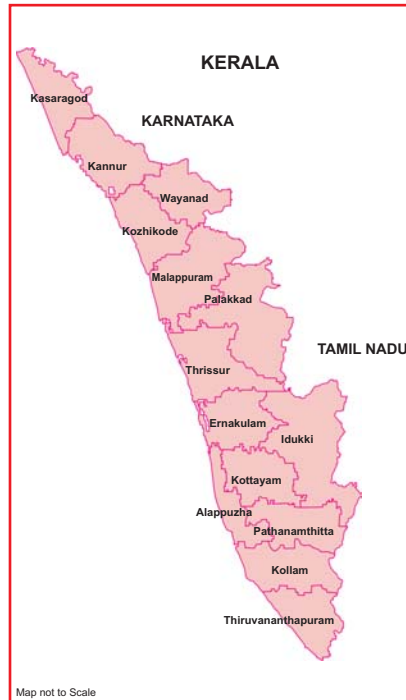


Kerala



Acclaimed by National Geographic as one of the 'Ten Paradies of the World', and by Paul McCartney as 'God's Own Country', Kerala has emerged as the cynosure of the world for its unmatched natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, delectable cuisine and spas for traditional Ayurvedic medicinal treatment. Kerala affords a majestic experience with a world of beaches, mountains, backwaters, wildlife sanctuaries and islands. The state stretches along the southern coast, with the backwaters of the Arabian Sea, reaching deep into the verdant countryside.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The city gets its name from the word, Thiruvananthapuram, meaning the city of Anantha, or the abode of the sacred serpent Anantha on which Lord Vishnu, the preserver of the Hindu trinity, reclines. It was once part of the kingdom of Travancore and the royal heritage is evident in the fine buildings and palaces that have now been converted into government offices. With wide avenues, parks, cultural institutions and undulating countryside, the capital of Kerala is a gateway to many charms, the state offers.

City Lights

Built by Raja Marthanda Varma in 1733 AD, the **Padmanabha Temple** is a fine specimen of South Indian architecture. The magnificent temple tower rises in seven-storeyed splendour, reflected in the pool in front.



KERALA

Padmanabha Temple

The Zoo is located near the **Napier Museum**. (Open 9 am to 5 pm, closed on Mondays). **Shanghumugham Beach** (4 km) has a park in the vicinity. **Kowdiar Palace**, home of the late

Kerala

Maharaja Sree Chitra Thirunal Bala Rama Varma and his family is off limits to the public. But the view of the grand old building from the gate is excellent. **The Velli Tourist Village**, on the outskirts of the city, is excellent for watersports. The beach allows for angling.

City Culture

The Healing Hand of Ayurveda: The ancient Indian science of Ayurveda has seen a glorious revival in Kerala with people flocking in for herbal body massages that promise to rejuvenate stressed out lives. Some of the various therapies on offer are the *Rasayana Chikitsa* that tones up the skin and the *Kayakalpa Chikitsa* for your immune system, while therapeutic treatments with herbal oils and buttermilk will help you get over lingering ailments. Some of the best centres are: Somatheeram Ayurvedic Beach



Rasayana Chikitsa

Resort (2268101), Ideal Ayurvedic Centre (2268632), Gopals Ayurvedic Beach Resort (2480833), Devaki Ayurvedic Health Care Centre (2326022) Trivandrum.

Festivals

In mid-August are held the annual snake boat races; at Aranmula, boat procession marks the **Parthasarathy Temple Festival**. Champakkulam, 16 km from Alleppey, too hosts boat processions. Caparisoned elephants march to the rustic rhythm at Trichur as part of the **Pooram Festival** in April while the same spectacle sweeps Thiruvananthapuram in November when **Arat Festival** is held.

Gourmet's Delights

Kerala is a land of rice and curries, tempered with coconut, tamarind and spices that grow here in abundance. Seafood preparations are common. In Thiruvananthapuram, you can go to **Promenade** or **Sayanna** at the Mascot Hotel, and for Kerala cuisine, visit **Rangoli** restaurant or **Ariya Niwas**. **Thattukada** has branches all over the city.

