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simonharrycollins/Shutterstock.com



Santhosh Varghese/Shutterstock.com



alionabirukova/Shutterstock.com

Kerala's first city, with its knotty official name of Thiruvananthapuram (often substituted by the shorter, more manageable Trivandrum), is an exhaustive introduction to southern India's urban and cultural life. Trivandrum tends to be unjustly overlooked en route to the state's beachside settlements, but easily warrants a few days of its own.

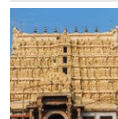
### Featured



#### Puthe Maliga Palace Museum

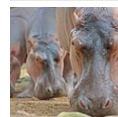
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### Top 5



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#### Thiruvananthapuram Zoo

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#### Keralam - Museum of History

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#### Napier Museum

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#### Kovalam Beach

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## THE CITY



Alexandra Lande/Shutterstock.com

Being the official capital of Kerala, Trivandrum is the state's most important administrative, cultural, and intellectual hub, home to significant institutions such as, for example, the science and tech development hubs of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing; the University of Kerala also has its base here.

Having been renamed to Thiruvananthapuram in 1991, Trivandrum still most often goes by Trivandrum for convenience. There are a few sites of interest to visitors, from the Kerala Science and Technology Museum with its world-class planetarium, to a good selection of museums and eateries serving south Indian specialities. The Shangumugham Beach is a pleasant daytime and/or evening getaway a stone's throw away from the Trivandrum International airport; Kovalam Beach, slightly further afield, is another local favourite.

## DO & SEE



ostill/Shutterstock.com

There is plenty to warrant a stay in Kerala's first city, and it is here, in Trivandrum, that a visitor can have the best go at experiencing Keralan urban life. If the inner city's museums and palaces prove insufficient, tranquil beaches (most notably, one of the world's finest: Kovalam) and further sights are only a short drive away.

### Padmanabhaswamy Temple



Although entry into the shrine is allowed to Hindus alone, visitors of any religious denomination can marvel at the 30-metre high golden gate (gopura) towering right next to the Fort. The sizeable structure is among the world's richest in terms of valuable metals and precious stones used in its interior decor. Its early origins remain steeped in mystery.

Photo: alionabirukova/Shutterstock.com

Address: West Nada, East Fort, Trivandrum

Phone: +91 471 246 4606

Internet: [www.sreepadmanabhaswamytemple.org](http://www.sreepadmanabhaswamytemple.org)

### Thiruvananthapuram Zoo



The Thiruvananthapuram Zoo - Asia's oldest - reportedly served as inspiration for the animals of internationally-acclaimed

"Life of Pi". Today, the zoo's inhabitants comprise hippos, leopards, deer, reptiles, and many more. The grounds are expansive, so do wear your walking shoes.

Photo: Alexandra Lande/Shutterstock.com

Address: Kanaka Nagar, Nanthancode, Trivandrum

Opening hours: Tue-Sun 9am-5.15pm

Phone: +91 471 231 6275

### Keralam - Museum of History and Heritage



The Museum of History and Heritage showcases artefacts through centuries of Keralan history. There are also a few multimedia and

interactive displays, making a tour entertaining, alongside educational. One of the highlights are model displays of traditional Keralan interiors.

Photo: Akhilan/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)

Address: Park View, Vikas Bhavan, Trivandrum

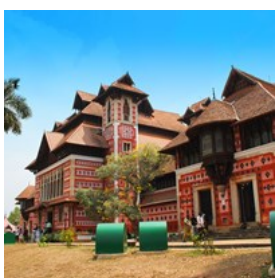
Opening hours: Tue-Sun 10am-5.30pm

Phone: +91 471 232 0231

Internet: [www.museumkeralam.org](http://www.museumkeralam.org)

More Info: Tourism Directorate Compound

### Napier Museum



The Napier Museum collection is dedicated largely to Indian deities and Keralan rulers of yesteryear, their endeavours and conquests. There are plenty of fascinating

artefacts on display, but the building itself is equally worth a look around, being a fine (albeit atypical) example of 19th-century architecture.

