

Kerala

State : (pop., 2008 est.: 34,232,000), southwestern India.

Area: 38,863 sq. km

Population: 31,841,374

Capital: Thiruvananthapuram

Principal Languages: Malayalam

Better known as "**Gods Own Country**", Kerala offers you a host of exciting holiday options. Spread out across the year are specially designed packages that highlight the State's attractions, and prove beyond doubt that the season never ends in this breath taking beautiful land.

Basic Facts		
Date of Formation	:	November 1, 1956
Area	:	38,863 Sq. Km.
Capital	:	Thiruvananthapuram
Principal language	:	Malayalam
State Festival	:	Onam
State Animal	:	Elephant
State Bird	:	Hornbill (Bensyrus Bicernis)
State Flower	:	Kanikkonna (Cassia Fistula)
State Tree	:	Coconut Tree (Cocos nucifera)
Geographical Data	:	North Latitude between 8 ⁰ 18' and 12 ⁰ 48' East longitude between 74 ⁰ 52' and 77 ⁰ 22'
Neighbouring States/UTs	:	Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Lakshadweep is.
Demography		
Population (2001)	:	3,18,41,374
Male (2001)	:	1,54,68,614
Female (2001)	:	1,63,72,760

Sex Ratio (Females per 1000 males)	:	1058
Population density (2001)	:	819/ Sq. Km.
Urban Population (2001)	:	8266925 (26%)
Rural Population (2001)	:	2357449 (74%)
Decadal growth rate (2001)	:	9.43
Scheduled Caste population (in million)	:	3.12
Scheduled Tribe population (in million)	:	0.36
Maternal mortality ratio 2001-03 (SRS 2007)	:	110
Crude Birth Rate (SRS 2008)	:	14.6%
Crude Death Rate (SRS 2008)	:	6.6%
Total Fertility Rate (NFHS-111)	:	1.9
Infant Mortality Rate (SRS 2008)	:	12
Life expectancy	:	71
Male life expectancy	:	71
Female life expectancy	:	73.62
Per capita income	:	Rs. 27,048
Literacy	:	90.92 %
Male literacy	:	94.20 %
Female literacy	:	87.86 %

Administration

Districts	:	14
Revenue Divisions	:	21
Taluks	:	63
Villages	:	1453
Panchayats	:	999

Development Blocks	:	152
District Panchayats	:	14
Assembly Seats	:	140 + 1 Anglo Indian Nominee
Loksabha Seats	:	20
Rajyasabha Seats	:	9
Municipalities	:	53
Municipal Corporations	:	5
Contonment	:	1 (Kannur)
Township	:	1 (Guruvayoor)
Educational Districts	:	38
Sub Educational Districts	:	161
Universities	:	7+ 2 Deemed Universities

District wise Details			
District	Area Sq. Km	Population	Head Quarters
Thiruvananthapuram	2192	32,34,356	Thiruvananthapuram
Kollam	2579	25,85,208	Kollam
Pathanamthitta	2731	12,34,016	Pathanamthitta
Alappuzha	1256	21,09,160	Alappuzha
Kottayam	2204	15,53,646	Kottayam
Idukki	4998	11,29,221	Painavu
Ernakulam	2408	31,05,798	Kochi
Thrissur	3032	29,74,232	Thrissur
Palakkad	4480	26,17,482	Palakkad
Malappuram	3548	36,25,471	Malappuram
Kozhikode	2345	28,79,131	Kozhikode
Wayanad	2132	7,80,619	Kalppatta
Kannur	2997	24,08,956	Kannur

