



Department of Tourism

Park View Thiruvananthapuram 695 033

Kerala India Fax: +91-471-2322279

Tel: +91-471-2326579 2321132

Email: info@keralatourism.org

marketing@keralatourism.org

www.keralatourism.org

Press Release

Kerala cuisine figures on Lonely Planet's 2026 best global experience list

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 24: Kerala's vibrant and diverse cuisine has earned a spot in Lonely Planet's list of the 25 best experiences to enjoy while travelling the world in 2026.

The renowned travel guide identifies Kerala, known for its “languid backwaters rippling beneath electric-green palms, as one of India's most thrilling culinary destinations. Kerala is the only Indian state to be on the list. With a rich tapestry of flavours, Kerala's culinary landscape features a wide array of dishes that reflect its cultural influences and local ingredients.

The guide says the intricate use of spices, coconut, and fresh seafood, showcasing traditional cooking techniques passed down through generations, allows visitors to experience the true essence of South Indian cuisine.

Tourism and Public Works Minister Shri PA Mohamed Riyas noted that the global community is increasingly recognising the state's rich and diverse culinary heritage, which stands proudly alongside the finest in the world.

“This appreciation extends beyond the state's renowned backwaters, sandy beaches, and picturesque hill stations; it highlights the unique flavours and traditions that define local cuisine,” said Smt. Sikha Surendran, Director, Kerala Tourism.

From the aromatic sadhya served on banana leaves during festive occasions to the iconic Kerala fish curry, the state offers a gastronomic journey that is as enchanting as its breathtaking scenery.

Travel writer Isabella Noble emphasises that a lovingly prepared sadhya—a traditional vegetarian banquet served on a banana leaf—captures the region's food-loving soul.

She is particularly impressed by the variety of home-cooked side dishes, including thoran (vegetables stir-fried with coconut), aromatic rasam (tomato and tamarind soup), and mango chutney, all served with rice and pappad on a fresh banana leaf. “Don't miss it,” she advises travellers from around the world.

The Travel Planet also finds attractive the “wafer-thin masala dosa (curried vegetables inside a lentil crepe) served with kaapi (South Indian filter coffee) or pollichathu (fish marinated in spices and grilled inside banana leaves).



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“A food-focused journey through this unhurried southwest pocket of India not only reveals the sizzling secrets and traditional roots of its kitchens but also spotlights an intriguing history in which locally grown spices – pepper, cardamom, turmeric, have always played a key role,” it says.

“Even within Kerala, cuisine varies enormously, from the rich Mappila cooking of the northern Malabar region to the south coast’s coconut-laden stews mopped up with fluffy appam (rice pancake).”

It describes Kochi as “one of the most inspiring places to dive in” and “an under-the-radar culinary hub” where flavours from across India mingle with spiderlike Chinese fishing nets as well as “an evocative old quarter and a thriving arts scene.”

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