resulted in a great amount of treasure in the temple vaults, safe from the avaricious.

The district has a coastline of 78 km along the Arabian Sea. In the eastern and north eastern highlands, valuable timber like Teak and Rosewood are grown. Rubber, tea, cardamom and spices are also cultivated.

The economy of the district stems from the tourism, leisure and IT industries. It can boast of being the seat of India's first animation park, the Kinfra Animation Park. Techno Park is dedicated to electronics, software and IT companies. The campus has an area of 300 acres, with a built up space of 4.5 million sq ft. More than 200 companies, including those of global fame, operate there. The campus is still growing.





MAJOR TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Tourism holds a significant position in the economy of the district. The district is blessed with a variety of attractions to allure tourists. There are natural gifts of hill stations, backwaters, lagoons, lakes, beaches and wildlife sanctuaries, and facilities like international airport, good hotels and resorts of all classes. Medical tourism, an important aspect of tourism finds a place with recognized Ayurveda centers and modern medicine specialty hospitals.

There are several tourist destinations, each one unique in its own way.





image credit : Ajay Kuyiloor via Wikipedia

Agasthyakoodam Peak

Agasthyakoodam Peak, said to have been the abode of sage Agasthya, is 1869 meters tall. The area is famous for its medicinal herbs. Trekking is possible with permission.



image credit : sreejithk2000 via Wikipedia

Akkulam

The picnic spot on the banks of lake Akkulam attracts tourists who'd like boat rides in a calm atmosphere. The boat club offers rides in various types of boats. To spend a night, kettuvallam, a houseboat is also available. Children's Park with exciting rides and the swimming pool make it more interesting.



image credit : Santhosh Janardhanan via Flickr

Anjuthengu

40 km north of Trivandrum city is Anjuthengu along the coast. This place was leased to the English for trade. Remains of the old fort can still be seen.

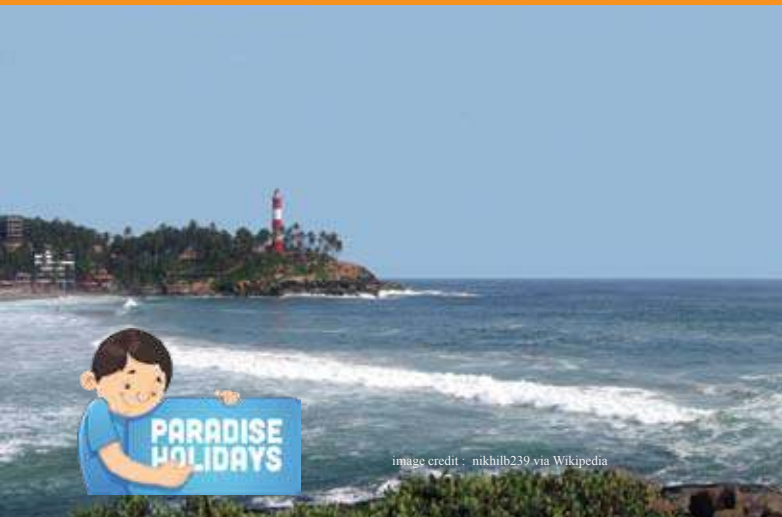


image credit : nikhilb239 via Wikipedia

Kovalam Beach

Kovalam Beach is one of the most famous beaches in Kerala. It is located very close to the city and tourists flock there every season!



image credit : Suniltg via Wikipedia

Neyyar Dam

Neyyar Dam is 29 km south of the city. The catchment area is used for boating. A three hour hike over the hills is thrilling. On the way to Neyyar are two breath-taking waterfalls, named Meenmutti and Kombaikani.



image credit : Sugeesh at via Wikipedia



image credit : Hans A.Rosbach via Wikipedia



image credit : Pillai.mech via Wikipedia

Aruvikkara Reservoir

Aruvikkara reservoir is the source of water for the city. The dam and surroundings are restful to the eyes that can behold beauty.

Poovar

Poovar is 29 km from Trivandrum. It is a beautiful backwater beach island where one must spend a day and night at least. Many resorts and hotels offer hospitality in picturesque cottages, some floating on the water.

Ponmudi

Ponmudi is a popular resort at an elevation of 912 meters. It is 61 km from the city. Hill-trails for hiking and a deer park arouse the senses. On the way to Ponmudi, you can halt at the Peppara Sanctuary and spend time trying to spot elephants, leopards and birds. Ponmudi is a place which offers night stay in cottages or dormitory.





image credit : Ikroos via Wikipedia

Varkala

Varkala is a coastal town. Cliffs adjacent to the sea are a strange sight in this part of the world. There are water spouts and spas on the sides of the cliffs. The Varkala beach is simply breathtaking!



Janardana Swami Temple

The 2000-year old Janardana Swami Temple is located close to the Papanasam Beach, Varkala. A dip in these waters is said to wash away your sins. It is an important Ayurveda treatment center. The bell at the temple was gifted by the captain of a Dutch vessel which sank here without any casualty.



image credit : Gsrajcev via Wikipedia

Sreekrishna Temple

Sreekrishna Temple at Neyyatinkara, built by Raja Martanda Varma, has a place in the heart of Hindu pilgrims. The king is said to have escaped from his enemies by hiding in the hollow of a jack tree, now well known as Ammachi Plavu.



image credit : Bnoyjsdk via Wikipedia

Sarkaradevi Temple

Sarkaradevi Temple is 6 km from Attingal, where the Travancore royals had a residence and other accompaniments. As many others, the historical importance of the place is due to the famous kaliyoot festival, introduced by the great sovereign Marthanda Varma. The festival in this temple is famous.





image credit : Binoysdk via Wikipedia

Attingal

Attingal is the birth place of Raja Ravi Varma, the most famous artist of those days. His paintings are exhibited in almost all the museums and art galleries of India. Sri Narayana Guru and the poet, Kumaran Ashan are also sons of Attingal.



image credit : Anulal via Flickr

Sivagiri Mutt

Sivagiri Mutt, established by the social reformer Sree Narayana Guru, is a place one should visit. His mausoleum on the hill top is a famous monument.

On the adjacent hills are the Sree Narayana Gurukulam and East-West University of Brahmavidya.



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Population	: 3307284 (2011 Census)
Area	: 2912 km ² .
Taluks	: 4
Pincode	: 695 XXX
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)471 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Thiruvananthapuram City, Neyyattinkara, Attingal, Varkala.
Accessibility	: Road, Rail, Air
Website	: www.corporationoftrivandrum.in



DISTRICT OF KOLLAM

The district of Kollam, Formerly known as Quilon, covers an area of 2,492 sq km. It lies between Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta in the north, and Thiruvananthapuram in the south. The coast line is long, and has a port which has been functional since 1500 BC.

