

# KOTTAYAM

*Lakes, Letters and Latex*

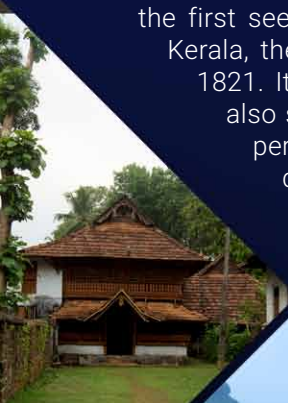


God's Own Country

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# *Kottayam: Lakes, Letters and Latex*

Kottayam is the hub of letters, lakes, and latex. The district has a rich literary tradition and is the birthplace of the publishing industry in Kerala. It is here that the first seeds of the Fourth Estate were sown. The first printing press in Kerala, the 'CMS Press' was established here by Rev. Benjamin Bailey in 1821. It was here that the first college of the state 'CMS College' was also started. Many of the state's leading newspaper publications and periodicals had its first print from Kottayam. The contribution of the district to print media and literature earned for Kottayam the name 'Akshara Nagari' or the 'land of letters'. The land is luxuriously covered with rubber plantations, hence the sobriquet 'land of latex'. Kottayam made great strides in the industrial sector with its rubber-based industries, which figure as its backbone. Kottayam is also home to many lakes, and this vast network of lakes form part of the majestic Vembanad Lake.



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# Kumarakom

**K**umarakom (**View video**) is a land of backwaters in which every eddy has a story to share. This quaint village sitting on a group of little islands in the serene Vembanad Lake is only 16 km away from Kottayam town.

For visitors who want to stay close to Nature, there is Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary. Spread across 14 acres on the banks of Vembanad Lake (**View video**), it is a favourite haunt of migratory birds like the Siberian Storks, and an ideal location to spot other birds like egrets, darters, herons, teals, waterfowls, cuckoos and wild ducks as well.

In addition to an enchanting backwater cruise, Kumarakom offers visitors opportunities to interact closely with the local community by encouraging them to participate in activities like roof thatching, coir spinning and fishing. It is no wonder that Kumarakom is Kerala's first Responsible Tourism destination. It has won the prestigious UNWTO Ulysses Award for Excellence and Innovation in Tourism as well as the National Award for the best tourism project. Waterscapes, the backwater resort of the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC), containing independent cottages built on stilts amidst coconut groves, is one of the highlights of Kumarakom.

### How to reach

Kottayam is the nearest railway station which is about 13 km from Kumarakom. The nearest airport, Cochin International Airport Ltd. (CIAL), is about 94 km away.





# Ilaaveezhapoonchira Valley



# Ilaveezhaponchira Valley

Nestled at the foot of three hillocks, Mankunnu, Kodayathoomala and Thonnipara, this valley spreads across a thousand acres in Kottayam district. It is extraordinarily beautiful during the monsoons when the terrain acquires a surreal aura.

Ilaveezhaponchira (**View Video**) has an excellent trekking trail surrounded by picturesque landscapes. It offers mesmerising views of sunrises and sunsets.

## How to Reach

The nearest railway station, Kottayam, is about 55 km away. The nearest airport, Cochin International Airport Ltd. (CIAL), is about 76 km away.

There is poetry in the very name of this valley. The sheer imagery in it inspires awe – Ilaveezhaponchira, or “the floral brook where leaves do not fall”.





# Ilikkal Kallu





Illikkal Kallu (**View Video**), or the Illikkal Stone, is a monolith, sitting on the Illikkal Hill about 6000 ft. above sea level. Each of the three hills has a unique shape and rises 4000 ft. or more above the ground.

One of them resembles a mushroom and is called Kuda Kallu, or the Umbrella Rock. Another hill has a small hunch on its side and is hence called Koonu Kallu, or the Hunchbacked Rock. Connecting these two hills is Narakapalam, or the Bridge of Hell, a narrow bridge about half-a-foot-wide. Illikkal Hill is one of the highest peaks in the Western Ghats, and it lures tourists with its enchanting beauty. A mythical medicinal herb called Neela Koduveli, is said to grow here and supernatural powers are attributed to its blue flowers.

