



*Idukki*



**H**ike the uncharted trails. Make new acquaintances among friendly locals. Find your calling in the mist-veiled highlands. Idukki, the landlocked district in eastern Kerala, is one of the most favoured tourist destinations in South India. A plethora of experiences awaits you in these unfathomed foothills of Western Ghats.

Apart from the much-vaunted destinations such as Munnar and Thekkady, numerous destinations have emerged as favourites among the travel fraternity in the past couple of decades. Panchalimedu, Meesapulimala, Amappara and Vagamon are a few of the places of interest.

Idukki is home to diverse endangered species including the Bengal Tiger and Nilgiri Tahr. The Periyar Tiger Reserve and the Eravikulam National Park are also located in Idukki.

Often called the spice garden of Kerala, Idukki is one of the greenest regions in the state. Let the cool mountain air fill-in your senses. Discover a new aroma in the boundless spice plantations. Behold the spellbinding view of purple-blue Neelakurinji flowers covering the Nilgiri every 12 years.



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# AMAPPARA

Amappara is that perfect offbeat getaway for thrill-seekers. The place got its name from the two gigantic rocks resting one above the other resembling a tortoise. 'Ama' in local parlance is a tortoise and 'para', a rock. As per the local folklore, mythological heroes Rama and Lakshmana took sojourn here during their search for Seetha!

A much-favoured off-road destination, adrenaline junkies will be in their element here. The exhilarating ride to Amappara, as you wobble and bounce off the rocks is one to be experienced. If you are a motorhead with a four-wheel-drive, you can give it a try too. Guided jeep safaris are available from Ramakkalmedu. There is an entry fee at Amappara check post for private vehicles.

There are plenty of viewpoints near Amappara which goes by different local names. There is one known as the 'flight viewpoint' which offers an awe-inspiring view of the villages in the valley.

Amappara is gaining immense popularity among the domestic travel community. There are numerous natural caves and boulders in the area worth exploring. The trail is fairly moderate and will take under an hour to complete. Protective fences have also been installed considering safety concerns. Restroom facility and resting benches are provided as well.

Ever dreamt about watching the ocean waves from the hills? The work of a hanging bridge and watchtower is progressing in Amappara. Upon completion, the 12-m-high tower mounted with a high-power binocular will aid visitors to see up to Alappuzha Beach in the west and Madura Meenakshi temple in the east.

Cruise amidst the misty shola forests and be enamored by that wind farm in the far-off hills. Unwind yourself and just be!








## THE IDEAL TIME TO VISIT

October to March is considered as the best time to visit Amappara. The climb will be difficult during the monsoons and is not recommended.

## ACTIVITIES

- Hiking
- Trekking
- Off-roading

## CONNECTIVITY

-  Direct buses to Ramakkalmedu are available from Kottayam
-  **Nearest railway station:** Kottayam Railway Station, about 135 km
-  **Nearest airport:** Cochin International Airport, about 136 km

# ARUVIKKUZHI

The wind feels less friendly, but we are not offended. For she has grown weary, blowing between bohemian customs and magnificent cultures. But before this fateful reunion, a dip in the Aruvikkuzhi waterfall plunging 1000 m down makes her a little calm and serene to our wonderment. On her way up the mountain, the sandalwood trees grant her a luxurious scent that stirs one's soul like no other. Is this what it feels like to be in heaven?

Aruvikkuzhi waterfall is one of the less explored destinations in Idukki. 'Aruvi' in the local language translates as 'stream'. Loosely dubbed as the stream that falls into the pit, Aruvikkuzhi waterfall can be best explored from Aruvikkuzhi Viewpoint. One of the notable features of the viewpoint

is that it is set on both sides of a stream flowing down the mountains with a bridge to separate them. To enter the viewpoint, a charge of Rs. 20 is levied for adults and Rs. 10 for children. The numerous brick walkways that zigzag along the park lead you to many scenic places with magnificent views and comfortable relaxing huts.

