



KERALA CALLING



Kerala's **HILLSTATIONS** Calling...

Summer Tourism on the Boom

THE FREEDOM TO
DO NOTHING.



EDITORIAL



Kerala's Summer Symphony

As summer envelops Kerala, school study holidays usher in a vibrant season, amplified this year by the buzz of impending Assembly elections. Tourism surges like never before. Once known only for monsoons, Kerala now draws crowds for its summer charm. Visitors now flock to savor moderate temperatures and hill stations, where cool breezes promise respite. Kerala's small size belies its vast travel options—from cool hill stations and sunny beaches to serene backwaters. Summer time is perfect for detox holidays and Ayurveda therapies that rejuvenate body and soul.

The landscape bursts into a riot of colours with temple, church and mosque festivals, weaving heritage into every corner.

Yet, amid the revelry, a cautionary note: escalating global temperatures cast a shadow, urging travelers and residents alike to tread mindfully.

On International Women's Day, Kerala shines brighter still. This year's UPSC results spotlight women empowered through education, embodying the state's progressive ethos. From electoral fervour to festive splendour, Kerala's summer isn't just a season—it's a celebration of resilience, renewal and rising aspirations.

Kerala Calling wishes all readers a happy vacation.

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52 Pages including Cover

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*Gods Own
Country*

WOMEN'S DAY



*Kerala's
Trailblazing
Women*



Multiple candidates from the State have secured places within the top 200, in the UPSC exam 2025 with a significant number being young women, many hailing from modest, non-metropolitan backgrounds.

As the world observed International Women's Day on March 8th, celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, Kerala's recent civil services results offer a compelling narrative that resonates deeply with the spirit of the occasion. This year, the State has not only showcased an impressive overall performance in the UPSC examinations but has also highlighted a powerful story of women breaking barriers, rewriting narratives and inspiring a new generation of dreamers. Their success transcends individual triumph; it symbolises a collective stride towards a more equitable society where daughters from small towns and villages confidently claim a space once

perceived as distant and elitist. These women are not just achieving personal milestones; they are dismantling old stereotypes and forging new pathways for others to follow.

Sreeja J.S., Gopika B., Dr Sreelakshmi V.C., Vishnupriya, Surya V.K., Kajal Raju, Jaseela Jannath, Anjana B, Divya S et.al. represent diverse life stories, yet they are united by a common thread: unwavering grit, disciplined effort and an unshakeable belief in their dreams. Their paths to success are often marked by years of balancing rigorous academic preparation with significant family responsibilities, navigating financial limitations and defying entrenched social expectations.

These women officers will hopefully bring invaluable lived experiences to the decision-making table. Their unique perspectives can make governance more sensitive and responsive to critical issues such as safety in public spaces, comprehensive health services, accessible childcare, quality education and equitable employment opportunities for women.

This Women's Day, let us commit to nurturing these dreams, for they are the bedrock of a brighter, more equitable future.

Sreeja J.S.

UPSC All India Rank 57

"I have grown up watching the struggles and sacrifices of my parents. One thought guided me in life — that the hardships must end, and I wanted to be the person to bring that change. To bridge the gap between my dreams and my reality, I took up professional coaching and relied on borrowed funds. Every day, I spent six hours immersed in classes, building the foundation I needed to compete at the highest level.

My academic background in Political Science—earning both my Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Madras Christian College—gave me the critical perspective required for this journey. My rank isn't just a personal achievement; it is a testament to the fact that where you start doesn't have to define where you finish."



Dr. Sreelakshmi V.C.

UPSC All India Rank 133

"This journey was, above all, my father's greatest dream. As a PWD overseer, he always envisioned me in the civil services, and after losing him to COVID-19, my determination to turn that vision into a reality became my sole mission.

Having completed my MBBS in 2014, I eventually took a leave of absence from my practice at Ashwini Hospital to immerse myself in UPSC preparation. Yet, I refused to let my medical calling fade; I continued my advanced studies and successfully secured my MD (Doctor of Medicine) during this same period. Balancing the rigors of medicine with the demands of the civil services was a challenge, but it was one I embraced to honour my father's legacy."

Kajal Raju

UPSC All India Rank 167

"Being born without a right forearm was never a deficiency to me; it was simply a part of who I am. From my childhood in Nileschwaram, I carried a dream of becoming a District Collector, but it was at IIT-Madras that this fascination turned into a concrete mission.

In 2022, when the UPSC panel asked me how hard it would be if I didn't clear the test, my answer was simple: 'I will try again.' That year, I secured the 910th rank and joined the Indian Railway Management Service. While I was grateful to serve, I knew I hadn't reached my destination. This year, the challenge was even greater—I was balancing intensive training in Jammu and Kashmir with a 9-to-5 schedule, often studying while traveling to military sites.

When the news finally reached me that I had jumped to the 167th rank, I realised that every setback, including failing the prelims just the year before, was just another step on the ladder. I've always believed that physical challenges are no match for a determined spirit, and today, that belief has brought me home to my dream."



Jaseela Jannath

UPSC All India Rank 397

"Blindness tested me, but it never defined me. Growing up in Vadakara with over 40% visual impairment, the world sometimes felt limited by others' perceptions. My journey was a test of endurance, taking four attempts to finally reach this milestone. After losing my father, who worked abroad, in 2018, my mother, Sainaba, became my pillar of strength, shielding me from societal pressure to 'just get married and settle down'. To master the vast UPSC syllabus, I turned my challenges into a strategy—relying on audio-based learning, voice-to-text tools, and intense peer discussions.

Securing this rank isn't just a personal victory; it's my answer to everyone who doubted a visually impaired girl's potential. I want to serve and empower people who face hurdles like mine, proving that when you focus on your goal and refuse to let go of your dream, the barriers eventually fall away."

Kerala Summer Beckons

During summer, tourists mainly flock to Kerala to escape from the scorching sun and cool off in the High ranges. Unlike in North India and the southern states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, Kerala summer is a little moderate



N.V. Ravindranathan Nair



Summer, for Shakespeare, is a beautiful but flawed transient season. But one would rightly say if the great poet and playwright had experienced the Indian summer, especially the God's own country's hot and humid environment during the period starting from March to May, he would have immortalised it in a different sonnet. It is quite natural that Britons and other westerners living five centuries after Shakespeare's exit from the world's stage prefer Kerala as one of their favourite destinations in the East. Backpackers from across the globe now search for experiencing Kerala's different climates including summer, as they appreciate to get soaked in the monsoon rains here.

Unlike North Indians, Gujaratis and Punjabis who throng the hillstations like Munnar, Ponnudi, Thekkadi, Nelliampathy or Parambikulam sanctuaries, the western tourists choose the sun kissed sandy beaches like Kovalam, Varkala, Cherayi, Muzhappilangadu,

Kappad or Bekal during summer.

As compared to the English summer which is too brief, Kerala has a considerably long summer to turn the white skin to copper. The hot days are inconsistent in Europe while here the sunsets could give a challenge to even the well-known Balinese sunsets.

Cultural Heritage as Social Capital

Another reason for the ramblers from the west is the cultural fetes and festivities offered across the length and breadth of this lean but long land strip. Nowhere else in the world can one offer such a distinct and varied cultural bonanza showcased in such short distances. In every ten-fifteen kilometres, the styles of the festivities change, tone and tenor of the language change, taste of food served change and the very rhythm and music change.

Domestic Tourists on the Go

Nowadays Kerala tourism industry is thriving on the spurt of domestic tourism sector. In 2025, 25 million





domestic tourists came visiting Kerala (12.6% increase) with Idukki and Ernakulam being the most sought after destinations.

In 2025, tourists footfall touched 2.58 crore, creating another record. While Idukki district attracted the highest number of domestic tourists - 46,79,800, Ernakulam followed it by hosting 44,29,899 tourists.

In 2025, as many as 8,21,999 foreign guests visited Kerala, an 11.3% increase compared to the previous year. Most visitors arrived from the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, France, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Oman and the Maldives. Ernakulam district led in the arrival of foreign visitors, followed by Thiruvananthapuram.

Spiritual Tourism

The spiritual tourism linked to Lord Ayyappa Shrine at Sabarimala, the Sreekrishna temple at Guruvayoor, and several other temples, noted Christian pilgrim centres of Malayattoor, Parumala and mosques in Kozhikode, Malappuram and Kasaragodu districts attract several thousand believers from far and wide.

The cultural capital of the state has been showcasing its great heritage through its festivals like Thrissur Pooram marked for its percussion ensembles, riot of colours presented in Kudamattom and parading of caparisoned elephants.

Theyyam and Thira are visual treats for a lifetime for the faithful who throng the sacred groves and the temples of Mother Goddesses during summer in North Kerala.

Destinations to visit

The hill stations and wild life sanctuaries, tea plantations and tourist circuits lying deep inside the lush green forests help the visitors to cool off. The water front activities in Gavi, Thekkadi and Malampuzha are ideal for family crowds.

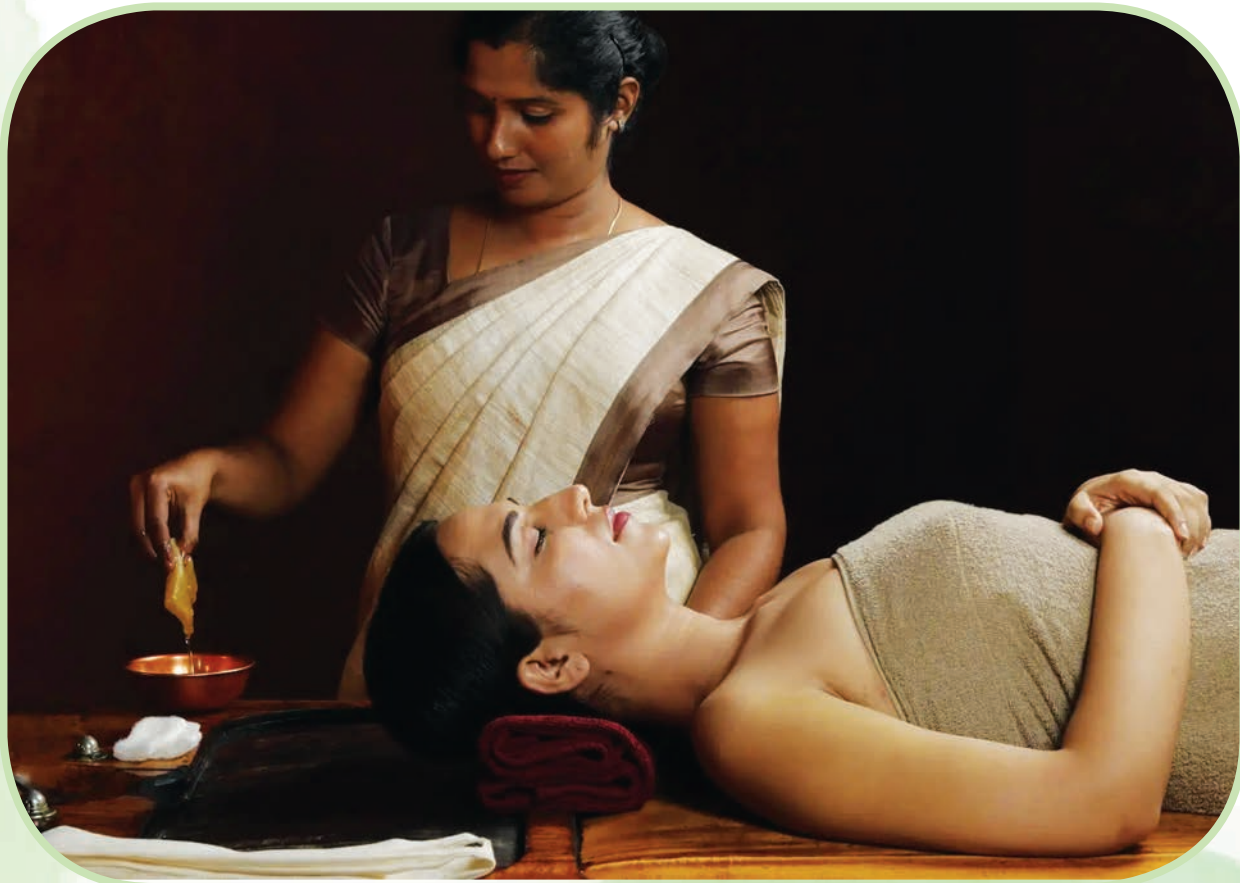
Kerala also offers the magical experience of paddling through the backwaters of Ashtamudi and Vembanadu in the Travancore and Kochi regions. The estuaries of Chaliar, Valapattanam, Kadalundi, Korapuzha and other rivers in the north also offer water cruises.

