

Munnar

Hills Shrouded In Mist



God's Own Country

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Content

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<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Munnar's Allure</i>	2
<i>Location and Attractions</i>	3
<i>Eravikulam National Park</i>	4
<i>Mathikettan Shola</i>	5
<i>Ananmudi Shola</i>	6
<i>Ecotourism</i>	7
<i>Significance of Ecotourism</i>	8
<i>Ecotourism in Munnar</i>	9
<i>Why Kerala</i>	10
<i>Trekking</i>	11
<i>Lakkom Water Falls</i>	12
<i>Cascade Walk</i>	13
<i>Camping</i>	14
<i>Pambadum Shola National Park</i>	15
<i>Chinnar</i>	16
<i>Jeep Safari to Marayoor</i>	17
<i>Stay Over</i>	18
<i>Log House Stay</i>	18
<i>Getting There</i>	19
<i>Photos</i>	20
<i>Videos</i>	31

Introduction

The Queen of the Hills is not a moniker that is given out lightly, but Munnar claimed it seamlessly like a pureblood monarch. This hill destination is today atop every global traveller's bucket list, standing as the ultimate culmination of natural beauty being gently shaped into an international tourist hotbed. The hills, meadows and plantations stretch out in all directions, and the moment your car begins the upward climb to its dreamy peaks, the realization that you are mere miles away from the very doorway to Paradise becomes rather clear.



Munnar's Allure

Munnar was supposed to be a place known primarily for its tea plantations, but it has evolved over the decades in a magnificent way. The visuals still remain, and at 1,500 m to 2,695 m above sea level, they leave a permanent mark on all who visit this majestic place. Travellers can constantly be seen raving about its hills, the mist, the valleys, the streams, the waterfalls, tea plantations and the rare flora and fauna on display here. There are a large number of locations in and around the place that provide holiday-goers with a perfect backdrop to let off some steam and unwind to their heart's content.



Location and Attractions

Located in the legendary South Western Ghats of India, it got its name due to its standing at the confluence of three rivers – Muthirapuzha, Nallathanni and Kundala Rivers (Moonu means 3 and aru is a river). Once the summer capital for the British, its tea plantation days are what earned it fame. Some of the most loved sites here include Eravikulam National Park, Anamudi Peak, Mattupetty, Top Station and the Tea Museum. The events, packages and activities are immense, and one never runs out of fun and invigorating things to do in these parts.



Eravikulam National Park

*The grandest and most-visited site in all of Munnar, Eravikulam National Park is home to some of the most mystical species in all of Kerala, be it the majestic Nilgiri Tahr or the blue gem that blooms only once every 12 years, the Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthianus*). Spread out over an area of 97 sq. km, it is located Devikulam Taluk of Idukki district. Once you reach Munnar, take the road to Rajamala and Eravikulam will soon be in sight.*

The National Park is a protected area and is divided into three regions - the core area, the buffer area and the tourism area. Visitors are allowed only to the tourism area that is in Rajamala, the region lying beyond the road entry into Eravikulam. Eravikulam is also famous for being the natural habitat of the endangered Nilgiri Tahr, the endangered mountain goat and this park was built with the aim of protecting and conserving them.



Mathikettan Shola

Declared a National Park in 2008, Mathikettan Shola gets a lot of traction among our visitors due to it being among the most prominent elephant strips in the area. Spread out over 12.82 sq km, it is also home to some of the rarest floral and faunal species in all of Idukki. Fed by Uchillkuthi Puzha, Mathikettan Puzha, and Njandar, three water bodies that emanate from the Panniyar, its highest point is the Kattumala, which borders neighbouring Tamil Nadu.

Hillocks cover its terrain, with their uneven heights adding to the visual appeal of the place. Mostly evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, shola grasslands and semi-evergreens adorn the landscape in this area. The medicinal herbs here are precious to many. A Muthavan tribal colony at Aduvilanthakudy is situated about its northeastern borders.

Where

Located in Poopara village of Udumbanchola taluk in Idukki district, it is about 2 km from the National Highway and 10 km from Munnar.