**The best time to visit Illikkal Hill is the post-monsoon season. It is best to avoid visiting the region during the rains (from September to January) when the hill paths become slippery.**

How to Reach

The nearest railway station is Kottayam, located around 60 km away.

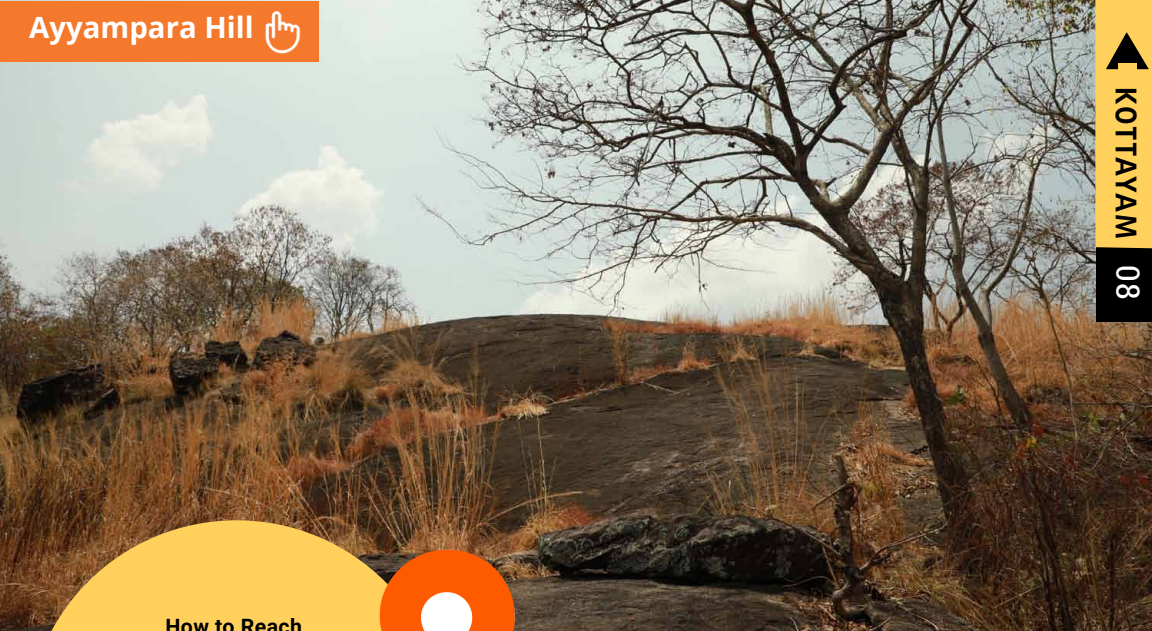
The nearest airport is Cochin International Airport Ltd. (CIAL), which is about 84 km away.



# Ayyampara Hill



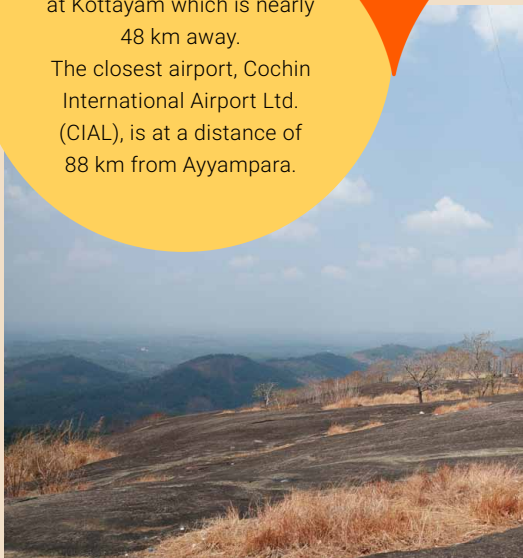




### How to Reach

The nearest railway station is at Kottayam which is nearly 48 km away.

The closest airport, Cochin International Airport Ltd. (CIAL), is at a distance of 88 km from Ayyampara.



