



AANAYOTTAM UTSAVAM

GURUVAYOOR SREE KRISHNA TEMPLE



**Panchayath/
Municipality/
Corporation**

Guruvayur Municipality

District

Thrissur District

**Nearest Town/
Landmark/ Junction**

Guruvayur K S R T C Bus Stand – 60 m

Nearest Bus station

Guruvayur K S R T C Bus Stand – 60 m

**Nearest Railway
station**

Guruvayur Railway Station – 1.1 km

Nearest Airport

Cochin International Airport – 52 km



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TIME

DATES

February – March

FREQUENCY

Annually

DURATION

10 days



ABOUT THE FESTIVAL (Legend/History/Myth)

Once Guruvayur was a Keezhedam of Thrikanamathilakam (Trikkunavay). The festival of Trikkunavay used to finish two days before the beginning of Guruvayur Utsavam. The elephants used to come from Trikkunavay for the Guruvayur utsavam. Once they refused to send their elephants to Guruvayur for not making payment in time. The elephants were chained but they broke the chain and ran to Guruvayur without the mahouts on that night. From that day onwards the elephants used to leave Trikkunavay on Punarvasu to reach Guruvayur in time for the festival. Trikkunavay was destroyed by the Dutch in 1755. To keep the reminiscence of this unusual event, the elephant race (aanayottam) is conducted every year and this marks the beginning of the Guruvayur Utsavam. The elephants run from Manjula, (the Banyan tree half a kilometer away from the eastern entrance to the temple) enter the temple, take 7 rounds and touch the flagstaff in the end. The first elephant to touch the flagstaff will be given special treatment inside the temple on the days of Utsavam and will get the privilege of carrying the Lord's thidambu for the procession

Temple History. According to the legends, the idol worshipped here is more than 5000 years old. But there are no historical records to establish it. In the 14th century Tamil literature 'Kokasandesam', references about a place called Kuruvayur is made. As early as 16th century (50 years after the Narayaneeyam was composed) many references are seen about Kuruvayur. In ancient Dravidic, Kuruvai means sea, hence the village on the coast may be called Kuruvayur. But according to Prof. K V Krishna Iyer (eminent historian), the Brahmins had begun to come and settle at Kodungalloor during the period of Chandra Gupta Maurya (321-297 BC). Trikkunavay in the Guruvayur documents is the same as Thrikanamathilakam or Mathilakam mentioned in the Dutch and British records. And this place was in between Guruvayur and Kodungalloor. Guruvayur was Trikkunavay's subordinate shrine since they were destroyed by the Dutch in 1755. That way Guruvayur must have come into existence before 52 AD. The story of Pandyan King building a shrine here may be a reference to the Azhavars , but they are all silent in their writing about Guruvayur. It was Melpathur's Narayaneeyam through which the Temple got publicity. The concept of Unnikrishna popularised by Poonthanam , Kururamma , and Villwamangalam brought more and more devotees to Guruvayur.



RELEVANCE-
(Local / National / International)

International



NO. OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATED

Lakhs of people

EVENTS/PROGRAMS

Anayottam
Processions
Illumination
Modest fire-works

DESCRIPTION *(How festival is celebrated)*

At Guruvayur, the Utsavam beginning on the day of Pushya (the 8th asterism) in the month of Kumbham (February-March), it ends after the Aarattu on the 10th day. Religiously, it is the restoration of divine Chaithanya. Brahmakalasam is preceded by the Utsavam. It is aimed at the purification and energisation of the powers of the deity. It is the last of the long series of rituals of kalasam and at the end, the flag will be hoisted heralding the Utsavam. Culturally, it consists of various processions, illumination and modest fire-works (this is a specialty of Guruvayur Utsavam that no explosives are used, unlike most of the other Kerala temples). All ten days, the place wears a festive look, streets dressed up with arches, festoons etc., houses freshly thatched and painted. Every shrine and building is tastefully decorated with lights, plantain trunks, bunches of coconut and arecanuts. Two Gopurams and the bahyankana (outer-courtyard) are elaborately decorated with illuminations and eye-catching electric displays. The lamps, Deepasthambams and vilakku are all lightened.