Kasargod	1961	12,04,078	Kasaragod
Total	38863	3,18,41,374	

Agriculture Scenario (2005-2006)		
Total cropped area	:	27,68,737 ha
Net area sown	:	21,05,070 ha
Area sown more than once	:	6,63,667 ha.
Land put to non agricultural uses	:	4,49,003 ha
Cropping intensity	:	131
Barren & uncultivated land	:	25,826 ha.
Permanent pastures and grazing land	:	95 ha.
Land under miscellaneous tree crops	:	4,593 ha.
Current fallow	:	83,454 ha.
Fallow other than current fallow	:	45,644 ha.
Cultivable waste	:	91,093 ha
Forest	:	10,81,509 Ha.
Gross irrigated area	:	4,55,310 ha.
Net area irrigated to net area sown	:	18.41%
Gross irrigated area to gross cropped area	:	16.44%
Irrigated area under paddy to total irrigated area	:	40%
Production of Rice	:	5,28,000 MT
Productivity of Rice	:	2,308 Kg./Ha.
Area under paddy cultivation	:	2.29 lakh ha.
Production of Milk (2006-07)	:	22.48 Lakh tonnes
Production of Egg (2006-07)	:	1,379 Million
Production of Meat (2006-07)	:	205.21('000 Metric tonnes)

General	
Seat of High Court	: Kochi
Highest Populated District	: Malappuram
Lowest Populated District	: Wayanad
Largest District	: Idukki
Smallest District	: Alappuzha
Longest River	: Periyar
Highest Peak	: Anamudi
Largest Kayal	: Vembanad Kayal
National Highways	: 8 (1524 Km)
Road Length	: 1,73,592 Km
Railway Route	: 1,148 Km.
Airports	: 3 (Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode)
Regional Passport offices	: 4 (Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Kozhikode and Malappuram)
Annual rainfall	: 3,428.4 mm (2006)
Forest Area (2001 census)	: 15,560 Sq. Km
Major Religions	: Hinduism, Islam, Christianity
Number of Post Offices (2007-08)	: 5,070
Number of Telephone Exchanges	: 1,242
Number of Rivers	: 44
Number of navigable rivers	: 41
Total length of Inland water ways	: 1,687 Km



Shri. R.S. Gavai, Governor



Sri. V.S. Achuthanandan

Chief Minister

Council of Ministers

<u>Shri. V.S ACHUTHANANDA</u>	Chief Minister
Shri. M.A. Baby	Minister for Education and Culture
Shri. Kodyeri Balakrishnan	Minister for Home, Tourism
<u>Shri. A. K.Balan</u>	Minister for Electricity, SC/ST Development
<u>Shri. Binoy Viswom</u>	Minister for Forest and wild life
<u>Shri. C.Divakaran</u>	Minister for Food and Civil Supplies
<u>Shri. P.K.Gurudasan</u>	Minister for Labour & Excise
<u>Shri. Elamaram Kareem</u>	Minister for Industries
<u>Shri. Paloli Mohammed Kutty</u>	Minister for Local Self Government
<u>Shri. N. K. Premachandran</u>	Minister for Water Resources
<u>Shri. K. P. Rajendran</u>	Minister for Revenue and Land Reforms
<u>Shri. Mullakkara Ratnakaran</u>	Minister for Agriculture
<u>Shri. S.Sharma</u>	Minister for Fisheries
Smt. P. K. Sreemathi Teacher	Minister for Health and Social Welfare
<u>Shri. G. Sudhakaran</u>	Minister for Co operation
Dr. T. M. Thomas Issac	Minister for Finance
<u>Shri. M. Vijayakumar</u>	Minister for Law, Sports and Youth affairs, Parliamentary Affairs
<u>Shri. Kadannapall</u>	Minister for Devaswom, Printing and

<u>Ramachandran</u>	Stationary
<u>Shri. Jose Thettayil</u>	Minister for Transport

It lies on the Arabian Sea, is bordered by Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states, and surrounds the coastal enclave of Mahe (part of Puducherry union territory). It has an area of 15,005 sq mi (38,863 sq km), and its capital is Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum). During the 3rd century bce, it was an independent Dravidian kingdom known as Keralaputra. The Kulashekara dynasty ruled the region in the 9th–12th century, when the regional Malayalam language took hold; it is still the dominant language. Portuguese intervention from 1498 was followed by Dutch rule in the 17th century. The Dutch were ousted in the mid-18th century by the princely state of Venad (Travancore), which itself came under British rule as part of the Madras Presidency in the early 19th century. It acquired its present name and shape in 1956. Kerala is one of India's most densely populated states.