Backwater tourism

Famous for its backwaters, Kuttanad in Alapuzha is a must-visit destination in Kerala. During the summer, the houseboat cruises on the tranquil backwaters offer a unique and relaxing experience. Kumarakom, located on the banks of Vembanad Lake, is the best place to visit during summer.

Hill stations

The lush green peaks of Ponmudi, clad in mountain mists, could offer beautiful sunrise and sun sets. Thekkady in Idukki district is popular for animal



sightings on the banks of Thekkady lake. Munnar, the most sought-after high-altitude destination, is noted for tea plantations, Eravikulam National Park and Mattupetty Dam. Besides, there are places like Chinnar, Sandalwood sanctuary of Marayoor and fruit gardens of Kanthalloor to visit. The Vagamon hill is marked for its lush green meadows, tea plantations and pine forests.

The entire Wayanad district is a nature lover's paradise. Capped with its misty mountains, east flowing rivers, waterfalls, and dense forests, pre historic caves and Banasurasagar dam, Wayanad makes it great for nature lovers and adventure seekers.

Silent Valley, Parambikulam, Nelliampathi, Meesapulimala, Vazhachal are also popular destinations during summer. Agasthyakoodam in Thiruvananthapuram district is ideal for those who love trekking.

Sun-kissed Kerala Beaches

Known for its shallow waters, Kovalam is ideal for swimming, sunbathing and water sports. The multiple beaches here provide vibrant nightlife and delicious seafood make it a perfect summer getaway.

Shortlisted in UNESCO's heritage sites, Varkala cliff is an ideal setting for summer getaways with its sandy beaches. Sivagiri hills, the spiritual abode of Renaissance leader and sage Sri Narayana Guru add

some profoundness to the visit.

Drive in beaches of Muzhappilangad, Padinjarekkara Beach, Payyambalam Beach, Vadakara sand banks Beach, Kappil Beach, Thirumullavaram, Neendakara, Kozhikode, Cherayi and Bekal Beach are ideal for visitors during summer.

Key Riverside Destinations

Pamba River (Pathanamthitta): Famous for the Aranmula heritage village, the Aranmula Snake Boat Race, and Lord Sri Parthasaradhi temple are ideal locales to visit.

Periyar River (Thattekadu/Ernakulam): Thattekadu is home to the Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary. The river also offers boating and scenic views near Malayattoor.

Athirappilly Falls and Vazhachal Falls, Houseboat cruises along the Tejaswini and Nileshtar rivers, Munroe Island located at the confluence of the Kallada river and Ashtamudi Lake, The spot where Poovar river converge with backwaters and Neyyar river are sites to be explored.

Thirunavaya (Malappuram), Thrithala (Palakkad), Killikkurissimangalam (Palakkad), Vallikunnu (Malappuram) are places to be watched for spiritual as well as cultural purposes.

The author is a senior journalist.

Indulge in the Festive Charm of Kerala



M.R. Hari

Summer season is also festival season in Kerala. It is a great time to witness local arts and festivals, making it a culturally rich time to visit.



Kerala can rightly be described as a land where festivals never truly set. If one were to ask how many festivals exist in the state, it would be difficult for anyone to give an exact answer. Yet one fact can be stated with certainty: somewhere in Kerala, at any given time of the year, a festival is being celebrated. These festivities may revolve around temples, churches or mosques. They may also take the form of agricultural

celebrations, village fairs or cultural gatherings organised by local reading rooms, neighbourhood associations and youth clubs.

What often fascinates visitors is not merely the number of festivals but their astonishing diversity and colour. Many of these celebrations showcase the creative skills and craftsmanship of local communities. Preparations often begin months in advance. Villagers



devote weeks—sometimes even months—of collective effort without expecting any reward, offering their time and labour simply for the joy of shared celebration. In the end, all this preparation culminates in spectacular performances that may last only a day or two—magnificent displays that vanish as quickly as they appear, like a brief burst of colour across the sky.

Artisanship at Display

Across Kerala, a long tradition exists of creating large ceremonial structures and ritual art forms using locally available materials. One striking example from southern Kerala is Kettukazhcha, an elaborate ceremonial display associated with certain temple festivals. Giant decorated structures and effigies—often shaped like horses or bulls—are constructed and carried in processions through the village. Equally impressive are the Nelkuthira creations of northern Kerala, enormous horse figures woven from harvested paddy stalks. These are not produced by professional artisans but by entire village communities working together, turning the process of preparation itself into a celebration.

Community participation reaches remarkable levels during Padayani, a vibrant ritual performance held in

the mother-goddess temples along the banks of the Pamba River. Padayani is notable for its artistic use of natural materials. The large ritual masks and figures used in the performance are crafted from kamukin paala—the dried sheaths that fall from areca palm leaves. Artists collect hundreds of these sheaths, paint intricate designs on them, and stitch them together to form towering structures several feet wide and many feet tall. At Neelamperoor Padayani, performers create spectacular swan-shaped figures rising more than fifteen feet high, decorated with dried banana leaves, lotus leaves and garlands of flowers.

Quite a Spectacle

In northern Kerala, the ritual performances of Theyyam and Thira dominate the festive landscape. These performances combine mythology, music, dance, costume and ritual devotion in a striking visual form. The tradition begins with Thottam Pattu, ritual songs that narrate the legends of the deity before the performer transforms into the divine form. The rhythmic accompaniment of percussion instruments builds an atmosphere of intense energy. Watching performers carry elaborate headgear—sometimes rising more than



twenty feet—while dancing with remarkable agility is an unforgettable sight.

Certain festivals known as Kaliyattam or Perumkaliyattam bring together multiple Theyyam forms in a single celebration. Some of these grand observances occur only once in twelve, sixty-four or even one hundred and forty-four years, turning them into rare historical spectacles.

Music and rhythm form the heartbeat of Kerala's festivals. Highly structured and technically sophisticated percussion traditions such as Pandi Melam, Panchari Melam, Thayambaka and Panchavadyam occupy a central place in temple celebrations. At the same time, more popular musical forms—band performances, chenda melams and other rhythmic ensembles—add to the festive atmosphere. Historically, Kerala is believed to have nurtured more than three hundred performing art forms, and even today more than a hundred of these traditions continue to appear in festivals across the state.

The Iconic Poorams

Kerala also hosts festival spectacles that are difficult to find anywhere else in the world. Among the most famous are Thrissur Pooram and Arattupuzha Pooram, often described as grand “gatherings of deities.” In

these events, the deities of surrounding temples arrive in magnificent processions to meet the presiding deity of the host temple. Elephants adorned with golden ornaments, colourful parasols, and rhythmic percussion ensembles create an atmosphere of breathtaking spectacle. Celebrations continue through day and night with dazzling fireworks and powerful musical performances, while thousands of spectators gather to witness the event. Many smaller temple festivals across Kerala can be seen as echoes of these great Poorams.

In Full Majesty

Festivals in Kerala are not confined to temples alone. Churches and mosques across the state host equally vibrant annual feasts and commemorations. Some of these celebrations mark historical events connected with the founding of the church or the life of a saint. A unique example is the Kappalottam at the church in Kuravilangad in Kottayam district, where an effigy of a ship is carried in procession around the church grounds by devotees. Other renowned church festivals include those at Malayattoor, Manarcad, Parumala, Koratty, Arthunkal and Edathua, each drawing large gatherings over several days.

Mosques too host major gatherings such as Nerchas, Chandanakkudam festivals and Uroos, attracting



devotees from across regions. One distinctive celebration takes place at Idiyangara Sheikh Masjid in Kozhikode, where a centuries-old tradition centres on the offering and sale of appam and other local delicacies. During the month of Ramadan, towns across northern Kerala come alive at night as people gather after breaking the fast to enjoy a variety of Malabar snacks and sweets.

Celebrating Togetherness

Festivals in Kerala also extend beyond places of worship. The famous snake-boat races, known as Vallamkali, are themselves major regional celebrations marked by intense competition and community pride. During the Onam season, clubs and community organisations conduct a wide range of sporting events and cultural programmes. In the Malabar region, Sevens football tournaments attract enormous crowds and excitement comparable to festival gatherings.

Village craft fairs are another important part of Kerala's festive culture. Events such as Omallur Vayal Vanibham and Pakkil Sankranthi Vaibham bring together artisans, traders and villagers in lively rural markets. Historically, major festivals were often followed by such fairs where people gathered to purchase household goods, agricultural tools and handcrafted items.

Another striking feature of Kerala's festivals is their inclusive nature. Celebrations rarely belong exclusively to a single religious community. Because people of different religions and castes have lived together in close social interaction for centuries, participation in festivals and feasts often crosses community boundaries. Preparations such as decoration, construction and arrangements usually involve people from many backgrounds, reflecting the shared cultural fabric of the region.

It is sometimes said that the period between May 15 and August 15 is relatively quiet in Kerala's festival calendar. Yet even during this time several important events continue to take place. The Kottiyoor festival in northern Kerala, the Moolam boat race in southern Kerala, church feasts, music festivals, the Karkidaka Theyyam performances of Malabar and the Karkidaka Vavu Bali rituals observed across the state ensure that the festive rhythm never truly pauses.

In truth, festivals in Kerala never really end. One simply has to discover where the next celebration is unfolding.

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Scorching Heat and Towering Clouds

Pre-monsoon Climate Risk over Kerala

The past decade has seen more frequent spells of intense heat, leading to growing concerns about heat stress and heatstroke in Kerala.



