Kerala Tourism’s culinary contest winners get a taste of Onam

Guests, five of them from abroad, visit Malabar as part of eight-day trip

September 01, 2022 06:16 pm
Updated September 02, 2022 08:17 am IST – KOZHIKODE

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Ten winners of Kerala Tourism’s culinary contest 2020-21 are currently on a week’s family trip across the state’s northern and central regions, enjoying the scenic beauty and local legends besides relishing a lavish feast on Thursday as part of Onam celebrations.

The visitors, five of them from abroad, enjoyed the taste of varied local dishes served as ‘sadya’ on plantain leaf. The grand assortment of rice, curries, fried chips, pickles and a line-up of delicious payasam puddings impressed the guests, a press release said here on Thursday.

The 10-member team and their families had their special lunch served at The Raviz Calicut, where the guests had a leisurely stopover. Having arrived by noon at the venue from Patharasricha Archaeological Museum in the city, the guests also laided a colourful flower carpet (pookalam) typical of Onam celebrations, before leaving for Kochi, 180 km southward.

"Such a wonderful experience,” exclaimed Swetshowa Natalia, a prize winner from Tomsk in Russia. Added West Bengal’s Vibhuti Chugh: “The dishes here have a unique taste”!

The other winners are Adina Ioana Panta (Manchester, U.K), Mariuva Nikolai (Kemerovo, Russia), Rosana Dana Salia (Bucharest, Romania) and Yuki Shimonuma (Tokyo, Japan) besides Remalakshmi Sundaraman (Tulangana), Jaya Narayan (Maharashtra), Himaranjith Prabhakaran (Karnataka) and Vinny Sukhath (Andhra Pradesh).

Minister for Tourism P.A. Mohamed Riyas said the government’s focus on tourism in the northern districts led the authorities to chart the prize-winners’ itinerary along the Malabar region primarily. That was why the guests were taken to places in Kannur, Wayanad and Kozhikode districts, he noted, referring to their eight-day trip that began on August 27.

K.S. Sriivas, Principal Secretary, Tourism, pointed out that the culinary contest enhanced the department’s website, as the foottall to the State is steadily increasing, overcoming a fall caused by prolonged spells of COVID-19. “Even during the pandemic period, the portal registered over one crore hits, just because we revved up our online activities,” he said.

Kerala Tourism Director P.B. Nishad said the guests got an opportunity to get a feel of Onam as a season.

The Kerala Culinary Contest 2020-21 was open to non-Keralites. Overall, there were 11,605 participants, of whom 8,600 were from within India and 3,005 from abroad. The authorities got 2,629 video entries, which were then uploaded on the website of Kerala Tourism for public voting. An initial screening followed, after which 359 videos (169 within India and 40 abroad) were shortlisted and uploaded on the portal.