

KANNUR

Deep Dive into
Kerala's Heritage
Wonders





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KANNUR

Kannur is synonymous with theyyam – that vibrant folk art ritual which holds the spectator in as much a trance as the artiste. Kannur has a rich cultural and political legacy. While Cannanore remains the anglicised version, stories galore on how the district might have gotten its name. Kannur bears evidence of the earliest signs of human habitation with rock cut caves, burial stone circles, dolmens and menhirs being sighted in the district.



Kannur was a part of the Chera kingdom, a dynasty that reigned in many regions of Kerala. The Kolathiri Rajas made Kannur their capital in the early centuries. The district is also home to the only Muslim royal dynasty in Kerala. During the British rule, Kannur put up a strong fight that was violent and long drawn. Today, the district thrives as a tourism destination, drawing in fascinated crowds from far and wide for its folk art rituals, temples, forts and numerous scenic destinations.



St. Angelo's Fort

St. Angelo's Fort is a symbol of Kerala's colonial past, built in 1505 by Don Francesco de Almeida, the First Portuguese Viceroy in India. The fort was built with the permission of the local Kolathiri king. Soon after, Almeida decided to turn the wooden fort into one made of stone which was completed in 1507. Also known as Kannur Fort, the imposing triangular laterite fort that is now a preserved monument under the Department of Archaeology has borne witness to many conflicts



The fort has changed hands many times, first being taken over by the Dutch in 1663. It then underwent a revamp, with the addition of three bastions Hollandia, Frieslandia and Zeelandia that are now its most prominent feature. The fort was purchased by the Arakkal dynasty's Ali Raja in 1772. In 1790, the British laid claim to the historic site, seizing it from the Beevi of Arakkal to make it their main garrison till 1947. The fort overlooks the Arabian Sea, neighbouring the Mopilla Bay Harbour, a natural fishing bay, and Arakkal mosque. The fort, with its moat, ammunition dumps, tunnels, underground jails and sturdy bastions, was a formidable base making it a much sought-after structure by settlers through the ages.



Timing

8 am - 6 pm



Connectivity

Kannur Railway Station, 2 km away
Kannur International Airport, 30 km away



Activities

Exploring, photography



Arakkal Kettu Museum

The Arakkal Kottaram or palace, better known as Arakkal Kettu, has the distinction of being the ancestral house of the only Muslim royal family in Kerala. The Arakkal Ali Rajas, as the male rulers were addressed, and in the case of women in power, Beevis, once ruled Kannur, the southern parts of Lakshadweep and Minicoy. While the palace building in itself has unassuming exteriors, glimpses of another era reveal themselves in the artefacts and heirloom inside the Durbar Hall which has been converted into the museum.



The museum is maintained by the Arakkal family. The palace which functioned as the administrative headquarters of the royal family was used as the office of the collector of Malabar until the Department of Archaeology began to maintain the building. The palace has an architectural style that blends traditional and colonial influences. Long verandahs lead to the palace which is made of laterite and wood. The two-storied main building has wooden floors and stained glass windows that envelope the large halls in a kaleidoscope of light during the day. The large kettu or courtyard distinct to traditional houses in Kerala is surrounded by independent units that used to house the administrative office and mosques. One of the blocks that is considered sacred has a lamp that is kept lit, known as Kedavilakku, all day. On display are a pathayam (used for storing grains in the olden days), the family seal, copies of the Holy Koran, swords, daggers, a telescope and other items that were used by the royal members.



Timing

10 am – 5.30 pm; closed on Mondays



Connectivity

Kannur Railway Station, 3 km away
Kannur International Airport, 25 km away



Activities:

Museum tour



Thalassery Fort

Thalassery used to be an important trading hub during the days of colonial reign. From spices to timber, the small town saw a lot of trading due to its strategic location close to the sea. The fort was built by the East India Company in 1703 to protect their trading activities after differences with local chieftains led to disputes. The Company had grown into a formidable settlement on the Malabar Coast by 1683.



The fort was seen as an added measure of protection. The presence of the French in Mahe, just 5 km south of Thalassery, provoked the British to establish their military stronghold in the region with the fort serving as the base, especially from 1776 to 1784. The walls of the fort rise to an astonishing 10 m. The bastions offer a view of the sea to watch out for any invasions. There is a lighthouse in the fort premises. Post independence, the fort was used by the government for their many offices. Now it is maintained by the Department of Archaeology. With its large walls, intricate woodwork on the doors and secret tunnels, the fort makes for a fascinating day of explorations.



