

Rediscovering India's Southern Edge

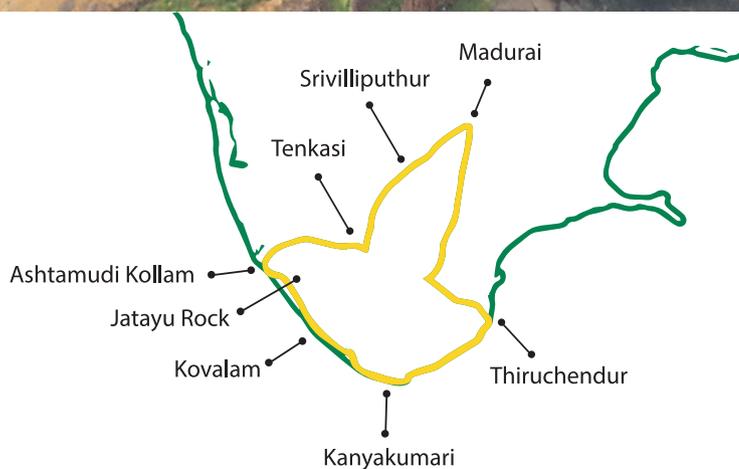
MADURAI TO KOLLAM

A journey through a poetical landscape

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The Leela Kovalam, a Raviz Hotel



At the edge of an ancient sub-continent, far away from the crowded tourist trails there are a thousand stories waiting to be heard, a thousand experiences for the wanderers yet to come. Raviz, for the love of travel has explored and curated 46 such awe-inspiring experiences because sometimes, “choosing the path less travelled, makes all the difference”. The Copper Plate Circuit

In the heart of South India, a forgotten itinerary beckons traveler to embark on a journey through a poetical landscape. This narrative takes us from the bustling city of Madurai in Tamil Nadu to the serene shores of Kollam in Kerala, a route once brimming with history and charm.

We invite you to step back in time to the 1970's and 1980's when South India started captivating tourists, especially those from foreign lands. This mystical journey typically began in Chennai and weaved through Mahabalipuram, Kanchipuram, Pondicherry, Tanjavur, Trichy, Madurai, Periyar, Kovalam, Kanyakumari, Rameswaram, and finally back to Chennai. Yet, the passage of time has reshaped this circuit, introducing new destinations and experiences, particularly in the enchanting state of Kerala.

During the 1990's, Kerala Tourism breathed fresh life into this itinerary with innovations like backwaters, houseboats, Ayurveda, and hill resorts like Munnar. One destination that remained a steadfast star was Kovalam, a renowned global beach haven.

It was the tranquil backwaters that truly made Kerala the "God's own country." Among the captivating regions, Vembanadu Lake, Kumarakom, Alappuzha, and Kuttanad stood out. And, in this watery realm, Ashtamudi Lake in Kollam also emerged as a natural choice for wanderers in search of serenity.

Turning back to Tamil Nadu, the southern part of Madurai has remained relatively unexplored. This land teems with rich culture and natural splendor, housing spectacular temples like Srivilliputhur, Shankaran Kovil, and Tenkasi. The 'Raja Gopuram of Srivilliputhur, South India's tallest temple tower, even became the official emblem of Tamil Nadu State. The journey through the Aryankavu pass of the Western Ghats, whether by road or train from Shenkottai to Kollam, is an awe-inspiring experience. Along this route, you'll encounter the Shendurunni Wildlife Sanctuary, Thenmala Dam and Eco Tourism Project, Palaruvi Waterfalls, Kulathupuzha Temple, and the iconic Hanging Bridge of Punalur.