Located 48 km from Kottayam town, along the Erattupetta - Muttom road, Ayyampara Hill is where mythology and reality intertwine. The five rock pillars on this hill are believed to represent the five Pandava brothers from the *Mahabharatha*. Legend has it that the Pandavas stayed here during their exile. Some believe that the hill owes its name to Ayyampara Temple, which has four pillars that support a flat piece of rock forming the roof.

Ayyampara stands 2000 ft. above sea level and offers a panoramic view of the entire region, including that of the nearby towns like Erattupetta and Pala.

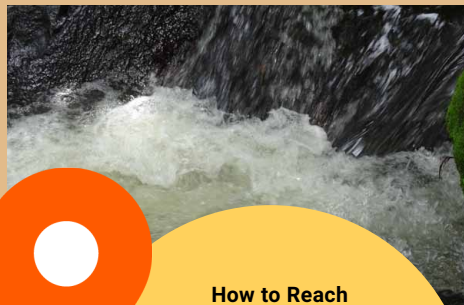
# Aruvikuzhy Waterfalls





Aruvikuzhy Waterfalls, situated 22 km from Kottayam, offer the right mixture of excitement and serenity. Nestled amidst rubber plantations, it makes an ideally quiet picnic spot. At the same time, the water cascading from the hills above, through 100 ft., makes it attractive for trekking enthusiasts as well.

The famous St. Mary's Church is situated uphill. The rubber plantation centre at Pallickathode is just 1 km from Aruvikuzhy Waterfalls.



### How to Reach

The nearest railway station, Thiruvalla, is nearly 29 km away.

Trivandrum International Airport which is the nearest airport is about 131 km away.



# Vaikom



With the Vembanad Lake as its neighbour, the historic town of Vaikom **(View Video)** lies on the western side of Kottayam district. Its beautiful water bodies and serene villages make Vaikom popular among tourists. Country boat rides and canoe cruises through the Muringupuzha backwaters offer glimpses into the unique village lifestyle of Kerala. Here, tourists can get a feel of the traditional fishing techniques of the locals and a taste of their signature dishes.

One of the oldest temples in Kerala, Vaikom Mahadeva Temple **(View Video)**, showcases the beauty of Kerala temple architecture. Renowned as the Kasi of the South, this temple is famous for elephant pageants and traditional art performances. The civil rights movement, Vaikom Satyagraha, marked a significant epoch in the state's history.



### How to Reach

The nearest railway station Kottayam is about 34 km from Vaikom.

The nearest airport, Cochin International Airport Ltd. (CIAL), is about 60 km away.