Kollam district is divided into six taluks i.e. administrative divisions. The city of Kollam is a corporation. It is located on Ashtamudi Lake. Neendakara, a fishing port is also on this lake. The main industry is cashew, its cultivation, processing and export. Most of the “cashew kings” live in Kollam. Cashew is an ever-increasing-costly product.



Sasthamkotta Lake

Sasthamkotta Lake, the largest fresh water lake in Kerala, provides drinking water to the city of Kollam. It is sought after for backwater cruises.



image credit: Umasankarindia via wikipedia



Munroe Island

Munroe Island, named after Colonel Munroe, is an island formed by the backwaters of Ashtamudi Lake and Kallada river. This is a beautiful, small village and worth a visit.



image credit: Saralstalin via wikipedia

Ashtamudi Lake

Ashtamudi lake covers 30% of the area of the district and it can be called the "Gateway to Kerala Backwaters." Paravur Kayal is another water body. Two major rivers, Kallada and Ithikkara, flow through the district.



Thenmala

Thenmala, 66 km east of Kollam, is an ecotourism project. The honey from Thenmala is of special quality.

There are many activities for adventure lovers at Thenmala.

There is a beautiful dam reservoir. Boating facility is available there.





image credit: Arunvrparavur via wikipedia

Thangassery

Thangassery located 5 km away from Kollam city is historically significant. There are churches which can be dated back to 18th century. The highlight of this place is the 144 ft lighthouse constructed in 1902.



Amritapuri

Mata Amritanandamayi's residence Amritapuri in Vallikavu, 35 km north of Kollam, is a major landmark. It is an international pilgrimage center on the shores of the Arabian sea. Regular buses connect the village with Karunagappally, the nearest railway station.



image credit: Mahesh Mahajan via wikipedia

Sreekrishna Swamy Temple

Ashramam Sreekrishna Swamy Temple is very popular with devotees. The toddler Krishna with butter in both hands is the deity who is revered and loved. The annual festival, called Kollam Pooram, is held in Ashramam Maidan.

The Mahaganapathi Temple

The Mahaganapathi Temple is one of the most popular temples in Kollam. It is famous for its delicious unniappom, a muffin type sweet. Of course, no eggs are used.



image credit: vipin v via Flickr



Palaruvi Falls

Palaruvi Falls is one of the most scenic waterfalls in Kerala. It is located near Aryankavu, on the way to Shenkottah. Another popular attraction in Kollam is a huge rock, locally called Jetayu Para. There are local legends which tie this rock with the epic, Ramayana.

Beaches

There are many beautiful beaches along the coastline of Kollam. Beaches at Kollam, Thirumallavaram and Thangasery are the popular ones.





ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : KOLLAM

Population	: : 2585208(2011 Census)
Area	: 2492 km ²
Taluks	: 5
Pincode	: 691 xxx
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)474 xxx xxxx
Major Towns	: Karunagapally, Kottarakara, Punaloor, Ochira, Kollam City
Accessibility	: Road, Rail
Website	: www.kollamcorporation.gov.in/



DISTRICT OF KOTTAYAM

Kottayam district has some picturesque traits such as its western border which is made up by the Vembanad Lake and the large Kuttanad paddy fields. On the east are the foothills of Western Ghats. Rubber plantations are numerous; the hills, stretching horizon of backwaters, green fields and the trees bestow the land with great beauty. Rain Gods are kind to the region, so the place remains lush and green throughout the year.

Kottayam was previously a revenue division of the Travancore kingdom administered by the Dewan of the Maharajah. It was in 1949 that the district was formed to be administered by the District Collector. Kottayam Town is the headquarters. The district has an area of 2,203 sq km and is made up of 5 taluks.



MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN KOTTAYAM



Vembanad Lake

Vembanad Lake, a great expanse of water, is the most important geographical formation of the district. It is a part of the long stretch of backwaters that run along one third of the west coast of Kerala. The lake is huge, 52 miles in length and 9 miles in width.

Traditional cargo boats called Kettuvallams have been modified to luxurious house boats and cruise boats. It is a pleasurable activity to move around the backwaters and enjoy peace and tranquility away from mundane matters.



Kumarakom

Kumarakom is a place 16 km from Kottayam which has become a star tourist spot. The lake forms its backdrop. The variety of birds found in the Kumarakom bird sanctuary is amazing! A canoe ride takes you there. The Victorian Bungalow built by A.G.Baker in 1881 is now the Taj Garden Resort. Since then many resorts have come up. The waters support marine and fresh water fishes. Karimeen is the delicacy universally recommended. Whether you stay in one of the comfortable resorts on the banks or in a house boat, you will be offered Karimeen and a special type of shrimp. Mind you, these are freshly caught.





image credit : Deepak Pradeep via Flickr

Elaveezhapoochira

Elaveezhapoochira, located about 60km from Kottayam town, is an exotic, must visit destination. The rolling green hillsides, cloud covered hill tops, trickling water streams are the hallmarks of this place. It is an ideal place for trekking and safaris.



Aruvikkuzhi Waterfalls

Aruvikkuzhi waterfalls, 18 kms away from Kottayam, is an idyllic picnic spot. Located in the midst of rubber plantations, the water cascade, down from a height of 102 ft. It is also a popular trekking spot for adventure lovers.



Pallam Backwaters

Pallam Backwaters, which is very close to Kottayam town, is a scenic tiny backwater stretch. This place is good for short, one day trips.

Vagamon

Vagamon is a hill station located in Kottayam district. It is situated 1,100 metres above sea level and has a cool climate even during summer. Vagamon was discovered by the British who found the place ideal for tea plantations. The scenic valleys, beautiful green meadows, enchanting pine forests, mists, fogs, tea estates, waterfalls with the overall greenery is really striking. Vagamon is 33 km away from Pala town.



image credit : SAMNAD.S via wikipedia



image credit : Sumesh001 via Flickr

Anchuvilakku

Anchuvilakku is a stone lamp post built by the renowned freedom fighter of that era, Veluthampi Dalawa. It is near the Changanerry boat jetty, about 22 km from Kottayam.

The Shiva Temple

The Shiva temple at Thirunakkara is in the heart of Kottayam town. The most important festival with Aarattu is conducted in March-April. It can be called the festival of Kottayam.



image credit : vishnur via Flickr

Ettumanoor Shiva Temple

Ettumanoor Shiva temple is a very famous and ancient Mahadeva temple which is about 12km from the city. It is considered to be built in 1542 AD.



image credit : Reji via Flickr

St Mary's Church in Manarcad

St Mary's church in Manarcad is a famous church near Kottayam. The 8 day Lent and Feast of Virgin Mary are observed there in September. Thousands of pilgrims make it a point to visit the church and seek blessings.