It is southwestern coastal state of India. It is a small state, constituting only about 1 percent of the total area of the country. Kerala stretches for about 360 miles (580 km) along the Malabar Coast, varying in width from roughly 20 to 75 miles (30 to 120 km). It is bordered by the states of Karnataka (formerly Mysore) to the north and Tamil Nadu to the east and by the Arabian Sea to the south and west; it also surrounds Mahe, a segment of the state of Puducherry, on the northwestern coast. The capital is Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum).

Although isolated from the Indian interior by the mountainous belt of the Western Ghats, Kerala has been exposed to many foreign influences via its long coastline; consequently, the state has developed a unique culture within the subcontinent, not only with a diverse religious tradition but also with its own language, Malayalam. Also notable is the high social status that continues to be accorded to women of Kerala, owing to the former strength of a matrilineal kinship system. Area 15,005 square miles (38,863 square km). Pop. (2008 est.) 34,232,000.

Land

Kerala is a region of great natural beauty. In the eastern part of the state, Anai Peak (8,842 feet [2,695 metres]), the highest peak of peninsular India, crowns the Western Ghats. Descending from the rocky highlands westward toward the coastal plain is a stretch of farmlands, with different crops cultivated at different elevations. Along the coast, a linked chain of lagoons and backwaters form the so-called Venice of India. Among the more important rivers that flow to the Arabian Sea are the Ponnani (Bharatapuzha), Periyar, Chalakudi, and Pamba.

Climate

The climate of Kerala is equable and varies little from season to season. Throughout the year, daily temperatures usually rise from the low 70s F (low 20s C) into the 80s F (27 to 32 °C). The state is directly exposed to the southwest monsoon, which prevails from July through September, but it also receives rain from the reverse (northeast) monsoon, which blows in October and November. Precipitation averages about 115 inches (3,000 mm) annually statewide, with some slopes receiving more than 200 inches (5,000 mm).

Plant and animal life

The watery coastal zones of Kerala are interspersed with coconut palm groves, while much of the Western Ghats and riverine areas are covered with rainforests and monsoon forests (tropical deciduous forests). Rolling grasslands are typical of the upland region. This diverse natural environment is home to an extraordinary array of wildlife. Mammals include sambar deer, gaurs (wild cattle), Nilgiri tahrs (wild goatlike animals; *Hemitragus hylocrius*, or, by some classifications, *Nilgiritragus hylocrius*), elephants, leopards, tigers, bonnet monkeys, rare lion-tailed macaques (*Macaca silenus*), and Hanuman and Nilgiri langurs (*Semnopithecus entellus* and *Trachypithecus johnii*, respectively). King cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*) are among the notable reptiles, while peacocks and hornbills are common birds. The state has several national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, among which the Periyar National Park and Tiger Reserve is the largest.

Population composition

The Malayalis are a group of people of mixed ethnic heritage who speak Malayalam, a Dravidian language; they constitute the majority of the population of Kerala. Most Malayalis are descendants of the early inhabitants of India, the so-called Dravidians (speakers of Dravidian languages), who were driven southward between about 2000 and 1500 bce when the Aryans (speakers of Indo-Aryan languages) descended into the Indian subcontinent. Over the millennia, there has been much exchange between the two groups. Elements of Indo-Aryan ancestry remain strongest among the Nambudiri, a prominent caste of orthodox Hindus. Also living in Kerala is a significant minority of Tamils, a neighbouring people of Dravidian ancestry.

More than half of Kerala's residents, including most of the Malayalis, follow Hinduism. About one-fourth of the population practices Islam, with the Moplah (Mapilla) people of the Malabar Coast constituting the state's largest Muslim community. Christians, who account for nearly one-fifth of the population, belong broadly to the Syrian Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches as well as to various Protestant denominations. Kerala also has tiny Jain, Sikh, Buddhist, and Jewish communities; there is an ancient synagogue in Kochi.

Settlement patterns and demographic trends

Kerala is one of the most densely populated states in India. While only about one-fourth of the population was reported as urban in the early 21st century, such statistics are deceptive because of the close proximity of rural houses, especially in the coastal plain. Indeed, in parts of the state there are densely populated rural equivalents of urban megalopolises. The major urban centres and industrial complexes include Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode, Kollam (Quilon), Alappuzha (Alleppey), Thrissur (Trichur), and Thalassery (Tellicherry).

