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Kerala â€“ Many call it mural painted by God by Vijay Joshi

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The scenic beauty of Kerala is such that many qualify Kerala as a mural painted by God, varied in its hues, shades and texture. Kerala is situated in the Malabar Coast of southwestern India. This coastal territory is cradled between Western Ghats and Arabian Sea.

Pristine beaches mist shrouded hill stations, supine backwaters, verdant landscape, exotic wildlife sanctuaries and sophisticated art forms â€“ the attractions that make Kerala tourism unique are multiple.

Kerala tour operators will suggest many beach destinations like Kovalam, Cherai, Varkala, Kappad, Muzhappilangad and Bekal. Out of these more sought after destination is Kovalam. Kovalam is situated in southern part of Kerala. The tourism promise of Kovalam was found out by Travancore Kings. It is one of the oldest known tourist spots of India. During ninety seventies hippies horded to this place. This event catapulted Kovalam into global tourism map. Kovalam was now a hot tourism destination. Formed by three crescent shaped beaches, Kovalam is easily accessible through road. This accessibility makes it popular among locals also. The seas of Kovalam are shallow and safe for swimming. The white sandy beaches will never fail to invite you to sunbathing. There are attractive coral reefs adjacent to the shore. You can go snorkeling for an underwater view. The accommodation facilities and quality of service are exceptional.

Out of the hill stations of Kerala, Munnar is the more oft visited one. Gifted with endowments of Mother Nature galore, Munnar provides a refreshing, soothing and gentle touch. This hill station in Kerala was the summer resort of British. Now it is a hotspot of attraction for millions of tourists. Situated about one thousand and six hundred meters above sea level, this gorgeous paradise stands near the converging point of three rivers â€“ Madupetti, Nallathanni and Kundala. Blanketed by mist, Munnar has a salubrious climate. Home to exotic fauna and flora, embellished with carpet of green tea gardens, blessed with gushing brooks, Munnar also offers world class accommodation facilities and quality service.

Kerala is endowed with a rich and diverse flora and fauna and there are a number of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries preserving them. More prominent of them are Periyar, Muthanga, Eravikulam and Silent valley. Periyar wildlife sanctuary is situated at Thekkady. There is an artificial lake around the sanctuary formed by Mulla Periyar dam. Among other animals, there are elephants and tigers present in the sanctuary. A boat ride in the lake let you savor wildlife from the safety of a boat. Thekkady is the only place in India you have the luxury of doing so.

Kerala trip is incomplete without tasting the charm of backwaters. Backwaters is a singular Kerala occurrence. The canals and inlets, both manmade and natural, estuaries of over forty rivers and five lakes â€“ the complex network including these is called backwaters. The backwaters make for magnificent landscape. Its shores are lined by houses, swaying coconut trees, emerald flora and lush green paddy fields, fishing nets and various activities of life. The backwaters itself is adorned by water flowers especially water lilies. Cruises along backwaters savoring this setting are memorable affairs.

Houseboats are the new fad in backwater tourism. Houseboats are modern day luxurious avtaars of yesteryear â€œKettuvallamsâ€•. Houseboats come with sleeping space, dining space and sit out open on all sides, letting tourists savor the backwaters.

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