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Now, an *uru* cruise through Malabar's cultural landscape

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The venture will have luxury dhow ferrying 50 guests

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Uru (dhow), Kerala Tourism's latest niche product and a reworked version of *kettuvalloms*, is all set to steal the show on the State's exotic backwaters.

The State-owned Bekal Resorts Development Corporation (BRDC) has decided to launch a luxury dhow before year end to give travellers the opportunity of a mesmerising cruise through the backwaters of Malabar.

The story of *uru*

The story of *uru* dates back to centuries and its significance in furthering trade is etched in the annals of history.

Beypore's fame for making quality dhows is known across the world, especially in Arabian countries where businessmen are now keen on making luxury dhows. (History has it that the Arab travellers who reached the coast for trade paved the way for the building of the *uru*.)

But, this is the first time that a dhow is being tailor-made for cruising through the shallow backwaters of Malabar.

"We are going for a ₹3 to ₹4-crore luxury dhow with all modern facilities that can ferry 50 guests. The design



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will be finalised soon and the work will be awarded through competitive bidding. We are planning to launch it before year end," BRDC managing director T.K. Mansoor told *The Hindu*.

Experiential day tour

The aim is to give an experiential day tour through the cultural landscape of Malabar.

Along with the art forms of the north such as Yakshaganam, Duff Mutt, Pavakali, Kolkali, Alamikkali and Oppana, tribal art such as Mangalam Kali, Eruthu Kali and Man Kali would be performed by artistes where the dhow stops during the cruise.

Besides offering traditional culinary delights, travellers would be taken on a journey through the heritage of the State through narratives and visual tools.

They would be given a glimpse of the making of the vessel, its history and significance by SMiLE entrepreneurs trained in story-telling.

Preserving culture

"The project will also preserve the shipbuilding culture of north Kerala. We are eyeing Arab tourists in a big way," he said.

The BRDC Director Board chaired by Chief Secretary Tom Jose has given the clearance.