S. Abhilash



Kerala, situated in the southern region of the Indian subcontinent along the southwestern coast of India, is often known for its lush greenery and relatively mild climate. However, in recent years, the state has been experiencing a noticeable rise in summer temperatures, especially between March and May. While extreme heatwaves usually occur in North India, Kerala is no longer immune.

Adding to this challenge are sudden weather events caused by towering clouds, known scientifically as cumulonimbus clouds. These dramatic cloud formations can rapidly develop on hot afternoons, bringing lightning, heavy rainfall, and strong, gusty winds. Such

events, though short-lived, can cause significant damage to property, disrupt daily life and even pose risks to human safety.

Together, rising heat and these intense storm episodes highlight how Kerala's climate is changing in subtle yet impactful ways. Understanding and preparing for these shifts is becoming increasingly important for communities across the state.

The Sun Factor

The intense heat Kerala experiences before the monsoon is not just a coincidence—it is driven by a few key natural factors. The most important among them is the seasonal movement of the Sun. As the Earth

transitions from the vernal equinox in late March into the northern hemisphere's summer, the Sun appears to move northward. During this period, from mid-March to mid-April, the Sun passes almost directly overhead across Kerala. This means sunlight falls more directly and intensely on the region, leading to a sharp rise in daytime temperatures.

Surrounded by vast stretches of ocean, the state experiences high humidity levels. Unlike dry heat in inland areas, this moisture-laden air prevents sweat from evaporating efficiently, making people feel hotter and more exhausted. This combination of heat and humidity significantly increases the risk of heat stress and heatstroke.

The overhead position of the Sun also plays a crucial role in increasing sunburn cases during this season. When sunlight travels a shorter path through the atmosphere, more of its energy—including harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation—reaches the ground. As a result, exposure to direct sunlight, especially during peak afternoon hours, can quickly lead to skin damage.

The Sea Factor

Even though a major climate pattern known as the Indian Ocean Dipole is currently in a neutral phase, the nearby seas are telling a different story. The eastern and central parts of the Arabian Sea are unusually warm, with surface temperatures hovering around 30°C—about 1 to 1.5°C higher than normal with potential chances of producing intense cyclonic storms especially in Southeast Arabian Sea.

This extra warmth in the ocean is quietly intensifying the heat over Kerala. Warmer seas pump more moisture into the air, making the atmosphere more humid and uncomfortable. At the same time, they can disrupt the usual land-sea breeze patterns that help cool coastal regions during the day and night. One noticeable effect of this is warmer nights, especially along Kerala's coastal belt.

Earth Getting Hotter

Data from the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) confirms that 2024 was the hottest year ever recorded globally. The global average temperature reached around 1.6°C above pre-industrial levels, setting a new benchmark in modern climate records. This record didn't happen in isolation. It came after an already unusually warm 2023, making the past few years the hottest in recorded history.

What's more concerning is that even as El Niño fades, global temperatures are staying unusually high. Looking ahead to 2026, even without a strong El Niño, summers in the Northern Hemisphere are expected to remain warmer than normal, showing how climate change is steadily raising the baseline of heat across the

globe. This trend makes it increasingly difficult to keep global warming within the 1.5°C limit set by the Paris Agreement.

Human activities lead to what is known as the urban heat island effect, where cities remain significantly warmer than surrounding rural areas. The lack of vegetation, reduced airflow and heat trapped by infrastructure make urban regions especially vulnerable during hot periods. At the same time, deforestation, construction, shrinking green spaces etc further amplify heat stress.

Rising Heat Index

For coastal areas such as Kerala, where absolute temperatures are relatively lower, a heatwave may be identified when the maximum temperature exceeds ~37 °C along with a departure of ≥4.5 °C from the climatological normal for two consecutive days.

Scientists created the "Heat Index" to measure human suffering at a particular temperature and humidity. Scientists consider this combination of temperature and humidity a measure of human discomfort. We feel 45–50°C when the temperature is 37°C and the humidity is 65%. This is the main cause of Kerala's coastal discomfort. Heat stress and rapid

		temperature (°C)																
		27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43
Relative Humidity (%)	40	27	28	29	30	31	32	34	35	37	39	41	43	46	48	51	54	57
	45	27	28	29	30	32	33	35	37	39	41	43	46	49	51	54	57	
	50	27	28	30	31	33	34	36	38	41	43	46	49	52	55	58		
	55	28	29	30	32	34	36	38	40	43	46	48	52	55	59			
	60	28	29	31	33	35	37	40	42	45	48	51	55	59				
	65	28	30	32	34	36	39	41	44	48	51	55	59					
	70	29	31	33	35	38	40	43	47	50	54	58						
	75	29	31	34	36	39	42	46	49	53	58							
	80	30	32	35	38	41	44	48	52	57								
	85	30	33	36	39	43	47	51	56									
90	31	34	37	41	45	49	54											
95	31	35	38	42	47	51	57											
100	32	36	40	44	49	54												

Caution
Extreme Caution
Danger
Extreme Danger

temperature rises impair the body's ability to regulate temperature, causing heat cramps, heat exhaustion, sunburn, heat stroke, hyperthermia, and worsening chronic conditions like cardiovascular and respiratory complications, kidney disease, and others. Heatstroke is fatal in extreme circumstances. Heat exhaustion can develop to heat stroke if not treated promptly.

Increasing Vulnerability

Extreme heat can indirectly affect human behavior, transmission of diseases, health service delivery, air quality, energy, transport, water quality, agricultural



production, animal husbandry, and low-income households. Depending on their body temperature regulation, infants, children under 4, and seniors are at risk for heat-related disorders. Other vulnerable categories are medicated chronic illness patients, construction workers and athletes. When exercising in intense heat, dehydration and heat-related disorders are more likely. There are various ways to avoid heat-related ailments. Staying cool and hydrated are the best ways to avoid heat-related illnesses. Avoid direct sunlight by staying indoors and following forecasts and warnings.

The first to feel the effects of climate change are those who work outside in sectors such as agriculture, building, transportation, landscaping, oil production, firefighting, and emergency response. There is an increased risk of industrial injuries associated with heat exposure. Workplace safety is especially compromised in high-risk occupations due to diminished cognitive capacities (attention) and prolonged reaction times (e.g., drivers). Elevated ambient temperatures heighten the likelihood of fires resulting from fermentation or self-heating of materials or products, overheating of electrical equipment, or high heat pressure. This phenomenon is pervasive in many sectors of business, but it is particularly prevalent in waste storage sites and waste

treatment plants.

Bracing for Summer

India has experienced a significant increase in the occurrence of heat waves and the number of deaths caused by heat. Since the 1990s, over 17,000 fatalities have been attributed to heat waves. During the summer of 2010, Gujarat encountered a scorching maximum temperature that surpassed 47 °C, resulting in the unfortunate occurrence of almost 1300 fatalities. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) implemented heat action plans in response to the catastrophe. These plans consist of comprehensive early warning systems and preparedness procedures. In tune with that, Kerala has also prepared comprehensive heat action plans and guidelines during extreme heat wave conditions. Resilience strategies for extreme heat should encompass the development of heat preparedness plans, identification of the most vulnerable populations, implementation of cool, green roofs and pavements to mitigate heat island effects, and the planting of trees to provide shade and facilitate evapotranspiration, thereby cooling the surrounding environment.

Pre-Monsoon Challenges

Convective storms due to heating of land—more



commonly known as thunderstorms—strike Kerala frequently during the pre-monsoon and post-monsoon seasons, often bringing sudden lightning, strong winds, and heavy rain that can cause significant damage within minutes. Several parts of Kerala are becoming more vulnerable to pre-monsoon convective storms. These fast-developing storms bring three major dangers: lightning, strong winds, and sudden heavy rainfall. Though these intermittent convective storm bring some relief to scorching heat, but with a higher damage potential.

Districts like Kottayam, Ernakulam, Idukki, and Pathanamthitta face particularly high lightning risk. Coastal areas tend to receive the most intense rainfall, while the Western Ghats experience the greatest number of storm events. Northern Kerala sees the heaviest rainfall from these storms, whereas southern Kerala gets them more frequently and acts as the state's core storm zone, making it more prone to landslides and flash floods. Evening thunderstorms pose significant challenges to outdoor election campaigns, particularly in regions like India where pre-monsoon convection is intense. These storms bring lightning, strong winds, and heavy rainfall, creating serious safety risks for large gatherings. Lightning, a major weather-related hazard

in India, can be fatal in open spaces, while sudden rain and gusty winds may trigger panic, disrupt events, and damage temporary infrastructure such as stages and electrical systems.

In view of the ongoing Assembly elections, there is a pressing need for the Election Commission to issue clear guidelines for conducting campaigns under weather-related risks. As most campaigns occur during afternoon and evening hours, participants are vulnerable to heat stress and thunderstorms. India frequently records lightning-related fatalities during outdoor activities, highlighting the need for precautions such as monitoring weather forecasts, avoiding peak thunderstorm periods, ensuring proper grounding of equipment, and arranging safe shelters. Effective crowd management and evacuation planning are essential for public safety. Despite these risks, climate change and heat-related challenges remain largely absent from political manifestos, underscoring a critical gap in policy focus.

Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated



Protecting your well-being during the summer months demands deliberate precautions and a proactive wellness plan.

Dr. Anju Angel Alex



“He had fainted while playing in the ground!” the teachers frantically exclaimed when they brought 8 year old Manu (name changed to conceal identity) to Taluk Hospital Kunnankulam in Thrissur. Dr Smitha Murali found that his pulse was of low volume and understood it was an instance of heat syncope; an exercise induced collapse precipitated by prolonged standing in the sun. The child recovered promptly after measures of cooling. The concern over similar episodes had given Ambily P V, Headmistress in a school in Edathala, Ernakulam, the foresight to set up a play-area in the roof-top, ahead of a ruthless summer. The school had already shifted their assembly to a former herbal garden where the trees provided shade from the scorching sun. The significance of these activities reflected in the words of Dr Smitha- “It is imperative to prevent ‘Invisible Water Loss’, and as children have a higher surface area-to body mass ratio, this water loss can be detrimental.”

This being the invisible, daily loss of water from the body, primarily through evaporation, the advice given by Dr Shahirsha, District Medical Officer, Ernakulam is noteworthy. “Hydration is very important. But that does not justify the intake of carbonated drinks or beverages like tea or coffee. These are diuretics that stimulate the kidney to produce more urine and thus aggravate the fluid loss. Dehydration has to be tackled, but by making the right choices”, he says. Being a champion of sustainable development he advises institutions to have more greenery as a long term goal. “Our summers are getting hotter by the year due to increased emission of greenhouse gases that has caused depletion in the ozone layer. Therefore prevention of heat related events by following the right practices is necessary”, he added.

In this context while talking about urinary tract infections which she gets to see a lot in children during summers, Dr Sony Kurian, Paediatrician at District Hospital, Aluva states “Children should be made to empty their bladder, once in every four hours, at least”. She also recalls dealing with increased fungal infection of groin in children. “The tight shorts worn with the uniforms are major cause for sweating in the groin



region which can cause fungal infections. With socks and all the paraphernalia being inevitable in schools, the least we can do is to discourage our kids from wearing tight fitting clothes like jeans when they have to wear it for longer duration at other times”, she says.

