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Houseboats â€“ Icons of backwater tourism by Anoop TU

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Those who visit Kerala are convinced that it is a paradise dear to God. Such are the blessings of nature on this narrow strip of land. Many return with their heart filled with joy and ecstasy, spreading the word about this magic land.

Kerala is situated in the Malabar Coast of south western India. This coastal territory rolls in green vegetation from Western Ghats to Arabian Sea.

Pristine beaches, mist shrouded hill stations, placid backwaters, enchanting wildlife, verdant landscape and classical art forms â€“ the attractions that Kerala offer are multiple, colorful and diverse.

Out of all attractions backwater is the single most one which primarily separates Kerala from the rest of the world. Nowhere else can one find same kind of phenomenon. Canals and inlets which are manmade and natural combine with branches of over forty rivers and five lakes to form a complex network which is known as backwater. Local people used it as a transportation medium before the advent of bridges, roads and ferries. They also depended on it for means of livelihood like agriculture and fishing. Thus backwaters had an economic significance. Backwaters are continuing to play this economic part to perfection by earning millions for Kerala economy through tourism. The primary attraction of backwaters is its exquisite landscape. Cruising through backwaters savoring this landscape is an activity highly sought after. Alleppey, Kochi, Kollam and Kumarakom are the main centers where backwater tourism thrives.

Houseboats have achieved iconic status in the realm of backwater tourism. Kerala Houseboats are innovated from the model of erstwhile â€œKettuvallamsâ€•. Kettuvallams once ruled the backwaters, poled along by one or two men, heavily loaded with rice, coconut and other commodities, transporting them from one place to other. The structure of Kettuvallam was with thatched roof over wooden hull, thus providing shelter from elements of nature. Kerala Houseboat is of a form that is largely unaltered. But they are modern and luxurious. Houseboats are two to three storied affairs with one to five bedrooms included. Apart from the sleeping space there is dining space, kitchen, western toilets and deck open on all sides. From the deck the elegant charm of backwaters can be savored to the fullest. Houseboats have generators attached to them and provide for air conditioning. A crew including a cook accompanies guests. The menu is typical Kerala variety with local fish to boot. Houseboats are run in a meandering pace even though motorized, letting guests savor the landscape leisurely and closely.

Out of the backwater destinations, Kumarakom is mostly preferred by honeymooners. Kumarakom is a tiny village immensely blessed with all bounties of a backwater village. Kumarakom tour packages offer excellent accommodation facilities in its resorts. There is a bird sanctuary too in Kumarakom which is frequented by migratory birds including Siberian Cranes.

Houseboats cruises can also be had in Kumarakom. Kumarakom Houseboat packages let you savor a scenery that is magnificent with shores adorned by attractive monuments, swaying coconut trees, emerald mangrove forests and lush green paddy fields, fishing nets and human activities of various hues; and backwaters embellished by water lilies.

Houseboats are ninety five to one hundred fifteen meters long and thirteen to fifteen meters in width. Houseboats are made of â€œAnjiliâ€• (Wild Jack) wood. The materials that go into making accessories are local and eco friendly.

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Anoop is an eminent writer and travel enthusiast, here giving valuable information on a Kumarakom Houseboat Packages, a Kerala Houseboats, Kumarakom Tour Packages and Kerala Houseboat. For more information visit our site a www.kumarakomhouseboats.org.in .

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