Once you climb the small hill and reach the top of the park, you are greeted with the view of a lifetime! From your vantage point, you can see the whole of lower Periyar spread across a carpet of green fields, and places as far as Gudalur and Cumbum in Tamil Nadu. In fact, the water from the stream falls down to Tamil Nadu. During the rainy season, the whole region is covered with mist. Numerous watchtowers will help you enjoy the view of the mountains soaring to eternity.







## TIMING

9.30 am to 5.30 pm  
on all days

## CONNECTIVITY



Reach Anakkara by travelling about 18 km from Thekkady wildlife sanctuary on the Kumily-Munnar road. From Anakkara, travel to Chellarkovil and follow the signboards to Aruvikkuzhi.

# HILL VIEW PARK

As we gently brush against the colourful crotons on the sidewalk and listen to the distinctive “trrrlllll! trrrlllll!” of the Rufous Babbler, we can’t help but wonder, isn’t Idukki that proverbial treasured Jewel in the crown? We drift further upwards through the walkway with bushes on each side bowing to us in reverence only to witness an inviting surreal landscape, equal parts spellbinding and exotic. Welcome to Hill View Park, the perfect place to answer Idukki’s call of the wild.

Spread across 8 acres and surrounded by lush green vegetation, Hill View Park is the ideal location to admire the depth and resonance of one of the largest arch dams in all of Asia, the Idukki Dam. Open throughout the year, the park is neatly constructed on a hill at a height of about 350 ft. above the dam water level that offers a 360-degree view of the majestic Western Ghats.

Discover the inner child in you with a host of adventure activities such as Couple Zip Line, Burma Bridge, Sky Cycling, Bungee Trampoline, Gun Shooting and several adrenaline-pumping sports.

Pedal your way through the pristine Hill View Park Lake and let the tranquil breeze calm your mind. Unwind yourself munching on homemade chocolates from the cafe or sip freshly brewed coffee plucked from the mountains close by. Climb atop the watchtower situated at the topmost point in the park and enjoy the bird's eyes view of Idukki town, Cheruthoni Dam and Idukki Dam. Don't hesitate to wave your hands in the air and call out to the elephants that come to quench their thirst by the lake. And if you feel a special connection, you are always welcome to stay at accommodations provided by KTDC at the park entrance at a reasonable tariff with a stunning view that opens to mesmerising landforms.





## TIMING

9.30 am to 5.30 pm  
on all days

## CONNECTIVITY



Nearest town: Cheruthoni

Well connected by road from major cities



Nearest Airport: Cochin International Airport, about 112 km



# MATTUPETTY DAM

Mattupetty is a quaint hill station nestling in the foothills of Anamudi, the highest peak in the Western Ghats. The scenic locale is 12 km from the Munnar Top Station along the Munnar – Vattavada road. Mattupetty Dam, constructed towards the end of the 1940s as part of the Pallivasal Hydro-electric project, is a rising tourist hotspot in Idukki.

Exuberant tea plantations on one side, plush green shola forests on the other; that's Sun Moon Valley Boating Centre for you. There is a good chance that you will spot elephants and wild deers during the journey. If you need to indulge in some adventure, then ride the placid waters in the speed boats and Pontoon boats.



There is a small amusement park named the cowboy park near Mattupetty. An array of fun-filled activities including wall climbing, zip-lining and pedal car are arranged in the park. Frequented by families, the park is the perfect place to spend a day with your kids.

Also known as the cattle village, Mattupetty houses the Indo-Swiss Farm, a prestigious project set up in participation with the government of Switzerland. Ever since its inception in 1963, the Indo-Swiss Farm has successfully developed numerous cattle breeds and has taken the dairy industry in the state to new heights.



