

Kerala is a state that has much variety in what it has to project to every traveller, tourist or adventure-seeker. The Ministry of Tourism, Kerala already has a functioning app on the Google Play Store that gives a very interesting insight into places to visit which could be made better with certain features being accessible, like the emergency numbers page and other details like budget hotels, access to tourist guides who have good knowledge about the history and cultural heritage, etc. I would like to interpret this application-idea competition of the Ministry of Tourism, to develop a platform to show tourists what misses the normal eye. Through the toy, Kaleidoscope, everything that you see is new. Similarly, each time the viewer looks; the vision of Kerala should be unique. The following are some of the ideas to include in a new application or be an added feature to the existing app for Kerala Tourism.

### 1. Tour-ident: your Tour Guide+Friend

Preparations for this feature are having a list of tourist attractions, district-wise or region-wise and each of the places gets assigned number codes. The places should also be linked to general interests of people. This feature lets the tourist personalize tours with respect to his or her interests, time they have in their hands and the amount of money they wish to spend. For example, say I have ten days within a district or area and I choose the places I want to visit and want it to be a low budget itinerary; boom it gives a 2-13-15-6 readymade tour plan explaining how to get around using cheap modes of traffic and cost on an average (the numbers here being the codes of the tourist attractions). The feature organises nearby places to be covered together, on the same day. Based on interests you feed in, the must-visit places also vary. Most importantly, it could guide one about the food you need to ask for in specific places. In the larger picture, post visit, the tourists could be asked to give feedback and to rate the places. Place-wise rating could be tabulated at the district level leading to healthy competition amongst districts. Through this micro-blog platform, tourists could make an account of all their activities in one place, so it becomes a treasury of all the must-visit places and thereby let other tourists know of the same. This could be mutually beneficial for both tourism and tourists. What we are looking at here is an app that consolidates a map and route platform with a food guide and travel company.

### 2. The Road Less Travelled

People who visit Kerala are not only tourists; they are also people belonging to different professions and want to understand Kerala from different lenses. Through this feature in the application, while travelling across the state, a tourist must be able to experience the Kerala of the yore, the old tales, and the forgotten dance forms, experience the lesser known foods and southern flavours through the small roadside eateries, trekking through the tea plantations where the rain Gods come to play, arts and cultural activities and centres that are not talked about. He or she should be given a glimpse into the lives of the personalities who were behind the brilliant art, literature, music and dance forms that have come out of Kerala. It is time to romanticise the idea of Kerala and make known the lesser known. Through the app, the Ministry could help promote culture and small businesses.

### 3. Speak-easy

Along with a Malayalam dictionary or speak-in translator which could help tourists get by in their travel, unaided and independent. Picture of signboards in the local language could be photographed through phones and the app would scan the picture to translate the signs in English or other languages. It definitely would help them from being taken for a ride.

### 4. Grapevine (noun. Informal, used to refer to the circulation of rumours and unofficial information.)

Important conferences and art events like the Biennale need to be publicised to attract the tourist crowd. Major happenings where they are heading or where they are located should be publicised through the app, becoming a localised news feeds of sorts. Tourists want to know where they can find the most important things that come easily to them back at their home town. Place where they can pick up and drop cycles for short distance travels, places with good Wi-Fi connectivity (other than their hotel rooms), safe places for relaxation without disturbance from unwanted elements, travel costs for auto/ taxi, food to try out and most importantly public toilets etc.