Kottayam is the center of publishing business in the State. A vast number of newspapers, periodicals and books are published from Kottayam. It is the home of Malayala Manorama which publishes the most popular newspaper in Kerala, a number of weeklies and magazines.



image credit : Johnchacks via wikipedia





ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : KOTTAYAM

Population	: 1979451 (2011 Census)
Area	: 2208 km ² .
Taluks	: 5
Pincode	: 686 XXX
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)481 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Kottayam, Changanasseri, Vaikom and Pala
Accessibility	: Road, Rail
Website	: http://kottayam.nic.in/





DISTRICT OF IDUKKI

Idukki, an area of 4,479 sq km lying in a narrow gorge (Idukku) among mountains and forests, is the second largest district of Kerala, the first being Palakkad. To the south is Pathanamthitta, southwest is Kottayam and Ernakulum and Thrissur to the north. On the eastern side of Idukki is Tamilnadu. Being mountainous, the district has 14 peaks, the highest being Anamudi which has the distinction of being the highest peak south of the Himalayas. The Periyar, Thodupuzhayar and Thalayar are the main rivers in the district. The district is divided into 5 Taluks: Devikulam, Peermade, Udumbanchola, Thodupuzha and Idukki. Painavu in Idukki is the headquarters.





image credit: Jean-Pierre Dalbéra via wikipedia

Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary

Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, also referred to as Thekkady, is set high in the Cardamom hills and Pandalam hills of SW ghats. The core zone is about 350 sq km. it is a reserve for elephants and tigers. The area is bounded by mountain ridges. It consists of a 1200 meter high plateau which steeply drops to the valley of the Pamba River. Periyar, the longest river of Kerala, originates from the forests of the Tiger Reserve.

MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN IDUKKI

Thommankuthu

Thommankuthu , located 20 km to the east of Thodupuzha, is famous for its numerous waterfalls. The scenic beauty has made this place one of the favorite shooting locations of the Malayalam movie makers.



image credit: Footprint Books via Flickr

Periyar Lake

Periyar lake, which is man-made, is in the center and the river meanders around the wooded hills. 75% of the area are rainforests; nearly 2000 species of flowering plants, varieties of ferns and 145 types of orchids has been identified. About 1000 elephants live here with abandon. Tourists love to watch the elephant families frolic by the Periyar lake. In such fortuitous surroundings, it is natural that many species of birds find their abode. The reserve has a core zone, a buffer zone and a tourism area of 53 sq km.





image credit: Bimal K C via wikipedia

Munnar

Munnar, the green hill station in Devikulam taluk, is a jewel in the crown of Idukki. Acres of tea gardens at such height, waterfalls and wildlife sanctuaries all draped in mountain mist, is an experience none should miss.

Confluence of 3 rivers can be seen in Munnar. It was the summer resort of the British government in the South. Seeing the streams, lakes, hills and valleys, you will know why Munnar was their select location. Activities are many, from walking, cycling and trekking to para-gliding. Nilgiri Tahr a striped rare mountain goat is a host you should meet. As the altitude varies from 1,450m to 2,695m, the weather in Munnar is cool all over. Winter stay requires warm clothes.



Thattekad Bird Sanctuary

Thattekad Bird Sanctuary was the first bird sanctuary to be opened in Kerala. Salim Ali, the best known Indian ornithologist, calls it the richest bird habitat in peninsular India. It lies between two tributaries of Periyar in a low-land forest. Though only 25 sq km in area, it supports a rich bird-life. Apart from the endemic ones there are visitors from far also.



image credit: PP Yoonus via wikipedia

Peermade

Peermade lies 915 meters above sea level. The grasslands, waterfalls and pine forests so attracted the Royals of Travancore, that they made it their summer retreat.



Idukki Arch Dam

Idukki Arch Dam is 168.91 m tall, and stands between the two mountains - Kuravanmala and Kurathimala. The dam is open for public during Onam & Christmas seasons. Photography is banned inside the dam premises.





ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : IDUKKI

Population	: 1107453 (2011 Census)
Area	: 4476 km ² .
Taluks	: 4
Pincode	: 685 XXX
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)486 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Thodupuzha, Adimali Munnar, Kattappana
Accessibility	: Road
Website	: http://idukki.nic.in



DISTRICT OF PATHANAMTHITTA

The Pathanamthitta district lies south of Kottayam, Alappuzha and Idukki. For the number of pilgrims the district receives, mainly to the famous shrine of Shabarimala, it is called the Headquarters of Pilgrimage Tourism. Blessed by 3 rivers and a large forest area comprising a tiger reserve, wildlife and nature enthusiasts also visit the district. The district is landlocked with an area of 2,637 sq km. The headquarters is the town of Pathanamthitta, located on the banks of the river Achankovil. Thiruvalla is the major commercial center.





image credit: Arun Sinha via Flickr



image credit: Reji via Flickr

MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN PATHANAMTITTA

Aranmula

Aranmula Vallamkali, the annual boat race, is very popular with spectators. Aranmula lures people with its strange metal mirrors. It is one of the best souvenirs for tourists. Aranmula Palace was built 200 years ago and is one of the best examples of the architectural form, Nalukettu.

Gavi

Gavi is inside the Ranni reserve forest, part of the Periyar Tiger Reserve. Forest tent camping is available from November through March. Gavi's evergreen forests are abundant with wildlife and several species of birds.

Konni

The place is known for 'aanakoodu' or elephant cage. The major attraction of this place is the wooden cages where wild elephants are kept and trained for various purposes.