Photo: tscreationz/Shutterstock.com

Address: LMS Vellayambalam Rd, Palayam, Trivandrum

Opening hours: Tue-Sun 10am-4.30pm, Wed 1-5pm

Phone: +91 471 231 6275

### Kovalam Beach

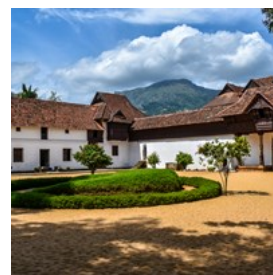


One of India's - and, indeed, the entire world's - finest beaches traces the Keralan coast roughly 15km away from central Trivandrum. The beach is

a travellers' darling, and a popular evening hangout spot for Trivandrum locals. The Lighthouse Beach at Kovalam's southern end has an elevated viewing platform and is especially scenic.

Photo: Martinfasanek/Shutterstock.com

### Puthe Maliga Palace Museum



Once the residence of Travancore royals, the roughly 200-year-old Puthe Maliga Palace (also known as the Kuthira Malika) has been

converted into a fascinating museum containing historic artefacts pertaining to the Travancore dynasty. A guided tour of the palace is included in the ticket price; admission to palace grounds is free.

Photo: Heymish Fernandez/Shutterstock.com

Address: Bhajanapura Palace Rd, East Fort, Trivandrum

Opening hours: Tue-Sun 8.30am-1pm & 3-5.30pm

## DINING



*Santhosh Varghese/Shutterstock.com*

The state of Kerala is famously referred to as "the land of spices", which is reflected in the local cuisine that makes generous use of turmeric, pepper, cardamon, nutmeg, ginger, and many other. A culinary experience not to miss is the sadya spread: a meal served on banana leaf, traditionally eaten by hand, which consists of rice and a variety of curries, along with dessert. Keralan cuisine is also famously not limited to vegetarian only, with various meats and fish represented across a plethora of dishes.

### Villa Maya

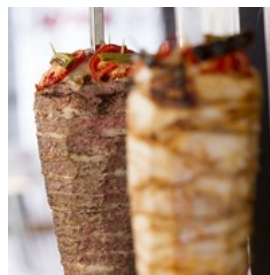


One of the finest dining experiences in Kerala (and, according to some rankings, all of India), Villa Maya is an exquisite restaurant occupying a

beautiful colonial mansion. The culinary emphasis is on elevated Keralan specialities, with a focus on seafood. Seating available inside the well-kept building or outside in private courtyard gazebos.

Photo: Santhosh Varghese/Shutterstock.com  
Address: 120 Airport Road, Enjakkal, Trivandrum  
Opening hours: Daily 7.30am-11.15pm  
Phone: +91 471 257 8901  
Internet: [www.villamaya.in](http://www.villamaya.in)  
More Info: Near Muthoot Sky Chef

### Zam Zam



This incredibly popular eatery serves up scrumptious Middle Eastern meat grills, north and south Indian specialities, seafood, and a sizeable selection of vegetarian dishes. For the best deals, check out the set combo meal menus, which are most often a steal. They are especially known for their ice creams.

Photo: Nadir Keklik/Shutterstock.com  
Address: Palayam, Trivandrum  
Opening hours: Daily 11am-11pm  
Phone: +91 471 401 1033  
Internet: [www.zamzamrestaurants.com](http://www.zamzamrestaurants.com)  
More Info: Opposite MLA Hostel

### Ariya Nivas



One of the best vegetarian dining establishments around, Ariya Nivas is an attractive restaurant that offers an all-you-can-eat lunch buffet at an extremely low price, and vegetarian thalis aplenty during dinner hours. They also have a typical south Indian breakfast selection to-order.

Photo: PI/Shutterstock.com  
Address: Manorama Rd, Thampanoor, Trivandrum  
Phone: +91 471 233 0789  
More Info: Opposite the Railway Station

### Mothers Veg Plaza



The wildly popular Mothers Veg Plaza is beyond any doubt one of Trivandrum's finest vegetarian dining establishments. Food



here is served as sadhya (laid out on a large banana leaf), with multiple varieties of dosas (savoury pancake) to go along. It's a casual affair, and a wildly popular one.

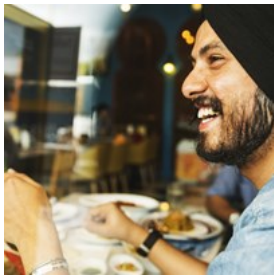
Photo: [vm2002/Shutterstock.com](#)

Address: Bakery Junction, Palayam, Trivandrum

Opening hours: Daily 7am-11pm

Phone: +91 471 401 2255

### Azad Restaurant



Azad has been in business since as early as 1940, a fact reflected in the menu that lists dishes with chicken, mutton and fish cooked according to the original 1940s recipes - but not only. It's a place well-known to and still frequented by locals, for both sit-in dining and take-away.