Timing

8 am - 6 pm; closed on Mondays



Connectivity

Thalassery Railway Station, 2 km away
Kannur International Airport, 25 km away



Activities

Exploring



Gundert Bungalow

The bungalow Dr. Herman Gundert called home for 20 years holds a special place in every Malayalee's heart. The revered German missionary, scholar and lexicographer lived at the English style bungalow from 1839.



The bungalow remains of cultural and historical importance to Kerala as it is here that the first Malayalam dictionaries and the first Malayalam newspaper Paschimodayam were born. Dr. Gundert is also believed to have brought out Rajyasamacharam. The bungalow sits atop a hill called Illikunnu in picturesque settings complete with a river running through the area. The Nettu Technical Training Institute is located close by.



Timing:

10 am – 6 pm



Connectivity

Thalassery Railway Station, 4 km away
Kannur International Airport, 23 km away



Activities:

Exploring



Paithal Mala

Paithal Mala is a nature lover's paradise. At 6 km, it is a fairly easy trek but is located 65 km away from the town and 4500 ft. above sea level. Visitors will find two routes – one from Pottenplave, near Kudiyanmala, and the other from Kappimala. The latter is supposedly more trying and so those looking for a light trek are advised against the route.



The trail along Pottenplave is easier to follow because of the beaten path. One will also find other trekkers enroute. Paithal Mala, one of the highest peaks in the district, is popular among photographers. It is home to many endemic species thanks to its location in the Western Ghats. A delightful waterfall, Ezharakundu, offers trekkers a chance to refresh themselves while exploring the trail. Paithal Mala borders Coorg in neighbouring Karnataka, offering an amazing view of the surrounding forests.



Timing:

9 am – 4 pm



Connectivity:

Kannur Railway Station, 62 km away
Kannur International Airport, 50 km away



Activities

Trekking



Payyambalam Beach

Payyambalam forms one of five beaches on the Western side of Kannur district, the others being Meenkunnu, Adikadalayi, Baby and Thayyil. Payyambalam Beach is a favourite among visitors, more so picnickers, as it is well-maintained. The beach has also been featured in many movies. A garden near the beach has a sculpture by Kanhayi Kunjiraman called 'Amma' or mother. The waters are ideal for swimming and surfing.



Timing:

All day



Connectivity:

Kannur Railway Station, 2 km away
Kannur International Airport, 32 km away



Activities:

Swimming, surfing, picnics



Muzhappilangad Beach

BBC called it one of the best drive-in beaches in the world. The shore is a 4 km stretch of dense sand, parallel to the NH-66, making the beach perfect to take in some sun and sand while enjoying a smooth drive. A nominal fee is levied for driving through the beach but that does not stop people from indulging in the experience.



Tourists also hire cabs to enjoy the drive. Large rocks act as a buffer from strong waves, keeping the waters calm for a swim. The rocks also give the beach its crescent shape. Adventure activities are aplenty at this beach like catamaran rides, parasailing, paragliding and other water sports. It is also a chance to get a taste of Malabar's popular food culture as shacks enroute to the beach serve different kinds of delicacies. People are cautioned against driving at night as the light may be insufficient. If you are in Kannur between October and May, it is the best time for a visit.



Timing:

8 am - 6 pm



Connectivity:

Kannur Railway Station, 15 km away
Kannur International Airport, 26 km away



Activities:

Driving, swimming, water sports



Dharmadam Island

A 5-acre island between Kannur and Thalassery, Dharmadam Island is a tropical haven, lush with coconut palms and uninhabited. It is also called Green Island. Located four kilometres away from Thalassery town, three sides of the island are surrounded by mainland rivers while one side faces the sea. If one is looking for a getaway that offers some quiet, this is the place.



The island was formed from a laterite rock projection between Anjarakandy river and the sea. Low tide makes it possible for people to reach the island by foot, making it a surreal experience. The walk should be made before high tide. It is also possible to hire a boat near Moidu bridge along the Kannur-Thalassery highway to reach Dharmadam island. The island was privately owned before being taken over by the government to be promoted as a tourist destination.



