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**Press Release**

**NYT features Kerala in 'Read Your Way Around the World' series**

**Thiruvananthapuram, April 27:** Famed for its panoramic nature, spices and eclectic culture and history, Kerala has figured in The New York Times' Read Your Way Around the World' series with American writer Abraham Verghese giving a list of good reads for anybody interested in exploring God's Own Country.

'Read Your Way Around the World' is a series carried by The NYT that helps readers and travellers explore the globe through books.

Abraham Verghese, the American author and physician born to Keralite parents, begins "Read Your Way Through Kerala" by lavishing praises on the beauty of the south Indian state before moving on to recommend an exhaustive list of books for those who are interested in Kerala or planning to travel to explore the unique experience awaiting them.

"If you arrive in Kerala from elsewhere in India, you'll feel as though you've landed in a different country — 'God's own country as Keralites like to say," notes Abraham Verghese, a bestselling author whose widely-read books include "Cutting for Stone." He is also a medical doctor and Vice Chair of the Department of Medicine, Stanford University.

"There is no better place to read than on the deck of your own houseboat travelling down shady waterways, while the fish you caught is being prepared in the open-air kitchen at the back of the boat....," the author says, referring to the unique backwater experience awaiting travellers in Kerala.

"It is fascinating to know that Kerala has figured in New York Times' Read Your Way Around the World series. This will especially serve as a guide for travellers interested in history and culture. This will bring to spotlight the literary and heritage tourism that Kerala has been promoting actively," Kerala Tourism Minister Shri P A Mohamed Riyas said.

While some of the titles that Abraham Verghese recommends are written on Kerala by explorers and historians panning over centuries some others are widely-read Malayalam literary works, which have been translated into English and other languages.

Abraham Verghese gives a snapshot of how the renowned spice coast attracted the Arab traders first followed by westerners starting with the Portuguese followed by the Dutch, the French and the English, before listing out the books worth trying to know Kerala better.



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Beginning on a cautious note that books of Kerala's history can feel tedious, he says "a first-time traveler is better off with a broader introduction to India, like V.S. Naipaul's incisive and inimitable "India : A Million Mutinies Now," paired with "The Idea of India "by Sunil Khilnani.

The author's list of good reads includes Shashi Tharoor's "Inglorious Empire: What the British did to India," Lathika George's "The Kerala Kitchen," which he describes as a colourful travelogue, memoir and cookbook and "Goat Days," by Benyamin.

His list of Kerala-related titles also has Nigel Cliff's "Holy War: How Vasco da Gama's Epic Voyages Turned the Tide in a Centuries-Old Clash of Civilizations", Tanya Abraham's "Fort Cochin: History and Untold Stories", Salman Rushdie's "The Moor's Last Sigh," N S Madhavan's "Litanies of Dutch Battery," Jack Turner's "Spice: The History of a Temptation," Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things," V K Madhavan Kutty's "The Village Before Time," Anita Nair's "The Better Man," Paul Chirakkarode's "Pulayathara," and Narayan's "Kocharethi: The Arya Woman."

"Even if you are limited to works translated into English, there are many to choose from. My favorites, Abraham Verghese says, include the master Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's "Poovan Banana and Other Stories" and M T Vasudevan Nair's "The Demon Seed and Other Writings."I am also a fan of Paul Zacharia's quirky, humorous and inventive writing style in "Bhaskara Patellar and Other Stories," "The Reflections of a Hen in Her Last Hour and Other Stories."

Before he concludes, he says his recommendations leave out many worthy writers.

**Ends**