

NANDA TRAVEL®

TRAVEL PARTNERS SINCE 1948

God's Own Country, Kerala 8 days / 7 nights



Kerala, the land of kera or coconut, contains a never-ending array of coconut palms, sun blached beaches, kettuvallams over enchanting backwaters, magical monsoon showers, silent valleys vibrant with flora and fauna.

Witness misty mountains from the Western Ghats, indulge your senses in a fragrance of spices, spend your evenings enjoying the reverberating rhythm of a wide array of art forms, fairs and celebrations.

Welcome to Kerala, known as God's Own Country!

G.C. Nanda & Sons Ltd. Tourist & Travel Agents **Since 1948 Lic 350558.**
2903, West Tower Shun Tak Centre, 168-200 Connaught Road, Central, Hong Kong
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Itinerary Details

21st of January - Hong Kong - Cochin

Depart Hong Kong on SQ 863 at 1330hrs & arrive in Singapore at 1720hrs, take your connecting flight SQ 5368 at 2045hrs, finally arriving in Cochin at 2245hrs.

You shall be greeted upon your arrival at Cochin International Airport and assisted to your hotel. Cochin (Kochi) is arguably the ideal starting point for exploring the unfathomable diversity and beauty of Kerala.

Enjoy your overnight stay at your hotel.

22nd of January - Cochin

In the morning proceed for a half day city tour of Kochi.

Places of interest include:

The Dutch Palace: Constructed by the Portuguese in 1568 as a gift to the Maharaja of Kochi. Many areas of the original structure were destroyed during the Dutch siege on Kochi; the repairs done by the Dutch Governor can be seen. The coronations of Kochi Maharajas have been always held here, where the large throne & coronation costumes are on display alongside a collection of other artifacts. The entire *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat* are beautifully depicted in a single mural here. Note that the Palace is closed on Fridays.

Jew Street & Paradesi Synagogue:

The commonwealth's oldest synagogue was constructed in 1568, used by Jewish refugees, looking to settle from Jerusalem during the Crusades. You shall notice the unique influence of native Hindu-Christian design. Many Jews used to live in this area prior to the creation of Israel, today only a handful remain, several handicraft and antique shops are scattered around for your perusal. Note that the synagogue is closed on Saturday.

St. Francis CSI Church:

The church was constructed by the Portuguese in 1503 and was the burial ground of *Vasco da Gama*. Located near **Fort Kochi Beach**, the building is attached to a large cemetery where many Portuguese soldiers have been buried. A large war memorial is located at the backyard, honoring the soldiers who sacrificed themselves in World War I.



Cochin

Chinese Fishing Nets:

A sight you will not miss, the official icon of Kochi and a testament of the strong relations between the Kochi Kingdom and the Ancient Chinese Empires. Located at **Fort Kochi Beach**, the beautiful Chinese fishing nets are proudly strung, originally over a hundred stood tall, now only few remain in good working condition. They were a gift by the Emperor of China Kublai Khan to King Kochi in the 14th century. Seeing the sun set through the peaceful nets is a highly recommended activity to partake in.

Willingdon Island:

A huge manmade island constructed by sand dredged from the backwaters to deepen the Kochi Port, a beautiful site which houses many five star hotels. The island was named after *Long Willingdon* who was the reigning Viceroy of India.

In the evening visit a local auditorium for an enchanting **Kathakali Dance Show**. Enjoy a unique combination of literature, music, painting, acting and dance. Dancers take various roles in performances traditionally based on themes from Hindu mythology, especially the two epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

After the show, enjoy your overnight stay at Cochin.

23rd of January – Cochin - Alleppey transfer to Houseboat

After your relaxing breakfast at around 1030hrs enjoy a transfer to Alleppey by car (approx. 53 km) followed by a Jetty ride to your Houseboat. You shall check-in at 1230hrs.

After you have settled in, we recommend taking a cruise through **Punnamada Lake**; Home of the famous *Nehru Trophy* snake boat race. As you enter the enchanting waters of **Vembanadu Lake**, you will get a chance to see the country people settled on the banks of the lakes, shops, school, children and vendors transporting their goods from point to point. Enjoy the panoramic views gifted by the serene nature of the land. Be sure to visit R-Block & C-Block, the areas where paddy is cultivated below the sea water level.