Agriculture, forestry, and fishing

Agriculture is the state's main economic activity. Commercial plantings on less than half of the total land under cultivation earn a sizable amount of foreign exchange but have necessitated the importation of food for local consumption. Kerala's principal cash crops are rubber, coffee, and tea, which are cultivated in plantations on the slopes of the foothills, as well as areca nut, cardamom, cashew nut,

coconut, ginger, and pepper. The major food crops are rice, pulses (e.g., peas and beans), sorghum, and tapioca. Commercial poultry farming is well developed.

The forests yield valuable timbers such as ebony, rosewood, and teak. In addition, Kerala's woodlands supply industrial raw materials such as bamboo (used in the paper and rayon industries), wood pulp, charcoal, gums, and resins. The state is also a national leader in fish production. Sardines, tunas, mackerels, and prawns are among the principal products of the industry.

Resources and power

Kerala lacks major reserves of fossil fuels. However, there are moderate deposits of ilmenite (the principal ore of titanium), rutile (titanium dioxide), and monazite (a mineral consisting of cerium and thorium phosphates), all of which are found in beach sands. Other minerals include limestone, iron ores, and bauxite (the principal ore of aluminum). The state is especially known for its high-quality kaolin (china clay), which is used to make porcelain.

Kerala has great hydroelectric potential, with some two dozen hydroelectric stations operating within the state. Several thermal plants supply additional energy, and in the late 20th century the state began to establish wind farms. Despite its wealth of renewable resources for power generation, Kerala has continued to import some of its electricity from elsewhere in India.

Manufacturing, services, and labour

Aside from agriculture, manufacturing and service activities are important contributors to Kerala's economy. Traditional cottage industries, such as weaving, the production of coconut fibre, and cashew processing, employ many workers in the manufacturing sector. Of the medium- and large-scale industries, food processing is the principal employer. Other major manufactures include fertilizers, chemicals, electrical equipment, titanium, aluminum, plywood, ceramics, and synthetic fabrics. Banking, finance, and other components of the services sector also employ a significant segment of the state's workforce. However, unemployment has remained acute, with the state's high level of education among the jobless exacerbating the problem.

Transportation

Kerala has well-developed road and railway systems. It is connected with the states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka by national highways. A railway coming from the east through the Palghat Gap in the Western Ghats meets with a railway running from north to south through the state and on to Kanniyakumari, the southernmost town of India. There is a major port at Kochi and intermediate ports at Kozhikode, Alappuzha, and Neendakara (near Thiruvananthapuram); all handle coastal and foreign traffic. Kochi also has major shipyard and oil refining facilities and serves as a district headquarters for the Indian coast guard and as a regional headquarters for the navy. More than 1,000 miles (1,600 km) of inland waterways form the main arteries for carrying bulk freight to and from the ports. Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode have international airports; an airport in Kochi offers domestic service.

Constitutional framework

The structure of the government of Kerala, like that of most other states of India, is determined by the national constitution of 1950. Appointed by the president of India, the governor is the head of the state and functions on the advice of the chief minister, who is the head of the Council of Ministers. The state has an elected unicameral Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha). The High Court in Ernakulam (near Kochi) is headed by a chief justice; appeals from the High Court may go to the Supreme Court of India. Below the High Court are district courts, subdivisional courts, munsifs' (subordinate judicial officers') courts, and munsif-magistrate courts. In addition, there are family courts and other courts that handle particular types of cases.

At the local level, the state is divided into districts, which in turn are subdivided for revenue purposes into talukas (subdivisions) and villages. Since the mid-20th century, Kerala's political experience has largely been one of instability, with a proliferation of political parties and coalition governments.

Health and welfare

The state maintains a relatively high standard of health service. A comprehensive health insurance plan is available for workers in a number of professions, and free medical treatment is offered in many hospitals, health centres, and dispensaries. Among the top priorities of government health schemes have been the establishment of health care facilities in rural areas, the promotion of family planning, prevention of blindness, and control of communicable diseases such as leprosy, tuberculosis, and malaria.