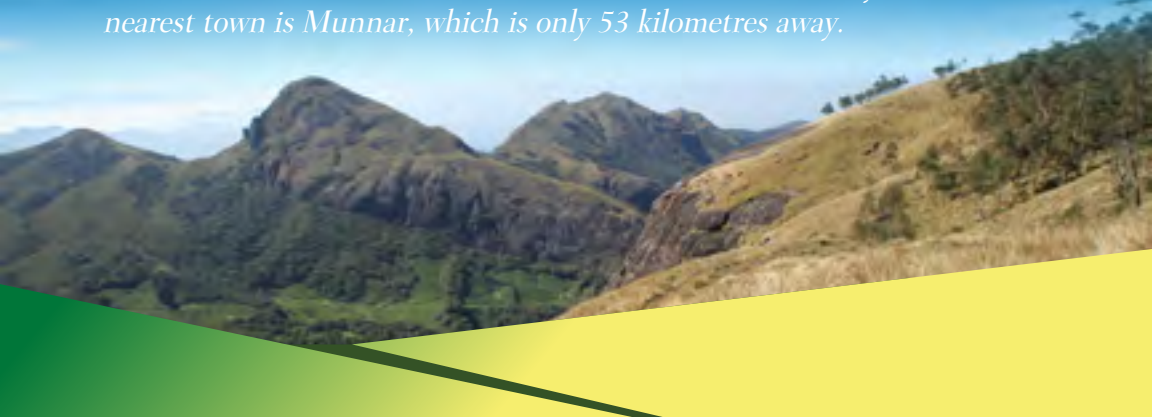
Ananmudi Shola

Ananmudi Shola represents one of Idukki's finest jewels, with the protected park containing some of the finest vantage points in the entire area, along with being a hotbed for sightings of endemic species. Bound on all sides by Eravikulam National Park, Pampadum Shola National Park, Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary and Mathikettan Shola Park, its 7.5 sq km area is every trekker's paradise.

Anamudi Peak, lying in the core area, is famous for being the tallest peak in South India. It boasts of high mountains, vast stretches of grassland, thick shola cover and waterfalls. Trekkers will find paths emanating from random corners that lead to even more beautiful sites during their hikes. Its biodiversity is among the most varied in the district and all of Kerala, with this area being home to around 174 species of herbs and shrubs, 62 species of trees and around 40 species of climbers. Tea plantations surround you, with tea factories visits being right atop most visitors' itineraries. Elephant, Nilgiri Tahr and tiger sightings are the other wildlife attractions in this pristine park.

Where

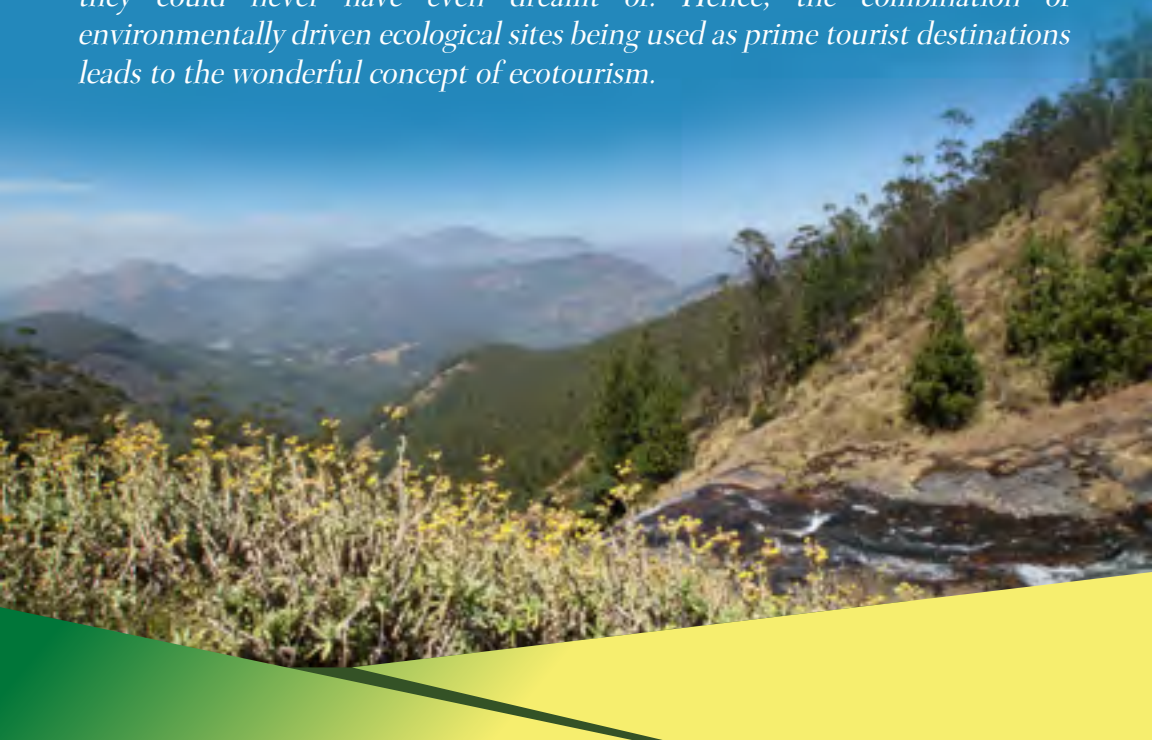
The National Park can be accessed from Kochi, which is only 160 km. The nearest town is Munnar, which is only 53 kilometres away.



