

INTERNATIONAL SPICE ROUTES CONFERENCE
FIRST EDITION, 6-8 JANUARY, 2026
Bolgatty Palace, Kochi

RUNDOWN

VENUE	TIME	SESSION	SPEAKERS
Day one 6 January, 2026			
Venue 1 Pepper	10.45 am to 01.00 pm	Opening Session Spice Routes People, goods and ideas in motion	Chair and Opening Note Sikha Surendran IAS Director, Kerala Tourism Prof. Seema Alavi (Online) Asoka University, New Delhi Prof. Michael Tharakan Former Vice Chancellor, Kannur University Prof. Pius Malekandathil (Rtd) Jawaharlal Nehru University Dr. Chhaya Goswami University of Mumbai Dr. Fahad Bishara (Online) Doha Institute, Qatar S. Swaminathan Secretary, Kerala Travel Mart
Lunch Break			
Technical Sessions			
Venue 1 Pepper	02.00 pm to 03.00 pm	Presentations Governing and sustaining transnational heritage corridors Policy pathways	Chair Sikha Surendran IAS Director, Kerala Tourism Dr. Venu V Former Chief Secretary & Chairperson, Kochi Muziris Biennale

			<p>Foundation</p> <p>Dr. Rima Hooja President, ICOMOS India</p>
			<p>Moderator</p> <p>Rupeshkumar K CEO, Responsible Tourism</p>
Venue 1 Pepper	03.00 pm to 04.15 pm	<p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>Living legacies Cultural Livelihood of Spice Route</p>	<p>Dr. Mahesh S Agasthya Kalari</p> <p>Dr. Richa Negi Director, Adi Drishya, IGNA</p> <p>Dr. Rajeev Pulavar Shadow Puppeteer</p> <p>Dr. Margi Madhu Koodiyattam Scholar</p>
Venue 1	04.15 pm to 05.15 pm	<p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>Digital Spice Routes Technology, immersive Media and the future of heritage interpretation.</p> <p>Session Coordination Rajeesh Raghavan</p>	<p>Moderator</p> <p>Sharon V Managing Director, Muziris Projects Ltd</p> <p>Arun Ashok Booking .com</p> <p>Anoop Ambika CEO, Startup Mission Kerala</p> <p>Densil Antony CEO, XR Horizon</p> <p>Johan Kuruvilla, Kochi Heritage Project</p>

<p>Venue 2 Clove</p>	<p>03.00 pm to 05.00 pm</p>	<p>Presentations Communities on the move Diasporic networks</p>	<p>Chair Dr. Sundhar Vadlamudi American University of Sharjah</p> <p>Prof. James Onley American University of Sharjah</p> <p>Prof. Neha Vora American University of Sharjah</p> <p>Dr. Sandhya Rao Mehta Sultan Qaboos University, Oman</p>
<p>Venue 3 Cinnamon</p>		<p>Presentations Cultural and linguistic fusions</p>	<p>Chair Dr. Akhila Yechury University of St. Andrews, UK</p> <p>Prof. Istvan Perczel Central European University, Austria</p> <p>Dr. Hugo Cardoso Lisbon University, Portugal</p> <p>Dr. Sara Mondini Ghent University, Belgium</p>

Venue 4 Cardamom		<p style="text-align: center;">Presentations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Connecting South, West and Southeast Asia</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chair</p> <p>Dr. Sandhya Rao Mehta Sultan Qaboos University, Oman</p> <p>Prof. Jajat Burhanudin Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta, Indonesia</p> <p>Prof. Sher Banu A L National University of Singapore</p> <p>Dr. Nia Deliana Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia</p> <p>Dr. Sundhar Vadlamudi American University of Sharjah</p> <p>Prabhir Purkayastha Journalist and Writer</p>
Venue 5 Cumin Online	04.00 pm to 5.00pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Special Lecture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Music of the Shores</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr. Sumangala Damodaran</p>	
Venue 5 Cumin	05.00 pm 05.45 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Conversation with</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Prof. Sanal Mohan</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Rtd) Mahatma Gandhi University,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Moderator</p> <p>Dr. Abhilash Malayil Sree Sankara University of Sanskrit, Kalady</p>
Ship Cruise and Dinner 06.30-9.30 pm			
Day two 7 th January, 2026			
Technical sessions			