Shopper's Paradise

Masks, coir handicrafts and carved furniture are the specialities. Table and floor mats are worth seeing here. Check out **Coir Corp.** (2323846), **Coir Board** (2323846) and **Triveni Shopping Complex**. The main shopping area is **MG Road** where you can also find **Gram Sree**, the village crafts centre. Since cashewnuts and spices are Kerala's major produce, do buy them from shops in **Chala Bazaar**, MG Road and **Fort** area. For

handicrafts, try **Kairali** (2475627), **Natesan's** (2330625) and **Khadi Gramodyog** (2331627).

Excursions

Padmanabhapuram Palace: Some 50 odd km away, built in teak wood, contains interesting murals of the 17th & 18th century. The palace is on the way to Nagarcoil.

Neyyar Dam: 32 km away, this is a favourite picnic spot. Boating facility is available in the reservoir. There is also a crocodile farm and a lion safari park.

Akkulam is a place of great scenic beauty with a picturesque lake. There is a boat club with over dozens of boats, available for joy riders.

Ponmudi: 61 km away, is a small hill station, where accommodation and restaurants are available. It also has a good trekking area. The journey by bus takes 2.5 hours. **Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary:** 50 km away, it is on the way to Ponmudi. The possible wild life sightings are elephants, sambhar, leopards and the lion-tailed macaque.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: Thiruvananthapuram has an international airport with flights from Sri Lanka, Maldives and West Asia. Nationally, Indian Airlines and Jet Airways connect the city with direct flights, the airport is six km from the city. **By Rail:** Broad and meter gauge services operate. **By Road:** Four National Highways connect at Thiruvananthapuram, linking it with all the neighbouring cities through a good network of roads. Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu road transport services serve the city.

Getting Around: KSRTC buses being generally overcrowded, taxis and metered autorickshaws are the best options. Autorickshaws and cars (with driver) are available on hire. Some of the better car rentals in town are Kerala Travels Interserve (Tel: 2324158), Swastik Travels (2331270) and Aries Travels (2330417). **Best time to visit:** November to June.

City Code: 0471

Indian Airlines: 2318288, 2316870

Jet Airways: 2325267, 2727635

Kerala State Road Transport

Corp.: 2327756

City Bus Stand: 2463029

India Tourism: 2501498

Govt of Kerala Tourist

Information Centre: 2501085

KTDC: 253234

Banks/Currency Exchange: Andhra

Bank: 2471161, Bank of Baroda:

2325923, Canara Bank: 2331536,

Central Bank of India: 2471294,

Thomas Cook: 2369729

Hospitals: Medical College:

2355901, General Hospital: 2443870,

PRS Hospital: 2348985

Chemists: City Medical Service:

2461770, Krishna Medicals: 2470454

Home Away From Home

The Muthoot Plaza: 2337733, Saj Lucia: 2463443, Fortune Hotel The South Park: 2333333, Pankaj: 2464645, The Residency Tower: 2381038, Chaitram (KTDC): 2330977.

KOVALAM

This beach town is probably the most important tourist destination in the state. It is the perfect recipe for a seaside holiday, with fabulous beaches

Kerala

and excellent hotels and resorts adding the necessary ingredients. The other high point is the Ayurvedic health programme offered by various health centers and resorts.

Kovalam has two palm-fringed coves separated from less-populated beaches by rocky headlands. The southern headland, is marked by a prominent lighthouse. It is a 15 minute walk from one headland to the other.

Gourmet's Delights

Open air restaurants lining the beach or little shacks beside coconut palms, offer standard menus: porridge, muesli, eggs, toast, idli and dosa for breakfast, and curries or seafood with chips and salad for dinner. At night, you can stroll along the beachfront and select your fish – the range includes seer, barracuda, sea bass, catfish, king and tiger prawns, and crab. You can also select the method of preparation: tandoor, sizzler or grilled. Some of the popular names of the eateries are: **Serenity, Black Cat, Shiva's Moon, Sea View, Sea Shore, Lonely Planet, Jungle** (Italian and Chinese), **the Lucky Coral** rooftop restaurant at the Hotel Seaweed is recommended.