Ecotourism

This planet we are on nurtures over 7 billion inhabitants on a daily basis. While its marvels are beyond the realm of any one person's imagination, it is easy to notice the damages that are being caused on each and every front, due to the rise in population and the spread of civilization. Even the uninhabited corners of Mother Earth are now being turned into urban centres, and this affects the fragile balance that has kept the planet afloat this entire time.

Tourism is a great bonding element, mixing and mashing cultural experiences from across the world. People gain empathy for those they may have nothing in common with, with places their ancestors may never have heard of or traditions they could never have even dreamt of. Hence, the combination of environmentally driven ecological sites being used as prime tourist destinations leads to the wonderful concept of ecotourism.



Significance of Ecotourism

Ecotourism lets people appreciate the many boons that Mother Earth has bestowed us with. It is the epitome of making people realize the true value of the treasures that we are endangering with our reckless actions. It is the clarion call that resonates within one's soul in a seamless but provocative manner, evoking the basic empathy that is the first step in battling the environmental dangers we are facing in this day and age.



Ecotourism in Munnar

Munnar, like most of Idukki, has constantly led the charge in maintaining and championing its dense forest cover. Home to some of the rarest endemic beings on the planet, a strict approach to building within the confines of nature has been followed in these parts. Establishments, tours and simple walks around the place show the effort that has gone in into maintaining the charm and greenery that earned Munnar its initial fame. One can see the boundless drive and energy that has gone into maintaining the parks and sanctuaries in this area, which ensures that our visitors understand that while nature is indeed inherently beautiful, humans play a huge role in deciding if it is preserved in the long run.



Why Kerala

The majestic trees and peeking wildlife that greet you during your journey are hallmarks of Kerala and its endless bounty of natural beauty. Much of our lore and tradition emanates from these parts, and they are treasure troves of our past and heritage. They are priceless cultural landmarks, behemoths of history and proud jewels that adorn our vast landscape. Kerala and its people have known for a long time the immense responsibility they have inherited from their ancestors; true crusaders who ensured the well-being of this land for centuries. It is now our moment, our time in history, to repay the gifts that the land has blessed us with.

Hence, the people and governments at all levels have come together to formulate ways to conserve and protect the myriad floral and faunal species that grace our unique landscape. Concerted efforts have been made in the last few decades, alongside budgetary allotments and specific policy changes, that has made Kerala one among the pioneers in the Ecotourism movement around the world. Being a region with such an abundance of natural resources, it seems only fitting that we set an example and lead the way in the global resistance against any threats to our environment.

Trekking

(Kurinji Trail)

Every 12 years, writers, biologists and nature enthusiasts throng to Idukki as people come together to witness the rare blooming of the legendary Neelakurinji. Sacred to the locals, and a source of pride for all Keralites, it turns the streets of Munnar into a carnival every single time it appears.

This trail is in itself a soft trekking package that helps you see the patches where one can witness the rare tracks of the Nilgiri Tahr and the areas where one normally gets to view the Neelakurinji. This three-hour trek is scheduled for mornings and evenings.