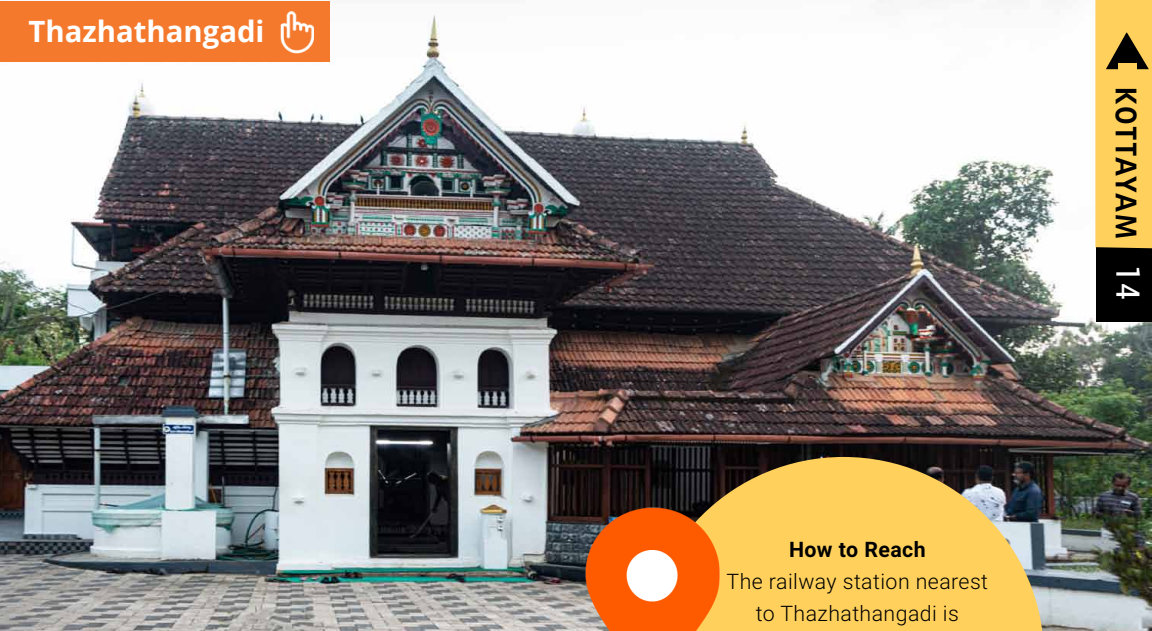






# Thazhathangadi



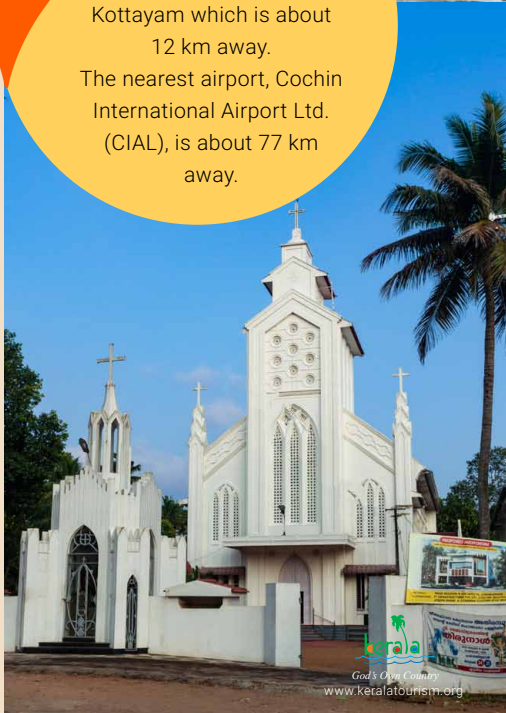


### How to Reach

The railway station nearest to Thazhathangadi is Kottayam which is about 12 km away.

The nearest airport, Cochin International Airport Ltd. (CIAL), is about 77 km away.

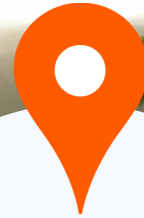
Thazhathangadi was once the hub of all trade in Kerala. Its strategic location and easy access through the waterways made it a trading centre in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. There was a time when the narrow streets of Thazhathangadi were abuzz with the loading and unloading of goods to and from faraway lands. This is your go-to place to learn about trade in the days of the yore. A walk through this land will offer a peek into the architecture of the yesteryears as the houses and buildings constructed during the glorious days of the town still retain their charm.