# THE IDEAL TIME TO VISIT

October to February

## ACTIVITIES

- Hiking
- Boating

## CONNECTIVITY

-  There are direct buses to Munnar from Kochi.
-  Nearest railway station: Angamali railway station, about 115 km
-  Nearest airport: Cochin International Airport, about 115 km

# MEESAPULIMALA

Considered one of the best treks in Kerala, Meesapulimala is a Shangri-la for hikers. The peak bears a resemblance to a tiger and its whisker and hence the name Meesapulimala, derived from the local language. Resting at an altitude of 2,640 m, Meesapulimala is one of the highest peaks in Kerala.

If nature is your thing, you're in for a treat. The trail is much like a Rousseau painting coming to life. Chase the wild butterflies to the abyss, stroll along with the myriad rhododendron trees, toss your worries into the isle of clouds. You can even get some local company on the way, like the Wild Gaur or the Nilgiri Tahr. Sambar Deer and Sloth Bears have also been spotted in the area.

Meesapulimala trek starts from the Silent Valley Base Camp which is at a distance of five km from Munnar town. The trek should be booked in advance; either from the KFDC website (<http://www.keralafdc.org/>) or from the ecotourism office in Munnar. If you are doing the trek during the monsoons, take special care of the leaches in the area. Owing to the environmental concerns, alternative trek routes to Meesapulimala, such as the one from Kolukkumalai, are closed now.

The trek is fairly moderate and will take four to five hours to complete. Meesapulimala rose to fame in 2012 when it was categorised among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



## THE IDEAL TIME TO VISIT

October to February is considered as the best season for the trek.

## ACTIVITIES

- Hiking
- Trekking
- Camping

## CONNECTIVITY



There are direct buses to Munnar from Kochi. Rented car and bike services are available as well.



Nearest railway station: Ernakulam Junction railway station (ERS), about 122 km



Nearest airport: Cochin International Airport, about 105 km



# PANCHALIMEDU

Legend has it that the mythical heroes Pandavas along with their wife Panchali took shelter here at Panchalimedu during their exile. And hence the name Panchalimedu; medu meaning hill. Panchalimedu is more of a soft hiking spot rather than a trekking trail. It's the perfect place to take a day off with your family.

About 10 km from Kuttikkanam along the Kottayam – Kumily road you will find this well-preserved piece of nature. There is a ticket counter maintained by the DTPC with a nominal entry fee. The entry starts at 6 am and closes by 6.30 pm. A cafeteria and restrooms are facilitated just near the entrance.

The hike is rather an easy one and can be completed by elders and children. A rock-laid walkway takes one to the summit. There are many benches and pillared halls en route to the trail. Bring your favourite book or people; sit back and relax in the misty meadows.

Panchalimedu is one of the best modelled differently-abled friendly destinations in Kerala. On special request, a wheelchair will also be made available in the booking office. Differently-abled friendly restrooms and special ramps are available for our specially-abled travel bugs.

Beliefs co-exist with harmony here. You can find a series of crosses on one side and a Hindu temple on another. During the hike, you can also see the Panchalikulam and Pandava Guha. During the festive occasion of Makar Sankranthi, thousands of devotees converge here to witness the Makara Jyothi.








## THE IDEAL TIME TO VISIT

May to October is considered a good time to visit.

## ACTIVITIES

- Hiking
- Soft Trekking

## CONNECTIVITY

-  There are direct buses to Kuttikkanam from Kottayam and Kumily. Private Jeep services to Panchalimedu are available from Kuttikkanam. Panchalimedu is 6 km from Murinjapuzha, along Kottayam-Kumily road
-  Nearest railway station: Kottayam railway station, about 70 km
-  Nearest airport: Cochin International Airport, about 125 km



# SREENARAYANAPURAM

Sreenarayanapuram is a serene little village with a colonial heritage located en route to Munnar from Adimali. The village is home to the enchanting 'Ripple Waterfalls' situated on the Muthirapuzha river which is renowned for usually having a rainbow over it! The spot attracts a lot of nature enthusiasts and trekkers round the year. Most of the residents here are migrants who were drawn here when the English started farming, back in the olden days.

