

Kerala Tourism

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Neighbours serve up toddy, state tourism yet to tap potential

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Clip 1

Image Text

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Excise rules a big hurdle

The excise rules in Kerala are very different from the other states. In Karnataka, they have flavours like ginger toddy, jeera toddy and many others, which cannot be sold in Kerala.

ANU KURUVILLA @Kochi

THE THINGS that define Kerala for a tourist are the rivers, lakes, hills, cuisine, traditional dance forms and, of course, the toddy shops. While the toddy experience is lacking in the state, the neighbouring state of Karnataka has decided to experiment with it. But, according to an official with the state tourism department, such an idea was mooted by the tourism minister as a part of experiential tourism.

According to those in the industry, the tourism experience will surely get spiced up if the

state government brings in a project that will see a visit to the toddy shop on the tourist itinerary. "It will not only work magic for the tourism prospects of the state but will also become a boon for the traditional toddy shops that are slowly disappearing," said Geethu Mohandas, travel influencer. She said it will generate a lot of job opportunities.

Kerala already has toddy shops that act as family restaurants too "like Mullapanthal in

Ernakulam and Karimpumkalla in Kottayam where the visitors come in with their families and enjoy the traditional 'shaap' cuisine".

However, according to Dileep, owner of Nettoor toddy shop, though the concept is very good and welcome, there are a lot of hurdles when it comes to implementation. "First of all, the excise rules in the state are very different from other states. In Mangaluru, they have flavours like ginger toddy, jeera toddy

and many others. However, we can't sell flavoured toddy in the state," said Dileep.

According to him, including toddy shops in the tour itinerary will save a large number of 'kallu shaaps' that are on the verge of closure.

"Though the idea is alluring, a lot of checks need to be placed before implementing it," said Rajesh P R, a tour guide. "There is the question of quality and also hygiene," he added.

According to a tourism department official, the minister understands the importance of utilising toddy in boosting tourism in the state.



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