image credit: Challiyan via Wikipedia

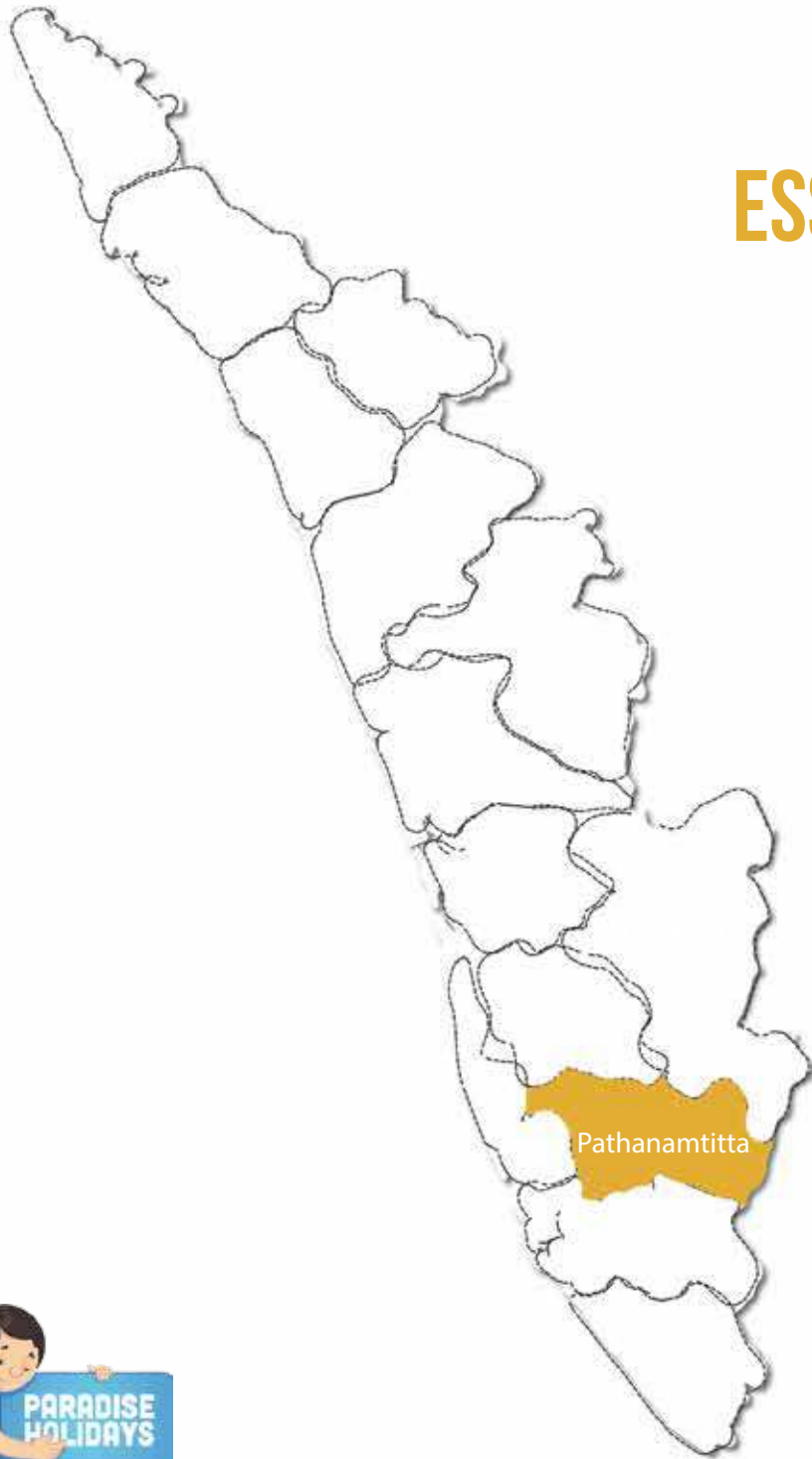
Sabarimala

Sabarimala is one of the most popular Hindu pilgrim centers in Kerala. The temple is open for worship only during Mandalapooja, Makara Vilakku, Vishu & the first six days of each Malayalam month. During the festival season of Shabarimala, the district is host to 3 to 4 millions of pilgrims who pay obeisance to Ayyappan, the ascetic prince of Pandalam to whom the temple is dedicated.



image credit: Ecluserre via Wikipedia

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : PATHANAMTITTA



Population	: 1195537 (2011 Census)
Area	: 2642 km ² .
Taluks	: 6
Pincode	: 689 XXX
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)468 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Pathanamthitta, Adoor, Ranni Thiruvalla
Accessibility	: Road, Rail
Website	: http://pathanamthitta.gov.in/





DISTRICT OF ALAPPUZHA

“Alappuzha” means a place where the river joins the sea, and that is why this region is called so. Its western border is totally made up of the Arabian Sea. The place finds mention even in the BC era and in the middle ages. The place is known for its coir industry. The first coir factory for making mats and matting was set up in 1859. Alappuzha is one of the most visited tourist centers of Kerala. Those who love boat rides and cruises flock here from all parts of the world. The large network of inland canals gives it the sobriquet, “Venice of the East”.





Kuttanad

Kuttanad is a much discussed place for its backwater paddy cultivation carried out below sea level. The land was reclaimed from the shallow parts of Vembanad lake. A spillway was constructed to avoid flooding from the 3 rivers that enter the lake. Kuttanadu is a much loved area for tourists who love to laze in their comfortable house boats dining on fish and rice or whatever they prefer.



Krishnapuram Palace

Krisnapuram Palace dates back to the 18th century. The museum presents ancient paintings and inscriptions, coins, megalithic remains, artifacts made of wood, brass and stone sculptures. The palace is maintained by the Archaeological Department of Kerala.



Nehru Trophy Boat Race

Nehru Trophy snake boat race known as 'Vallam Kali' is a challenging event 'for boat' owners and oarsmen, and an exciting spectacle to onlookers. This is held every year during the month of August.



Ambalappuzha

The place is famous for the Sri Krishna Temple which is believed to have been built in 790 M.E. 'The Ambalappuzha Paal Paayasaam,' a sweet pudding made of rice and milk is quite famous.

**MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN
ALAPPUZHA**



image credit - Haree via wikipedia



image credit : Challiyil Eswaramangalath Vipin via wikipedia

Arthunkal

Arthunkal St.Andrew's Church organizes a feast in memory of St.Sebastian, which is very popular. The church was established by Portuguese missionaries in the 16th century.



image credit : Julia Maudlin via Flickr

Alappuzha Beach

The light house and sea pier constructed in 1862 are the major attractions of Alapuzha Beach which is located near the town.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : ALAPPUZHA

Population : 2,121,943 (2011 Census)

Area : 1414 km².

Taluks : 6

Pincode : 690 XXX

Telephone Code : +91 (0)477 XXX XXXX

Major Towns : Cherthala, Chengannur
Kayamkulam

Accessibility : Road, Rail, Water

Website : <http://alappuzha.nic.in/>



DISTRICT OF ERNAKULAM (KOCHI)

This district has the distinction of being the highest revenue yielder among the 14 districts of Kerala. The district has Thrissur to the north, Idukki to the east and Alappuzha and Kottayam to the south. The west, of course, is the Arabian sea. Kakkanad, a suburb of the city of Kochi, is the administrative headquarters. The district is strategically connected to the rest of Kerala by roadways, rail and water ways. The Cochin International Airport is in the northern part at Nedumbassery.



Since the 14th century, Kochi has been an important spice trading center. It was the first place to be colonized by the Europeans in India. It was the main seat of Portuguese India; later the Dutch took over, and then the British. The Kochi royal family had been ruling since the 12th century; later the king became a figurehead only.

The Southern Naval Command, Headquarters of the Indian Coast Guard with its air squadron, Port of Kochi, Cochin Shipyard, International Container Transshipment Terminal are all based in Kochi. So are the CSE (Cochin Stock Exchange) major chemical industries like FACT, Cochin Refineries and electrical industries like TELK. The Special Economic Zone attracts investment. The High Court of Kerala and Info Park add to the luster. IT and ITES services have become a major source of Income.





Fort Kochi

Fort Kochi is situated about 13 km from Ernakulam and is famous for Chinese fishing nets, picturesque beaches and architectural style of the buildings. European style is clearly evident and that makes this small town stand apart from other towns in Kerala.

Jew Synagogue and Jew Town

Jew synagogue (Paradesi Synagogue) was built in 1568 and is one of the oldest active synagogues. This synagogue is located in the old part of Mattenchery Town in Kochi known as Jew Town.



