

23RD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ARACHNOLOGY

ICA 2026

SUPPLEMENT TO THE THIRD CIRCULAR

Food, Dining, Hospitality & Post-Congress Travel in Kerala

A little practical information to help you feel at home in Kochi

FOOD	CULTURE	HOSPITALITY	TRAVEL
International & local choices	Heritage & cuisine	Comfort & convenience	Explore Kerala

Dear Participants and Prospective Participants,

As many of you will be visiting India and Kerala for the first time, we would like to share some additional information about food, dining, hospitality and travel opportunities in Kochi and Kerala.

Food and Dining in Kochi – No Need for Concern

We understand that some participants, particularly those visiting India for the first time, may have questions about food safety and the availability of familiar food.

Participants can be assured that food in established hotels and restaurants in Kochi and Kerala is generally safe for international visitors. Kochi is an established international tourism and business destination with a large number of hotels and restaurants serving both domestic and international visitors.

As with travel anywhere in the world, participants are nevertheless advised to use normal precautions when choosing food and drinking water, particularly when trying unfamiliar or informal food outlets.

A Wide Choice of International Food

Kochi has a highly diverse culinary environment reflecting its long multicultural history. Participants can find:

- Traditional Kerala cuisine
- Indian and North Indian cuisine
- Vegetarian and vegan food
- Seafood
- Chinese and other Asian cuisines
- Continental cuisine
- Italian and other European dishes
- Fast food and internationally familiar options

Many established mid-range and higher-end hotels and restaurants in Kochi serve Continental and other international dishes, so participants who prefer familiar food will have plenty of choices. Kerala Tourism specifically notes the availability of Continental, Chinese, Indian and traditional Kerala cuisines at standard restaurants across the state.

Kerala Tourism – Travel Tips: <https://www.keralatourism.org/travel-tips/>

Some Simple Precautions

Participants are advised to:

- Prefer freshly prepared and properly cooked food.
- Drink bottled, filtered or otherwise reliably treated water.
- Avoid food that has been exposed for long periods.
- Inform restaurant staff about food allergies or dietary restrictions.
- If you prefer less spicy food, simply ask for “mild” or “less spicy.”
- Participants with serious food allergies should confirm ingredients before ordering.

There is no need to avoid Kerala or Indian cuisine simply because it is unfamiliar. Kerala's food culture is diverse, and visitors can choose between local dishes and familiar international cuisine.

Kerala & Kochi – Internationally Recognised Destinations

Kerala has a well-established international tourism industry and welcomes visitors from around the world every year. Kerala was recognised in the 2025 Traveller Review Awards by Booking.com as the second among India's 10 Most Welcoming Regions, based on verified traveller reviews.

Kerala Tourism – Traveller Review Awards Recognition:

<https://www.keralatourism.org/newsletter/news/2025/kerala-ranked-second-in-traveller-review-awards-for-most-welcoming-regions/2294>

Kochi has also received international recognition as a destination to watch in 2026. Booking.com has included Kochi among its Top 10 Trending Destinations set to become must-visit vacation spots in 2026. Kochi is the only Indian city included in this global list, alongside destinations in Vietnam, Spain, Colombia, the USA, China, Cape Verde, Brazil, Germany and Australia.

Booking.com highlights Kochi as a waterfront city shaped by centuries of global trade and cultural exchange, with historic neighbourhoods, cultural attractions, cuisine and access to Kerala's backwaters and Western Ghats.

BOOKING.COM • 2026 TRENDING DESTINATIONS

[View Booking.com – 2026 Trending Destinations](#)

A Taste of Kerala

We strongly encourage participants to experience Kerala's distinctive food culture during their visit. Popular dishes and food experiences include Kerala vegetarian meals (Sadya), appam, puttu, dosa, idli, biryani and a wide variety of seafood and regional specialities.

Kerala's Responsible Tourism Mission also showcases a wide range of traditional and regional dishes from different parts of the state.

Kerala Tourism – Ethnic Cuisine: <https://www.keralatourism.org/responsible-tourism/ethnic-cuisine>

A World-Ranked Kerala Restaurant in Kochi

For participants interested in experiencing Kerala's culinary reputation, Paragon Restaurant, originally from Kozhikode, is a particularly interesting option.

Paragon was ranked No. 5 in TasteAtlas's "150 Most Legendary Restaurants in the World" list, with its Malabar cuisine and biryani among its well-known specialities.

TasteAtlas – 150 Most Legendary Restaurants in the World: <https://www.tasteatlas.com/iconic-dishes-legendary-restaurants>

Participants do not need to travel to Kozhikode to experience Paragon. Paragon has outlets in Kochi, making it easily accessible to visitors staying in the city.

Optional Post-Congress Kerala Group Tour

Would you like to stay on in Kerala after ICA 2026 and explore more of the state?

Our travel partner, Kerala Voyages, is coordinating an optional post-Congress group tour of Kerala for delegates who would like to travel together after the Congress.

IMPORTANT

This is not an official ICA 2026 Congress programme. The tour is being coordinated independently by Kerala Voyages, with the aim of providing an easy and convenient opportunity for delegates to explore Kerala together, particularly for those who would enjoy travelling in the company of fellow ICA 2026 participants.

Possible Destinations

- Kochi – heritage and cultural attractions
- Munnar – Western Ghats, tea plantations and mountain landscapes
- Thekkady – forest and wildlife experience
- Alappuzha/Kumarakom – Kerala backwaters and houseboat experience
- Varkala – dramatic coastal cliffs, beach and cultural attractions
- Kovalam – renowned beaches and coastal leisure
- Wayanad – Western Ghats, forests, wildlife and scenic landscapes

These are well-established tourist destinations and are commonly combined in Kerala tour itineraries. Kerala Tourism's accredited tour operators offer similar circuits covering Kochi, Munnar, Thekkady and the Alappuzha backwaters.

Possible Tour Formats

TOUR FORMAT	INDICATIVE ROUTE
Short Tour – 3 Days / 2 Nights	Kochi → Munnar → Kochi
Extended Tour – 5 Days / 4 Nights	Kochi → Munnar → Thekkady → Backwaters → Kochi

The final itinerary, accommodation, transport arrangements and cost will depend on the number of participants and will be communicated by Kerala Voyages.

If you are interested in joining this optional post-Congress group tour, please express your interest so that Kerala Voyages can assess the number of participants and prepare a suitable group package.

The post-Congress tour is optional, independently coordinated by Kerala Voyages, and separate from ICA 2026 registration.

During ICA 2026

Meals and refreshments provided as part of the Congress programme — Welcome Reception, Lunch, Congress Dinner, and Tea & Coffee Breaks — will be arranged at the Congress venue.

For meals outside the Congress programme, there are numerous restaurants and cafés in and around the Congress venue, as well as throughout Kochi.

We hope this information will reassure participants and help you feel comfortable about food, dining and travel in Kerala, while also encouraging you to make the most of your visit beyond the Congress itself.

With warm regards

Mathew M. Joseph

Convenor – Organizing Committee

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