Besides the star attraction that the waterfall is, the Ponmudi Dam is located at Sreenarayanapuram, that too close to the waterfall and is open to tourists. There is the Ponmudi Eco Point atop the dam which is well worth visiting. Besides soaking in the scenic beauty of the spot, one may engage in activities

that refresh both the mind and body, including boating and trekking. The Hanging Bridge built by the English in the past is also a major attraction. Jeep safari tours are offered here and attract a lot of tourists.

If you have an affinity for trekking, you would fall in love with this cosy little village. The trek routes take one through beautiful spice plantations and are eligible to be on every trekking enthusiast's bucket list. From Sreenarayanapuram, one may trek to the spots like Anappara, Chokkanmudi, and Kuranguppara which are all within access from the village.

The entry fee is Rs. 10. Carrying a camera will cost an additional Rs. 20. Tourists can visit this place daily from 8 am to 6 pm.







## CONNECTIVITY



Sreenarayanapuram Ripple Water Falls is about 6 km from Iruttukanam and is easily accessible if you are travelling on the Kochi – Dhanushkodi highway.



Nearest railway station: Ernakulam Junction railway station (ERS), about 120 km



Nearest Airport: Cochin International Airport, about 102 km

# THEKKADY

Hum along with the winged friends from distant lands. Give company to the innumerable Otters in the lake. Take your senses for a treat in any of the spice shops in the town. Explore Thekkady on your own chords.

Beloved by sightseers and backpackers alike, Thekkady has something treasured in her for every traveller. Thekkady is part of the Periyar National Park, a protected Elephant and Tiger Reserve in Kerala. Named after Kerala's longest river, the Periyar park houses many endangered species including the Bengal Tiger.

Boating in the Thekkady lake is one activity that should not be missed. Tickets can be booked online ([www.ktdc-boating.com](http://www.ktdc-boating.com)) or directly from the counter.

Drifting leisurely in the tranquil blue waters along the alluring wilderness is an experience to cherish for a lifetime.

If you are looking to experience nature up close, you can always trek into the unsullied trails in the hills. Guided treks of different magnitude are available; choose one in consonance with your physical fitness. You can always go the extra mile and opt-in the Periyar Tiger Trail. Accompanied by armed guards, experience the ethereal flora and fauna of the Western Ghats. If luck favours your side, you can even spot a Bengal Tiger.

A trip to Thekkady is never complete without the Spice plantation visit. Explore the variety of spice cultivations with a guided tour. You can also get handcrafted souvenirs and high-quality spices from the local market.





## THE IDEAL TIME TO VISIT

October to February is considered a good time to visit.

## ACTIVITIES

- Hiking
- Trekking
- Boating

## CONNECTIVITY

-  There are direct buses to Thekkady from Kottayam and Kumily.
-  Nearest railway station: Kottayam railway station, about 107 km
-  Nearest airport: Cochin International Airport, about 145 km





# VAGAMON

Simmer down with a soothing bonfire at any of the numerous resorts in the hills. Hop up in a 4x4 and cut through the infinite lemongrass meadows. Located at an elevation of 1200 m, Vagamon (also spelt Wagamon) is one of the most sought-after destinations in Idukki.

Vagamon is known for its scenic hillocks, locally known as 'Motta Kunnu', and majestic pine forests spread over hundreds of acres. Like many hill stations in the state, Vagamon was discovered by the Britishers during the 1920s when they were in search of suitable locations for their tea plantations.



Vagamon is one of the few places where you can do Tandem Paragliding in Kerala. Witnessing the grandeur of the Western Ghats from the skies is an unequalled experience altogether. Vagamon also hosts various international paragliding competitions and workshops. There are also places where you can experience activities like kayaking, zip-lining, rock climbing, archery and more.

Another important attraction in Vagamon is the Kurisumala Ashram, a Christian monastery established in 1958. Spent a day with the monks in the Ashram, enjoy the beauty of silence, stop by the dairy farm set up and maintained by the monks.

