



Udhagamandalam / Ootacamund, popularly known as Ooty, a beautiful little hill station situated at an altitude of 2268 mtrs. above sea level. Ooty is 'The Queen' among the hills. It is a collage of luscious Tea gardens, hills and cliffs, forests, sporting spots, parks & gardens, lakes and cascading waterfalls all making it a perfect holiday destination. Ooty is alluring, vibrant and mesmeric and it is your haven on the hills. The origin of the name Udhagamandalam is obscure. The first mention of the place occurs in a letter of March 1821 to the Madras Gazette by an unknown correspondent as Wotokymund. In early times it was called OttaikalMandu "mund" is the [Tamil](#) word for a [Toda](#) village, and the first part is probably a corruption of the local name for the central region of the Nilgiri Plateau. Another likely origin of the stem of the name (Ootaca) comes from the local language where Otha-Cal literally means Single Stone. This is perhaps a reference to a sacred stone revered by the local Toda people. The name probably changed under British rule from Udhagamandalam to Ootacamund, later shortened to Ooty.



Botanical Garden- this garden was laid out in 1847 by the Marquis of Tweedale and is spread over 55 acres. Lush green well maintained lawns, rare tree species (like the cork tree which is probably the only such tree in India, the paper bark tree and the monkey puzzle tree- monkeys cannot climb this tree), a 20 million year old fossilized tree, an Italian-style garden bordering a clear pool, a vast variety of flowering bushes and plants in myriad hues (exotic and ornamental), fern house with a vast range of ferns and orchids, are some of the many highlights of this garden. A flower show along with an exhibition of rare plant species is held every year in the month of May at this garden. The Garden is maintained by the Horticulture Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu and has a very wide variety of plants that include different types of roses, imported shrubs, rare flowering plants etc.



Dodabetta Peak- situated at a height of 2,623 meters, Dodabetta Peak is the highest point in the district. Situated at about 10 km from the Ooty town, it is one of the most prominent view points around Ooty. The top of the peak remains covered by mist most of the time but on a clear day, you can have a look at the landscape as far as the plains of Coimbatore and the Mysore plateau) , Dolphins Nose (this view point is 10 Kms from the town. The Nose is a unique rock of tremendous proportions which looks like a Dolphin.



Ooty Lake- this lake was artificially formed by John Sullivan, the founder of Ooty, in 1823-25 by damming the mountain streams flowing down Ooty valley. This lake is situated just behind the Main Bus Stand and the Railway station, this stretches, in an irregular 'L' shape, for about two kilometers in length and varying distances in width. At the far end is the Boat House where all kinds of boats are available for hire from eight in the morning to six in the evening.



Kabini River

This place derives its name from the winding River- Nagarhole meaning "snake river" - which flows through the park. The 640 sq km of gently undulating terrain at the foothills of the Brahmagiri hills is covered with thick tropical forest, grassy swamps and numerous rivers and streams. The park and animal life is part of the country's first 'bio-sphere reserve'. One can be sure of seeing the bison, elephant, spotted deer, sambar, barking deer, wild boar, mongoose, peacock, jungle fowl and many other birds and animals.



Mysore is the second largest city in the state of Karnataka. The city is situated at the base of Chamundi Hills. Mysore is famous for the Dussehra celebrations during which a large number of tourists visit the city. Hindu mythology says that Mysore was ruled by Mahishasura a demon and the demon was later on killed by Goddess Chamundeshwari. Till the 15th century the area where Mysore stands today, was known as Puragere. The fort was constructed in the year 1524 by Chamaraja Wodeyar III. Mysore city is the cultural capital of Karnataka. Dussehra is the most important festival of the city. This festival is celebrated for a period of 10 days and it was started by King Raja Wodeyar I in the year 1610. The ninth day of the celebration is known as Mahanavami and the imperial sword is worshiped on this day. Processions constituting ornamented elephants, camels and horses are taken out. The style of painting prevalent is an outgrowth of the Vijayanagar school of painting. The typical characteristic of these paintings is the plaster of Paris work in which gold hydrofoils are pasted. Mysore is also known as City of Palaces. There are a large number of palaces around the city to be visited. The famous Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion is now being converted into a museum and is dedicated to folk culture.



At the crest of this hill is **Sri Chamundeshwari Temple** that dates back to the 11th century. The striking Gopura (Pyramidal Temple tower) was added by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar- III in 1825-1826. Goddess Chamundi was the patron deity of the rulers. Near the temple is the **Statue of Mahishasura**, the demon slayed by the goddess Chamundeshwari. Half way up the stone steps, is the 4.8 meter high monolith of **Big Nandi**, Lord Shiva's mount.