Venue 1 Pepper	9.30 am to 10.15 am	Panel Discussion Thinking Beyond the Shore: Oceanic Intersections and Entangled Histories	Moderator Dr. Chhaya Goswamy University of Mumbai Prof. Rajan Gurukkal Vice Chairperson, State Higher Education Council Prof. K N Ganesh Chairperson, Kerala Council for Historical Research
		Panel Discussion Heritage to Experience Reimagining Spice Routes for tourism	Moderator Shihad Muhammed MD, City Heritage Jose Dominic Founder - CGH Earth Rahul Narayanan, Kavvayi Stories
	10.15 am to 11.15 am	Session Coordination Johan Kuruvilla	 S Swaminathan Secretary, KTM Zuzana Zwiebel Tour Operator
	11.15 am to 12.15 pm	Panel Discussion Heritage tourism: Question of sustainability Coordinated by: Shihad Muhammed	Moderator Sharon V Managing Director, Muziris Projects Ltd Dr. Manojkumar Kini Director, KTIL Dr. Dileep M R Director, KITTS Dr. Venugopal Scientific Counselor, ICOMOS

		<p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>Sustaining the Spice Legacy: Indigenous Food Systems and Global Markets</p> <p>Session Coordinated by: Lois Christy</p>	<p>Moderator:</p> <p>Dr. Tanya Abraham Founder-Director, The Art Outreach Society</p> <p>Renuka Bala Mambally's Royal Biscuit Factory</p> <p>Dr. Indu Menon KIRTADS</p> <p>Sanu Muhammed C Co-Founder Fulva</p> <p>Shiyas, Al Saj Kitchen</p>
Venue 2 Clove	10.00 am 12.00 pm	<p>Presentations</p> <p>Material engagements Movement of objects</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Dr. Midhun C Sekhar Muziris Projects Ltd</p> <p>Dr. Peter Nagy Qatar Museums</p> <p>Dr. V Selvakumar Tamil University, Thanjavoor</p> <p>Dr. Jenee Peter Union Christian College, Aluva</p>
Venue 3 Cinnamon		<p>Presentations</p> <p>Shipbuilding traditions in South India</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Dr. Senthil Babu French Institute, Pondicherry</p> <p>Dr. Balasubramanian French Institute, Pondicherry</p> <p>Gopinath Srikande French Institute, Pondicherry</p>

Venue 4 Cardamom		<p>Presentations</p> <p>Colonial interventions Spices and imperialism</p>	<p>Chair Dr. Ophira Gamlie University of Glasgow, UK</p> <p>Dr. Akhila Yechury University of St. Andrews, UK</p> <p>Dr. Abhilash Malayil Sree Sankara University of Sanskrit, Kalady</p>
Venue 5 Cumin	12. 00 am to 12.45 pm	<p>Special Lecture on Lakshadweep Dr. Bindu Menon Mannil Azim Premji University, Bangalore</p>	<p>Dr. K.N. Sunanthan Azim Premji University, Bangalore</p>
Lunch Break			
Venue 2 Clove		<p>Presentations</p> <p>Performative traditions</p>	<p>Chair Prabir Purkayastha Journalist, Writer</p> <p>Prof. M V Narayanan Former Vice Chancellor, SSUS, Kalady</p> <p>Geetha K Wilson Tubingen University, Germany</p>