Dutch Palace

Mattancherry Palace built by the Dutch and gifted to the Rajah is a fine example of a "Nalukettu" which means a traditional building for the aristocracy of Kerala with 4 wings, all opening into a central courtyard.

**MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN
ERNAKULAM**



Cherai Beach

Cherai Beach is one of the beautiful beaches facing the Arabian sea. It is about 25 Kms from Cochin and is an ideal place to unwind and enjoy the long sandy beach.

Hill Palace Museum

Hill Palace Museum is Kerala's first heritage museum and is also the largest archaeological museum in Kerala. It is situated near Tripunithura, Kochi. It was built in 1865 and was the administrative headquarters of Kochi Rajas.



Bolgatty Palace

This palace was built by the Dutch in 1744 and is one of the oldest existing Dutch palaces outside Holland. Bolgatty palace is located in Bolgatty Island, Kochi. It is now converted into a heritage resort by the state.

Willingdon Island

Willingdon Island, reclaimed from the sea has the port, rail terminus and naval base. There are beautiful walkways and jetties on this island. The island is also home to numerous government & private sector establishments associated with the port.



image credit: Vaikooverly via Wikipedia



Kodanad Elephant Training Centre

Kodanad is a rural village near Cochin which is around 42 Kms from Ernakulam town. This place is famous for the elephant training centre established in 1950. Because of the Indian government ban to elephant capture, Kodanad is now just a rescue training centre for stranded baby elephants and wounded elephants.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : ERNAKULAM



Population	: 3279860 (2011 Census)
Area	: 3068 km ² .
Taluks	: 6
Pincode	: 682 XXX
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)484 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Aluva, Muvattupuzha, Paravur, Thripunithura
Accessibility	: Road, Rail, Air, Water
Website	: http://ernakulam.gov.in/



DISTRICT OF THRISSUR

The district of Thrissur forms the central part of Kerala, bounded by Malappuram in the north, Palakkad in the east and Ernakulam in the south. On the west stretches the Arabian sea. There are 6 taluks in the district which is spread across 3032 km². The very name Thrissur brings to mind the pomp and splendor of Thrissur Poooram. Thrissur city is the headquarter of the district. The name signifies its association with the three Shiva temples. Thrissur, known for its cultural history and archaeology, is called the cultural capital of Kerala. Kerala Kalamandalam, (Dance) Sahitya Academy, Lalitkala Academy and Sangeeta Nataka Academy are all housed here.



MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN THRISSUR



Thrissur Pooram

"The Pooram of Poorams," the Thrissur Pooram, draws big crowds, eager to experience the thrill of the Chenda Melam (drums of all kinds and other musical instruments). More than 30 caparisoned elephants are lined at opposite ends of Thekkinkad Maidanam. There arise several hoo-hah exclamations when the extremely beautiful, bejeweled big umbrellas are changed every few minutes by the two competing temples, Paramakavu and Thiruvambadi. And to top it all, fireworks are displayed until late in the night. Thrissur Pooram is held every year during the month of April.



Guruvayur

Guruvayur is a municipal town in Thrissur district. It houses the famous Sree Krishna Temple, dedicated to Lord Krishna, also known as, Guruvayoorappan. It is the fourth biggest temple in India, in terms of the number of devotees per day. There is an elephant camp located in Punnathur Kotta, a distance of 3 km from the Guruvayur Temple, considered to be one of the largest elephant sanctuaries housing around 60 elephants which belong to the temple.





Vadakkunnathan Temple

Vadakkunnathan Temple is an ancient temple in the city of Thrissur. This temple is a classic example of the Kerala style of architecture. Mural paintings depicting various episodes from Mahabharata can be seen inside the temple. The temple has been declared a national monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act. Thekkinkad ground, encircling the temple, is the main venue of the famous Thrissur Pooram held in April.



Kerala Kalamandalam

Kerala Kalamandalam is a major centre for learning South Indian performing arts like Kathakali, Kudiyattam, Mohiniyattam, Ottamthullal, Kuchipudi, Bharatanatyam & Nangyarkuttu. Mahakavi Vallathol Narayana Menon played a primary role in setting up the Kalamandalam. Kalamandalam follows the gurukula sampradayam, the ancient Indian education system based on residential tutelage. It is situated in the village of Cheruthuruthy in Thrissur district on the banks of the Bharathapuzha river.



Aathirappalli and Vazhachal

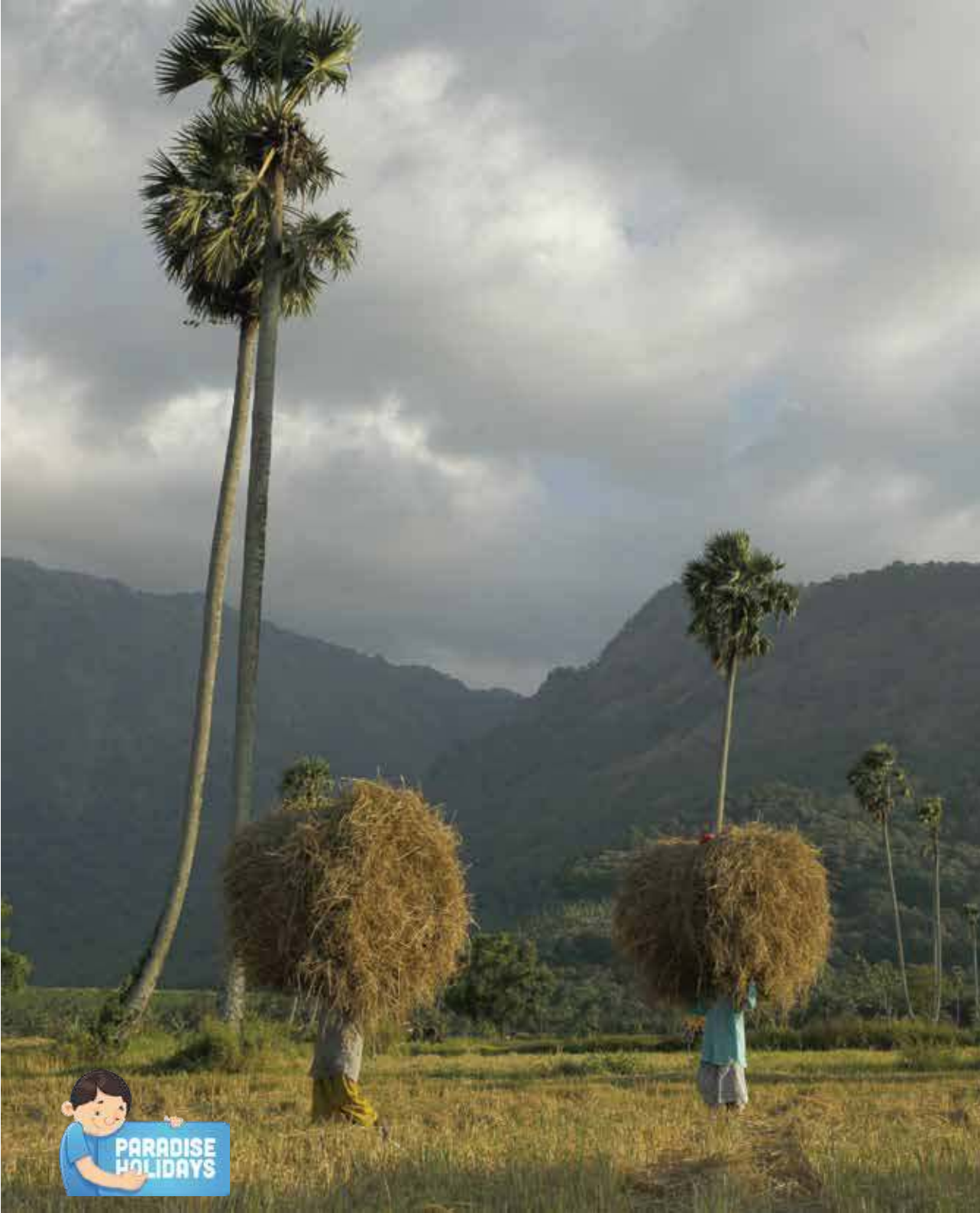
Two spectacular waterfalls makes this place one among the most preferred tourist destinations in Central Kerala. These waterfalls are a place of scenic beauty and are just 5 km apart.



