

A traditional thatched-roof boat, likely a houseboat, is shown on a calm waterway. The boat has a curved, arched roof made of woven palm leaves. Inside the boat, three people are visible: a man in a white shirt and dark pants, a woman in a light-colored dress, and a man in a light-colored shirt and shorts. The boat is surrounded by lush tropical vegetation, including palm trees and dense foliage. The water is still, reflecting the boat and the surrounding greenery. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

Spice Coast Cruises
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Belong to the Backwaters

SPICE COAST CRUISES

A CGH EARTH PHOTOBOOK



WADE THROUGH THE ENCHANTING BACKWATERS



Welcome aboard Spice Coast Cruises for a memoir-inspiring journey through the backwaters of Kerala. It's a journey along the Vembanad Lake on a Kettuvallam, which is a large traditional houseboat.

In Malayalam, 'kettu' means 'to tie' and 'vallam' means 'boat'. The Kettuvallam is the most enchanting vehicle to explore the various facets of life along the backwaters.



JOURNEY ON A HANDMADE CRUISE



You'll be amazed to know that 'Kettuvallams' or Houseboats are handmade. They are made of huge planks of wood held together by thick coir ropes tied to knots. They are coated with fish oil and black resin made from boiled cashewnut shells. Back in the day, Kettuvallams were used to transport rice, spices and ferry people through the backwater canals. Steering the Kettuvallams are boatmen, who are specialists in navigating them along the backwater landscape through its every ripple, with ease.





Spice Coast Cruises
CREW



SWAY IN NATURE'S HAMMOCK



You'll revel in awe, inside the enchanting Kettuvallam. Its bedroom cabins are cozy, comfortable spaces to relax in. So, while you have your privacy and are also protected from insects and the elements, you still stay connected to nature. The boats are air-conditioned (at night) and equipped with 1 or 2 en suite bedrooms. The foredeck is a place to sit and enjoy a breezy, beautiful view of the landscape along the waters. As the boat sails, you'll feel a mild sway in your sleep, with sounds of gentle lapping of water against the sides of your floating bedroom.







DINE FRESH OFF THE WATERS



The most distinctive stand-outs of your on-boat meals will be freshness and flavour created by the members of the crew, who are also renowned for their culinary skills in regional cuisine. Seafood is the mainstay of this menu, with the fish always caught fresh from the backwaters. Aside from Karimeen, do relish the lentils and gourd made authentic with fresh pepper and mustard seeds, served with greens handpicked from the markets that dot the canals on the cruise. All of these come accompanied with steaming bowls of rice. That makes the Kettuvallam home to Kerala cuisine with some of the many hard-to-miss dishes being Karimeen, Avial and Chembu Mezukkupuratti.





CATCH GLIMPSES OF LOCAL LIFE



Most inhabitants of the Vembanad lake derive their sustenance from the lake through a variety of activities that include fishing, agriculture, boat building, coir rope production, handicrafts and tourism. The cruise on the Kettuvallam will be your opportunity to spend time with the local folks engrossed in their vocations – fishermen and shell harvesters at work, paddy being sowed or harvested, native toddy-tappers clambering up and down coconut trees. You could in fact try your hand at coir-making. If you're lucky, you can taste the local favourite, 'toddy', a drink made out of fermented sap of palm trees.

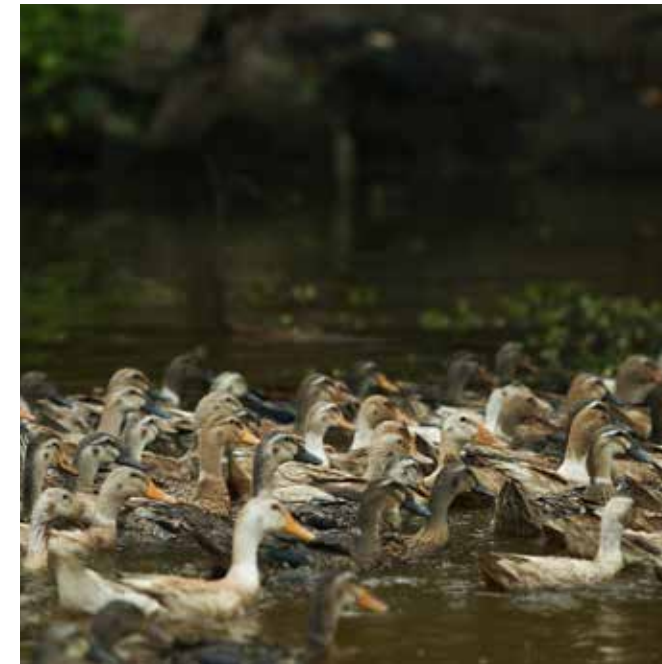


IMMERSE IN THE CULTURE



The villages along the Vembanad lake are a blend of one common element – charm! They reflect local customs, occupations and social standing of various groups that have chosen to make their home in and around this vast and wondrous lake. Your cruise is not all water, but a bit of land too. If you choose to stay for two nights or more, you can explore the villages on bicycles and savour the flavours of local life. You'll be amazed by the canvas you'll ride past. Whether you choose to walk or cycle through any of these villages, you'll celebrate this journey into a culture.





DISCOVER THE RICH BACKWATERS



The Vembanad lake is a habitat to different flora and fauna, with the backwaters being home to many birds. A lot of them can be seen at the Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary on its eastern shore. As you cruise along the backwaters, you'll see several species, both marine and non-marine, that are a mix of native and migrant. The backwaters have a unique ecosystem comprising a variety of species, all of which make the Vembanad lake a unique blanket of water. So on your trip in a Kettuvallam, get ready to be greeted by charming sights in the sky, with a mesmerizing view of the sunset from your houseboat, forming the backdrop.







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