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PRESS RELEASE

Kerala features in CNN Travel's 19 places to visit in 2019

- **From backwaters to beaches, from prawn curry to Kathakali, from culture to wildlife, Kerala has everything for global tourists**

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 3: In a huge affirmation of its alluring tourism credentials, Kerala has been featured in the exalted list of 19 places across the globe that CNN Travel has recommended for a visit in 2019, with the travel portal paying glowing tributes to God's Own Country, its stunning backwaters, sumptuous cuisines, and life moving at a relaxing pace.

"This area of India has it all: sun, sea, sand, good food, houseboats, culture and wildlife. Its spectacular natural landscapes -- think palm trees and sprawling backwaters -- lend the region the nickname God's Own Country," noted CNN Travel, making the state a must-visit destination for international travellers in the ongoing year.

It also said severe floods during the summer of 2018 wreaked havoc across this southwestern state, but many of its top tourist destinations escaped unscathed.

Kerala's backwaters are not only an idyllic place to stay on a houseboat, but it also gives an opportunity to see India at a relaxing pace, it said.

"Kerala's backwaters are famous for a reason: a nexus of waterways linking the region's villages and best explored via *kettuvallam* -- a traditional wooden houseboat. It's worth spending anywhere from a single afternoon to a week on one of the many rental houseboats on offer, enjoying the sights and sounds drifting by," it said.

The coastal state is also great for beaches, particularly in the southern part of the state. "Postcard-perfect Kovalam is a surfing hotspot, while Varkala is good for just relaxing," it pointed out.

In particular, the travel portal lavished praise on Kerala's cuisines -- from the spice shops of Munnar to the coconut, which is everywhere in Kerala and used to make one of the state's signature dishes: Kerala prawn curry.



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It also mentioned Kochi International Airport, powered entirely by solar panels, and the ancient port city of Kochi, once occupied by the Portuguese, which is a multicultural hub offering plenty to do and see.

Kerala is a great place to check out traditional Kathakali dance, the storytelling dance form known for its colorful and intricate costumes and masks.

Other top trips include Munnar to see the tea plantations, and Periyar National Park, a wildlife haven offering guided jungle treks.

Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran said, "It is a massive recognition for Kerala Tourism and will surely increase the footfalls in the state from across the globe. What is particularly heartening is the fact that CNN Travel has made it explicitly clear that most of the state's tourism destinations escaped unscathed in the aftermath of the severe floods of 2018."

Expressing happiness, Tourism Secretary Smt. Rani George said it would give a huge fillip to Kerala's touristy appeal. "It is going to be an authentic advertisement for God's Own Country and its brand as an inescapable tourist destination," she added.

"The endorsement of Kerala as a never-miss destination by CNN Travel has come at the most opportune time, which also recognises how quickly tourism in the state has bounced back after last year's floods with the stake-holders and the government moving together", State Director of Tourism, Shri P Bala Kiran, said.

Ends