Dr Sachin K C, Deputy DMO of Kannur is glad to say, “We haven’t had any school based heat related events till now, which is an impetus to continue giving reminders of good practices to the public. When kids are made to stand for long in places where they are exposed to direct sunlight, along with fluid loss there will also be electrolyte loss” he reminds us.

As heat related health events ought to be dealt with at field and clinical level, Dr Arathi Krishnan, Deputy DMO, Ernakulam, elaborates about how knowledge is disseminated. “It may sound cliched but it is a fact that prevention is always better than cure”.

Rajani G, Mass Media Officer, Ernakulam is very vocal when she talks on the subject. “Summer is a time where the usage of umbrellas should be given as much prominence as during rainy season. This being the season of examinations, if on one side we are done with the Physical Education classes in school hours, we are now faced with a new threat—that of our kids returning home after exams during the time when it is most sunny. It would be a good idea to hand them an umbrella along with that water bottle while going to school or anywhere, for that matter. Our kids tend to buy carbonated or sugary drinks and go to play outdoors after a refill. This has

“Hydration is very important. But that does not justify the intake of carbonated drinks or beverages like tea or coffee.”

Summer is a time where the usage of umbrellas should be given as much prominence as during rainy season.”

to be discouraged”. Her constant close interaction with children gives her the insight to mention that parents should open windows in their room as the kids sit to study to aid ventilation. She also adds “Special attention has to be given to the quality of the drinking water where boiling and cooling of water is the mantra to ensure its quality in the light of water-borne diseases”.

Dr Smitha crisply captures it in a nutshell. “Wear clean cotton underclothes that are washed well and dried in the sunlight instead of being hung in some dark nook of a room. Insist on children carrying a water bottle, preferably not of plastic, when carrying boiled water that might still be warm. Give them anything between 750 ml to 1 litre of water in their bottle. Stay away from sugary drinks. They worsen the dehydration and increase thirst. Schools can always keep ORS stock in their infirmary. Promote fresh fruits for snacking. If you have to give fruit juice, go for one with no added sugar, made at home. An option to break the monotony of water is fresh buttermilk. It has probiotics, sugar and salt as in ORS solution. And, if you want to give them a sunscreen, go for a physical sunscreen with zinc oxide and titanium dioxide in the case of kids though the best sunscreen is cloth!”

We might not be able to gift our children the safe summers we experienced as kids once. But as responsible citizens we can give our young ones the protection they deserve from heat related illnesses if not the lovely summers we once enjoyed as children!

The author is Assistant Surgeon, PHC Kalamassery

The Wings of Nooranad: A Journey through Nature



C. Rahim

“It is only when we step out to watch birds that we realise how many winged friends live around us. It makes us recognise that the Earth does not belong to us alone.”



Human beings are an integral part of nature. However, when we use the phrase “Humans and Nature”, it creates a false sense of separation—as if we are creatures existing apart from the natural world. Humans harbour a certain arrogance in this regard. While it is true that humans possess the unique ability to alter nature to an extent, we become arrogant only when we fail to realise that this ability was gifted to us by nature itself.

This lack of awareness leads to large-scale destruction: encroaching upon rivers, reclaiming ponds, levelling hills and blasting rocks. Unbridled development has polluted our earth, water and air; even the oceans are now tainted. Fossil fuels have disrupted the atmospheric balance.

As the equilibrium of nature shattered, the tragedy of climate change began to haunt us. Remember the floods that ravaged Kerala in 2018 and 2019. Remember Cyclone Ockhi. Remember the Chooralmala disaster. Today, natural disasters have become an annual occurrence here. Biodiversity is being lost at a massive scale. All living beings, including humans, are now struggling to find pure air, clean drinking water and safe food. War only further pushes humanity into environmental ruin and misery.

Knowing Our Surroundings

In such a life, paying attention to our surroundings helps us understand ourselves. It allows us to get closer to the plants, birds and wildlife that share this earth with us. After all, how can we love or protect something we do not know?

I have had the opportunity to travel across many parts of India—Kashmir, the Himalayan regions, various parts of the Western Ghats and the deserts of Rajasthan. I have filmed around 125 documentaries about our biological wealth and tried to understand the lives of people there. Yet, the fact that I still know so little about my own birthplace, the village of Nooranad, famously known as the Bird Village, reveals the vastness of what there is to learn.

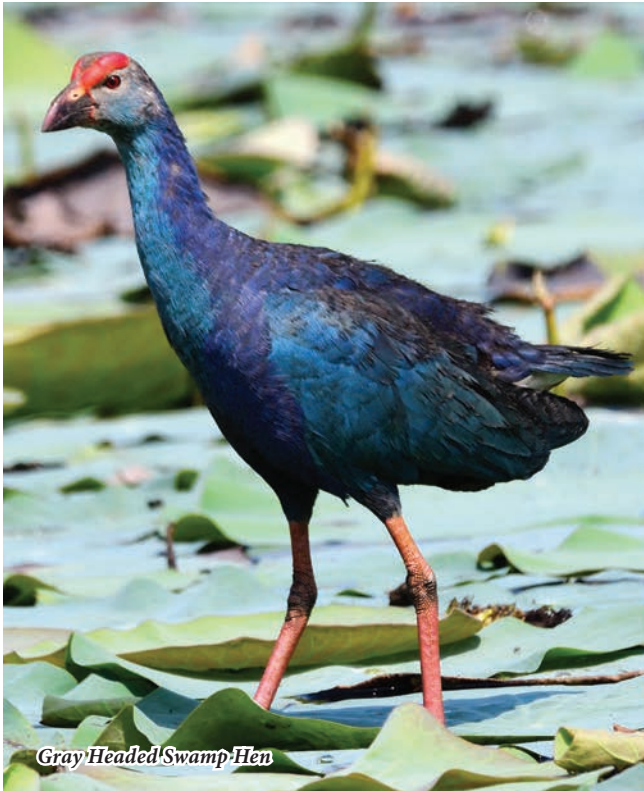
Let me recall the experience of wandering through Nooranad, the eastern region of Alappuzha district, with friends during a summer day and a rainy day in search of birds.

Birdwatching in February

One of the primary wetlands in the Onattukara region is the Karingali Puncha, a vast paddy field where single-crop cultivation is practiced. Today, a large portion of it remains waterlogged throughout the year, making it a favourite haunt for birds. I have been coming here in search of birds since childhood.

On a bright, sunny day in 2024, some friends and I set out to count the birds in the Puncha. The open fields, devoid of shade trees, were scorching. Therefore, we conducted our observations for a few hours in the morning and evening.

Despite the intense heat, a few hours of walking along the field bunds revealed 72 species of birds. On February 4th, across the Palamel and Nooranad panchayats, we documented and photographed these sightings.



Gray-headed Swamp Hen



Gray Oriental Darter Swamp Hen

- Cormorants were the most numerous, with over 300 spotted.
- We found 129 Whiskered Tern.
- Large flocks of migratory birds were seen, including Wood Sandpipers, Green Sandpipers, Wagtails and Little Stints.
- We identified four types of Egrets: Great Egret, Intermediate Egret, Little Egret, and Cattle Egret.
- Other sightings included the Booted Eagle, Black-crowned Night Heron, Oriental Darter, Purple Moorhen, Bronze-winged Jacana, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Common Kingfisher and White-throated Kingfisher.

Using telephoto lenses helped us identify the birds clearly. The Gramasree Nature Conservation Society has been active here since 1987. Although the organisation shrank as original members moved away, the birdwatching effort was revitalised by the arrival of Arun C.G. (a birdwatcher from Thiruvananthapuram), M.A. Latheef, Fairoz Beegum, Sumesh Vellarada, Devapriya, Gauri Murukkumpuzha, and Anju Kumarapuram. Others like J. Hashim, Yamuna Hareesh, Hareesh, Nooranad Ajayan, Rekha S. Thankal, Amal Rahim also played active roles.

Birdwatching in the Monsoon

In the 1980s, water birds began arriving to nest in the trees near the Nooranad Police Station. Back then, there were large trees on both sides of the Kayamkulam-Punalur road. While there used to be over ten thousand water birds during the monsoon, their numbers have dwindled significantly.

During my birdwatching trips in June and September, I was joined at various times by the renowned director and Padma Vibhushan awardee Adoor Gopalakrishnan,

educationist Dr. Achuthsankar, Sadath, Sujitha and photographer Bobby Kattola.

The significance of this sanctuary is heightened by the regular nesting of the Great Egret and Intermediate Egret. It was in the Nooranad bird sanctuary in 1987 that these two species were first discovered nesting in Kerala. This finding was recorded in international environmental magazines. Even authoritative books like Salim Ali's *Birds of Kerala* and Induchoodan's *Keralathile Pakshikal* had not previously mentioned these birds nesting in Kerala. This time, we found 28 nests of the Intermediate Egret and 35 of the Great Egret.

I also recall discovering the largest sanctuary for Oriental Darters (included in the Red Data Book) in Athikkattukulangara in 2012. In the current survey, we found 315 nests of Cormorants and 22 nests of Oriental Darters.

A study report on the Nooranad bird sanctuary was published in the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* (BNHS). At that time, it was estimated that an average of 15,000 fledglings hatched annually from various sites in this region. By 2024, that number has plummeted to just over 1,200. We couldn't find a single nest of the Night Heron, which used to nest here in abundance.

This is the story of the birds of my homeland. Every land will have such stories to tell. While we undertake great journeys, we often forget our own local paths. Our small Kerala is filled with regions of immense historical and biological importance. We must develop the eyes to see them. After all, we must know ourselves before we can know others.

The author is a birdwatcher, environmental activist and journalist.

In total, a single day's census recorded 1,670 birds!

Beat the Heat



Munnar



Lakkidi Hills, Wayanad



Illikkal Peak, Vagamon



Ramakkalmedu



Peerumedu

*Gods Own
Country*

SUMMER DESTINATION

GAVI

Witness Nature's Grandeur

Gavi, nestled within the Periyar Tiger Reserve in Pathanamthitta district, stands out as a premier eco-tourism destination. This pristine haven blends adventure, wildlife encounters and sustainable tourism. Gavi has surged in popularity, especially after global tourism giant Alistair International hailed it as one of India's top eco-spots and must-visit sites. Nature enthusiasts and thrill-seekers flock here for trekking, wildlife watching, forest camping and night safaris, all while supporting local communities.

Unique Appeal and Community Involvement

What sets Gavi apart is its deep integration of local tribal communities. Residents serve as guides, gardeners and cooks, fostering livelihoods and instilling conservation values. This model preserves the forest's integrity through traditional knowledge. Visitors experience unspoiled wilderness amid hills, valleys, tropical forests, grasslands, sholas, waterfalls, and cardamom plantations. Endangered species like the Nilgiri Tahr and Lion-Tailed Macaque roam the outskirts, while over 260 bird species—including the Great Pied Hornbill, woodpeckers, and kingfishers—delight birdwatchers. Elephants, too, make frequent appearances, turning every visit into a wildlife spectacle.