Cost of the Package

Rs. 290 per person for Indian National

Rs. 560 (minimum two people) for Foreigners



Lakkom Water Falls

Inside Eravikulam, there are hidden jewels that people come across only once they enter these hallowed grounds. The Lakkom Waterfalls originate in the heart of the Park and offer absolutely mesmerizing visuals. The waterfall is on the roadside in the route from Munnar to Marayoor, and is easily accessible. Many people loving making this pitstop to simply capture the divinity of the moment. Visitors can also avail services from the eco shop cafeteria and refreshing recreation centre set up here.

Cost of the Package

Rs. 20 per person



Cascade Walk

The forest whispers when you're least expecting it to. The very air permeates your being, with soft caresses and gentle murmurs that let you know that you're surrounded by over a million different species at any given time. Flora and fauna are simply words that cannot capture the brilliance that exists in these parts, as you weave your way through luxuriant Shola forests while the enchanting Lakkom Waterfalls is right next to you. This one hour trek is scheduled for mornings and evenings and is among the Parks most beloved attractions.

Cost of the package

Rs. 100/ person



Camping

Stay at Lakkom Log House

The Lakkom Log House is embraced by the Shola forests, hidden perfectly in the palm of nature itself. The sweet chirping birds and gurgling waterfalls form the perfect getaway for any modern traveller, tired by the ebbs and flows of urban life. Lakkom Log House is located near the Lakkom Waterfalls and offers high-end accommodation, forming one among the foremost premium sites in this entire location.

Cost of the Package

Rs. 3000 for two Indian Nationals

Rs. 4000 for Foreigners

Rs.1000 per extra person (maximum 4 persons)

Contact Details

For enquiries and reservations, Forest Information Centre
Wildlife Warden's Office, Munnar - 685 612

Tel: 91-4865-231587, Mob. 91 8301024187, 91 8547603199

Email: enpmunnar@gmail.com



Pambadum Shola National Park

Idukki is synonymous with dense forests but Pambadum Shola is a special spot where this reputation is stretched to its absolute. Covering over 12 sq km, it may appear tiny in comparison to most other protected areas in the state, but the sheer natural rush that this place invokes is unreal. It was declared a National Park in the year 2003, with April to September being the best time to visit and experience this lesser-known jewel.

The Trek to Vattavada

Pambadum Shola can be best accessed via a picturesque trek to Vattavada, with the best visuals of the surrounding woods being on display in these parts. It is a 3-hour trek, with rolling green hills, blue mountains and shola forests being the best of travelling companions the entire way.

Timing: 08.00 A.M. to 02.00 P.M.

Rs. 250/- per person

Stay over Log House

The Log House is a quaint cottage in the middle of the forests, whose rustic vibe imbibes everything the wild stands for. It is among the best ways to experience Pambadum Shola, visitors can avail of the package which is available in two log house (Bison) and one ethnic hut. The stay programme includes dinner and breakfast.

Check-in: 03.00 P.M. and Check-out: 10.00 A.M. Contact

Rs. 3000/- for two persons

The Wildlife Warden

Munnar PO, Idukki Dist.Kerala, India.

PIN:685 612

Tel: 91-4865-231587, Mob:9447979093,

Email: ww-munnar@forest.kerala.gov.in

Chinnar

In Chinnar, rainfall is among the most anticipated times of the year as it gives much-sought solace to its heat parched land. Its location in the Western Ghats ensures that it misses out on the routine monsoon in June-July which other parts of the State enjoy. Yet, it is a much-loved site in Idukki, and interestingly, is famous for being the location of the second highest number of Grizzled Giant Squirrels in the world.