Timing

9 am – 5 pm



Connectivity

Dharmadam Railway Station, 2 km away
Kannur International Airport, 27 km away



Activities

Sight-seeing, boating



Thalassery Pier

Locally called Kadalpalam, literally meaning sea bridge, the Thalassery pier was built to do exactly that – serve as a bridge between the big ships and the shore, when Thalassery was a bustling commercial hub.



The bridge, 500-ft-long, was built by the British in the 20th century. The pier is a beautiful sight as it stands looking out into the Arabian Sea, surrounded by fishing boats. Many films have been shot here for its picturesque settings. The pier stands as a relic from the colonial era, a witness to so many historical events, as life carries on around it.



Timing:

All day



Connectivity:

Kannur Railway Station, 23 km away
Kannur International Airport, 26 km away



Activities:

Sight-seeing



Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary

The northernmost wildlife sanctuary in Kerala, Aralam in the Western Ghats stretches over 55 sq. km. area of forests. Established in 1984, the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary is contiguous with the forests of Coorg and is home to the Malabar Giant Squirrel, elephants, spotted deer, gaur, sambar, barking deer, Nilgiri Langur and Hanuman Langur.



Many butterfly species, endemic to the Western Ghats, are found here. The sanctuary is regularly visited by school children as part of nature camps. Visit the tallest peak in the area, Katti Betta, for an even more breathtaking view of the area. Aralam is a dream spot for trekkers who want to explore beyond what the day trek has to offer. Ambalappara is a three day trek with an overnight stay at the Ambalappara watchtower. Meenmutty Falls is the other option, a four hour long trek, with a guide. Aralam village hosts the Central State Farm, which was built in 1971 by the government of India. It remains one of the main production centres for hybrid coconut seeds in the country.



Timing

8 am – 6 pm



Connectivity

Thalassery Railway Station, 55 km away
Kannur International Airport, 36 km away



Activities

Trekking, wildlife viewing



Palakkayam Thattu

The perfect getaway, Palakkayam Thattu is located in the Western Ghats, 3500 ft. above sea level, where tourists come to recharge themselves. The Palakkayam Thattu Adventure Park has many activities such as rope cross, zipline, gun shooting, zorbing ball, archery and more. Palakkayam Thattu Hill Stay offers tents for camping – one of the best ways to experience the serenity of the wilderness.



Yellow benches along the trail to the top allow people to rest and enjoy the view. The flora and fauna here is diverse and rich. Palakkayam Thattu feels like that little space between heaven and earth. Don't forget to pose for photographs at Kannur Eye, a frame that sets the backdrop at the hill station for a perfect picture. The best time to visit the hill station is between October and January.



Timing

5 am – 9 pm



Connectivity

Kannur Railway Station, 49 km away
Kannur International Airport, 42.5 km away



Activities

Trekking, camping, adventure sports



Madayipara

A laterite plateau that takes on various hues during different times of the year, Madayipara is an ecological paradise. It has some of the rarest varieties of flora seen in Kerala apart from uncommon species of butterfly. The hillocks have played a significant part in history as well. It used to have the administrative hub of the Ezhimala kings.



Royal families have held their coronation ceremony here with four watchtowers standing guard. A pond called Juda Kulam, in the shape of a handheld mirror, is said to be linked to ancient Jewish settlers in the area. The Vadakunda Siva temple nearby is a popular temple among visitors. The Pooram Festival is highly anticipated as the place is said to reflect a vibrancy that is unmatched during that time. An hour away from Kannur, Madayipara is a must-visit.



Timing

8 am – 8 pm



Connectivity

Pazhayangadi Railway Station, 2 km away
Kannur Railway Station, 25 km away
Kannur International Airport, 49 km away