Education

Kerala has one of the most advanced educational systems and highest levels of literacy in India. Elementary education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 11. There are primary, middle, and secondary schools, as well as polytechnical and industrial training institutes, arts and science colleges, and professional colleges. Kerala also has several universities, including the University of Kerala (1937) in Thiruvananthapuram, the University of Calicut (1968) in Kozhikode, Cochin University of Science and Technology (1971) in Kochi, and Kerala Agricultural University (1971) in Thrissur.

Cultural life

The cultural heritage of Kerala reflects extensive interaction with diverse communities from antiquity to the present. With an array of ancient Hindu temples with copper-clad roofs, later mosques with "Malabar gables" (triangular projections at the rooftops), and Baroque churches from the Portuguese colonial era, the state's architecture offers a chronicle of the social, spiritual, and political history of the area. Other characteristically Keralan art forms include intricate paintings on wood, thematic murals, and a remarkable variety of indoor and outdoor lamps (from which the state has earned the sobriquet "Land of Lamps").

Literature and learning, in both Tamil and Sanskrit, have flourished since the 2nd century ce; meanwhile, the Malayalam language, though an offshoot of Tamil, has absorbed much from Sanskrit and also has a prolific literature. Notable names in Malayalam poetry are Tunchattu Eluttaccan and Kuncan Nampiyar among classical poets and Kumaran Asan and Vallathol in the 20th century. In 1889 Chandu Menon

wrote *Indulekha*, the first outstanding novel in Malayalam, for which he received a certificate from Queen Victoria. Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, who produced hundreds of works before his death in 1999, has remained among the most widely read Malayali novelists.

Most traditional dances of Kerala pertain to the great Indian epics—the Mahabharata and the Ramayana—or to the honouring of specific Hindu deities. In kathakali, the classical martial dance-drama of Kerala, male performers portray both male and female characters. By contrast, the bharata natyam dancing, dating to early Tamil times, is practiced exclusively by females.

History

Kerala is first mentioned (as Keralaputra) in a 3rd-century-bce rock inscription left by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka. In the last centuries bce this region became famous among the Greeks and Romans for its spices (especially pepper). During the first five centuries ce the region was a part of Tamilakam—the territory of the Tamils—and thus was sometimes partially controlled by the eastern Pandya and Chola dynasties, as well as by the Cheras. In the 1st century Jewish immigrants arrived, and, according to Syrian Orthodox Christians, St. Thomas the Apostle visited Kerala in the same century.

Much of Kerala's history from the 6th to the 8th century is obscure, but it is known that Arab traders introduced Islam later in the period. Under the Kulashekara dynasty (c. 800–1102), Malayalam emerged as a distinct language, and Hinduism became prominent.

The Cholas often controlled Kerala during the 11th and 12th centuries. By the beginning of the 14th century, Ravi Varma Kulashekara of the Venad kingdom established a short-lived supremacy over southern India. After his death, Kerala became a conglomeration of warring chieftaincies, among which the most important were Calicut (now Kozhikode) in the north and Venad in the south.

The era of foreign intervention began in 1498, when Vasco da Gama landed near Calicut. In the 16th century the Portuguese superseded the Arab traders and dominated the commerce of the Malabar Coast. Their attempt to establish sovereignty was thwarted by the zamorin (hereditary ruler) of Calicut. The Dutch ousted the Portuguese in the 17th century. Marthanda Varma ascended the Venad throne in 1729 and crushed Dutch expansionist designs at the Battle of Kolachel 12 years later. Marthanda Varma then adopted a European mode of martial discipline and expanded the Venad domain to encompass what became the southern state of Travancore. His alliance in 1757 with the raja of the central state of Cochin (Kochi), against the zamorin, enabled Cochin to survive. By 1806, however, Cochin and Travancore, as well as the Malabar Coast in the north, had become subject states under the British Madras Presidency.

Two years after India's independence was achieved in 1947, Cochin and Travancore were united as Travancore-Cochin state. The present state of Kerala was constituted on a linguistic basis in 1956 when the Malabar Coast and the Kasargod taluka (administrative subdivision) of South Kanara were added to Travancore-Cochin. The southern portion of the former Travancore-Cochin state was attached to Tamil Nadu.