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : THRISSUR

Population	: 2975440 (2011 Census)
Area	: 3032 km ² .
Taluks	: 5
Pincode	: 680 XXX
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)487 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Guruvayoor, Irinjalakkuda, Kunnamkulam.
Accessibility	: Road, Rail
Website	: http:// thrissur.gov.in/





DISTRICT OF PALAKKAD

The district of Palakkad lies between Malappuram in the northwest and Thrissur in the southwest. It is bordered on the east by Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. The district of Palakkad has an area of 4480 sq km. Palakkad Gap in the western Ghats is a gateway to Kerala from the north.

The district has vast stretches of paddy fields and is known as the Granary of Kerala.



MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN PALAKKAD



Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary

Parambikulam Wild Life Sanctuary is 135 km from Palakkad. The semi-tropical forest is home to Elephants, bisons, tigers and several other species of wild animals. Boating and trekking are the permitted activities in Parambikulam.



image credit: PP Yonus via Wikipedia

Silent Valley National Park

Silent Valley National Park is an ever-green forest, so called because of the absence of the usual forest sound of cicadas. It is a biosphere reserve which should be kept safe from the marauding hordes. Lion-tailed Macaque are found only in Silent Valley.



Nelliampathy

Nelliampathy, known as the Ooty of Kerala, is about 80 kms from Palakkad. It is a hillstation between a series of ridges with deep valleys and dark forests.





Palakkad Fort

Palakkad Fort is one of the most beautiful and best preserved forts in Kerala. It comes under the Archeological Survey of India. The fort was built by Hyder Ali of Mysore during his invasion in the year 1766. Later it fell into the hands of the British in 1790.



Malampuzha Dam

Malampuzha Dam is an irrigation dam built across the Bharata Puzha. There are beautiful gardens, an amusement park for children, an aquarium, snake park and boating facility on the reservoir.



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : PALAKKAD

Population	: 28,10,892 (2011 Census)
Area	: 4480 km ² .
Taluks	: 5
Pincode	: 680 XXX
Telephone Code	: 91 (0)491 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Shornur, Chittur, Ottapalam, Mannarkad
Accessibility	: Road, Rail
Website	: http:// palakkad.nic.in/



DISTRICT OF MALAPPURAM

Malappuram District was formed in 1969 by merging portions of the erstwhile Palakkad and Kozhikode districts. It is the most populous district in Kerala. The terrain is hilly with the big river Nila (Bharathapuzha) flowing through the district. There are 7 taluks in the district which is spread across 3000 km².



MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN MALAPPURAM



Kottakal

Kottakkal is known for Arya Vaidya Sala, a world renowned centre of Ayurveda. Ayurveda has been found to be very effective in treating major illness and health complaints. Kottakkal Pooram festival which attracts thousands of people is another attraction.



Thirunavaya

Thirunavaya is a place of cultural and historical importance in ancient Kerala, situated on the banks of the river Bharathapuzha (Nila). Mamankam, the famous medieval festival and trade fair, was held in the Thirunavaya once in twelve years until the 18th century. Thirunavaya was a place of religious significance from the early Middle Ages. Temples consecrated to the Trimurtis - (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva) are situated on either bank of Nila. A martial art festival of Kalaripayattu, is conducted during summer on the sands of dry Bharathapuzha. Thirunavaya is also famous for ayurvedic treatments.



Nilambur

Nilambur Taluk is famous for its forests, wild life, rivers, waterfalls and its scenic beauty. The town is on the bank of the Chaliyar. Teak from Nilambur is of high quality. The oldest teak plantation, called Conolly's Plot, boasts of the tallest teak tree. It is just 2 km away from the town. A long hanging bridge across the Chaliyar takes you there. The Teak Museum is a place of interest. A bio resources park is attached to it.



image credit: Prasanth Moorchilot via Flickr

Kottakunnu

Kottakunnu has a newly developed amusement park (water theme park) in Malappuram District. The place is also known for the Lalithakala Academy art gallery.

The remnants of a fort built by the Zamorins can be seen.



image credit: Sahalpk via Wikipedia

Tirur

Tirur is where the 16th century poet, Thunchath Ezhuthachan the father of Malayalam literature lived. The place is revered by scholars. In the month of February a week-long Literary Festival is held when litterateurs congregate.

Kadalundi

Kadalundi Bird Sanctuary spreads across over a cluster of islands in the Kadalundi River which flows into the Arabian Sea. Over a hundred varieties of native birds and around 60 varieties of migratory birds can be spotted in this sanctuary.



image credit: PDhruvaraj S via Wikipedia

Ponnani

Ponnani is a tidal port used by the fishing industry now, but once it was a busy port and one of the seats of the mighty Zamorins who ruled the northern part of Kerala from Calicut.

The tidal mouth of Bharatapuzha is beautiful with flocks of a variety of birds. Lake Biyyam has water sports facilities and a boat race is conducted during Onam.



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : MALAPPURAM

Population	: 41,10,956 (2011 Census)
Area	: 3000 km ² .
Taluks	: 7
Pincode	: 676 XXX
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)483 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Erintalmanna, Manjeri, Tirur Kottakkal
Accessibility	: Road, Rail, Air
Website	: http:// malappuram.nic.in/



DISTRICT OF KOZHIKODE

The district of Kozhikode lies south of Kannur, with Wayanad to the east, Malappuram to the south and the Arabian sea in the west. The city of Kozhikode, also called Calicut, is the district headquarters and third largest city in Kerala.