Venue 3 Cinnamon	02.00 pm to 03.45 pm	<p>Presentations</p> <p>Aesthetics and experiences Museums in the region</p>	<p>Chair Prof. James Onley American University of Sharjah</p> <p>Dr. Manal Ataya Director, Sharjah Museums</p> <p>Riyas Komu Multimedia artist and curator</p> <p>Dr. Robert Carter (Online) Qatar Museums</p>
Venue 4 Cardamom		<p>Presentations</p> <p>Travel of faith and Goods</p>	<p>Chair Prof. Jajat Burhanudin Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta, Indonesia</p> <p>Dr. Ophira Gamlie University of Glasgow, UK</p> <p>Dr. Ajay Sekhar SSUS, Kalady</p> <p>Fr. Rijo Geevarghese Independent scholar</p> <p>Dr. (Fr). Byju Mukalel BCM College, Kottayam</p> <p>Dr. K.N. Sunanthan Azim Premji University, Bangalore</p>
Venue 1 Pepper	04.00 pm to 05.00 pm	<p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>Muziris Reimagined Chronicles of a heritage preservation initiative</p>	<p>Moderator Prof M H Ilias Mahatma Gandhi University</p> <p>Dr. Manojkumar Kini Former Managing Director, Muziris Heritage Project</p> <p>Dr. Benny Kuriakose Architectural consultant, MHP</p>

			Mohankumar Kallayil Former Deputy Director, CDIT
			Sharon V Managing Director, MHP

Visiting the shows conducted by Aazhi Archives in association with Muziris Heritage Project at Fort Kochi and Mattancherry
05.30 pm to 08.00 pm

Cultural Performance and Dinner

08.00 to 10.00 pm

Day Three

8th January, 2026

Technical Sessions

Boat 1 & Boat 2	08.30 am to 01.00 pm	Boat trip to the ancient port of Muziris	Guided trip
Muziris Heritage Project	03.30 pm 04.30 pm	<p>Special Lecture</p> <p>Indians in the Indian Ocean Complicated Spice Routes from Medieval Kashmir to Kerala</p>	Dr. Mahmood Kooria Edinburgh University, UK
Muziris Heritage Project	04.30 pm - 05.30 pm	<p>Presentations</p> <p>Knowledge traditions in the region</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Dr. Selvakumar Tamil University, Thanjavoor</p> <p>Prof. Roy Wagner (Online) ETH, Zurich</p> <p>Dr. Senthil Babu French Institute, Pondicherry</p> <p>Dr. Arun Asokan ETH, Zurich</p>
Muziris Heritage	05.30 pm to 06.00 pm	Valedictory Session	

Project			
BoatCast Conversations with Zahir Mirza on boat 6-8 January, 2026 In association with Aazhi Archives			
Performances 7-8 January, 2026			
Fort Kochi (7/1/26)	06.00 pm to 08.30 pm	Kārkuzhali Songs of Jewish women in Kerala	Reshma Satish Singer
Kottappuram Fort (8/1/26)	06.00 pm to 07.00 pm	Cavittunātakam An Indo-Portuguese performance	Thampi Asan and team Gothuruth, Ernakulam
Exhibitions 6-8 January, 2026			
Bolgatty Palace (6-8/1/26)	10.00 am to 05.00 pm	Cavittunātakam Photographic exhibition In association with Aazhi Archives	K. R. Sunil Photographer, author
Bolgatty Palace (6-8/1/26)	10.00 am to 05.00 pm	Seeing is Believing Exhibition of photographs of Church Paintings In association with Aazhi Archives	Biju Ibrahim Photographer
Bolgatty Palace (6-8/1/26)	10.00 am to 05.00 pm	Migrant Dreams Exhibition of photographs of early migrants from Kerala	Aazhi Archives
Shows @ Fort Kochi In association with Aazhi Archives			
Kara Gallery Fort Kochi Till 31 st January, 2026	10.00 am to 06.00 am	Archeo Logical Camera Photo-documentation of archeological sites in Kerala	Mohammed A Archeological photographer