Photo: [Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock.com](#)

Address: Mahathma Gandhi Rd, Overbridge, Chalai Bazaar, Trivandrum

Phone: +91 471 247 0455

### CAFES



*Santhosh Varghese/Shutterstock.com*

Cafes aren't a foreign concept to Trivandrum residents, and there are quite a few across town. For breakfast (or any other meal of the day, for that matter), try a local speciality called dosa: a pancake cooked to crispy perfection, made with rice and black lentil flower, served with one or

more types of dip.

### Indian Coffee House



The distinctive-looking spiral-shaped building containing this Indian Coffee House branch is well-known to Keralans, who regularly take advantage of its efficient service and inexpensive offerings of savoury meals and delightful sweets.

Photo: [Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock.com](#)

Address: Palayam, Trivandrum

Phone: +91 471 321 4502

More Info: [MLA Hostel](#)

### Cherries & Berries



This excellent little cafe serves a good selection of sweet and savoury treats. The latter delights with jacket potatoes, grilled cheese sandwiches, pasta, pizza, burgers, soups and salads; the former's highlights are ice creams and milkshakes, along with a great many teas and coffees.

Photo: [George Dolgikh/Shutterstock.com](#)

Address: Carmel Towers, Vazhuthacaud, Trivandrum

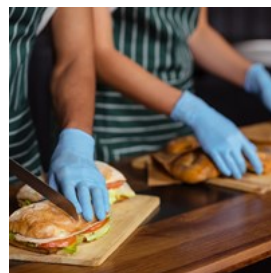
Opening hours: Daily 10am-10pm

Phone: +91 471 273 5433

Internet: [www.cherriesandberries.in](http://www.cherriesandberries.in)

More Info: [Opposite Cottonhill GHS](#)

### Supreme Upper Crust



Supreme Upper Crust became an instant hit with locals upon its inauguration, and has seen an undwindling flow of patrons ever since.

Highly praised for its French and Italian-inspired dishes, orderly workings and excellent in-house patisserie, the cafe is a delight for both visitors and locals.

Photo: wavebreakmedia/Shutterstock.com  
Address: Kuravankonam, Trivandrum  
Opening hours: Daily 11am-11pm  
Phone: +91 471 272 7722  
Internet: [www.supremeuppercrust.com](http://www.supremeuppercrust.com)  
Email: [info@supremefoodco.com](mailto:info@supremefoodco.com)

### Cofi Club



This longstanding local cafe is a time-tested place for good coffee, and a quaint hangout spot for a low-key meal or get-together.

Entertainment is provided by the indoor pool table that guests are welcome to make use of. The menu is extensive, and includes local and international dishes.

Photo: successo images/Shutterstock.com  
Address: Kiliyileth Building, Pattom, Kesavadasapuram, Trivandrum  
Opening hours: Daily 11am-12am  
Phone: +91 471 400 0040  
More Info: Opposte Big Bazar

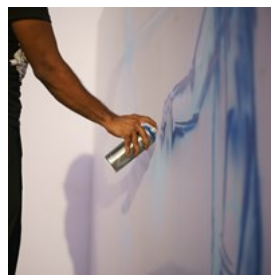
## BARS & NIGHTLIFE



*Peter Kim/Shutterstock.com*

Trivandrum admittedly has rather scarce evening entertainment, but a few after-hour establishments do exist, even beyond hotel restaurants and bars alone. Keep in mind that most places that sell alcoholic drinks outside of upscale hotels are only allowed to serve wine and beer, leaving hotel-adjacent bars to monopolise strong liquor and cocktails. In the evenings, many head to nearby Shangumugham or, slightly further afield, Kovalam beach.

### Maanaveeyam Veedhi



What was once an inconspicuous side street has, over the years, grown to become an important cultural hub and space frequently used by local artist and performers to put on a varying array of shows. It's one of the city's coolest hangout spots, and especially so on Sunday evenings.

