



## Department of Tourism

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### PRESS RELEASE

## New York Times lists Kerala among 52 Places to Go in 2023



**Thiruvananthapuram, Jan. 13:** Kerala's stunning resurgence as a global travel destination in the post-pandemic phase got a massive endorsement with the New York Times listing the state among 52 must-visit places in 2023.

Kerala is the only destination from India and listed at 13<sup>th</sup> spot in the newspaper's annual list of places to visit.

What clinched this global recognition for the state are its festivals, experiential tourism products and its trendsetting Responsible Tourism (RT) initiative that brought benefits to communities and unfolded the pastoral charm of the state before the tourists.



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The prestigious newspaper wrote that people travel to immerse themselves in other cultures, but some forms of community tourism put residents on display without offering benefits.

But in Kerala, which is celebrated for its beaches, backwater lagoons, cuisine and rich cultural traditions like the Vaikathashtami festival, the state government has adopted an award-winning approach of Responsible Tourism that allows visitors to experience village life while supporting the communities that host them, observed Paige McClanahan, the newspaper journalist who visited Kerala.

In an all-embracing snapshot, The New York Times also talked about Kerala as a place where one can learn to climb a palm tree, visit a temple during an annual festival and get a sustainable taste of village life.

In particular, it mentioned Kumarakom as one of several “responsible tourism destinations” in the state, where “visitors can paddle through jungly canals, weave rope from coconut fiber and even learn to climb a palm tree. In Maravanthuruthu, visitors can follow a storytelling trail and enjoy village street art before taking in an evening performance of a traditional temple dance.”

An elated Tourism Minister Shri P A Mohamed Riyas said the achievement is effectively a global accolade for the state's community-based activities in the travel and hospitality sector. "The government considers sustainable tourism development meaningful if only it leads to the development of local communities. The global honour will give a fillip to the arrival of foreign tourists to the state."

The minister said the government has been cooperating with not only other states but also with several foreign countries which are keen to replicate the Kerala model of Responsible Tourism (RT). “Since the RT Mission has been transformed into a society, its activities can be widened to more areas. The government aims to buttress the local economy and transform it as a major economic source of the state,” he added.

Shri K S Srinivas, Principal Secretary, Kerala Tourism, said Kerala's thrust on experiential tourism clinched this coveted recognition for the state. “In the current year, we are anticipating a healthy uptick in domestic and international tourist arrivals by offering them a raft of novel tourism products.”

Noting that Kerala Tourism targets inclusive tourism development, Kerala Tourism Director Shri S Prem Krishnan said being featured on the list of New York Times is a global recognition for this approach.



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Besides Kerala, others who are listed included London, Morioka (Japan), Monumental Valley Navajo Tribal Park (USA), Kilmartin Glen (Scotland), Auckland (New Zealand), Palm Springs (California), Kangaroo Island (Australia), Vjosa River (Albania), Accra (Ghana), Tromso (Norway), Lencois Maranhenses National Park (Brazil), Bhutan, Greenville (South Carolina), and Tucson (Arizona).

For Kerala Tourism, the year gone by witnessed remarkable achievements and inspiring global and national honours. TIME magazine figured Kerala as one of the '50 Extraordinary Destinations to explore in 2022'. Conde Nast Traveller featured Kerala's Aymanam village among 30 best places to visit, while Travel & Leisure magazine chose the state for the Global Vision Award.

Last year, the STREET project, a part of the state's Responsible Tourism initiative, bagged the global award at World Travel Market (WTM), London.

**Ends**