Mysore Maharaja Palace- designed by the English Architect, Henry Irwin, the Mysore Palace dominates the skyline of Mysore. A three storied structure in the Indo- Saracenic style built between 1897-1912, the palace has beautifully designed square towers at cardinal points, covered with domes. The **Durbar Hall** with its ornate ceiling and sculpted pillars and the **Kalyanamantapa** (Marriage Pavilion) with its glazed tiled flooring and stained glass, domed ceiling are worth noting. Intricately carved doors, the golden **howdah** (elephant seat), paintings as well as the fabulous, jewel encrusted golden throne (displayed during Dasara) are amongst the palace's other treasures. The walled palace complex houses the Residential Museum (incorporating some of the Palace's living quarters), temples and shrines including the Shwetha Varahaswamy temple. The palace is illuminated on Sundays, Public Holidays as well as during the Dasara Celebrations when 97,000 electric bulbs are used to illuminate it.



Bangalore, which means 'the town of beans' was founded by Kempegowda, a chieftain under the Vijayanagar empire, in the early 16th century. Bangalore is also called as a 'Garden City of India' This city has a beautiful Parks, Gardens and tree-lined avenues. Probably the fastest growing city in Asia, Bangalore, the home of the electronics industry.



Lalbagh Gardens- this exotic garden, laid out by Hyder Ali in 1760, span an area of 240 acres in the heart of Bangalore, is amongst India's most beautiful botanical parks. This holds the key to major contribution in maintaining the City's healthy environment for generations. The garden has about 1000 species of rare plants and herbs. The park is constructed in about 2400 acres. There is a glass house depicting London's Crystal Palace and this is the main center of attraction. The garden is well protected with stone walls which act as enclosures. It has four approach gates.



Yet another jewel in the crown of God's Own Country- Kerala, is the pristine, tropical city of Kumarakom. This cluster of small picturesque islands around the Vembanad Lake, with its beautiful landscapes, picturesque [canals](#), [backwaters](#) and [lagoons](#) & scenic environs is a perfect holiday spot. It was described as the list of places known as Venice of the East by [Lord Curzon](#). The Palm fringed canals and shores bustling with glimpses from the day to day life in the country side, the mirror still lagoons, picture book lakesides and its long sandy beach has blessed Kumarakom, the water locked district, to become one of the best Backwater tourism destinations in God's Own Country. The large network of canals provides Kumarakom its lifeline. Water carnivals using the gigantic snake boats and the country canoes of varying sizes have an important role in the community life of the people of the district. The soil found in the region is fertile, the numerous paddy fields, mangrove forests, and coconut groves found stand testimony. The lush greenery is an amazing sight and is a treat for the eyes. The island is popular among honeymooners looking for peace & solitude. Thousands of migratory birds flock to this area every year. Bird watchers flock here each year to catch a glimpse of the various birds visiting the island. This beautiful island has numerous small fishing skiffs throughout the town. With both salt water and fresh water surrounding Kumarakom, there are several varieties of fish found here. Excellent marine and freshwater fish including tasty karimeen (also known as pearl spotted fish), shrimp, and prawns are available in the area making it perfect to enjoy a lip smacking sea food platter.



The backwaters are a unique web of lakes, lagoons, canals and rivers, which form an integral part of the touristic scenario of Kerala. The journey through waterways that traverse past picturesque villages. Fields brimming with ripe paddy. Rows and rows of swaying coconuts palms. Watch Kerala life, at work and at play.



Wayanad is a derivative of the term Vayal Nadu, where Vayal means Paddy fields and Nadu the land, comprising it to indicate a land of paddy fields. Wayanad is explicitly beautiful with mist clad mountains, intense forests and fertile green plantations. The forests of Wayanad are cosmic landmasses for animals to enjoy their natural dwelling. Snuggled amidst the Western Ghats Mountains, Wayanad is one of the exquisite hill stations of Kerala. It is a revenue state due to foreign exchange of cash crops such as vanilla, tea, coffee, pepper, cardamom and many other condiments. Wayanad shelters endangered species as it has an amazing range of flora and fauna. Wildlife aficionados and nature lovers will find Wayanad wildlife sanctuaries as the right place of visit. The place enjoys a pleasant climate the whole year. Having an influential history, numerous evidences depicting new Stone Age civilization is seen on the Wayanad hills. Relicts and edicts are found in this place emphasizing the prehistoric epoch. According to the history, Wayanad was ruled by the Veda tribes, it was then taken by Pazhassi Rajas, and later Hyderali conquered Wayanad. When Tipu took over, he handed it to British. It was the British who introduced cash crops, laid roads and developed Wayanad significantly. The prominent festivals such as Onam, Maha shivaratri and Vishu display eternal harmony. Rice, rasam, sambhar, poricha kootu, moru kootan, avvial, pal payasam, and many more items make their food a classy food.