The journey to Gavi enhances the adventure. Tea plantations blanket the winding roads, passing scenic stops like Mundakayyam, Kuttikanam, Peermedu, and Vandiperiyar (14 km northeast, with Gavi 28 km from Kumily near Thekkady). The 109 km drive from Pathanamthitta takes about 2 hours on rugged terrain—opt for sturdy vehicles like jeeps. Entry requires passes from the Vallakkadavu Forest Check Post (₹25/person, ₹50/vehicle; cameras

₹25, video ₹100).

Immersive Stays

Upon arrival, the serene Green Mansion eco-lodge welcomes guests with panoramic views of Gavi Lake and surrounding forests. Options range from cozy rooms to tree houses and wilderness tent pitching. Forest camping, a rarity in India, lets adventurers pitch tents amid nocturnal wildlife sounds—an indescribable thrill. Tree-top houses provide front-row seats to avian life.

Exciting Activities and Viewpoints

Gavi brims with tailored experiences. Day treks, guided by locals, explore trails to breathtaking viewpoints. Valley View reveals deep ravines and dense forests below, while Kochu Pampa near Green Mansion spots grazing Nilgiri Tahrs. Sabarimala Viewpoint, a short trek away, offers panoramic sights of the pilgrimage hills and Makara Jyothi site. Night safaris to Kullur, Gavi Pullumedu, Kochu Pampa, and Pachakanam spotlight nocturnal creatures.

Access and Practical Tips

Reach Gavi via:

- **Bus:** Pathanamthitta Bus Station (97 km)
- **Flight:** Cochin International Airport (160 km).
- **Train:** Kottayam Railway Station (128 km).

Gavi's tourism prospects shine bright. Its sustainable practices, diverse activities, and raw beauty draw global visitors, boosting Kerala's eco-reputation. As a Periyar Tiger Reserve gem in Ranni reserve forest, it promises unforgettable memories.

SUMMER DESTINATION

Discover KUMARAKOM

Kerala's Summer Tourism Haven



Nestled on the shores of Vembanad Lake in Kottayam district, Kumarakom unfolds as a tranquil paradise of shimmering backwaters, lush mangroves and winding canals. This cluster of tiny islands in the Kuttanad region spans 51.67 square kilometers, including 24.13 square kilometers of the lake itself. Just 14 kilometers from Kottayam town, it offers a laidback escape where time slows amid emerald waters and verdant landscapes. For summer travellers, Kumarakom shines as a cool retreat from Kerala's

heat, drawing nature lovers with its migratory bird bonanza, houseboat cruises and authentic local flavours.

The Visionary Origins of a Natural Gem

Kumarakom's story begins in the 1840s with British agriculturist Alfred George Baker. Passionate about farming and nature, Baker petitioned the government for 500 acres of wetland northeast of Vembanad Lake. Granted the land, he transformed it eco-friendly: filling and levelling with earth, planting coconut groves across 150 acres, and developing



paddy fields with easy irrigation. He dug canals for water flow, using the excavated mud to build bunds that blocked saltwater intrusion—preserving the local flora and fauna. Baker's foresight also included mangrove plantations to curb soil erosion, leaving swathes untouched for nature to reclaim. Today, this legacy makes Kumarakom a sustainable summer haven, where cooling lake breezes and shaded groves provide relief from the sun.

Kumarakom pioneered Responsible Tourism and summer visitors benefit from this through community-led experiences that

promote eco-conscious travel.

Summer's Feathered Spectacle

No Kumarakom visit is complete without the Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary, India's first scientifically managed preserve, sprawling 14 hectares. Baker's untouched lands evolved into a biodiversity hotspot, hosting over 180 bird species thanks to the lake's proximity, mangroves, mild climate and insect abundance.

Spot common locals like owls, cuckoos, egrets, woodpeckers, moorhens, cormorants, darters and ducks. Thrill to summer migrants: Marsh Harriers, teals, larks, Siberian cranes, herons, bitterns, and Brahminy kites. Early mornings or dusk boat rides from the sanctuary offer prime viewing amid rustling mangroves—perfect for photography in the soft summer light. The sanctuary's shaded paths and lake-cooled air make it an ideal daytime activity, shielding visitors from peak heat.

Backwaters, Cruises and Culinary Delights

Summer backwater cruises on Vembanad Lake deliver lifetime memories. Glide through canals fringed by paddy fields and palm groves, polka-dotted with emerald isles. Houseboats, often community-run under RT, offer air-conditioned comfort with sundowners as the sun dips into the water. Watch net fishing at dawn—fisherfolk casting Chinese-style nets for karimeen (pearl spot), shrimp, and prawns—then savour fresh catches grilled with coconut.

Toddy shops amplify the vibe. Try out madhura kallu (sweet fresh toddy from coconut inflorescences), which ferments into a tangy brew. Pair it with kallappams (rice pancakes laced with sweet toddy) or spicy duck and seafood curries infused with coconut milk. These open-air eateries buzz with locals, offering shaded respite and authentic Kerala flavours—essential for summer's relaxed pace.

Cultural Crafts and Serene Walks

Wander Kumarakom's paddy fields, Kerala's God's Own Garden, for humbling summer strolls. Golden sheaves sway under azure skies, refreshing the soul. Nearby, witness coir-making and coconut frond weaving—generational crafts yielding eco-friendly mats, baskets and ropes. Master artisans breathe life into palm textures, blending tradition with sustainability.

Kumarakom exudes peace: a parallel universe of tranquility where backwaters mirror the land's rhythm. Backpackers and families alike find refreshment in its greenery, from birdwatching to boating.

Plan your summer getaway to Kumarakom—Kerala's ultimate blend of nature, culture and calm.

SUMMER DESTINATION

MUNNAR

Your Ultimate Summer Sanctuary





When the plains of India begin to simmer under the relentless summer sun, the mist-shrouded peaks of the Western Ghats offer a cool, emerald embrace. Munnar, a tranquil hill station perched at an altitude of 1,600 meters in Idukki district, is more than just a travel destination—it is a timeless oasis where the air is crisp, the tea is world-class, and the scenery feels like a fantasy painted onto reality.

The Land of Three Rivers

The name 'Munnar' literally translates to three rivers in Malayalam, signifying its unique location at the confluence of the Muthirapuzha, Nallathanni and Kundala mountain streams. Historically the domain of the indigenous Muthuvan tribal community, the region remained a wild frontier until the late 19th century.

In 1880, European planter A.H. Sharp sowed the first seeds of tea across 50 acres. Today, those modest beginnings have blossomed into an endless carpet of green that has become the town's iconic global identity.

Nature and Wildlife

While Munnar is a year-round beauty, the March to May summer window is particularly pleasant for those seeking a retreat from the humidity of the coast.

- **Eravikulam National Park:** Spread across 97 sq. km, this sanctuary is the hallowed ground of the endangered Nilgiri Tahr. The park usually closes from February to March for calving season, making April and May the perfect time to visit.
- **The Neelakurinji Phenomenon:** If you are lucky enough to visit during the Kurinji Season (once every 12 years), you will witness the hills bathed in a surreal blue hue.
- **Anamudi Peak:** Towering at over 2,700 meters, the highest peak in South India dominates the skyline, offering

a majestic backdrop for trekkers and photographers alike.

Must-Visit Landmarks

Munnar's charm lies in its variety. Whether you are a history buff or an adrenaline junkie, there is a corner of this town for you.

Destination	Highlight	Why Visit in Summer?
Tea Museum	Nallathanni Estate	Explore the fascinating transition from manual rollers to modern tea processing in a cool, indoor setting.
Mattupetty Dam	Storage Masonry Dam	Enjoy speedboating on the lake or visit the nearby Indo-Swiss Livestock dairy farm.
Echo Point	Acoustic Phenomenon	Situated at 600 feet, the cool breeze and wildflowers make it a perfect picnic spot.
Top Station	Panoramic Views	The highest point (1,700m) where you can literally walk among the clouds on the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border.
Pothamedu View Point	Plantation Vistas	Offers a bird's-eye view of coffee, tea, and cardamom plantations—best visited at sunrise.

Getting There:

- **By Air:** Cochin International Airport (107 km) or Coimbatore Airport (175 km).
- **By Rail:** Aluva (Alwaye) Railway Station is the most convenient gateway, located about 108 km away.
- **By Road:** Well-connected by KSRTC buses and private cabs from all major cities in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Itinerary Tip: A 2 to 3-day trip is the sweet spot for a summer getaway. Spend your first day exploring the tea estates and the Museum, the second at Eravikulam and Anamudi, and the third soaking in the views at Top Station and Mattupetty.

Pro Tip: Don't miss the Attukad and Lakkam Waterfalls. Even in summer, these cascading waters provide a refreshing mist that defines the Munnar experience.

NELLIYAMPATHY

The Cool Summer Hill Retreat

As summer temperatures soar across Kerala, Nelliampathy in Palakkad district emerges as a premier hill station haven, offering respite at elevations up to 1,572 meters above sea level. Often called the Queen of Palakkad, this lush destination draws crowds fleeing the heat, with its mist-shrouded peaks, hairpin bends, and panoramic viewpoints providing instant relief and stunning vistas.

Thrilling Ascent and Roadside Gems

The drive from Nenmara town to Nelliampathy is an exhilarating summer prelude, featuring about 10 hairpin curves that wind past verdant valleys and the Palakkad Gap. Start at Pothundy Dam, a serene spot at the foothills perfect for family picnics, boating and splashing in cooler waters before tackling the climb. Along the way, viewpoints reveal endless paddy fields and distant Tamil Nadu plains, making the journey a highlight for heat-weary travelers.

Cool Climate and Lush Plantations

Nelliampathy's summer appeal lies in its consistently pleasant climate, hovering around 15-25°C even in peak heat,

thanks to its Western Ghats perch. Vast tea, coffee, cardamom and orange plantations blanket the slopes, turning the hills into a green oasis where visitors can stroll shaded paths, tour estates and pluck fresh fruits. These aromatic gardens not only cool the air but offer guided walks that educate on sustainable farming, ideal for a refreshing daytime escape.

Biodiversity and Wildlife Spotting

Part of the UNESCO-listed Western Ghats, Nelliampathy teems with summer-friendly biodiversity, from endemic birds to elusive elephants, leopards and gaurs in its dense forests. Birdwatchers thrive here amid misty mornings, spotting species amid the cooler canopy. Nearby Parambikulam Tiger Reserve adds easy day trips for wildlife safaris, where summer's lower crowds enhance sightings in shaded trails.

Adventure amid the Mist

Summer adventurers find Nelliampathy a launchpad for invigorating treks to Seetharkundu Viewpoint, Manpara, Kambamala, Meenampara and Mattumala, where arduous



paths reward with sweeping valley views and wildflower meadows. Try rock climbing, mountain biking or off-road jeep safaris through rugged terrain, all amplified by the crisp, oxygen-rich air. These activities suit all levels, providing adrenaline without the oppressive lowland humidity.

Cultural Vibrancy: Nenmara Vallangi Vela

Time your summer visit for early April's Nenmara Vallangi Vela festival at Nellikulangara Bhagavathy Temple, a riot of color post-paddy harvest. Villages Nenmara and Vallangi compete with caparisoned elephants, Panchavadyam percussion battles, Kummatti dances and Asia's loudest fireworks, creating a festive coolant under lantern-lit aanapandals. This 20-day spectacle, peaking around April 2-3, blends devotion and rivalry, offering immersive cultural thrills amid the hills' summer breeze.