Facts at a Glance

Access: 12 km away from Thiruvananthapuram. Taxis are easily available. You can take a KSRTC bus too. **Getting Around:** Taxis and autos are easily available. However, you can hire two wheelers too, on per day basis, from **Voyager Travels** (2481993).

Tourism Information Centre: 2480085.

Home Away From Home

Kovalam Hotel & Beach Resort: 2480101, Samudra (KTDC): 2480089, Sea Face: 2481835, Poovar Island Resort: 2212068, Somatheeram Ayurvedic Beach Resort: 2286101, Abad Palshore: 2481481.

KOLLAM

Quilon or **Kollam**, is an old seaport circumfringed by Ashtamudi Lake. During ancient times, Kollam was a renowned international trade centre, frequented by Phoenicians, Persians, Romans, Arabs and Chinese! Famous travellers like Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta have acclaimed its importance as a commercial town.

Also, it was in Kollam that 'Ramanattam', a dance form of Kathakali originated!

City Lights

Cruising down the backwaters in Ashtamudi, housed in a boat and living life at ease ... Kollam is the ultimate place to be. Apart from the immaculate backwaters, there are other interesting places too, like **Thirumullavaram**, 5 km away is a fabulous beach. **Thankassery**, 5 km away again, treasures the awesome remnants of the Portuguese and Dutch forts. A 45 metre high lighthouse is an added attraction to this place. **Paravoor**, 20 km away, is a narrow skirt of land stretching in between the backwaters and the sea. A beach resort by KTDC and a major water sports complex by Kollam DTPC adorn Paravoor. The famous **Varkala** beach is a mere 15 km away. Paravoor is well connected by road and rail. **Thenmala**, 68 km east of Kollam, is a



Verkala Beach

traveller's delight, surrounded by dense forests in the eastern ranges. The Thenmala Dam and pleasure boating along **Senthurini Wild Life Sanctuary**, is a treat to behold.

City Culture

Travel around the city by boat. DTPC, Kollam, lets out boats elegantly named Vatsala, Ashtamudi, Neerja, Neelima, Subhiksha. The luxury houseboats in **Kettuvallam**, are like floating mansions. This is where the backwater cruises depart for Atta Alappuzha, and holiday packages can be availed of. A Power Boat Rally is held here annually.

Facts at a Glance

Access: **By Air:** At 66 km, Thiruvananthapuram is the nearest airport. **By Rail:** Part of Southern Railways, it is well connected by trains. **By Road:** Connected by good roads, on NH47.

City Code: 0474
Dept. of Tourism: 2743620
DTPC: 2253308
Bus Stand: 2740399

Home Away From Home

Aquaserene: 2512410, Sea Bee: 2741225, Yatri Niwas (KTDC): 2745538.

ALAPPUZHA

This 'Venice of the East' is bang on the banks of the Vembanad. A maze of canals run through the town, making it the backbone of the charming backwater cruises.

City Lights

Probably the most popular spot is **Alappuzha Beach**. An old lighthouse situated here adds a certain mystique to the area. **Kottamkulangara Mahavishnu and Devi Temple** are the oldest temples beside the lake. **Mullackal Rajarajeshwari Temple** is home to Goddess Rajarajeshwari who is known to come alive during the auspicious Navratras. **Mannarasals Sree Nagaraja and Sri Krishna Temple** (14 km from Alappuzha), depict the traditional temple architecture that Kerala is renowned for.



Backwaters at Kerala

Facts at a Glance

Access: **By Air:** The nearest airport is Kochi, 98 km from Alappuzha. **By Rail:** From Kochi, after reaching the Alappuzha Railway Station, go to the boat jetty, 9 km away. From Ernakulam, it takes two hours to reach. **By Road:** The place is connected to all the south Indian towns, by a well-developed network of roads. From Thiruvananthapuram, the distance is

Kerala

154 km. **By Ferry:** Take one of the State Water Transport boats link Alappuzha to Kollam, Kottayam, Chenganassery, Nsdumudy and Kovalam. You can even hire a boat from Kochi to Alappuzha. It takes around 2½ hours. **Best time to visit:** November to March.