Mind, however, that Maanaveeyam Veedhi is also known to be frequented by street racers, and although street racing isn't exactly allowed, it still takes place here between 5pm and 2am on some nights. Injuries have been reported, so please do take precaution.

Photo: Rahul Ramachandram/Shutterstock.com  
Address: Nandavanam, Palayam, Trivandrum  
Email: manaveeyamveedhi@gmail.com

### V Bar



Hilton Garden Hotel's V Bar is a reputable venue for hearty meals and evening drinks. On Saturdays, chill bar vibes turn increasingly

energetic with DJs spinning tunes and guests populating the dance floor. Drinks of all manner are served, including cocktails.

Photo: Marques/Shutterstock.com  
Address: Punnen Rd, Statue, Palayam, Trivandrum  
Phone: +91 471 660 0000  
More Info: At Hilton Garden Inn

### The Sky Bar



Out by Kovalam Beach, The Sky Bar is a pleasant choice for drinks in a refined seaside setting. The bar is located at The Leela Raviz Kovalam, an upscale clifftop resort featuring an infinity pool and many further amenities, located within walking distance from Kovalam Beach.

Photo: Kitti Tantibankul/Shutterstock.com  
Address: Beach Rd, Thiruvananthapuram  
Opening hours: 17.30-23.00  
Phone: +91 471 305 1234  
Internet: [www.theleela.com/en\\_us/hotels-in-kovalam/the-leela-raviz-kovalam-hotel/dining/the-sky-bar/](http://www.theleela.com/en_us/hotels-in-kovalam/the-leela-raviz-kovalam-hotel/dining/the-sky-bar/)  
More Info: The Leela Raviz Kovalam, a level below the main pool deck area, facing the gymnasium

## SHOPPING



Santhosh Varghese/Shutterstock.com

Quite a few things make the must-buy shopping shortlist in Kerala, all of which are, naturally, readily available in the state's capital. Head to one of Trivandrum's vibrant markets to stock up on celebrated Keralan spices, and do try the state-grown tea and coffee, well-liked by both locals and visitors. There is no shortage of jewellery (including real gold and diamond) and hand-crafted souvenirs (most prominently, wood carvings), as well as cosmetics containing the essence of the Keralan-native coconut.

### Chalai Bazaar



The sprawling bazaar is one of Kerala's oldest, one far removed from being a mere tourist attraction, used rather by local residents themselves.

It's a feast for the eyes and an assortment of goods to any heart's desire, from fresh fruit and vegetables to Indian sweets, textiles, and cosmetics.

Photo: AjayTvm/Shutterstock.com  
Address: East Fort, Trivandrum



### Connemara Market



Another one of Kerala's busy markets is Connemara, a shopping destination as much as a cultural experience.

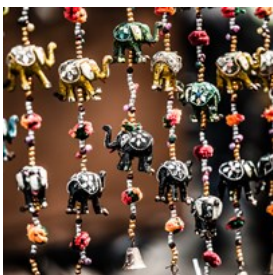
Haggling is near-mandatory, so do not hesitate to try and secure best deals on edibles, fabrics, and clothing by giving a counter-offer.

Photo: Curioso/Shutterstock.com

Address: Palayam, Trivandrum

Opening hours: Daily 6am-9pm

### SMSM Institute



This government-run treasure trove of local crafts is a reliable location where to shop for Keralan souvenirs. The selection is large and

price ranges vary, some items being on the higher end of the price spectrum, but deals are generally rather reasonable.

Photo: Curioso/Shutterstock.com

Address: Punnen Rd, Statue, Palayam, Trivandrum

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 9am-8pm

Phone: +91 471 233 0298

Internet: [www.keralahandicrafts.in](http://www.keralahandicrafts.in)

### Bhima Jewellery



If you're looking to buy high-quality jewellery, you'll be right at Bhima: the longstanding gold and diamond vendor enjoys a good reputation locally;

outlets are staffed by knowledgeable attendants ready to tend to customers' any desire.

Photo: Ashwin/Shutterstock.com

Address: Mahathma Gandhi Rd, Vanchiyoor, Trivandrum

Opening hours: Daily 10am-8pm

Internet: [www.bhima.com](http://www.bhima.com)

### Sarwaa



Sarwaa is a fantastic, quaint store and cafe away from the hustle and bustle of Trivandrum's central shopping areas. The well-stocked shop

sells hand-crafted figurines, jewellery, accessories, textiles, cosmetics, and more. There is a delightfully atmospheric cafe on-site, too.