Prime Viewpoints and Hidden Spots

Must-visits include Seetharkundu Waterfall, cascading 100 meters for misty sprays perfect for cooling off, and Nelliampathy Guha for serene cave explorations. Mattumala

and Kesavanpara viewpoints frame endless horizons, while orange-pineapple farms tempt with juicy, sun-ripened treats. These spots, less crowded in summer weekdays, let you savour solitude in nature's air-conditioned embrace.

Easy Access

Reach Nelliampathy swiftly: Fly into Coimbatore (120 km), Calicut (150 km), or Cochin (115 km) airports, then drive 2 hours from Palakkad Junction (56 km) or Thrissur (77 km). Roads from Palakkad town (60-65 km) are scenic and well-maintained, ideal for summer road trips. Stay in eco-homestays, resorts amid plantations, or budget lodges serving Kerala sadhya with fresh hill produce.

Nelliampathy transforms summer into a symphony of cool winds, adventures, and festivities, making it Kerala's ultimate heat-beater. Whether picnicking at dams, trekking misty trails, or revelling in Vela fireworks, this Palakkad gem delivers rejuvenation for families, thrill-seekers and culture lovers alike. Pack light layers and head uphill—your summer sanctuary awaits.

SUMMER DESTINATION

Fascinating Escapades to

PARAMBIKULAM Tiger Reserve





Nestled in the lush, misty hills of the Western Ghats straddling Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Parambikulam Tiger Reserve spans 643 square kilometers of pristine wilderness—making it an ideal summer getaway for families, wildlife lovers and adventure seekers. Forget scorching plains; this biodiversity hotspot offers refreshing breezes, shaded forests and thrilling escapes from the heat, all while showcasing Bengal tigers, tribal heritage and stunning water bodies.

Why Parambikulam is Summer's Best-Kept Secret

Beat the summer sizzle with Parambikulam's dense canopy of evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests, dotted with teak, rosewood, sandalwood, bamboo groves and grasslands. It is a haven for endangered species like Bengal tigers, elephants, leopards, gaur, sambar deer and vibrant birds such as the great Indian hornbill and Malabar pied hornbill. Spot reptiles, amphibians, and migratory flocks during cooler morning safaris—the perfect way to unwind from urban heat.

The drive in is half the fun: Wind through quaint villages and coconut groves from Pollachi, then climb steep, rocky paths past Top Slip Reserve into mountainous bliss. With pleasant weather from November to April (and still milder summers than lowlands), it is prime for relaxed exploration.

Sustainable Ecotourism Adventures for All Ages

Parambikulam shines as a model of eco-friendly fun. Hop on guided wildlife safaris in green vehicles or trek iconic trails like Kariyanshola (a 2-day immersive program with tribal homestays, night camping under stars and expert-led forest hikes). Try Thunakadavu Trek for panoramic views, or boat across serene Parambikulam, Thunakadavu and Perumaripallam reservoirs, spotting wildlife from the water.

Stay in treehouses, jungle camps or tents at Thunakadavu—book ahead for these nature-immersed spots. Marvel at the Kannimara Teak, one of the world's oldest and largest at 48.5m tall, 6.57m girth, and 360 years old, towering amid wild teak remnants.

Dive into Tribal Heritage and Culture

Connect with indigenous Kadar, Malasar, and Muduvar tribes at the Tribal Heritage Centre. Learn their nature-harmonious traditions through artefacts, tools and interactions—adding a cultural layer to your summer story.

Easy Ways to Reach Parambikulam

- By Bus: From Pollachi (65 km) or Palakkad (45 km to Pollachi).
- By Flight: Coimbatore International Airport (55 km from Palakkad).
- By Train: Palakkad Junction (93 km) or Pollachi Junction (53 km).

Entry permits and guides are available at the info centre—open year-round.

Parambikulam isn't just a reserve; it is a refreshing summer sanctuary blending adventure, wildlife, and heritage. Pack your bags for tigers, treks and tranquility!

PONMUDI

Ultimate Summer Hill Escape

As Kerala's summer heat intensifies, Ponmudi Hill Station, just 55-60 km from Thiruvananthapuram, beckons as a misty haven at 1,100 meters elevation. This Western Ghats gem offers cool breezes between 18-25°C, lush tea gardens, and panoramic plateaus, drawing urbanites for quick relief from coastal swelter. The drive's 22 hairpin bends reveal Kallar River's wild sparkle first, setting the tone for refreshing adventures amid endless green valleys.

Scenic Journey and Misty Arrival

Your summer trip begins with Kallar River's temperament—swift and shimmering from distant showers—greeting you en route from Thiruvananthapuram. Winding roads soon cloak you in mist, expanding into a

breezy plateau ringed by blue hills and valleys, perfect for shrugging off lowland humidity. Early mornings amplify the magic, with fog lifting to unveil terraced tea estates and distant Arabian Sea glimpses, ideal for photographers chasing golden-hour shots.

Refreshing Waterfalls and Valleys

Ponmudi's cascades shine in summer's drier flow, starting with nearby Meenmutty Falls, a 300-meter beauty reached by a thrilling 4-km forest trek over boulders and streams. Cool off at Golden Valley's pebble-lined rivulets near Kallar, prime for picnics and dips without monsoon crowds. These spots provide shaded respite, where crystal waters and wild ferns create natural air-cooling amid the hills' perpetual freshness.



Trekking Trails for Adventure Seekers

Summer trekkers thrive on Ponnudi's moderate paths to Varayadumotta peak, Bonacaud Falls, Vazhvanthol, Kalarkad, and Seethatheertham, offering Western Ghats vistas without peak-season mud. Spot rare birds, wild goats, or civets while hiking; bolder souls tackle Agasthyakoodam base (permit required) for wilderness highs. Trails suit families or solos, with crisp air energising every step toward viewpoints framing mist-veiled valleys.

Wildlife and Tea Garden Serenity

Adjacent Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary teems with deer, leopards and birds in its lush reserves, accessible via short summer drives for guided walks minus heavy rains. Stroll manicured tea gardens blanketing slopes, inhaling aromatic breezes while sipping fresh brews and banana fritters at hilltop stalls. These low-key pursuits rejuvenate, blending nature immersion with easy access to echo points and deer parks.

Thiruvananthapuram's Cultural Gems

Pair your Ponnudi getaway with Thiruvananthapuram's heritage hotspots, just an hour away. Start at Padmanabhaswamy Temple, the world's richest Vishnu shrine with Kerala-Dravidian architecture, murals and Anantha reclining deity. Explore Napier Museum's natural AC-cooled trove of bronzes, ivory and Mughal-Chinese artefacts;

adjacent Sree Chithra Art Gallery showcases Raja Ravi Varma oils and Tanjore masterpieces.

Nearby, Puthenmalika (Kuthiramalika) Palace displays Swathi Thirunal's wood-carved legacy. Kanakakunnu Palace, a Travancore entertainment gem, now buzzes with cultural events. Trivandrum Zoo, Asia's oldest, spans 55 acres with modern naturalistic enclosures for tigers and cheetahs.

Venture to Veli Lake's waterfront park, floating bridge and kayaks; Shanghumugham Beach for sunset strolls past Matsya Kanyaka mermaid sculpture. Kovalam Beach's crescents (Lighthouse, Hawa, Samudra) lure with lighthouse climbs; Vizhinjam offers Marine Aquarium pearls and bustling Fishing Harbour.

Easy Access and Summer Stays

Fly into Thiruvananthapuram International Airport (58 km), train to Central Station (56 km), or bus to Ponnudi Stop (2.4 km); the 2-hour drive is thrilling yet paved. Stay in KTDC resorts, guesthouses or camps amid hills, savouring local food with valley views. Summer weekdays mean fewer crowds, more serenity.

Ponnudi blends misty thrills, cool cascades, and Thiruvananthapuram's royal riches into a perfect 2026 summer blueprint—trek by day, unwind by twilight.



Discover

RANIPURAM HILLS

Kerala's Ooty

Nestled in the Kasaragod district, Ranipuram Hills stands as a serene hill station at 750 meters above sea level, often dubbed the 'Ooty of Kerala' for its lush landscapes and cool climate. This biodiversity hotspot borders Karnataka's Coorg mountains on one side and Kerala's coastal plains on the other, offering breathtaking panoramic views of the Western Ghats.

Natural Beauty and Biodiversity

Ranipuram captivates with its mix of evergreen Shola

forests, monsoon woodlands, vast grasslands and meadows dotted with wildflowers and lemongrass, whose breeze is said to carry medicinal properties. The area teems with wildlife, including elephants, leopards, deer, wild boars, Malabar giant squirrels, jungle cats and reptiles like king cobras and monitor lizards. Bird enthusiasts spot species such as the Malabar grey hornbill, Great Indian hornbill, paradise flycatcher, and green barbet, alongside rare butterflies fluttering through the canopy.

The proposed wildlife sanctuary here preserves rare



medicinal plants and orchids, making it a trekker's and nature lover's paradise. Formerly known as Madathumala, these forests merge seamlessly with neighboring hills, creating an immersive escape from urban hustle.

Trekking Adventures

The star attraction is the moderate 2-5 km trek starting from Panathady, lasting 1-3 hours one way depending on pace and stops. The trail begins with stone-paved paths through misty, dense woods—climb using sturdy roots and fences that

hint at nearby wildlife like tusks—before opening to endless Shola grasslands swaying in the wind. Summit views reward with horizons of mountains, valleys and occasional elephant herds.

Jeep safaris and nature walks extend exploration to lesser-known spots. Trails open from 8-9 AM to 4-5:30 PM; entry costs ₹30-50 for adults and ₹15 for children. Early mornings are best for cooler temps and clearer sightings.

Activities and Experiences

Beyond trekking, visitors enjoy wildlife spotting, bird watching and photography amid rolling meadows. Jeep rides navigate scenic routes, while nearby Kottancheri Hills offer additional hikes and temple visits. Cultural immersion peaks with Theyyam rituals—vibrant dances honoring deities like Pottan and Panjurli Theyyam—performed in North Malabar traditions, often around May.

Picnics on hilltops and lens-capturing golden-hour grasslands add to the allure. No food along trails, so pack essentials or eat at base parking areas.

How to Reach

Ranipuram is accessible yet remote, ideal for road trips.

Mode	Nearest Point
By Road	Kanhangad Town
By Train	Kanhangad Railway Station
By Air	Kannur International Airport
Alternate Air	Mangalore Airport (Karnataka)

Buses and taxis run regularly from Kanhangad or Panathady.

Accommodation Options

District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) cottages, private homestays, resorts, and luxury A-frame cottages in nearby plantations offer kitchens, views, and breakfasts.

