



Kerala

Includes ➔

Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum)	943
Kovalam	949
Varkala	953
Kollam (Quilon)	957
Alappuzha (Alleppey)	960
Munnar	972
Kochi (Cochin)	976
Thrissur (Trichur)	991
Kannur & Around	998
Lakshadweep	1001

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Villa Maya (p947)
- ➔ Dal Roti (p985)
- ➔ Bait (p952)
- ➔ Malabar Junction (p985)
- ➔ Paragon Restaurant (p993)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Green Woods Bethlehem (p981)
- ➔ Varnam Homestay (p997)
- ➔ Kaiya House (p955)
- ➔ Ashtamudi Villas (p959)
- ➔ Reds Residency (p981)

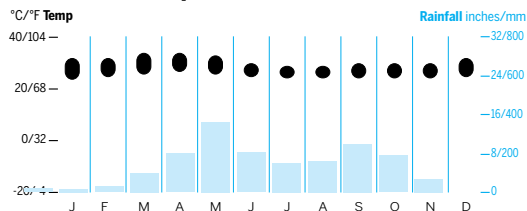
Why Go?

For many travellers, Kerala is South India's most serenely beautiful state. A slender coastal strip is shaped by its layered landscape: almost 600km of glorious Arabian Sea coast and beaches; a languid network of glistening backwaters; and the spice- and tea-covered hills of the Western Ghats. Just setting foot on this swath of soul-quenching, palm-shaded green will slow your subcontinental stride to a blissed-out amble. Kerala is a world away from the frenzy of elsewhere, as if India had passed through the Looking Glass and become an altogether more laid-back place.

Besides its famous backwaters, elegant houseboats, ayurvedic treatments and delicately spiced, taste-bud-tlingling cuisine, Kerala is home to wild elephants, exotic birds and the odd tiger, while vibrant traditions such as Kathakali plays, temple festivals and snake-boat races frequently bring even the smallest villages to life. It's hard to deny Kerala's liberal use of the slogan 'God's Own Country'.

When to Go

Thiruvananthapuram



Dec–Feb Perfect beach and back-water weather. Festival season throughout the state.

Apr Kathakali at Kottayam and Kollam festivals, and the elephant procession in Thrissur.

Aug–Oct End of the monsoon period: Onam festival, snake-boat races.



Kerala Highlights

- 1 Backwaters (p964)**
Cruising in a houseboat or punted canoe from Alappuzha, Kollam or Kumarakom.
- 2 Wayanad (p995)**
Spotting wild elephants, trekking and relaxing in remote forest accommodation.
- 3 Varkala (p953)**
Watching

- the days slip-slide away at this cliff-top beach resort.
- 4 Munnar (p972)**
Bedding down in a beautifully remote resort and trekking through emerald tea plantations.
- 5 Fort Cochin (p977)**
Feeling the history and dining with a local family in a homestay.

- 6 Kathakali (p990)**
Experiencing a performance in Kochi.
- 7 Matha Amrithanandam-ayi Mission (p960)**
Calling in for a cuddle at the ashram of Amma, in Amrithapuri.
- 8 Kannur (p998)**
Exploring unspoilt beaches and *theyyam* rituals in the north.