# Nadukani

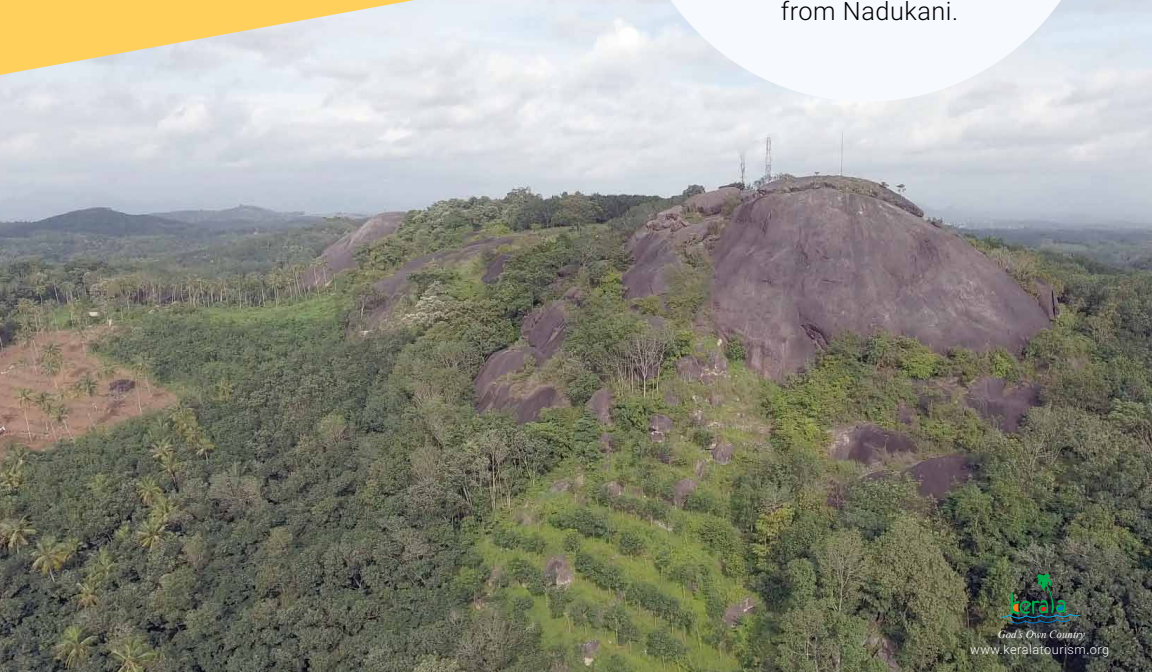
Nadukani, a popular hill station situated about 70 km from Kottayam, is another tourist spot that blends the charms of Nature watch and adventure. Standing at an altitude of 3000 ft., it offers a magnificent view of Thodupuzha River, Moolamattom town, Malankara Reservoir and surrounding mountains. Nadukani is a picturesque location where tourists can walk through endless stretches of meadows, enjoying the sight of mountain ranges on one side and Muvattupuzha River on the other.



### **How to Reach**

The nearest railway station, Aluva, is located about 40 km away.

The nearest airport is Cochin International Airport Ltd. (CIAL), which is about 39 km from Nadukani.







# Poonjar Palace



The 600-year-old Poonjar Palace, located about 40 km from Kottayam, is a time capsule. Filled with antiques and furniture from the past, this palace transports visitors to another age the moment they enter it. A palanquin, an ennathonni (a cot carved out of a single piece of wood used for Ayurvedic massages), huge chandeliers, palm leaf manuscripts, jewel boxes, different types of lamps, sculptures of Nataraja (dancing Lord Shiva), old measuring cups, statues and weapons – the list of the antique collection here is endless. There is also an amazing replica of the Madurai Meenakshi Temple near the palace. The walls of this temple are adorned with sculptures that narrate Puranic stories of India. The palace is now listed as a heritage site and historic monument by the Department of Archaeology, Govt. of Kerala.

### How to Reach

The railway station nearest to the palace, Kottayam, is nearly 30 km away. The nearest airport, Cochin International Airport Ltd. (CIAL), is about 76 km away.



# Aymanam



Aymanam (**View Video**) is like a quaint little village straight out of fiction. Made famous globally by Arundhati Roy's Booker Prize-winning novel, *The God of Small Things*, it continues to attract tourists who come in search of the scenic backwaters, vast stretches of paddy fields and swaying coconut farms, detailed vividly in the novel.

This beautiful village is located only 10 km from Kumarakom, and about 8 km from Kottayam. The name "Aymanam" is derived from two words Ay meaning "five" in Tamil and vanam meaning "forest" in Sanskrit. The name refers to the five forests – Vattakkadu, Thuruthikkadu, Vallyakadu, Moolakkadu and Mekkadu – that once surrounded this region.

Nearly two-thirds of Aymanam is, at present, covered by paddy fields. Vembanad Lake lies to the west of the village. Meenachil River flows through it.

This verdant landscape makes it a favourite spot for migratory birds during summer. Country boat rides through the backwaters and interior canals, offering glimpses into the village life and the refreshing beauty of the river-side hamlet, form the highlight of this tourist destination.

### How to Reach

The nearest railway station is Kottayam, located about 7 km from Aymanam.

