

## National Geographic Traveler-Nov/Dec 2009

### India: Kerala Backwaters

"The lakes, rivers, and canals in this southern Indian state, which visitors ply aboard houseboats, present a unique travel and cultural experience."

"Environment plays an important role in Kerala, particularly for agricultural conditions. The history is strong here, since this was the launching point of European influence. A gentle society and a relaxed pace, with an emphasis on the region's architecture."

**An Exclusive Programme to experience the Backwater Life of Kerala along with its rich Culture,History,Cuisine & Heritage.**

#### **Day 01 – Cochin**

On arrival at Cochin Airport, you will be met & transferred to your Hotel.Cochin is the commercial capital of Kerala which is surrounded by serene backwaters and many islands.Afternoon free for sightseeing. Evening, enjoy a traditional cultural show which is a kaleidoscope of the art forms of South India performed at Greenix Theatre.. Overnight at the Hotel .



**Cochin Sightseeing - *St Francis Church***, built in 1510 by friars brought to India by Vasco da Gama, is the first European church built in India and is the site where *Vasco da Gama* was buried. The *Jewish Synagogue* was built in 1568, Chinese hand-painted tiles are one of the attraction. This, the only Synagogue in India has a nostalgic past of a Jewish Diaspora. The "*Dutch Palace*" was built in the 1550s; the palace contains excellent mythological murals and a rare example of traditional Keralite flooring - a subtle mix of burnt coconut shells, lime, plant juices and egg whites - which gives the effect of polished marble.



## Day 02 – Kumbalangi Backwater Model Tourism Village

Morning, after breakfast, proceed to Poothotta, an island village for a *backwater Cruise* with lunch. After lunch drive to **Kumbalangi**, a model Tourism Village situated on Cochin Backwaters. Experience the day to day life of a Kerala Backwater village. You have the option to go on a tuk-tuk (Autorikshaw - a three wheeler which can accommodate three pax through the narrow village roads.) Enjoy the explicit sunset at the backdrop of Kerala Backwaters. Dinner at an authentic restaurant set on the Backwaters and Chinese Fishing Nets. Drive back to your Hotel for overnight stay.



**Village backwater Cruise** – An escorted short journey in a country boat into the pristine purity of a typical backwater village of Kerala.... zigzagging through narrow canals and paddy fields fringed with coconut palms.... watch rare birds.... country boat making.... a natural fish farm where you can go fishing... The lady at a village house will demonstrate the coir making and if it's the right time you will have your toddy

tapper to show you the toddy tapping process. Before winding up you will have your lunch at our Farm House with the unique taste of a village cooking.

Kumbalangi is a village in Cochin, 13 kms away and the first model fisheries and tourism village in India. Ride in a rickshaw through the narrow country roads from where you can see the village folk engaged in different activities for their livelihood, a woman in her village provision shop, a farmer in his paddy field, a fisherman spreading his net, a kid with a fishing net ....it goes on. Enjoy lunch at the village.



## Day 03 – Kumarakom Backwaters

After breakfast, check out from the Hotel & proceed to Kumarakom (90 minutes drive), which is famous for its backwater & scenic beauty, sprinkled with traditional houseboats, country crafts, rural lifestyles and Tranquility. On arrival at Kumarakom check in at the Resort set on Vembanad Lake. It's your day to explore the serene backwaters of Kerala. You will have the option to go for a village walk, rejuvenating Ayurvedic Massage, Sunset Cruise or a bird watching tour through the never ending canals. Overnight at the Resort. The slender coconut palms everywhere, its never ending paddy fields, meandering lagoons and backwaters, mangroves full of nesting birds of a hundred varieties in the pristine beauty of Kumarakom.



## Day 04 – Kumarakom Backwaters

Full day explore the beauty of backwaters. You may visit Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary in the morning to watch rare birds. Option for Ayurvedic Massage or a short drive through the nearby villages etc. Overnight at the hotel.

Kumarakom is a cluster of little islands on the Vembanad Lake and a picturesque, clean village like most places in Kerala. The Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary is spread across 14 acres, the bird sanctuary is a favourite haunt of migratory birds and an ornithologist's paradise. Egrets, darters, herons, teal, waterfowl, cuckoo, wild duck and migratory birds like the Siberian stork that live in flocks are a fascination for visitors. The best way to watch the birds of the Kumarakom sanctuary is a boat trip round the islands.



## Day 05 – Houseboat on Backwaters

Enjoy your breakfast at the resort. By noon the *Houseboat* will pick you up from the resort jetty. Explore the amazing backwater life of Kerala! We use only the Houseboats certified by the Department of Tourism with trained crew and maintaining high quality hygiene standards Overnight at the Houseboat.



The name Backwaters brings you the very thought of Houseboats. Food and leisurely times spent on-board with the feeling and privacy of house as well as enjoying the natural beauty. A Cruise amidst marvelous mangrove forests, captivating coconut canopies, swaying palms, mangrove forests, pulsating paddy fields sprinkled with enchanting waterways and canals decked with white lilies, can be quite a

rejuvenating experience for the weary traveler. Enjoying a cruise in these backwaters is not to be missed, as it leaves you feeling fully rejuvenated. The banks of these backwaters in Kerala are the most enchanting picnic spots. You get to experience the native way of living.

What is truly magical about a houseboat ride is the breathtaking view of the untouched and otherwise inaccessible rural Kerala that it offers. The houseboats have all the creature comforts of a deluxe hotel including furnished bedrooms with noiseless airconditioners, modern chemical toilets, cozy living room and a fully equipped kitchen. Meals are cooked on board and supplemented with fresh fish from the backwaters served by the Kuttanad locals, on board.



## Day 06 – Departure or Extension

Like all good things, your backwater holiday experience comes to an end but you will always carry with you memories of this unique and unforgettable experience. Today, you will be assisted and transferred to Cochin International airport for your flight home or you have the option to extend your Holiday of your choice. Please feel free to share your thoughts with us to help you to plan a longer experience!!