Activities

Sightseeing, photography

360° VIDEOS



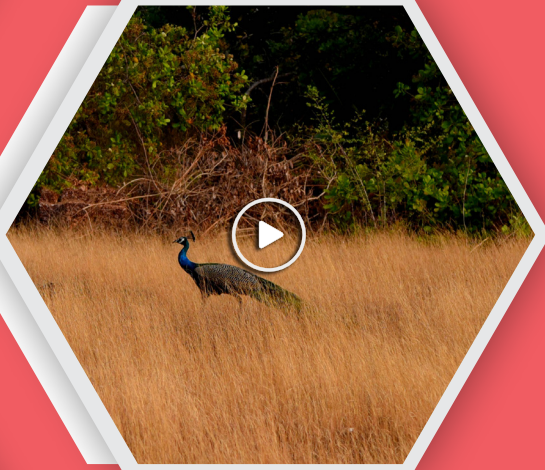
Muzhappilangad Beach

Parassinikkadavu





Dharmadam Island



Madayipara



Paithal Mala

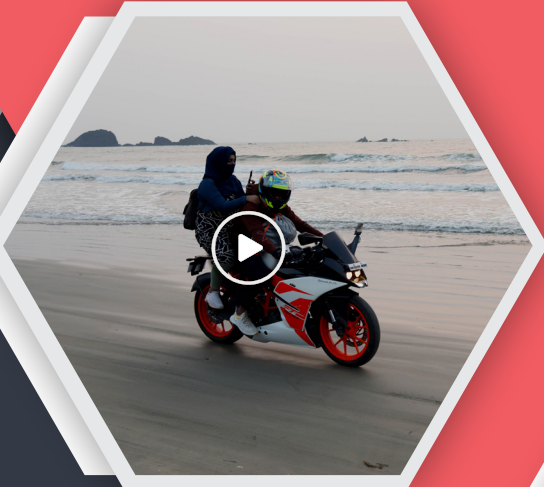