A hiker's paradise, Vagamon offers a plethora of options to trek the lush hills. There are a multitude of locations like Kolahalamedu, Moonmala, Vakavanam trail (also known as Vagamon windy walk trekking), Thangalpara where you can take a day off from the mundane life and experience nature up close.





## THE IDEAL TIME TO VISIT




Vagamon is an all-season destination but October to February is often considered the perfect time to visit.

## ACTIVITIES

- Paragliding
- Hiking
- Trekking
- Camping



## CONNECTIVITY

-  There are direct buses to Vagamon from Kottayam and Kumily. You can also take a rented cab from Kochi or Kottayam.
-  Nearest railway station: Kottayam railway station, about 64 km
-  Nearest airport: Cochin International Airport, about 97 km

# URUMBIKKARA

Urumbikkara Hill, Idukki, is truly an escape into the wild. Accessible only via off-road capable vehicles from the village of Enthayar, the bumpy drive to the top of this mystical hill is exciting indeed. It takes about 90 mins to reach the top and along the way, one can catch glimpses of Urumbikkara's colonial links: ruins of old tea factories from the time of the English which only add to the charm of this hill. Glorious views of the Pappani waterfall can also be seen on the way.

The hill stands at an altitude of 3500-4500 ft. above sea level. Around the year, the hill is clad in a lush green coat of shola forest and the air is cool and misty. One can find many streams here and experienced trekkers may go as far as the waterfall at the hilltop accompanied by a guide. Owing to the calm nature of the hill and the presence of many birds, the hill sees a fair number of birding expeditions every year.

Visiting Urumbikkara is a great way to spend a two-day holiday with the family. Of course, you may consider stretching it further if you have an adventurous streak in you; there are plenty of trekking routes to take. Camping enthusiasts are bound to love the hill. This is one of those places where you can watch a starry night at your own pace, while lying on soft green grass, far from the hustle and bustle of the cities. However, be prepared for chilly weather as night-time temperatures here can drop to freezing levels.

One can hire a jeep from Enthayar and it is possible to camp overnight at the hilltop. Urumbikkara lies in the southern part of the Idukki district and is very close to Vagamon. Great views of Vagamon await one at the hilltop. Kuttikkanam is also close by and can be accessed via trekking routes.





## CONNECTIVITY



Nearest railway station: Kottayam railway station, about 74 km



Nearest airport: Cochin International Airport, about 116 km





HILL VIEW PARK

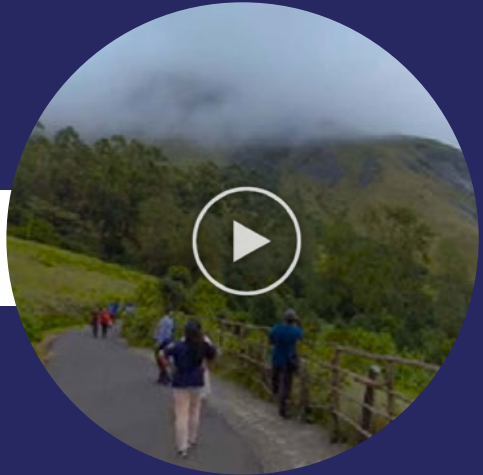
PANCHALIMEDU





## VAGAMON

## ERAVIKULAM NATIONAL PARK





AMAPPARA

MEESAPULIMALA





## VAGAMON – SOLO TRAVELLER SERIES

## THEKKADY, THE WILDERNESS BECKONS



## KERALA MONSOON SAGA @ MUNNAR



## AMAPPARA





# ARUVIKKUZHI



# RIPPLE WATER FALLS



# MATTUPETTY DAM



# MEESAPULIMALA



# PANCHALIMEDU





# IDUKKI ARCH DAM



# THEKKADY



VAGAMON



# URUMBIKKARA



THANK YOU