Trek to Thoovanam Falls

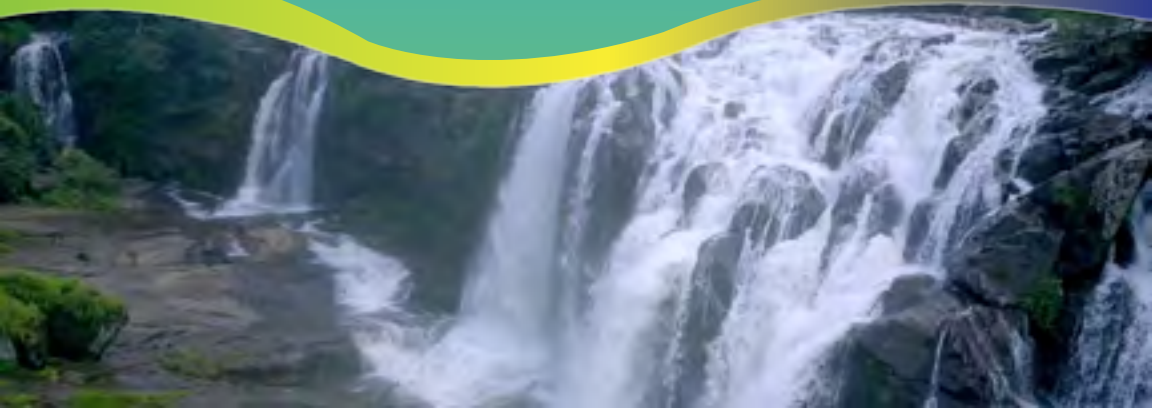
The intrinsic beauty of Chinnar is best sought out on a trek to Thoovanam falls. Locals attest to this 4 km trail being the best method to traverse and experience many of the sanctuaries' intricacies. The journey begins from Alampetty Checkpost, and a guide takes you on a trip that lasts over 3 hours. The Chinnar River is right next to you, and as soon as the Thoovanam Waterfalls come in front of you from afar, you are instantly transported to a magical land of beauty and wonder.

Timing: 08.00 A.M. – 02.00 P.M. (in-between 3 hours)

Rate

Rs. 250/- Indian Nationals

Rs. 600/- for Foreigners



Jeep Safari to Marayoor

Marayoor is a great location to get in touch with the past and history of this region. A special drive to the village of Marayoor through the tribal villages of the region and to Kanthalloor Village is among the best ways to understand the roots around which this entire area evolved. This package is available in two slots: 3 hours and a 5-hour programme.

Timing: 08.00 AM – 02.00 PM

Rate

Rs. 3000/- for 3 hours

Rs. 6000/- for 5 hours



Stay Over

Log House Stay

No words can match the intensity of actual experience, and this package provides the same for all our visitors to Chinnar. A log house on the banks of the river, in the very middle of a vast forest, where a wide variety of animals check in with all visitors from time to time.

The stay includes dinner and breakfast.

Jellimala Log House, Squirrel House, Koottar Log House, Pambar Log House, Churilipetty Log House and Karakkad Tree House are the available log houses in Chinnar.

Check-in: 02.00 P.M. and Check-out: 10.00 A.M.