Photo: Santhosh Varghese/Shutterstock.com

Address: Sankar Rd, Althara Nagar, Sasthamangalam, Trivandrum

Opening hours: Daily 10am-7.30pm

Phone: +91 95622 90006

Email: [info@sarwaa.com](mailto:info@sarwaa.com)

## TOURIST INFORMATION



yogesh\_more/Shutterstock.com

### Passport / Visa



The Indian government offers a traditional visa (stamped inside of the passport), or an eVisa, obtained online. All

nationals of the European Union and multiple countries across the world



are eligible for an eVisa, which should be applied for at least 4 days prior to travel date (but no further in advance than 30 days) and is accepted at 24 airports and 3 seaports countrywide. Special conditions apply to Pakistani passport holders or individuals with familial ties to Pakistan. Citizens of Bhutan, Nepal, and the Maldives are exempt from visa requirements (if not entering via mainland China).

Photo: TukTuk Design/Shutterstock.com

### Trivandrum International Airport



The Trivandrum International Airport offers a number of domestic and international connections. It is conveniently located not too far from Trivandrum city centre.

A public bus services the airport; journeys from the city to the airport take roughly 10 minutes. Taxis are available for hire in the arrivals area.

Photo: Juan Garces

Address: Airport Rd, Chacka, Vallakkadavu, Trivandrum

Phone: +91 471 270 2600

Internet: [www.trivandrumairport.com](http://www.trivandrumairport.com)

### Best Time to Visit



Late May sees the start of monsoon season in Kerala, and although visitors used to avoid the months of June through September for this very

reason, the trend seems to have started to change, and an increasing number of tourists make their way to Kerala during the year's most humid months. Another reason to come in August is the large-scale cultural festival of

Onam, which brings 10 straight days of festivities.

October through February remain the months most popular with tourists for their favourable weather, while February through May can get very hot and are best avoided if you're sensitive to high temperatures.

Photo: VectorA/Shutterstock.com

### Public Transport



Most bus routes start from the Trivandrum City Bus Terminal at East Fort and run across the city from there. Bus numbers are indicated in numerals

and destinations only written in Malayalam (the local language), but most locals speak English and would most likely be able to assist.

The preferred mode of public transportation in Trivandrum is the autorickshaw, which is fast, cheap and efficient. These can be taken at regular bus stations or signposted autorickshaw stops.

Photo: Pierre-Luc Auclair

### Taxi



Taxis are ubiquitous and can be hired easily. It is common to hire a cab for an entire day or even several days in a row, which is an option to

consider if you're travelling with a group or planning to do extensive sightseeing.

Some local cab companies are:

Mango Cabs  
+91 99954 66066  
[www.mangocabs.in](http://www.mangocabs.in)

TaxiTel  
+91 75609 29292  
[www.taxitel.in](http://www.taxitel.in)

Photo: ArrivalGuides

## Post



Thiruvananthapuram  
General Post Office:

Photo: Andy Fuchs  
Address: Mahathma Gandhi Rd, Trivandrum  
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 8am-8pm  
Phone: +91 471 247 3071

## Pharmacy



Karunya Community  
Pharmacy

Photo: Gemma Garner  
Address: Medical College, Chalakkuzhi, Trivandrum  
Opening hours: 24/7  
Phone: +91 471 244 0191

## Telephone



Country code +91,  
followed by 471 (area  
code) + local number

Photo: Jardson Almeida

## Electricity



230 V / 50 Hz Type C  
"Euro" plugs and types D  
& M three-pin plugs are  
used

Photo: Stirling Tschan

## Population

The city: 957,730  
Metro area: 1.68 million

## Currency

Indian rupee = 100 paise

## Opening hours

Some restaurants open in the afternoon; most remain in operation until 10 or 11pm. Opening hours may vary greatly for private businesses.

## Newspapers

Mathrubhumi  
The Times of India  
The Hindu

## Emergency numbers

Police: 100  
Fire brigade: 101  
Ambulance: 102

## Tourist information

Tourist Facilitation Centre  
+91 471 256 0439  
Park View, Department of Tourism, Thiruvananthapuram  
Mon-Sun 10am-5pm