City Code: 0477

Ferry Service: 2251395

Backwater Tours: 2244171

Tourism Info Office: 2260722

DTPC: 2253308

Home Away From Home

The Marari Beach: 2863801,
Punnamada Backwater Resort:
2233690, Alleppey Prince: 2243752.

KUMARAKOM

One can safely call Kumarakom a beach resort town, tucked 14 km away from Kottayam. The resorts are more or less self-contained, offering a variety of activities like angling, cruising and visiting villages along the backwaters, watersports on the lake and visits to local farms and paddy plantations.

City Lights

Water Bird Sanctuary: A 14-acre bird sanctuary is situated on the eastern banks of the Vembanad Lake. Birds like Siberian storks migrate here every year. **Aruvikkuzhi Waterfalls:** 18 km from Kottayam, the waters roar as they cascade down the mountains from a height of 100 ft. **Vembanad Lake:** Kottayam is a vast network of rivers and canals which empty into the great expanse of water called the Vembanad Lake. The lake, an enchanting picnic spot and a fast

developing backwater tourism destination, provides boating, fishing and sightseeing experiences that are truly exhilarating.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airport is Kochi, 110 km away. **By Rail:** The closest railhead is at Kottayam, which is 14 km away. **By Road:** The city of Kochi is 78 km away. Kumarakom is connected to Kottayam by road lined with paddy fields and villages that are crisscrossed with canals. The nearest bus terminal is in Kottayam, and from there, you will have to rent a car to reach Kumarakom. **Waterways:** You can also cruise down to Kumarakom in your houseboat from either Alappuzha or Kochi. Most resorts here are on the waterfront, and have boat jettys on the opposite banks of Lake Vembanad. **Best time to visit:** November to March.

City Code: 0481

Tourism Info Office: 2251796

Home Away From Home

Kumarakom Backwater Resort: 2524900, Taj Garden Retreat: 2524377, Coconut Lagoon: 2525834, Kettuvallam Houseboats (KTDC): 2524258.

THEKKADY (PERIYAR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY)

More popular as a tiger reserve, Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the largest Sanctuaries in India. Spread across 777 sq km, of which 360 sq. km is thick evergreen forest, the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary was declared a Tiger Reserve in 1978. The splendid artificial lake formed by the



Elephants at Thekkady

Mullaperiyar Dam across the Periyar river adds to the charm of the park. A boat ride on the serene Periyar Lake is the best way to go about the Thekkady experience. Herds of elephants that come down to the lake to frolick are a major attraction. Apart from mongoose, bison, sambar and flying squirrel, you also have lush hills and spice plantations here!



Periyar Lake

City Lights

Kumily, 4 km away, is on the outskirts of the sanctuary. An important shopping centre and spice trade centre, the main bus station and most of the medium range accommodation in the Periyar region are in Kumily. The ancient **Mangala Devi Temple**, 15 km away, is hidden in the dense woods at the top of a peak 1337 m above sea level. Open to visitors only on the **Chithra Pournami** festival day. Permission to visit the area can be

obtained from the Wildlife Warden (2322027).

Eating Out

Bordering both Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the cuisine is a mix: *idli*, *dosa* and *kappa* stimulate appetite. Rice and curry, made of vegetables or fish, are the staple food of this forest region.

Shopping

Thekkady is the best place to buy spices like cardamom and pepper. You can also pick up tea and coffee here.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airports are Madurai (140 km) and Kochi (190 km), which are well connected to many destinations in India. **By Rail:** The nearest railhead is Kottayam (115 km) on the Ernakulam-Thiruvananthapuram line. Theni is the closest railway station, 60 km away. **By Road:** You can hire a car from Madurai or Kochi to reach Periyar. From Kottayam it takes four hours and from Kochi 5 hours. Thiruvananthapuram is 271 km – two direct buses leave daily for the eight-hour journey. The drive into the hills is spectacular; you can glimpse waterfalls and a number of plantations including tea, coffee, rubber and spices. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 18°C, Max 29°C; Winter: Min 15°C, Max 21°C. **Rainfall:** 2,500 mm, from June to September. **Best time to visit:** September to May.