Rs. 4000/- for two persons

Rs. 1000/-for extra Person

An entrance fee will be charged extra

Contact Information

Munnar P.O, Idukki, Kerala, PIN - 685 612

Phone: 04865 231587 Mobile:9447979093

Email - ww-munnar@forest.kerala.gov.in



Getting There



Nearest Railway Station

Aluva about 108 km away and Angamali about 109 km away



Nearest Airport

Cochin International Airport via Aluva - Munnar Road, about 108 km away



Location

Latitude: 10.091234, Longitude: 77.060051





Photo gallery



Tea Estate Munnar



*A different view
Thoovanam waterfalls*



Magical view of Eravikulam



Meesapulimala hills



Nilgiri Tahr at Eravikulam



On the way to Meesapulimala



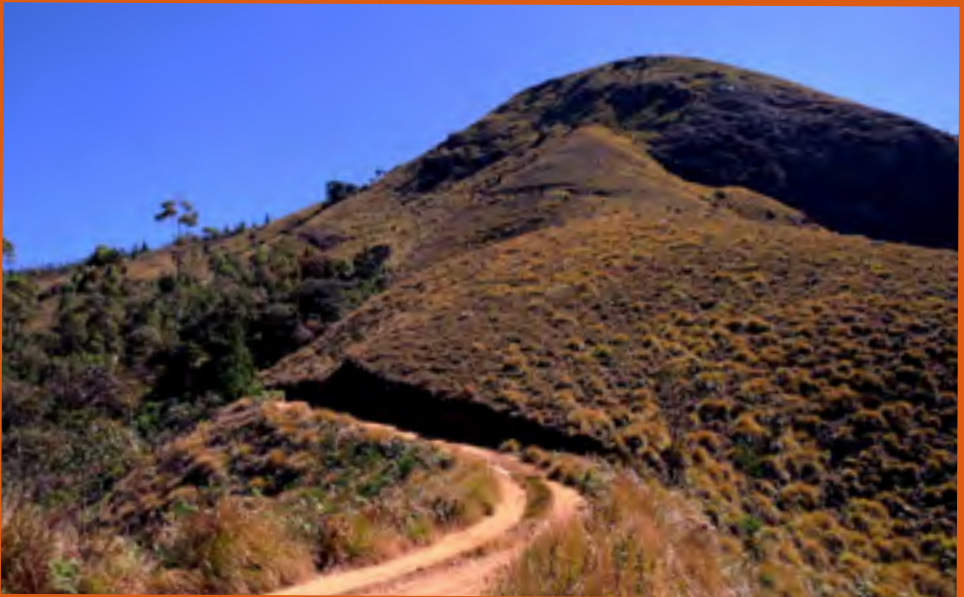
Pambadum Shola National Park



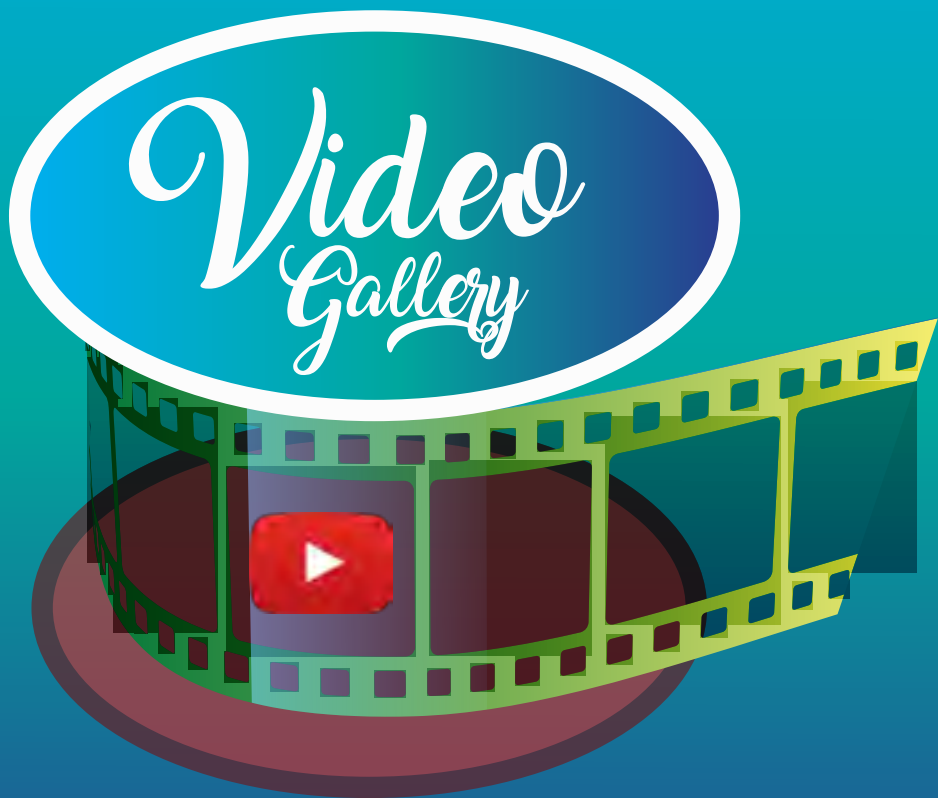
Tea Plantations in Munnar



Trekkers atop Meesapulimala



Trekking trail to Meesapulimala



Video Gallery

Mathikettan Shola
National Park



Video Gallery

Pambadum Shola
National Park



Video Gallery

Base Camp at Munnar



Video Gallery

Trek to Meesapulimala



Video Gallery

Eravikulam National Park



Video Gallery

Trek to Thoovanam falls