The nearest airport is Cochin International Airport Ltd. (CIAL), which is about 88 km away.







360°  
VIDEOS

## Ilaveezhappoonchira



## Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary



# VIDEO GALLERY

**Vaikom**



**Ilaveezhaponchira**



**Illikkal Kallu**



**Malarikkal Water Lilies**



## Manarcad Perunnal



## Things to do in Kumarakom



## Aymanam

a Less-explored Treasure



## Vaikom

Village Life Experience



## Festivities

at Vaikom Mahadeva Temple



## Vembanad Backwaters







# PHOTO GALLERY



# Ilaveezhaponchira



# Illikkal Kallu





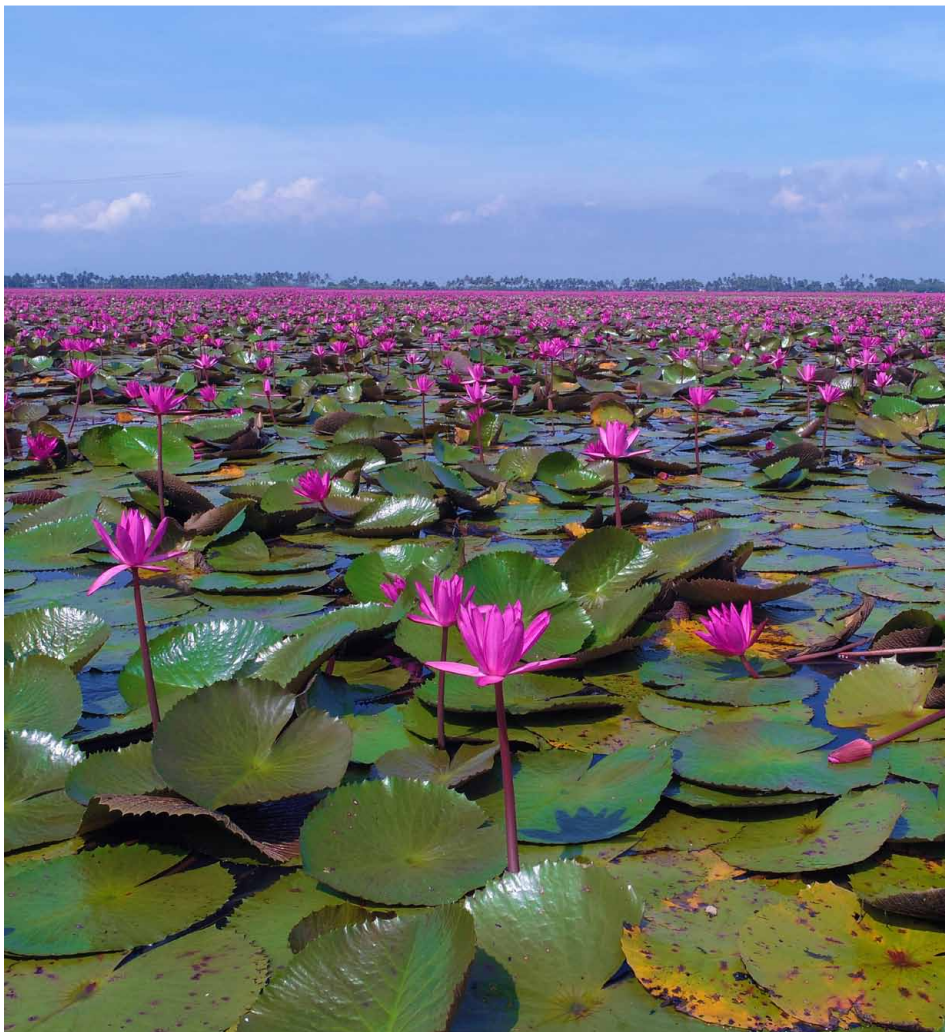
# Thazhathangadi Juma Masjid



# Aymanam Temple



# Malarickal Water Lilies





# Vaikom Backwater



# Poonjar Palace





# Thazhathangadi Church





# Kumarakom



# Aruvikuzhy Waterfalls



**THANK  
YOU**