Thiruvalluvar Statue, Kanyakumari



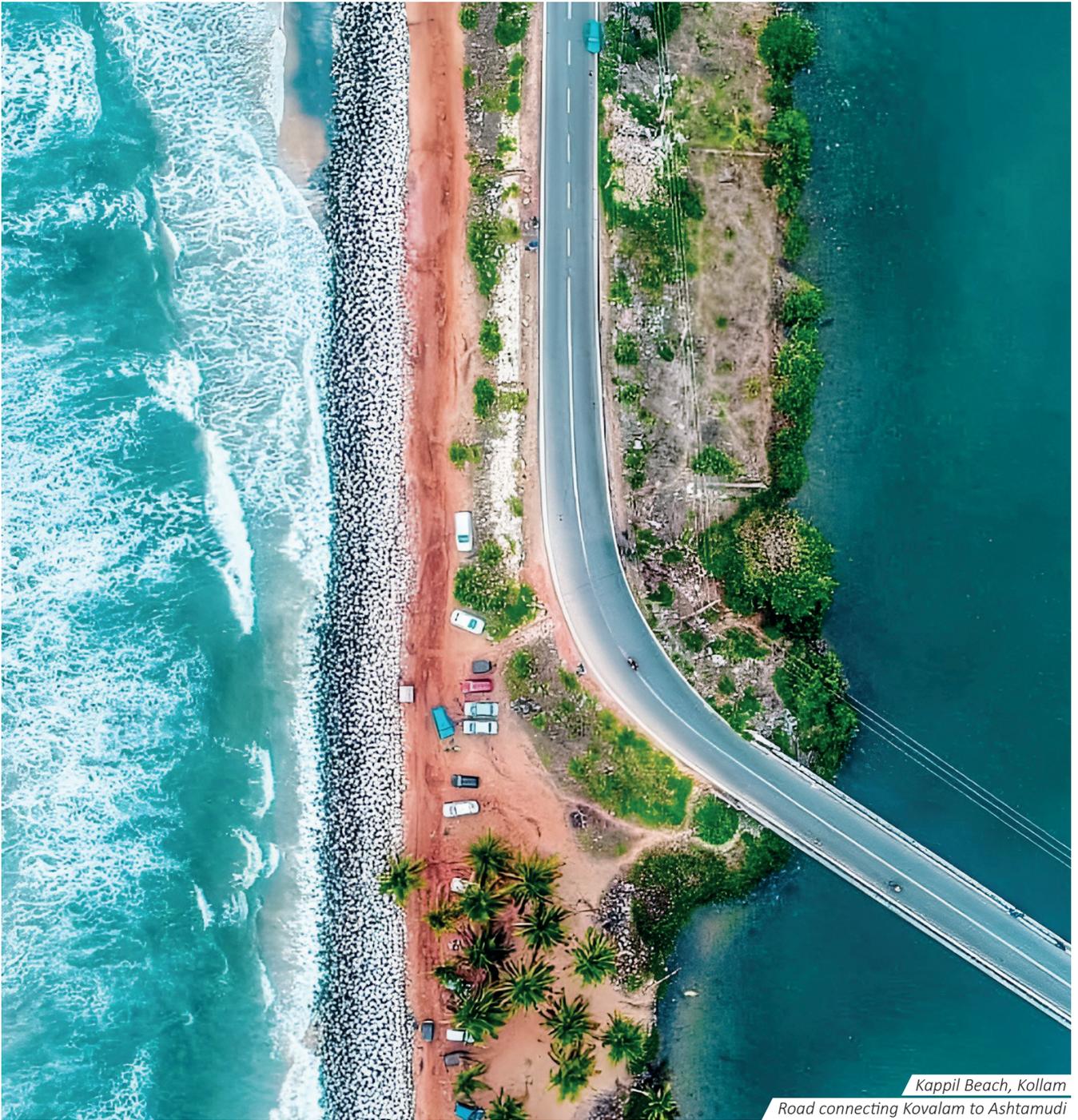
The Leela Ashtamudi A Raviz Hotel



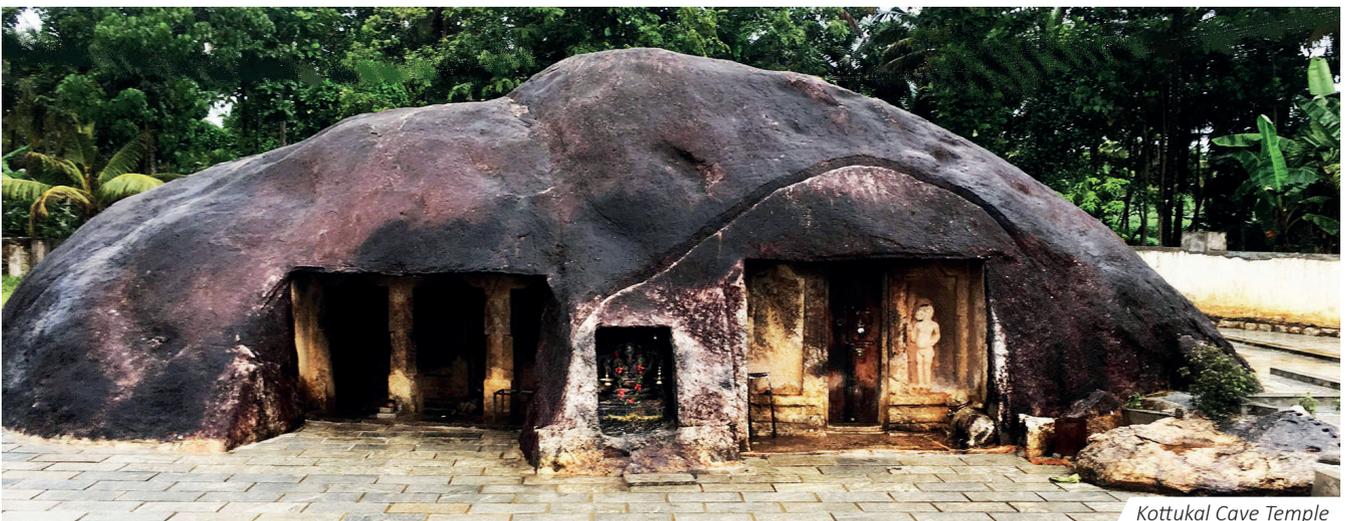
Srivilliputhur

Historically, this circuit traced a famous trade route from South Tamil Nadu to Kollam, once a bustling port in ancient times. Trade organizations like 'Anchuvaram' and 'Manigramam' controlled commerce along this route. These regions were part of great South Indian kingdoms like Chera and Pandya during the Sangam age (200 BC to 500 AD). Madurai reigned as the capital of the Pandya Kingdom, while Kollam (Quilon) stood as the capital of Venad, a part of the Chera Kingdom. Much of the classical Tamil literature emerged during the Sangam period, where the concept of 'Tinai,' representing poetical landscapes, thrived. These Tinai encompassed five distinct regions: Kurinji (hilly/mountain), Palai (dry lands), Mullai (pastoral), Marutam (agricultural), and Neital (coastal). A journey from Madurai to Kollam or Kovalam still carries you through these metaphorical landscapes, encapsulating the essence of that poetic era.

In just 3 to 5 days, one can unravel this mystical circuit, with the flexibility to begin in either Trivandrum or Madurai. The journey encompasses 250 kilometers of exploration, from the awe-inspiring Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple to the divine Srivilliputhur Andal Temple, the tranquil Shankaran Kovil, the revered Tenkasi Kashi Viswanathar Temple, the refreshing Curtalam Water Falls, the spiritually significant Aryankavu Ayyappa Temple, the serene Thenmala Eco Tourism Project, the cascading Palaruvi Waterfalls, and the iconic Punalur Hanging Bridge. As night falls, a restful retreat awaits at a Backwater Resort on Lake Ashtamudi in Kollam.



