



## Department of Tourism

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### Press Release

#### Food tastes strengthen ties between nationalities: Kerala Tourism head

- *Ten winners of Kerala Tourism Culinary Contest 2020-21 conclude state visit*



**Kochi, Sep 3:** Flavours of shared food create and strengthen a special bond among people of different nationalities across the globe, Kerala Tourism Director Shri PB Nooh noted, as the ten winners of the Kerala Tourism Culinary Contest 2020-21 wound up their week-long family trip across the state's northern and central regions.

“The tasteful memories these esteemed guests take on their return to one’s native countries effectively make them brand ambassadors of Kerala,” he remarked at a function on Friday night, complimenting the winners of the contest.

The family trip was offered to the winners by the state government in a unique attempt to promote its tourism through the culinary route.



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Another objective of the contest was to initiate and strengthen interpersonal relations between people of states and countries, besides facilitating better international communication on cultural and culinary matters and widening Kerala's reputation abroad as a travel destination, Shri Nooh pointed out at the function organised in the city by the state's Tourism Department.

"A history of frequent brush with other cultures through commerce has made Kerala's food rich and varied. All those European traders who set off for spice trade reached Kerala first," he recalled. "We must continue to harmonize a range of tastes and continue with our culinary experiments for newer dishes."

Adina Ioana Panta, a prize winner from Manchester (UK), said she had never experienced such a warm hospitality elsewhere in the world. "I feel like moving out from my family as I return to my country," she added.

The visitors — half of them from abroad — were enormously impressed by Kerala's natural beauty and local legends. Besides Panta, the team comprised Morozov Nikita (Kemerovo, Russia), Roxana Dana Saila (Bucharest, Romania) and Yuki Shimizu (Tokyo, Japan), alongside Remalakshmi Sundararajan (Telangana), Jaya Narayan (Maharashtra), Himanandhini Prabakaran (Karnataka) and Vinny Sukanth (Andhra Pradesh).

Earlier this week, the guests got a taste of varied local dishes when they were served 'Onam sadya' on plantain leaf at Kozhikode on Wednesday.

The Kerala Cuisine Contest 2020-21 was open to non-Keralites. Initially planned for six months from December 21, 2020 to June 21, 2021, the campaign received overwhelming response, prompting authorities to extend its duration till August 31, 2021.

Overall, there were 11,605 registrants of whom 8,600 were from within India and 3,005 from abroad. Authorities got 2,629 video entries, which were then uploaded on to the website of Kerala Tourism for public voting. An initial screening followed, after which 359 videos (319 from India and 40 abroad) were shortlisted and uploaded on to the portal. A second-level evaluation followed, leading to 10 winners (5 of them outside of India) on the final list.

The final evaluation was done by a four-member jury appointed by the state's Department of Tourism, and the names of the winners were officially announced by Tourism Minister Shri P.A. Mohamed Riyas.

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