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## Kochi

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Kochi, a major city in the Southern Indian state of Kerala is an attractive city with serene backwaters, lagoons overhung with swaying coconut palms and picturesque islands. A center of Kerala's maritime trade for centuries, it's a fine natural harbour created by the famed underwater Malabar mud-banks. Kochi consists of mainland Ernakulam, the islands of wellington, Bolgatty and Gundu in the harbour, Fort Cochin and Mattanchery on the southern peninsula, and Vypeen Island north of Fort Cochin, all linked by ferry. A must see destination recommended by National Geographic.

Along the harbor, the heart of the city, rows of antediluvian Chinese fishing nets indicate years of strong trade links with China. The unique buildings along the water's edge testify to the erstwhile presence of Dutch and Portuguese colonisers.

The influence of Chinese, Jews, Arabs and Europeans is evident in Kochi and provides a fascinating mix of cultures for every visitor.

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- **Exploring Kochi**

Bolghatty Island and Bolghatty Palace, Mattanchery Palace, Jewish Synagogue – the oldest synagogue in the Commonwealth Parishath Thampuran Museum, St.Francis Church, 500 year old Portugese houses, Chinese Fishing Nets along Cochin harbor.

- **Shopping**

Kerala’s famous polished metal mirrors or Aranmula kannadi, rosewood artifacts, coir floor coverings and tablemats, old dowry boxes from Travancore, gold jewelry exclusive to Southern India, cotton saris, traditional khadi (handspun and hand-woven) attire and antiques from Jew town, aromatic spices and exotic cashews, ornaments made of coconut shells or bamboo cane, miniature models of snake-boats.

- **Special Attractions**

Kathakali dance performances and Kalari Payattu demonstration of physical exercises and mock duels.

- **Major Festivals**

Onam – Kerala’s new year and harvest season celebrated between August and September and Temple Festival.

- **Currency**

Indian Rupee (INR)

- **Language**

English is widely spoken and understood in all cities and Tourist areas. Hindi is the official language.

- **Climate**

The best time to visit India is in the winter. 3 major seasons. Winter summer and monsoon.

- **Flying Time**

Flying time from Muscat : 2 Hours 30 Minutes

- **Time Difference**

GMT + 5.30 Hours

