

25 THINGS TO DO IN KERALA

1. Wake up to the world's best breakfast



Kerala's spread of morning dishes - vellaappam, Uppuma, iddli, puttu, masala dosa and appams have been rated the best breakfast in the world by Travel & Leisure magazine. A must-try is the crisp lacy appam served with meat/vegetable stew.

2. Walk-through paddy fields



Here's a completely different walking experience. Venture in to the very heart of the paddy fields, on narrow dykes. Don't lose yourself in the dazzling green around you, as you'll have to watch out for the slushy water passages that run through your mud path.

3. Take a swig of toddy



Ask your tour guide to arrange for fresh madhura kallu (sweet toddy extracted from the coconut palm) and have it the Kerala way with exotic karimeen pollichathu (baked fresh water fish) or spicy pickles.

4. Stay on an exotic houseboat



Embark on an enchanting journey across sun-kissed backwaters on a kettuvallom (fully furnished traditional rice boat). While your eyes explore the rustic life that floats by, treat yourself to backwater delicacies prepared by your personal chef.

5. Ride a Canoe



Drift along serene waterways in a country craft, enjoy the breeze, answer a cuckoo's call, wave back at the cheerful village folk on the banks. Invite some of their chirpy children to hop in for a ride. They'll keep you well entertained

6. Lunch from the fisherman's net



Along the Cochin Coast and at Vasco da Gama Square in Fort Kochi, you can select your favourite from an inviting display of juicy sear fish, sardines, prawns, and red snappers. Ask the friendly fisherman to fry it for you the local way

7.Wear a Kerala saree



Stun your friends in Kerala saree - five metres of fine off-white cotton edged with gold - that lends an extraordinary elegance to the person wearing it. Each piece is specially woven on a traditional handloom.

8.Spice up your life



Kerala is the Spice Coast of India. Take home a chest full of exotic spices and win compliments for your aromatic cooking. These are also available in special gift pouches.

9. Ride an 8-tonner-without-wheels



At the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary in Thekkady, venture majestically into the scenic jungle on an elephant. A mahout will guide you on your enchanting journey

10. Follow the tiger's trail



Join the Thekkady tiger trail - a real adventure trek into the dense forest with expert guides. Cook in the jungle. Sleep in tents. Wake up to the sounds of the wilderness. And yes, don't forget to spot a tiger.

11.Design a floral pattern



During Onam, the harvest festival in August-September, you can see colourful, beautiful floral decorations (pookalam) in the courtyards of Kerala's homes. Try making one with family and friends.

12.Cheer a snake boat race



Watch the backwaters of Kerala come alive. Feel the excitement bubble in you as teams of 100 oarsmen row their snake boats, their bodies swaying in unison to the fast rhythm of full throated singing, in one of the most exhilarating water sports.

13. Get an Ayurvedic massage



Gift yourself new life: Surrender to the magical fingers of specially trained masseurs, to medicated baths that will refresh you, herbal diets that will replenish you, yoga that will revitalize you, and meditation that will recharge you.

14. Go bananas



In Kerala, red, green and yellow are synonymous with various types of plantains. These digestives come in different shapes too -- tall, short, stout, and sleek. And while you taste banana chips, raw banana dishes, banana milkshakes, banana icecreams, dried bananas, and fried bananas, you'll wonder if there's any other fruit more versatile

15.Listen to temple music



Panchavadyam is an orchestra of 5 native instruments - suddha-maddalam, kombu, edakka, elathalam and timila. This traditional temple music accompanying elephant pageants builds up the festive spirit. And never fails to leave its listeners entranced.

16.Marvel at elephant pageants



The spectacle of 30-60 caparisoned elephants will enthrall you as they move in a majestic procession, while trumpets and drum beats work up to a frenzy. The best of these spectacles is seen at the Thrissur Pooram.

17. Bathe in healing waters



Don't miss your chance to take a dip in the waters of the Nelliampathy forests in Palakkad or the mineral springs at Varkala. These waters are known for their medicinal properties. Take a splash, heal yourself.

18. Take a train through paradise



A train journey is an interesting way to experience Kerala. Get a window seat and watch the landscape unfold like pages of a colourful picture book, or acquaint yourself with your fellow travellers who make interesting profiles

19. Picnic beside virgin lakes



Pack a picnic basket and spend a romantic evening beside the crystal clear lakes near Munnar. Try your luck at fishing and feast on your fresh catch. Go for a long walk hand-in-hand, undisturbed. Lie down on the most comfortable of grass beds.

20. Wash your sins away



According to a myth, sage Narada was approached by mendicants who confessed to having sinned. The place he created for them to pray for redemption is known as the Papanasam beach (papanasam meaning redemption from sins). Take a dip and come out feeling clean in your heart too.

21. See wildlife from a boat



Watch wildlife at close quarters from the safety of a boat at the sanctuaries of Kumarakom, and Periyar. Herds of wild elephants bathing in the lake, the Indian bison digging his horns into an unaffected tree, the cormorant darting into the waters - a treat for an amateur photographer.

22. Meet martial art experts



Kalaripayattu, the martial art form of Kerala, is the oldest and most scientific in the world. Watch agile bodies gleaming in oil and armed with weapons practise their feats-chattam (jumping), ottam (running), marichil (somersault)-to stunning perfection

23. Behold the Queen of the Arabian Sea



Kochi, also known as the Queen of the Arabian Sea, is breathtakingly beautiful. Apart from being the commercial capital and the most cosmopolitan city of Kerala, Kochi also flaunts one of the finest natural harbours of the world.

24. Discover prehistoric settlements



The Edakkal caves at Wayanad and the caves at the mouth of the Shenduruny River have interesting pictorial writings and cave drawings from the Stone Age. You'll have to trek at least a kilometer uphill to reach the Edakkal caves.

25. Let a mohini enchant you



Mohiniyattam or the dance of the enchantress reflects the graceful nature of the land. The sensuous, graceful movements of the dancer, clad in gold and off white costumes, will remind you of palms swaying in the gentle breeze and sweeping waves.

