

A Backwater Symphony in Kerala / India

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Are you a bit tired of walking to explore God's Own Country? It is okay, this month let us have a backwater trip, staying comfortably in a luxurious houseboat. So hire one from Alappuzha, feel free and relaxed as your eyes, first lazily and then passionately enjoy the bewitching Vembanad lake, the largest backwater stretch in Kerala.

Let us steer towards Kumarakom, one of the prime tourist attractions of Kerala. En route, Vembanad lake offers you sights of village life and a lot of backwater activities. The green shores throbbing with vigour and pure beauty will never tire you. The soft sunlight lends the calm water a new enchantment as the palms on both shores welcome you with a gentle whisper in the wind. Your mind will assure you that this scene will remain within you, to relieve you during all your busiest hours.

Once you enter Q S T and R Block Kayal, it is an added enchantment. It is situated at Kuttanad area, popularly known as the rice bowl of Kerala. Cruise leisurely through the canals, which are fringed by palm groves and paddy fields. On reaching Kumarakom, you enter another world of wonders. This small backwater village, which is a cluster of islands, has a life of its own, with a slow, serene rhythm. The sights, sounds and fragrances will simply captivate you.





After staying back at Kumarakom for a bit and relaxing, let us proceed to Vaikom, another place of interest. It is time again to enjoy the placidity of the Vembanad lake, in all its splendor. On the way, you will find a small island, Pathiramanal, seemingly afloat in the middle of the backwater. Have a brief stop and your guide can share with you many interesting myths surrounding this region.

On resuming your journey, the next halt point for you is Thanneermukkom, a village

known for its Salt Water Barrier, popularly known as Thenneermukkom Bund. It is the largest mud regulator in India. Travelling through this region and savoring some delicious Kerala snacks is a simply marvelous experience.

The next stop, Vaikom offers you many interesting sights and lifestyles. You may find here the specimens of Kerala's grand tradition. A famous temple dedicated to Lord Shiva is the prime attraction of this town. The refreshing greenery here is another add-on for you.

From Vaikom, after recharging with a delicious Kerala meal, let us proceed to Kumbalangi. We travel via Thykkattussery, a small village surrounded by coconut groves and paddy fields, enchanting constituents of backwater life. The first sight that welcomes you to Kumbalangi is that of majestic Chinese fishing nets lining the sides of the backwaters. Pokkali fields, a traditional indigenous method of cultivation in which the practice of taking a paddy crop is

followed by prawn filtration, is another interesting sight you can have at Kumbalangi.

Once through the breezy backwaters of Kumbalangi, it is time for us to proceed to Fort Kochi, known for its share of Chinese fishing nets and many historic sites. The place is worth a walk, if you would like to. However, the sights from on board are also fascinating.

Bidding adieu to Fort Kochi, let us steer towards the Bolghatty Island, our final destination. En





route to the Bolghatty Island, you would pass by the panoramic view of the mainland of Ernakulam city, its skyline and the shipyard on the eastern side. Once in Bolghatty, it is time for us to wind up. Loosen yourself to the soothing cool breeze and the reassuring touch of serene sunlight. Sweet is the memory of the last few hours, that is sure to haunt you fondly for all the years to come. Disagree? Try the trip and you certainly won't.