City Code: 04869

Wildlife Preservation Office:
2322027

Hospitals: Central Hospital: 222045

Home Away From Home

Muthoot Cardamom Country: 222816, Taj Garden Retreat: 222401, Lake Palace (KTDC): 2322023, Periyar House: 222029, Rose Garden Residency Pyramid: 232240.

MUNNAR

This hill station on the Western Ghats, immersed in tea estates is a getaway, charming beyond imagination. Though just relaxing in the greens seems like what the doctor ordered, you can visit a **Tea Factory** (permission for any of the 26 factories of Tata Tea Ltd can be obtained from their Regional Office in the centre of Munnar town. Another excursion could be to **Devikulam**, 15 km from Munnar. The Sita Devi Lake with its mineral waters and picturesque surroundings is a beautiful outing. The lake also offers good trout fishing opportunities. **Top Station** is known for the Neelkurinji plant that flowers only once in 12 years. It is at a distance of 37 km on the Munnar-Kodaikanal road at an altitude of 1,700 m. Top Station also has a panoramic view of the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu. **Echo Point** (15 km from Munnar) is very scenic. **Eravikulam National Park** (15 km away) is situated in the Devikulam Taluk and is home to the Nilgiri Tahr. The Anamudi



Eravikulam National Park

peak (2695 m) is located in the Southern region of the park. **Kundala** is 29 km from Munnar, there is a golf course here, owned by the Tatas. An artificial dam and Aruvikkad waterfalls are other places to see in the area.

Must Do

Munnar sightseeing and golf helicopter holiday. Contact: (04865) 231516.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airport is Kochi, 130 km away. **By Rail:** The nearest railhead is also at Kochi. **By Road:** Munnar is best reached from Kochi (130 km, 3 ½ hrs). There are eight daily buses (4 ½ hrs), check timings. Prepaid cabs operated by the KTDC are available from Kochi airport. **Distances:** Ooty 282 km, Periyar 160 km. **Getting Around:** One can easily get around on foot. Cycling is yet another option. DTPC hires out cycles on hourly basis. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 15.2°C, Max 25.8°C; Winter: Min 0°C, Max 10°C. **Best time to visit:** September to May.

City Code: 04865

Bus Station: 230201

Banks: The State Bank of Travancore: 230274, SBI also offers currency and travellers cheques exchange facilities.

Post Office: 230280

Hospitals/Chemists: Tata General Hospital, Matha Hospital, Arun Hospital, Susan Medicals, S. B. Medicals

Home Away From Home

Fort Munnar: (04868) 249311-13,

Club Mahindra Estate: 230512, Star Homes Igloo: 263207, Tea County (KTDC): 230460 and 5230460.

KOCHI

Kerala's commercial hub, Kochi, known earlier as Cochin, is a cosmopolitan town. Being a natural harbour on the Arabian sea coast, foreigners have anchored here since time immemorial. There are palaces, forts, beaches, backwaters, old churches, snake boat races, Kathakali, museums and all the conveniences of a big city. A collection of islands and narrow peninsulas, **Ernakulam** is its commercial center and forms the mainland. The two main railway stations and the bus stands are located here. **Fort Kochi** and **Mattachery** form an elongated island west of Ernakulam. **Willingdon island** which houses the Airport, Port and Naval base lies between Ernakulam and Fort Kochi. **Jos Junction** in Ernakulam is considered as the nerve center of the city.

City Lights

Fort Kochi is probably the best preserved history of colonial times. The architectural styles used in its various monuments and buildings reflect the bygone era. Walk through or cycle around for soaking in its



Chinese Fishing Nets

ambience. **Chinese Fishing Nets** are a legacy of one of the earliest visitors to the Malabar coast, unmistakable as one enters the harbour. The best place to watch them is from **Vasco Da Gama** square, a narrow promenade that parallels the beach with little stalls that serve fresh seafood and tender coconuts. **Santa Cruz Basilica**, built by the Portuguese, was elevated to a cathedral by the Pope John Paul IV in 1558. Along Rose Street stands **Vasco House**, one of the oldest Portuguese houses in Fort Cochin built in the first half of the 16th century. Though never fully authenticated, it is believed to have been the residence of Vasco Da Gama. Vasco Da Gama who died in Cochin in 1524 was buried here before his remains were returned to Portugal 14 years later. **Fort Kochi Carnival** on new year's eve is a colourful festival not to be missed.