VIDEO GALLERY



**Palakkayam
Thattu**



**Payyambalam
Beach**



Muzhappilangad Beach

Parassinikadavu Muthappan Temple



Thalassery Cultural Circuit

PICTURE GALLERY

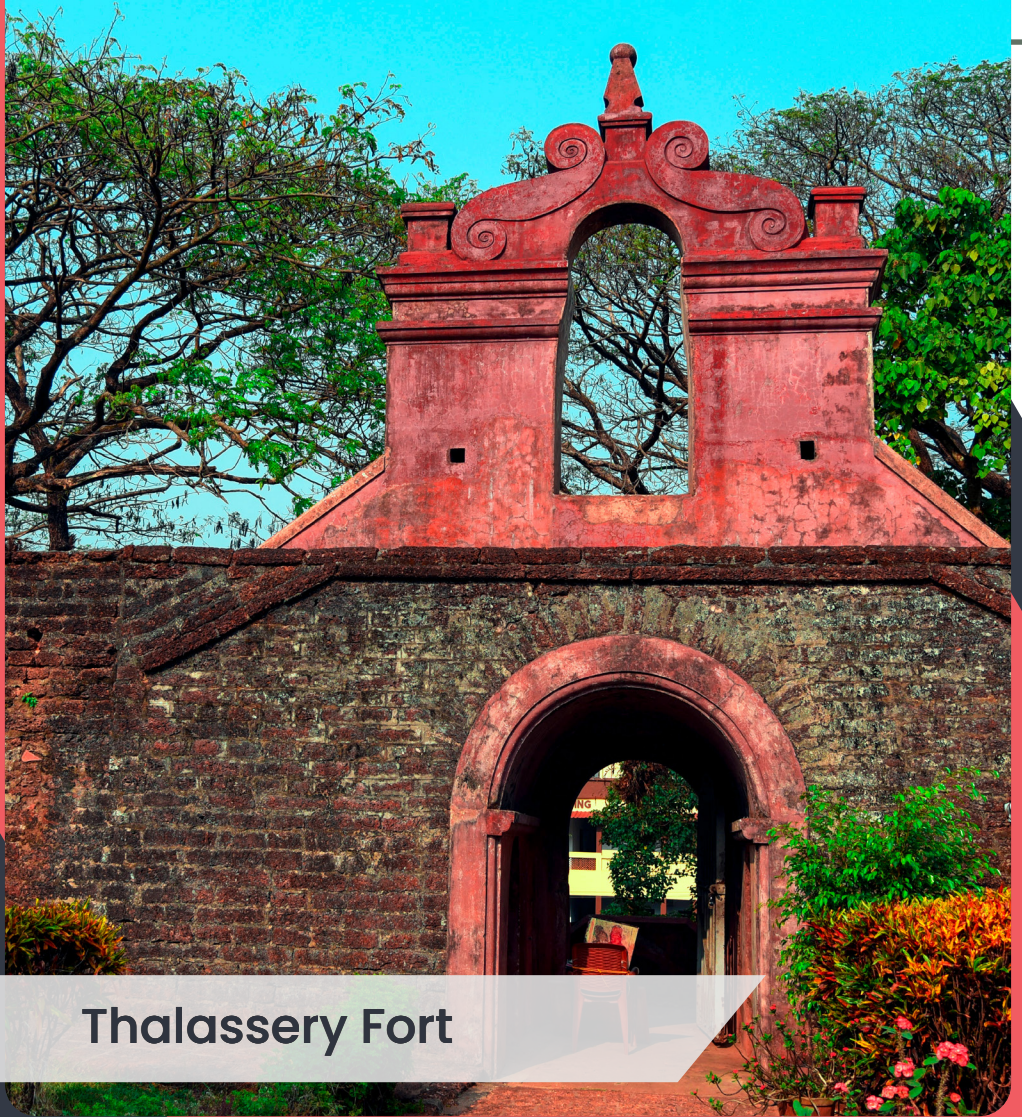