Explore Kasaragode

Combine with Kasaragod's beaches or forts for a full north Kerala itinerary. Kasaragod's beaches like Bekal, Kappil, and Pallikere lure sun-seekers with golden sands and turquoise waves. At its heart lies Bekal Fort, Kerala's largest and best-preserved stronghold, built by the Keladi Nayakas. Perched on Pallikara's shores, its bastions offer epic sunsets and sea views. Valiyaparamba Backwaters, the state's third-largest network, invites serene cruises through greenery.

Immerse in Theyyam, North Kerala's hypnotic ritual where performers channel gods through dance, music, and mythology in elaborate costumes. It's a spiritual spectacle showcasing artistic heritage.

Kasaragod's tourism prospects soar, blending eco-sensitive beaches, historic forts, backwaters, and living arts into a holistic escape. This undiscovered gem promises authentic Kerala experiences, sustainable and soul-stirring.

SUMMER DESTINATION

A Guide to
THEKKADY'S
Wild Wonders

While many travellers flock to Kerala's coast for the beaches, those in the know head for the high altitudes of Idukki district during the summer. Situated between 900 m and 1,800 m above sea level, Thekkady offers a refreshing escape from the tropical heat. With temperatures hovering between a pleasant 19°C and 35°C, the cool, aromatic air of the Western Ghats provides the perfect backdrop for adventure and nature lovers.

The Heart of the Wild

Thekkady is synonymous with



the Periyar Tiger Reserve, a sprawling 777 sq. km sanctuary of dense evergreen forests and savanna grasslands. In the summer, as water sources deep in the forest dry up, the chances of spotting wildlife increase significantly as animals congregate near the central Periyar Lake.

- **Boating Safaris:** The lake, an artificial reservoir created by the Mullaperiyar Dam, is the sanctuary's centerpiece. A boat safari is the safest and most iconic way to view herds of wild elephants, sambar deer, and gaur (Indian bison) along the water's edge.
- **The Rare & Endangered:** Periyar is one of India's oldest and best-managed tiger reserves. Lucky visitors may spot the elusive Bengal Tiger or the rare White Tiger, alongside the endemic Nilgiri Tahr and Lion-tailed Macaque.
- **The Lifeline of Kerala:** The reserve is the birthplace of the

River Periyar, the longest perennial river in the state. Not only does it provide drinking water to numerous towns, but the Idukki Dam downstream generates a major share of Kerala's electricity.

Summer Adventures

Summer mornings and evenings are the prime times for outdoor activities before the midday warmth sets in. Thekkady offers a robust menu of eco-friendly adventures:

- **Bamboo Rafting:** A full-day program combining a 10 km trek through the forest with a serene rafting session on the lake.
- **Periyar Tiger Trail:** For the truly brave, this guided trekking and camping program allows you to stay in tents deep within the reserve, listening to the nocturnal drama of the wilderness.
- **Border Hiking:** A challenging full-day trek along the rugged ridges of the sanctuary, offering panoramic views of both Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Beyond the Sanctuary

Thekkady's charm extends beyond the tiger reserve into the bustling plantation towns and scenic viewpoints of the Idukki district.



Attraction	Distance from Thekkady	Best For
Kumily	2 km	Shopping for fresh spices (cardamom, pepper, cloves) and tea gardens.
Sathram	10 km	Off-road jeep safaris and 360-degree viewpoints over the hills.
Chellarkovil	15 km	Cascading waterfalls and the telescope view.
Vandiperiyar	18 km	Visiting tea factories and the Government Agriculture Farm's rose gardens.

The Scent of Summer

Thekkady is a global hub for natural spices. The fertile soil of the region yields world-class cardamom, black pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger. A guided walk through a spice plantation is a sensory delight. In summer, you can witness the traditional drying and processing of these aromatic treasures.

Tip for Summer Travelers: Plan your treks and boat rides for the early morning (7:00 AM slots) to enjoy the coolest temperatures and the best wildlife activity.

Whether you are navigating the backwaters by bamboo raft or trekking, Thekkady in summer is a verdant, soul-soothing retreat that stays true to Kerala's legendary reputation.

VAGAMON

The Emerald Soul of the Western Ghats

For those weary of the relentless hum of urban life, Vagamon offers more than just a vacation; it offers a sanctuary. Replete with rolling hills, rustic hamlets and sprawling valleys, it is a land where time seems to slow down, allowing you to catch a deep breath of the chilly valley winds.

Vagamon sits at an altitude of approximately 1,100 meters, a height that grants it a perennial spring-like climate.

The Enchanting Meadows

The defining feature of this region is undoubtedly the Vagamon Meadows. Imagine vast, undulating hills covered in a carpet of velvet green that stretches as far as the eye can see. Interspersed with patches of vibrant wildflowers, these

meadows are the perfect setting for a slow afternoon.

The Mystical Pine Forests

As the highest point in Vagamon, Kolahalamedu is home to towering pine trees with needle-covered branches that knit together to block out the midday sun. Walking through these woods feels like stepping into a northern European fairytale. The area has been declared a protected zone, ensuring that the serene, mystical atmosphere remains untainted by over-development.

The Triple Hills: A Journey of Faith

Vagamon is unique not just for its ecology, but for its spiritual soul. The town is famously anchored by three hills—



Thangal, Murugan, and Kurisumala—each representing one of Kerala’s major religions, standing in silent harmony.

1. Thangalpara: This massive rocky hill is a significant Muslim pilgrimage site. It houses the Dargah (tomb) of Sheikh Fariduddin, a Sufi saint from Afghanistan who reportedly lived here 800 years ago. Remarkably, a water source tucked within the rock’s crevices never runs dry, even in the harshest summers.

2. Kurisumala (Mountain of the Cross): Founded by the Belgian monk Father Francis Acharya, Kurisumala the ashram blends Christian monasticism with Indian spiritual traditions. The climb to the summit is a meditative experience,

rewarded by panoramic views of the Idukki landscape.

3. Murugan Hill: Dedicated to Lord Murugan, this hill features a beautifully carved rock temple. It provides a peaceful vantage point to look out over the tea plantations and the valley below.

Adrenaline amidst the Mist

While many come to Vagamon for the peace, others come for the thrill. The unique topography of the region—steep cliffs juxtaposed with flat, grassy landing zones—has made it the paragliding capital of Kerala.

- **Trekking:** Trails through the pine forests and up the Triple Hills cater to both beginners and seasoned hikers.
- **Rock Climbing and Rappelling:** The rugged cliffs of Mooppanpara and various rocky outcrops provide a stern challenge for adventure enthusiasts.
- **The Glass Bridge:** For a modern thrill, the Vagamon Glass Bridge at the adventure park offers a beautiful view straight down into the abyss, providing a 360-degree perspective of the valley.

The Green Gold and Hidden Waters

The tea plantations of Vagamon are meticulously manicured, creating rhythmic patterns across the hillsides. Nearby, the Pattumalai Church, built entirely of granite and surrounded by tea gardens, stands as a testament to the region’s architectural and natural fusion.

The Marmala Waterfalls, often reached via an exhilarating off-road Jeep safari, is a hidden cascade that plunges into a deep pool amidst thick vegetation. For a more relaxed experience, the Vagamon Lake offers quiet boating opportunities.

Must-Visit Attractions:

Attraction	Highlights
Eco-Point	Famous for its natural echo phenomenon and breathtaking views.
Orchidarium	A botanical paradise featuring thousands of exotic orchid varieties.
Mooppanpara	A V-shaped canyon providing a dramatic viewpoint of the plains below.
Karikadu View Point	The best spot for wide-angle photography of the winding ghat roads.

Getting There

Vagamon is well-connected yet remains blissfully secluded.

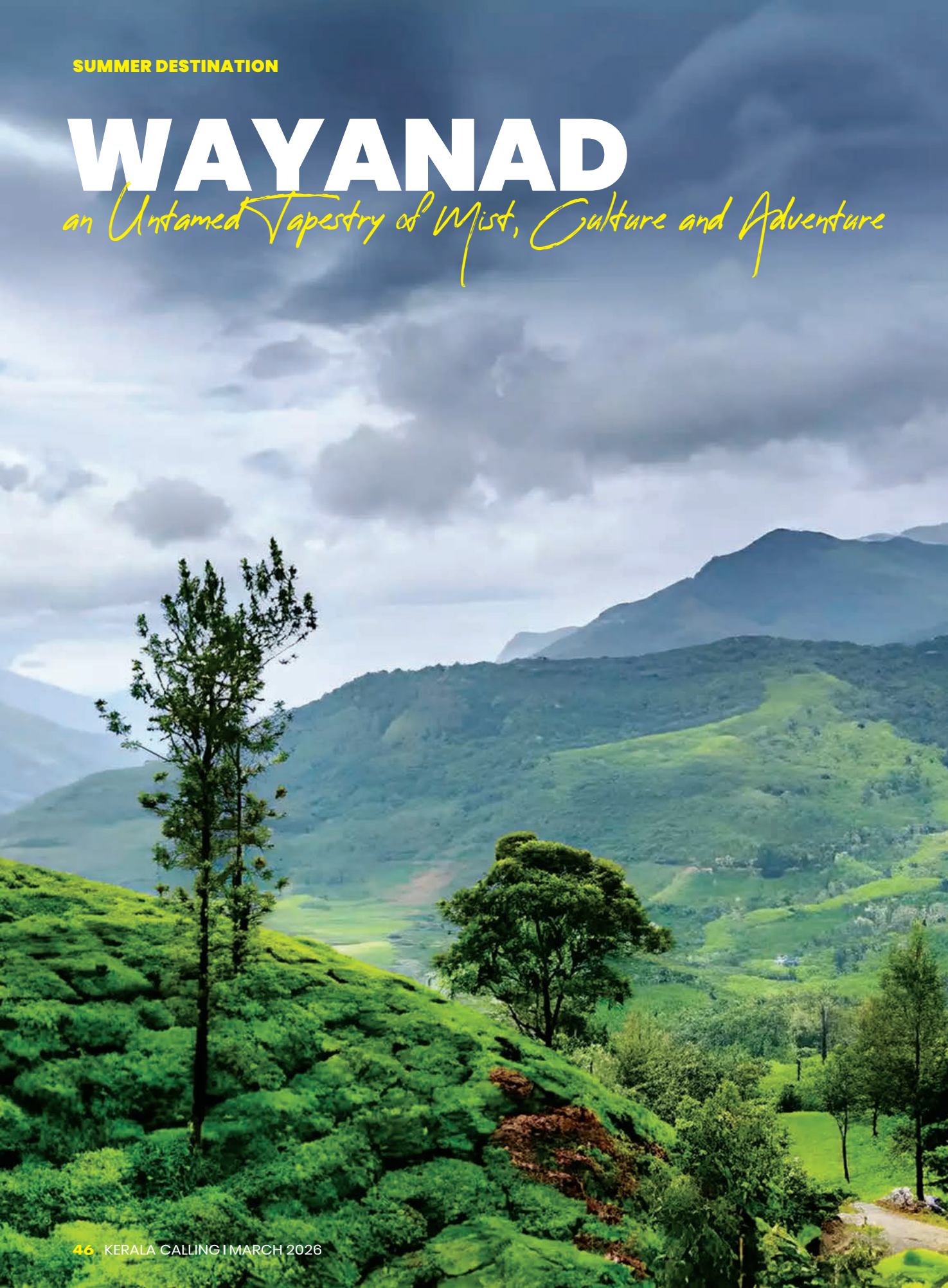
- **By Road:** Approximately 65 km from Kottayam.
- **By Rail:** Kottayam Railway Station is the nearest major railhead.
- **By Air:** Cochin International Airport (COK) is the closest gateway for domestic and international travelers.