Must Do

Watch the **Kathakali** exponents perform live, after they have given a demonstration of the fine art of facial make-up, nuances of the costumes, masks and postures. A mesmeric hour-long programme, contact **Cochin Cultural Centre, Art Kerala** and **See India Foundation**.

Shopper's Paradise

Cane, bamboo and jute handicrafts on one side and precious/semiprecious studded gold and silver jewellery are famous. So are herbal oils and ayurvedic medicines. **MG Road** is the main shopping mall while **Shanmugham Road** too, is coming up well. Kerala State Handicrafts Development Corporation's **Kairali**

Kerala

and State Handicrafts Society's **Surabhi** are good shopping propositions.

Gourmet's Delights

There are a number of good restaurants. Try **Volga** (2390869), **Pandhal** (2367759).

Other Excursions

Thrissur: **Trichur Pooram**, forts, ruins, wildlife park and temples make this town worth a visit. In the heart of the town is a large ground which houses the **Vadakumnathan Temple** while the **Town Hall** has a collection of lovely murals.



Town Hall

Palakkad: Called the granary of Kerala, it lies on the border with Tamil Nadu. There are rivers, streams, valleys and forests. Well connected by road from all over Kerala and Tamil Nadu, it lies 80 km northeast of Thrissur. Accommodation available at Muthoot Cardamom County (04869-224501) and KTDC's Garden House (0491-2815217).

Guruvayoor: The Sri Krishna Temple here is one of the two most important pilgrim centers in the state. Non-Hindus are not allowed in the temple. You can watch a Kerala Hindu marriage ceremony. The temple celebrates four main festivals:

Ulsavam (Feb-March) has elephant processions, **Vishukani** (April), **Astami Rohini** (Aug-Sep) and **Ekadasi** (Nov-Dec). Kochi is the nearest airport (100 km), and the nearest railhead is Thrissur, 29 kms from Guruvayoor. By road, Guruvayoor is connected to Cochin, Coimbatore (142 km), Trichur, Palghat (95 km), Thiruvananthapuram (294 km), Ootacamund (230 km). KSRTC buses available. KTDC accommodation available in Nandanam.

Bekal: Renowned for the 3,000 year old Bekal Fort, good stretches of beaches, backwaters and colourful festivals. The nearest airports are Mangalore (80 km), Calicut (200 km), Cochin (390 km) and Bangalore (390 km). Kasargod (12 km) and Kanjangad (12 km) provide rail connections. **Kodi Cliffs, Kappil Beach, Pallikere Beach, Bekal Aqua Park, Nithyanandasram, Ananthapura Lake Temple** are some of the sights worth checking out.



Ananthapura Lake Temple

Ranipuram, (55 km East) is a hill station set amidst coffee, rubber, pepper plantations and the forests. Performances of **Theyyam** and **Yakshaganam** within the temple premises, **Kamalam** (buffalo race, Nov-Dec) make for an interesting entertainments.

Kasargod: 20 km north of Bekal and 47 km south of Mangalore, has a small 17th century fort nearby at Chandragiri built by Shivappa Nayaka.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: Kochi is India's latest international airport connected to Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Dubai, Muscat, Tehran, Bahrain, Singapore and Male among others. Domestic airlines too provide good linkages within the country. **By Rail:** Ernakulum Junction is the main point with services from most regions of India. **By Road:** Bus services of Kerala KRTC, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka service Kochi since it is an important commercial hub of south India. **Getting Around:** The best way to get around the town is by taxi or autorickshaw. While prices for the latter are negotiable, one can hire taxis at standard rates from several taxi stands. **The ferry** is more popular. You can also use the ferry to cross over to any of the islands of Kochi. The mainland has several ferry stations – the Main Boat Jetty, the High Court Jetty and the Sealord Jetty are the most frequented ones. Ferry timings from the Main Boat Jetty: **Vypeen:** Half-hour journey; frequent services daily; **Mattancherry:** Half-hour journey; six ferries daily; **Fort Kochi:** Twenty-minute journey, daily 30 services. **Varapuzha:** Two-hour journey, daily six trips. **Willingdon Island:** Fifteen-minute journey, frequent services. **Car Rentals:** KTDC offers car-renting facilities. Other than that, you can find several private tour operators in Kochi who also offer car rental services like **Cosmopolitan Travels**. Taxis can be hired from the Corp Taxi Stand,

Ernakulam (2361494). **Best time to visit:** December to February.