It was the center of an independent kingdom ruled by the Zamorins since 14th century. The ports of Malabar were important centers for Indian Ocean trade of spices, silk and other goods. From the 7th century onwards, Chinese and Arab traders have come to Calicut as is evident from Chinese writings. This brought about the arrival of various invaders such as Portuguese, Dutch, Mysore Sultans and the British.





Beypore

Beypore is one of the oldest ports of ancient Kerala from where trading was done to Middle East. It is famous for building ships of yore-the URUS (Arab Dhows). There is a marina and a beautiful beach.



Kappad

Kappad is a famous beach near Kozhikode. This is the place where the Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama landed in the year 1498.

A small stone monument can be seen with the inscription, "Vasco da Gama landed here, Kappakadavu, in the year 1498".



image credit : Pradep717 via wikipedia

Pazhassi Raja Museum and Art Gallery

Named after the brave ruler who dared to fight the British with the help of tribal warriors, this museum displays old coins, mural paintings and monuments. The art gallery has some excellent paintings, by Raja Ravi Varma, the old master painter.

**MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN
KOZHIKODE**





Kozhikode Beach

Kozhikode Beach is a cool place to enjoy an evening. The two crumbling piers and the old lighthouse take you back to days gone by.

Thusharagiri

For those who are lovers of Nature, a visit to Tusharagiri about 50 km away is gainful. Far from the madding crowd, this waterfall springs from the high hills among the green forests. You feel cool and fresh. If fond of trekking, you can trek to reach the waterfall. A bath in the big pool is heavenly!

Sarovaram Bio Park

Sarovaram Bio Park is an eco-friendly development inside the city of Kozhikode. The project has been developed with an eco-friendly theme and is located in an ecosystem consisting of wetlands and mangrove forests containing bird habitats. It is one of the most popular locations in the city to spend an evening.





ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : KOZHIKODE

Population	: 28,78,498 (2011 Census)
Area	: 2344 km ² .
Taluks	: 4
Pincode	: 690 XXX
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)495 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Vatakara, Koyilandy, Thamarassery
Accessibility	: Road, Rail, Water
Website	: http://kozhikode.gov.in/





DISTRICT OF WAYANAD

The district of Wayanad was established in 1980 with an area of 2,131 km sq. km. comprising 3 taluks. It is set high on the Western Ghats with altitudes ranging from 700 to 2100 meters. It is the least populous district. There are 5 Ghat roads to reach Wayanad from coastal towns and lower hills.

The region was native to a large number of tribals or Adivasis. The forests had been inhabited by them since 3000 years or even earlier. Evidence of New Stone Age culture can be seen in some places.



The Kabini, an east flowing river, is a tributary of Kaveri. Kabini has 3 tributaries draining the whole of Wayanad. The weather is pleasant throughout the year with a good amount of rainfall. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy. Apart from coffee, tea, cocoa, pepper and vanilla in plantations, rice is widely cultivated. The old trees of rose-wood, anjili are seen in some parts providing shade for coffee plants. The present trend is to grow silver oaks for shade as they grow fast and serve as support for pepper. Eucalyptus is also cultivated to extract the oil. The reserve forest has a large share of teak trees grown in plantations.





Muthanga Wild Life Sanctuary

Muthanga Wild Life Sanctuary is on the way from Mysore to Sultan Battery, spread over 344 km². A variety of large wild animals such as Indian Bison, elephant, deer and tiger are found there. The sanctuary is now an integral part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The place is bounded by Nagarhole, Bandipur & Mudumalai Wild Life Sanctuaries.

Edakkal Caves

Edakkal Caves are two natural caves on top of the Ambukuthimala, 25 km from Kalpetta. The New Stone Age pictorial writings from the Neolithic man on the walls of these caves, believed to date to at least 6,000 BC, indicate the presence of a prehistoric civilization or settlement in this region.

Thirunelli Temple

Thirunelli is an ancient temple near Brahmagiri Mountain. The temple is 32 kms. away from Mananthavady town and a journey through the forest gets you there. The temple is a marvel of ancient architecture. It was an important town and pilgrim center in south India at the time of Tamil Chera king, Bhaskara Ravi Varma. Beyond the Brahmagiri Mountain is the Kudagu district of Karnataka.

**MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN
WAYANAD**





Pookod Lake

Pookode Lake is a freshwater lake in the Wayanad district, located 3 kms away from Vythiri. It is one of the most popular tourist spots in the district. It is spread across an area of 8.5 hectares and with a maximum depth of 6.5 metres. This perennial fresh water lake, nestled among wooded hills, is the only one of its kind in Kerala.



Tholpetty Wildlife Sanctuary

Tholpetty Wildlife Sanctuary has a wide variety of animals. Visitors are restricted to the outer tourist zones of the sanctuary. The sanctuary is located 20 km east of Mananthavady, 13 km from Thirunelly on the Kodagu Road.



Chembra Peak

Chembra Peak is the highest peak in Wayanad, at 2,100 metres above sea level. Chembra is 8 kms from Kalpetta. Permission from the forest office in Meppady is required for trekking up to Chembra Peak. A heart shaped lake on the way to the top of the peak is a major tourist attraction.





Meenmutty Falls

Meenmutty Falls is located 29 km from Kalpetta in Wayanad District. It is three tiered and the second biggest water fall in Kerala with a height of 300 meters. A two km hike through the jungle will take you there.



Banasura Sagar Dam

Banasura Sagar Dam is the largest earth dam in India consisting of a dam and a canal project started in 1979. The dam is made up of massive stacks of stones and boulders. The dam is located 21 km from Kalpetta and has become a popular tourist destination. Boating facility is also available.



The Tomb of Pazhassi Raja

Pazhassi Tomb is a simple but beautiful tomb built in Mananthavady, Wayanad. The tomb is built as a memorial for the Veera Pazhassi Raja who was famously known as the Lion of Kerala. Pazhassi Raja, who fought for freedom from the British, somewhat like the Scottish kings of yore - without a permanent dwelling but moving from place to place, may give a feeling of awe.



Soojipara Water Falls

Soochippara Water falls is 13 kms. from Meppady in Wayanad district. The water falls from 100ft to 300ft heights makes the place unique with its beauty. To reach the waterfalls, you need to trek down 2kms through dense forest over steep rocks.



Vythiri

Vythiri is a very exotic and picturesque place located in the Sylvan Northern High Ranges of Kerala in Wayanad District. Situated at an altitude of 1300m from the sea level, the resort town is known for its comfortable, refreshing and pollution free environment. Vythiri is the only hill station resort of its kind in Kerala. Tree houses are one of the biggest attractions of Vythiri.





ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : WAYANAD

Population	: 7,80,619 (2011 Census)
Area	: 2,131 km ² .
Taluks	: 3
Pincode	: 690 XXX
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)493 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Sulthan Bathery, Kalpetta Mananthavady
Accessibility	: Road
Website	: http://wayanad.gov.in/



DISTRICT OF KANNUR

The second district from the north in the State of Kerala is Kannur, which covers an area of 2,966 sq km and comprises of 4 taluks. The town of Kannur is the district headquarters, and gives the district its name. Kannur is the most urbanised district in Kerala, with more than 50% of its residents living in urban areas.

Kannur is the source of Kalari Payattu, an exciting form of martial art. The district is a major centre of Theyyam, a ritual dance of northern Kerala. Kannur is known as the Land of Looms. The cloth manufactured is of high quality and is exported.

Kannur district can be called the cradle and home of communism which is almost like a religion to the locals.





St. Angelo's Fort

St. Angelo's Fort, built in 1505 by the Portuguese, is situated near the sea coast and is about 2 km away from Kannur town. Even now, it is in a fairly good state of preservation, though parts of it have collapsed. A few obsolete guns can be seen at the place. The fort is a protected monument under the Archaeological Survey of India.



Payyambalam Beach

Payyambalam Beach is a beach located just 2 km from Kannur town. It is one of the beautiful beaches in the state with an unbroken coastline of a few Kms.



image credit: Pradeep717 via wikipedia

Parassinikkadavu Snake Park

Parassinikkadavu Snake Park is situated 18 kms away from Kannur town. The snake park here houses about 150 varieties of snakes including the Spectacled Cobra, King Cobra, Russell's Viper, Krait and various pit vipers. There is also a large collection of non-poisonous snakes including pythons. The park is dedicated to the preservation and conservation of snakes, many species of which are getting extinct gradually.

MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN KANNUR





Mappila Bay

Mappila Bay is situated near the St. Angelo's Fort. The bay was famous during the Kolathiris' regime as a commercial harbor.

Today the place has turned into a modernized fishing harbor.



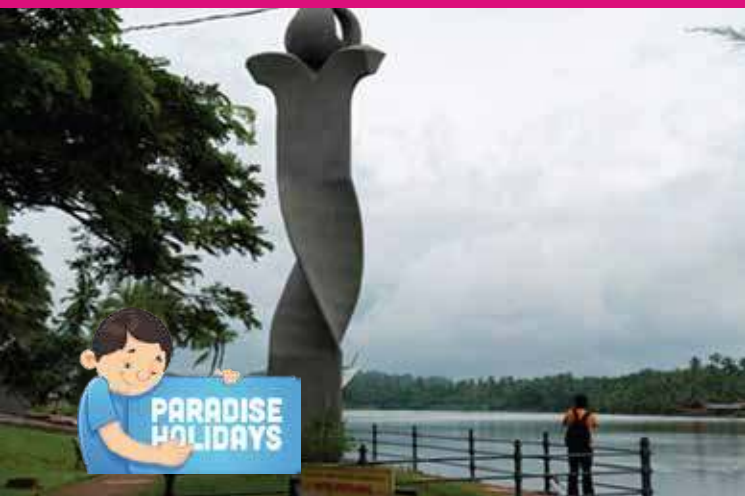
Muzhappilangad Beach

Muzhappilangad Beach is in Kannur district, located parallel to NH 66 between Kannur and Thalassery. This is the largest drive-In beach in Asia where you can drive an entire length of 4 kms. It is one of the important tourist destinations in the district of Kannur.



Thalassery Fort

Thalassery Fort is in Thalassery, a town in Kannur District. The British built the fort in the year 1708. The fort has secret tunnels to the sea. It is now a historical monument preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India.



Mahe

Mahe is a small town (9 km²) surrounded on all sides by Kerala. It is officially a part of the Union Territory of Puducherry. The Kannur District surrounds Mahé on three sides and Calicut district on one side. Formerly a French colony, Mahe now forms a municipality in Mahe district of the Union Territory of Puducherry.



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : KANNUR

Population	: 2,412,365 (2011 Census)
Area	: 2,966 km ²
Taluks	: 3
Pincode	: 670 XXX
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)497 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Thalassery, Payyannur, Taliparamba
Accessibility	: Road, Rail
Website	: http://www.kannur.nic.in/





DISTRICT OF KASARAGOD

Kasaragod is the northern most district of Kerala. Kasaragod town is the administrative headquarters of the district. The district of Kasaragod shares its borders with Kannur in the south, Dakshina Kannada in the north, Western Ghats in the east & the Arabian sea in the west.

Its history is rather different from the rest of Kerala. The area was part of the Vijayangar empire which later came under the Naiks. History influences the languages spoken in the district.

Apart from Malayalam, people speak Tulu, Beary, Konkani and Kannada.

The district is famous for the art forms of Yakshagana, Bombe-yattu and Theyyam.





image credit : Riju K via Flickr

Bekal Fort

Bekal Fort is the biggest fort in Kerala, spreading over an area of 40 acres. It is 14 km from Kanhangad and 15 km from Kasaragod town. The fort is fronted by a long stretch of beach. The fort stands on a headland that juts into the sea and looks majestic. The fort was constructed during the time of Shivappa Naik in A D 1650. Subsequently, Bekal fell into the hands of Mysore. Bekal served as an important military station of Tipu Sultan when he led the great military expedition to capture Malabar. In 1799 saw the end of Mysorean control and subsequently, the fort came under the British.



image credit : Vaikooverly via Wikipedia

Ranipuram

Ranipuram is a hill station at 2460 ft, a place of grassy hills adjacent to moist green forests. Trekking is easy with two routes, including one that has steps part way. The view at the top brings green coolness to one's eyes. Cottages are available for stay. Ranipuram has the potential to develop into a premier hill station. Also the bio-diversity park is growing gradually with the introduction of the Nilgiri Tahr, a stranger to North Kerala. Wild elephants are summer guests.



Chandragiri Fort

Chandragiri Fort, built in the 17th century, is in Kasaragod district. The fort stands on the banks of the Payaswini, also called Chandragiri river. This large fort is 150 feet above sea level and occupies an area of about seven acres.

MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN KASARAGOD



Kottancheri Hills

The Kottancheri Hills are a part of the Western Ghats in Kasaragod district. The forests of Kottancheri are packed with wildlife. Elephants, Wild Dogs, deer, wild pigs, rare birds are all abundant here. It is near Ranipuram rainforest. It is an ideal place for trekking, and has a picnic center too.



Valiyaparamba Backwaters

Valiyaparamba backwaters lie separated from the mainland. The place is known for its scenic beauty. It offers boat cruises and it is 30 kms from Bekel Fort.



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION : KASARAGOD

Population	: 13,02,600 (2011 Census)
Area	: 1992 km ²
Taluks	: 3
Pincode	: 671 XXX
Telephone Code	: +91 (0)499 XXX XXXX
Major Towns	: Kanhangad, Nileshwaram, Manjeshwaram
Accessibility	: Road, Rail
Website	: http://kasargod.nic.in/



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