Kappil Beach, Kollam
Road connecting Kovalam to Ashtamudi



Kottukal Cave Temple



Shendurney wildlife sanctuary, Kollam



Anjengo Fort



Kuttalam

In the next two days, Kollam and Ashtamudi reveal their treasures through unique experiences. Houseboat cruises glide through the serene waters of Lake Ashtamudi, while Munro Island offers a half-day trip. You can explore the historic Thangassery Fort and Lighthouse, visit a Cashew Factory, and indulge in authentic Ayurveda treatments and modern spas for relaxation. The journey then takes you to the internationally acclaimed beach haven, Kovalam, near Trivandrum. Along the way from Kollam, explore attractions like Varkala Beach, Anjengo Fort,

Kayikkara Asan Memorial, Muthalapozhi Harbor, and the Vettucaud Church. In Trivandrum, the Sri Padmanabha Swami Temple, Kuthira Malika Museum, Napier Museum, and Sri Chitra Art Gallery beckon. You can unwind on the famed beaches of Kovalam or indulge in rejuvenating Ayurveda programs at spas.

On the return journey, consider a visit to Kanyakumari, or make it a day trip from Trivandrum. Along the way, don't miss the awe-inspiring Padmanabhapuram Palace, the largest wooden palace globally, and the sacred

Suchindram Temple. This journey isn't just about rediscovering the past; it's an opportunity to enlighten the traveler's soul within you. It's a passage through time, culture, and landscapes, each offering a unique facet of South India's enchanting story.

Luxury hospitality chain Raviz Hotels and Resorts presents "The Copper Plate Circuit," offering experiential stays at Leela Raviz Ashtamudi and Leela Raviz Kovalam, ensuring a holistic experience of the entire circuit.