Dining room of Elitaire houseboat

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Stop by the **Pathiramanal Island** for photos, located on **Vembanad Lake**. The name *Pathiramanal* means *Sands of night*, an ideal place for a break in the journey of a backwater cruise. Home to many rare varieties of migratory birds from all around the world, a vast network of beautiful lakes, lagoons and fresh water rivers.



If you wish to see where thousands of devotees gather for prayer, receive favours and feel gratified, be sure to head to **Chavara Bhavan**, the old wooden house where the blessed *Kuriakose Elias Chavara* was born. Chavara Bhavan has become a holy shrine and spiritual resort where a 250 year old historically important *beacon of light* is kept intact.

After having soaked up the peaceful atmosphere, head back to your Houseboat for a well-deserved overnight stay.

24th of January – Houseboat – Kumarakom

After an early breakfast and check out at 0900hrs, cruise towards Kumarakom by jetty. Check in at your new resort.



Kumarakom Lake Resort

We recommend resting for the day or roaming around at your own leisure, enjoy the many resort activities or rejuvenation options at your disposal.

Sleep overnight at Kumarakom.

25th of January – Kumarakom - Periyar

In the morning, after your enjoyable breakfast, check out & proceed to Periyar (approx. 130 km.) Upon your arrival, check in to your new resort.

Periyar, spread over an area of 777 sq. km, this sanctuary has about 35 tigers and leopards. However, sighting a tiger in Periyar is a fortune for one out of thousand and considered extremely lucky. The park encompasses a 26 sq. km artificial



Thekkady wild life Sanctuary

lake and is the home of sambars, wild boars, elephants and antelopes which can be occasionally seen on the banks of the river during a boat cruise.

Blessed by nature, the area has enormous tea, coffee, pepper and cardamom plantations in lush greens.

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Relax on an afternoon boat cruise on **Lake Periyar** to view wildlife or take an Elephant Safari through the Kumily plantation area.

Once you are ready, head back to your resort for an overnight stay.

26th of January - Periyar – Vagamon

Enjoy your morning doing as you please until the afternoon, where you shall be taken to Vagamon in the Idukki Hills (approx. 100 km.) Vagamon is an enchanting hill station located on the Idukki-Kottayam border. Witness rolling knolls cloaked in emerald green, evergreen tea gardens, cascading waterfalls & mist clad hilltops. Upon your arrival at the hill station, check in at the Vanilla County Homestay. Tomorrow has been allocated to a full day of sightseeing; today we recommend relaxing and getting settled in after your long journey to the area.



Vagamon County Homestay

27th of January – Vagamon

As you will soon discover, there is much that you can do at Vagamon. You may go for a plantation trip, visit the Poonjar Palace or, see the 20-acre rock formation at Ayyampara.

Plantation Trip:

Vagamon is home to spices, pepper, rubber, vanilla and cardamom. During the trip you will see Meenachil River, which originates near Vanilla County. The river, or rather the stream, is of ravenous beauty as it gushes and gurgles forth through the rocks and creates baby waterfalls and little pools on the way down. Enjoy the crystal clear waters which allow you to see the pebbles underneath.

It is worth seeing **Illikal Peak**, which stands tall at 6000 ft. This is the origin of River Meenachil and many others. The natural menhirs atop the mountain take on a mystical meaning to those who view it from afar.

Poonjar Palace:

The seat of the ancient Poonjar kingdom still draws the crowds to marvel at an era long past. It is a glorious testimony to the



Elephant Count



Plantation

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regal opulence of a bygone era. The present day Munnar was a small principality under these rajahs till they were leased to the British tea companies two centuries ago.

Ayyampara:

Also known as *Five Rocks*, a 20-acre rock formation is a favourite haunt for those who wish to see some spectacular sunsets. It is really fascinating to witness the Moon rising as the orange red Sun sets on the horizon, truly a breathtaking and unforgettable event.

After having enjoyed Vagamon, head back for your final overnight stay.

28th of January - Vagamon - Cochin

Enjoy your final morning at your own leisure.

In the afternoon you shall be transferred to Cochin airport (approx. 100 km.), upon your arrival proceed to the airport for your flight to **Singapore** on SQ 5367 at **2345hrs**.

29th of January - Cochin - Singapore - Hong Kong

Arrive in **Singapore** at **0650hrs**; connect to SQ 860 at **0830hrs** finally arriving back in **Hong Kong** at **1215hrs**.

JOURNEY END