St. Angelo's Fort



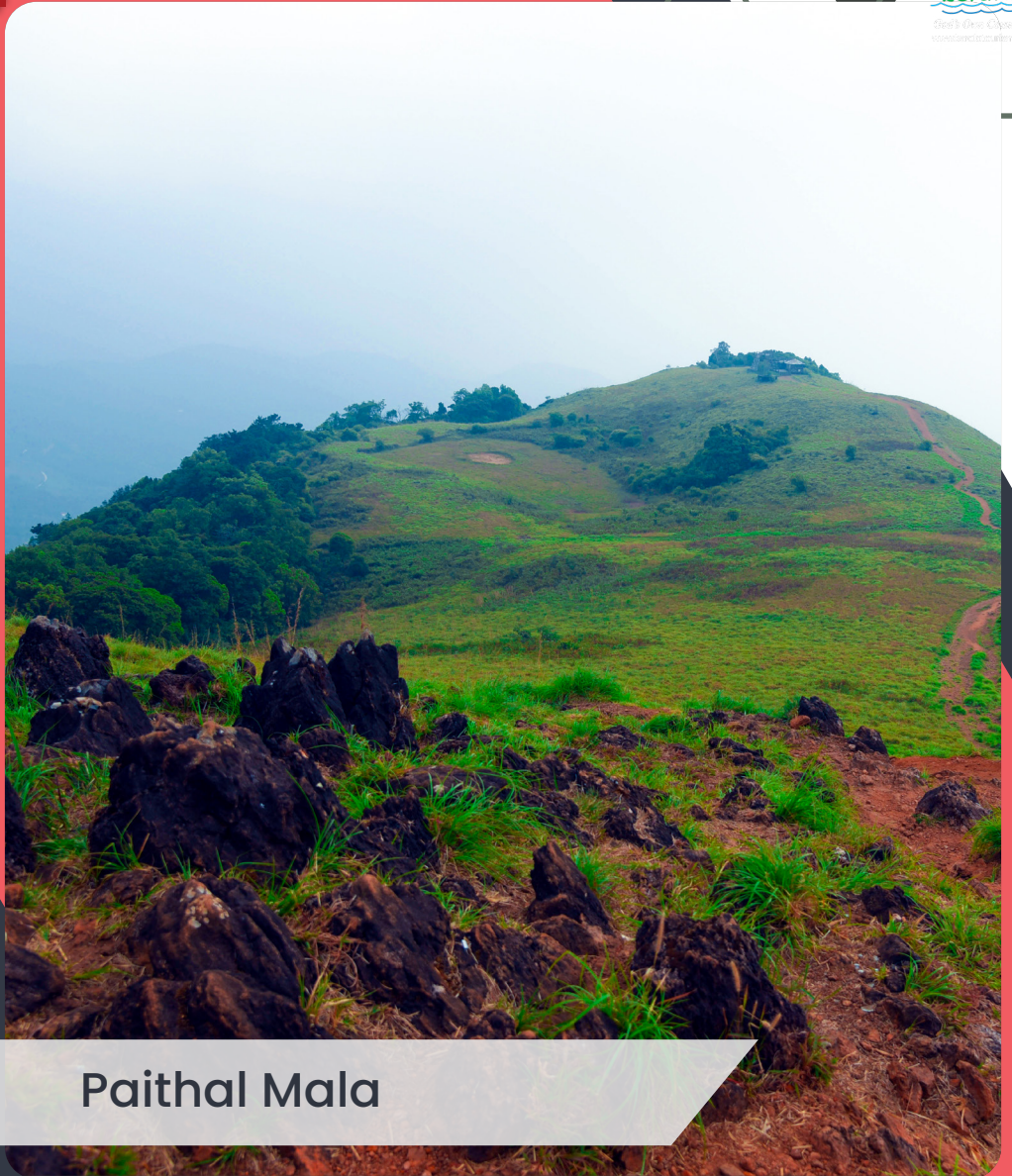
Arakkal Kettu Museum



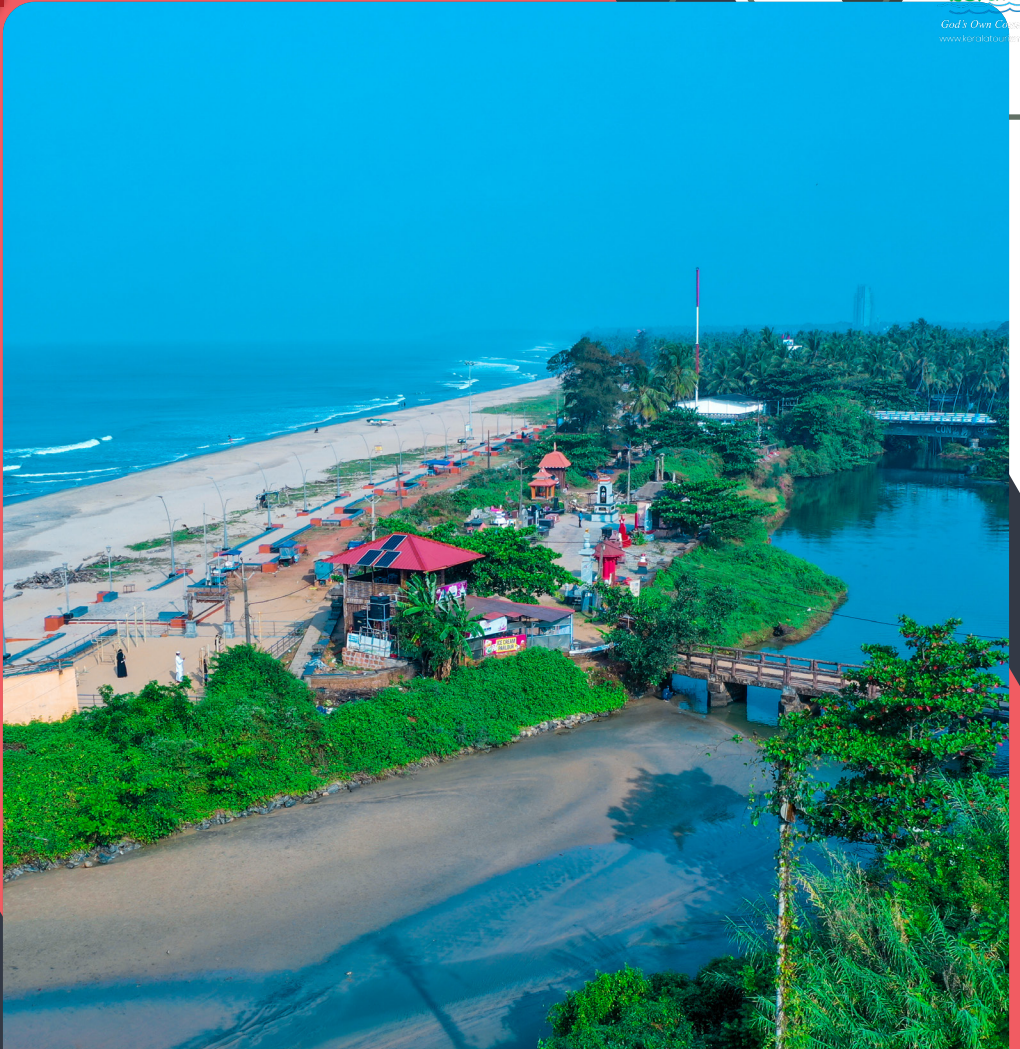
Thalassery Fort



Gundert Bungalow



Paithal Mala



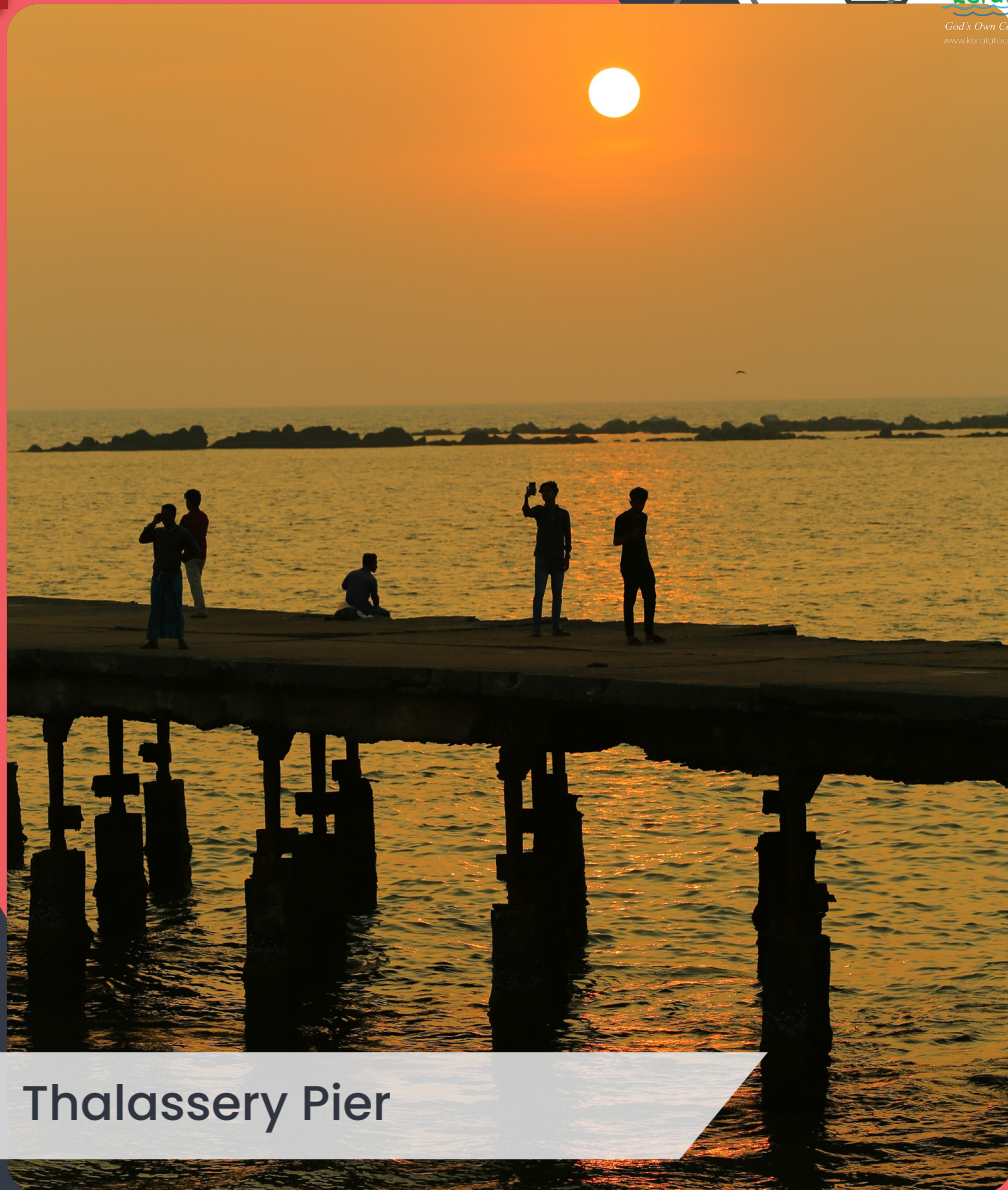
Payyambalam Beach



Muzhappilangad Beach



Dharmadam Island



Thalassery Pier



Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary



Palakkayam Thattu



Madayipara



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THANK YOU