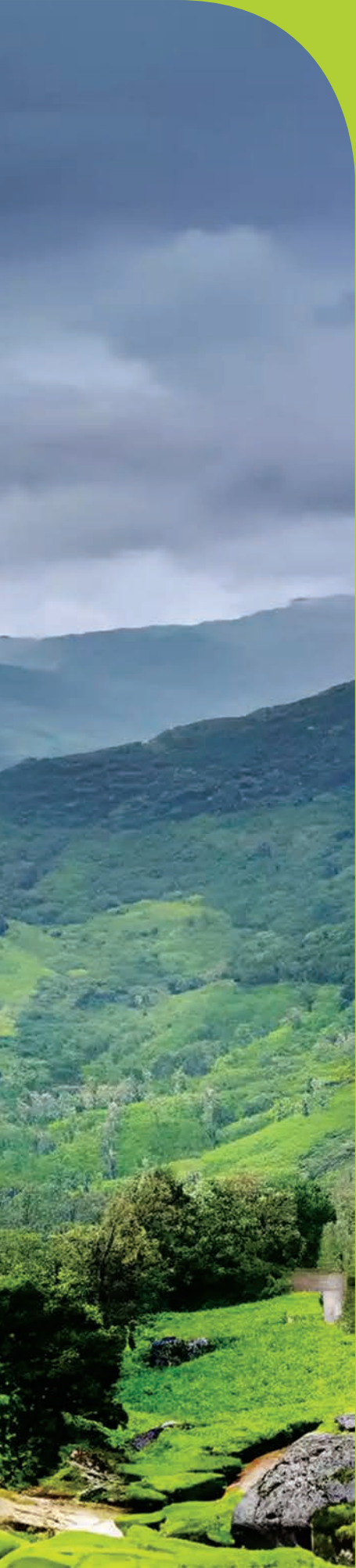
Vagamon is not just a destination; it is a feeling. In a world that is increasingly loud, Vagamon remains a quiet, green whisper.

SUMMER DESTINATION

WAYANAD

an Untamed Tapestry of Mist, Culture and Adventure





Wayanad is a destination that feels more like a living, breathing sanctuary. Nestled high in the Western Ghats of Kerala, this Land of Paddy Fields (derived from the Malayalam words Vayal Nadu) is a verdant mosaic of lofty ridges, rugged terrain and dense, ancient jungles.

Peaks and Vistas

For those who wish to touch the sky, Chembra Peak stands as the ultimate sentinel. Reaching an elevation of 2,100 meters, it is the highest point in the region. The trek to the summit is legendary, not just for the physical challenge but for the heart-shaped lake nestled halfway up—a natural wonder that never dries, symbolising the romantic soul of the hills.

If Chembra is the heart, Lakkidi View Point is the gateway. As the highest point in Wayanad, it offers a dizzying, bird's-eye view of the serpentine roads winding through the lush Thamarassery Ghat pass. Similarly, Neelimala and Cheengeri Hills provide breathtaking panoramas where the rising sun paints the Ambukuthimala range in shades of gold.

Waters of the Wild

The Banasura Sagar Dam, built across the Karamanathodu River, holds the prestige of being the largest earth dam in India and the second largest in Asia. Its turquoise waters, set against the backdrop of the Banasura hills offer a serene spectacle.

For a more intimate encounter with water, Pookode Lake serves as a tranquil freshwater retreat surrounded by evergreen forests. Meanwhile, the Kuruva Dweep (Kuruva Island) offers a unique river delta experience. This 950-acre cluster of islands in the Kabini River is accessible by bamboo rafts, leading visitors into a silent world of rare flora.

Historic Getaway

Perched on Ambukuthi Hills, the Edakkal Caves are not technically caves but a natural cleft in the rock. They house Neolithic and Mesolithic carvings that date back thousands of years.

The legendary Pazhassi Raja, known as the Lion of Kerala, utilized the impenetrable Wayanad jungles to wage guerrilla warfare against the British East India Company. His defiance remains a

pillar of local pride, commemorated at his tomb in Mananthavady.

The Jain Temple at Sulthan Bathery, dating back to the 13th century, reflects a period of strong Jain influence before it was used by Tipu Sultan as an ammunition dump in the 18th century. Nearby, the Thirunelli Temple, the Kashi of the South, stands as an ancient testament to Lord Vishnu, draped in the silence of the Brahmagiri hills.

The Heartbeat of the Land

At the core of Wayanad's identity is its indigenous population. Home to over 50 tribes, including the Paniyas, Kurichiyas, Adiyas, Kurumas and Kattunayakans, the district is a living museum of tribal heritage.

To bridge the gap between modern tourism and ancient traditions, the 'En Uru' Tribal Heritage Village in Pookode provides a platform for these communities. Here, visitors can see prototype tribal cottages, sample traditional fare at the cafeteria and purchase authentic tribal medicines and handicrafts.

The Nilgiri Biosphere

The Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, split into the Muthanga and Tholpetty ranges, acts as a bridge between the parks of Karnataka (Bandipur and Nagarhole) and Tamil Nadu (Mudumalai).

A jeep safari through the forests offers sightings of:

- **Mammals:** Elephants, tigers, leopards, and gaur.
- **Avifauna:** The Pakshipathalam Bird Sanctuary is a trekker's paradise, home to the rare Edible-nest Swiftlet, peacocks and various species of woodpeckers and owls.

Nearest Airport

Calicut International Airport (CCJ).

Nearest Railhead

Kozhikode (Calicut).

Wayanad is more than a hill station; it is a sanctuary where nature and history coexist in a fragile, beautiful balance. From the skull-shaped Phantom Rock to the whispering depths of the Kanthapara Waterfalls, every corner of this district offers a story. It is a place that demands you slow down, breathe the mist-laden air, and respect the ancient rhythms of the land and its people.

DETOX HOLIDAY

The Ultimate Summer Reset

Embrace the Magic of Kerala's Ayurvedic Detox



As the relentless Kerala sun climbs higher and the humidity thickens into a heavy blanket, the body often sends out distress signals. You might feel a persistent lethargy, notice your skin losing its lustre, or struggle with a digestive system that feels uncharacteristically sluggish. In God's Own Country, the answer to this seasonal slump is the timeless wisdom of Ayurveda.

Transformative detox holidays in Kerala have evolved far beyond simple spa retreats. They are holistic biological resets, blending 5,000-year-old Vedic science with the region's lush natural bounty. In a world increasingly dominated by fast-paced digital stress, these journeys offer a rare opportunity to emerge refreshed, balanced and physically radiant.

Ayurveda, the Antidote

According to ancient Vedic texts, summer is the season of Pitta dosha—the elemental combination of fire and water. When the external heat rises, our internal fire can flare up, manifesting as physical inflammation, acidity, skin rashes and even heightened irritability.

Ayurvedic detoxes, specifically the five-fold purification known as Panchakarma, are designed to counteract these specific imbalances. The efficacy of these ancient practices is increasingly supported by modern data:

- **Oxidative Stress:** Studies from the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) indicate that Panchakarma can reduce oxidative stress by up to 30%.
- **Immune Boost:** By flushing out Ama (metabolic toxins), the body's natural defence systems are significantly bolstered.
- **Metabolic Health:** These retreats often lead to a healthy weight loss of 3–5 kg through anti-inflammatory diets and specialised massages.

In Kerala, where many households integrate Ayurvedic remedies into daily life, these treatments are elevated by local treasures. Imagine starting your morning with Nasya (nasal therapy) using eucalyptus-infused sesame oil to clear the sinuses, followed by a cooling massage using fresh coconut oil, neem and turmeric.

Navigating the Journey: From Backwaters to Balance

Kerala's diverse geography—stretching from the tranquil backwaters of Kumarakom



to the dramatic cliffs of Varkala—makes it the global epicentre for authentic healing. Most professional retreats offer 7-to-21-day packages, which include personalised consultations with Vaidyas (Ayurvedic doctors).

A typical, structured itinerary unfolds in three vital stages:

Phase	Duration	Focus	Key Experience
Purvakarma	Days 1–3	Preparation	Abhyanga (oil massage) to loosen deep-seated toxins.
Pradhanakarma	Days 4–7	Core Detox	Tailored purgation and enemas based on your unique Prakriti (body type).
Paschatkarma	Day 8+	Rejuvenation	Yoga, meditation, and Sattvic meals like rice gruel and fresh juices.

Post-pandemic, this sector has seen a massive surge in wellness tourism, according to 2025 reports. Kerala has set the gold standard, combining clinical expertise with sustainable practices and organic, farm-to-table nutrition.

Mental Clarity and Physical Cooling

The benefits of a summer detox go beyond the physical. For busy professionals, the reduction in stress hormones provides a mental declutter that is invaluable before the busy monsoon season begins.

Essential Tips for Your Summer Escape:

- **Hydrate Naturally:** Pair your treatments with Kerala's seasonal fruits—mangoes and pineapples—which act as natural digestive aids.
- **Location Matters:** If you struggle with the heat, opt for beachside locations to benefit from the cooling ocean breeze.
- **Check Certification:** Always verify that your chosen centre is AYUSH-certified to ensure medical safety and authenticity.
- **Consult Early:** Many top-tier resorts now offer telehealth consultations, allowing you to begin your preparation before you even board your flight.

While the world chases quick fixes and fad diets, Kerala invites you to step back into a rhythm that honours the laws of nature. This summer, trade the standard beach lounging for a deep inner renewal.

The Humane Ingredient in Fasting Porridge



Ashkar Kabeer



The iftar spreads in Kerala's mosques are a feast of diversity. From assorted dates and fruits to even biriyani, a wide variety of dishes appears in every mosque, yet the one iconic star among them all is still the humble fasting porridge. From spiced porridge to meat porridge, the flavours change from region to region. These nuances can be seen everywhere, from the Karuppattikkada mosque at Chala, Thiruvananthapuram, which has been serving porridge to people of all castes and religions for more than 90 years, to the Muhyiddin mosque at Valiyathura, where the aroma of coconut-milk rice porridge drifts across the shore. The porridge made with 26 ingredients at the old mosque in Chala itself has a history of over fifty years. It reached the mosque through the labourers and through Kethal Sahib, who became the guardian of that distinctive taste. Kethal Sahib would prepare the porridge at home and bring it for the workers who came to the mosque to break their fast.

Thampanoor Juma Masjid is a mosque where thousands of people from all communities come every day to drink the porridge and to take it home. Many travelers have shared the taste of that porridge with their fellow passengers. In most mosques, the distribution of porridge that begins around five in the evening also presents noble images of secular harmony. The Manacaud Valiya Palli, which made sure the police officers on Attukal Pongala duty could drink fasting porridge, and the Palayam mosque, which served food to the Pongala devotees echoes the ethos that Kerala truly remains God's own country.

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