Enjoy the Forest and Ayurvedic Spa in Vythiri Resorts.



Coorg is also known as the "Scotland of India". It is an endless expanse of scenic beauty- lush green valleys, coffee plantations, and majestic mountain ranges. With over 2,564 sq. kms. carpeted shade of green and a land wrapped in white mist, Coorg, no wonder is a magical destination in Karnataka. It leaves a visitor spellbound during the rains. Madikeri, the district headquarters of Kodagu is located at an altitude of 1425 meters above sea level. Kodagu is believed to have been derived from the word 'Krodhadesa' meaning 'Land of Anger'. Another story traces the origin of Kodagu to 'Kannada Kundu', which means dense forest on a steep hill. Coorg is located on the South west end of Karnataka in the Western Ghats. Talacauvery, a few kilometers from Madikeri is the origin of the Cauvery River. The river is worshipped by the locals. The history of Coorg dates back to the 888 AD. The region was ruled by many dynasties including the Gangas of Talakad, Kadambas, Changalvas, Kongalvas, Hoysalas and Nayakas. The Haleri dynasty, founded by a young prince was the longest ruling dynasty in the history of Kodagu.



Abbey falls- A big attraction for tourists and filmdom alike is the Abbey Falls, 8 kms. from Madikeri. Even during the summer there is plenty of water in these falls. The roar of the falls can be heard from the main road, from where a path goes through lovely coffee and cardamom plantations right up to them. The chirping of innumerable birds which are easier heard than seen, fill the air with sweet music. Do remember to take your binoculars and camera when you go there.



Dubare Elephant Camp- This is mainly an elephant capturing and training camp of the Forest Department, at the edge of Dubare forest, on the bank of river Cauvery, on the Kushalnagar- Siddapur

road. The largest land animal is captured here with the help of tamed elephants and local tribals - the Kurbas - and is held captive for upto 6 months in large teak wood cages. The tamed elephants attend to various jobs during the day and in the evenings they come down to the river to bath and to be scrubbed clean by their mahouts. You can watch Elephants been given a scrub-bath in the River and also watch how oil is applied on their forehead, tusks and other aspects of Elephant grooming. You can watch the food being prepared for the Elephants and how they are fed. The Mahouts will then demonstrate the various commands the Elephants can obey. This can be vividly portrayed by making Elephants perform some mock logging operations. While visitors are going through all these activities, a Naturalist explains about all aspects of Elephant ecology, history, conservation etc. Further, a leaflet giving interesting information on the same will be given to visitors. Afterwards the mahout obliges eager tourists for free elephant rides within the camp),



Bylakuppe- After the Chinese took over Tibet, the refugees were settled at this place. “Lugsum Samdupling” (established in 1961) and “Dickyi Larsoe” (established in 1969). The Golden Temple in Bylakuppe is a home for thousands of Tibetans living in exile and a center for Tibetan Buddhism in South India. The Tibetan refugees make up a population of about 10,000. It consists of a number of small camps/agricultural settlements close to each other, and has a number of monasteries, nunneries and temples in all the major Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Most notable among them are the large educational monastic institution Sera, the smaller Tashilunpo monastery (both in the Gelukpa tradition) and Namdroling monastery (in the Nyingma tradition). The spectacular Golden Temple which is also a major tourist spot in the area. Golden Temple (this monastery is the main tourist attraction in Bylakuppe. Stepping inside the temple feels like walking into another world, and the noisy streets of South India suddenly seem to be very far away. Three beautiful golden Buddha statues each of 40 Feet namely Padmasambhava, Buddha and Amitayus look down at visitors above the altar. The walls are adorned with colourful paintings depicting gods and demons from Tibetan Buddhist mythology. The altar is decorated with flowers, candles and incense, and small birds nesting amongst the golden statues fly happily around the temple. This place is very calm and majestic sight, surrounded by its landscaped gardens. During festivals, the main courtyard becomes an open stage where masked dancers twirl in colorful costumes to the sound of gongs and massive ceremonial trumpets. Tourists are welcomed to visit the monasteries and temples. Photography is allowed even inside the temple. Sera Je Monastery keeps Tibetan Buddhist culture alive in Bylakuppe. It is modeled after the original Sera University in Tibet. Sera belongs to the Yellow-Hat Gelugpa sect of Buddhism and is the local seat of education. More than 5,000 Buddhists studying here to become monks. There are also several stores around the temple area that sell Tibetan jewellery, handicrafts, incense and souvenirs).