City Code: 0484

Indian Airlines: 2352065

Jet Airways: 2293231, 2610037

Air India: 2351295

Kochi International Airport:

2610115

Kerala State Dept. of Tourism:

2610113

India Tourism: 2668352

KTDC: 2353234, 2382199

Cochin Harbour Railway Station:

2666050

Banks: ANZ Grindlays, Andhra

Bank, Central Bank of India, Canara

Bank and the State Bank of

Travancore.

Hospitals: Medical Trust Hospital:

2358001, City Hospital: 2361809,

Amrutha Institute of Medical Science

& Research: 2233818

Home Away From Home

Taj Malabar: 2666811, Le Meridien: 2705777, Taj Residency: 2371471, Casino: 2668421, The Trident: 2666816, The Brunton Boat Yard: 2215461, Abad Plaza: 2381122, Quality Inn Presidency: 2394300, The Malabar House Residency: 2216666, Bolgatty Palace (KTDC): 2750500, 2750003, The Metropolitan: 2376931, Grand: 2382061, Fort Heritage: 2225333.

KOZHIKODE

First came Vasco Da Gama, at Kappad near Kozhikode in 1498, heralding the Portuguese, who were later followed by the Dutch, French and the British all keen to dominate the trade in Malabar. This age-old town still upholds its commercial status.

City Lights

Mananchira Square, the former courtyard of the Zamorins, has the **Tali Temple**, the **Kuttichira Mosque** and the **Church of South India**. Five kilometers north of town, at East Hill, archaeological display at the **Pazhassirajah Museum** include copies of ancient murals, bronze, coins and models of megalithic monuments – earliest monuments of Kerala. Next door, the **Krishna Menon Museum** has memorabilia of this former defence minister, while the art gallery has paintings of **Raja Ravi Varma**. Sixteen km north, en route Kannur, lies the non-descript memorial for Vasco Da Gama's arrival at **Kappad Beach**. Two km further, you can cruise on the dappled waters at **Kalipolika**.



Kappad Beach

The **Sweet Meat Street** is the busiest street in Kozhikode and derives its name from the times when the street was lined with sweetmeat stalls. **Beypore** (10 km south of Kozhikode), with prominent ports and fishing harbours, was an important trade and maritime center of ancient Kerala. Its boat building yard boasts a tradition of almost 1500 years.

Must Do

The backwaters here are unspoilt, and some of the best. Contact **Malabar Houseboat Cruises**: 2452045.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The airport is 23 km from the town, with flights to Mumbai and other Gulf countries. **By Rail:** The station is south of Mananchira Square. Heading southeast there are trains to Coimbatore via Palakkad. These trains then head north to the centers of Bangalore, Chennai and Delhi. **By Road:** Connected to tourist towns in the whole of South. **Distances:** Mangalore (242 km), Ernakulam (190 km) and Thiruvananthapuram (414 km). **Getting Around:** Buses, autorickshaws and taxis. Autos are metered.

City Code: 0495

Air India: 2765545

Indian Airlines: 2766243

Jet Airways: 2740052, 2741189

Central Bus Station: 2722771

Dept. of Tourism: 2702606

KTDC: 2722391

Banks: SBI (branches at Bank Road and Palayam Beach Road) exchanges foreign currency and travellers' cheques. P L World, at Bank Road, also exchanges foreign currency. Standard Chartered Bank has a branch on the Town Hall Road.

Hospitals/Chemists: National Hospital: 2723061, Baby Memorial Hospital: 2723271

Home Away From Home

Taj Residency: 2765354, Malabar Palace: 2721511, Malabar Mansion (KTDC): 2722391, Fortune Hotel Calicut: 2768888.