



KANYAKUMARI



A Tourist Guide





Devi Kumari

Kanyakumari

The Spectacular Land's End

Kanyakumari, the land's end, is a popular tourist centre at the confluence of the three seas - the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal. Thousands of tourists, round the year are lured by the serene beauty of this place and the spectacles of sunrise and sunset. Though sunrise can be viewed throughout the year, sunset is visible only from October 15 to March 15 from this southernmost tip. But one can view both sunrise and sunset throughout the year from atop a hill called Murugan Kundram which offers a panoramic view of Kanyakumari. The sunset and moonrise can be seen almost simultaneously on full moon days from the same spot. It is a unique spectacle.

The Devi temple situated at the tip of the land, overlooking the sea, is dedicated to the virgin Goddess Kumari or Devi Bhagavathi. The entrance to the temple is through the northern gate, while the eastern gate always remains closed except on some festival days.

Amidst the sea there are two rocks known as 'twin rocks', both contributing to the rich Indian heritage with the monuments of Swamy Vivekananda and Saint Thiruvalluvar.

Kanyakumari and its surroundings are believed to be part of the land which was created by Parasurama, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Folktales and mythological stories speak volumes about Kanyakumari.

Mythology is full of conflicts between Devas and Asuras, and the ultimate victory of the Devas; it is the conquest of good over evil.

Banasura, the king of demons, propitiated Brahma. When Banasura asked for a boon of



Pari Vettai

immortality, Brahma expressed his inability to grant such a boon, but gave an option to choose his own manner of death. The asura wished that if at all he had to die, let his death be at the hands of a virgin.. Brahma said 'thathaastu' (so it be). Armed with this boon, Banasura started harassing the Devas and torturing the saints and rishis, causing them endless misery. Unable to bear this agony, the Devas, rishis and saints appealed to Mother Earth who in turn sought the help of Her consort Lord Vishnu who is the Protector of the Universe. On the Lord's command, the Devas propitiated Parasakthi who alone was capable of destroying Banasura. The Devas performed a yagna which was so powerful that the Goddess was much pleased. She promised to annihilate Banasura. As ordained, Parasakthi in Her reincarnation came down to earth as a virgin. It is a very common mythological fact that whichever reincarnation she took, she would do penance to rejoin Her husband Lord Shiva through a marriage.

Hence Kumari did penance so that she would be married to Shiva. Shiva, pleased and happy expressed His willingness to marry her. This was made known to Kumari. Narada who undertook this task arranged a proper time for the marriage before dawn and insisted that the auspicious time should not be missed. Elaborate arrangements were made

at Kumari's place to celebrate the marriage. The Lord was staying at Suchindrum. The bridegroom's party started from there well in advance with pomp and pageantry. Meanwhile Narada was prompted by the Devas to do something to stop the marriage, because once the marriage is over, Kumari could not be a virgin and Banasura could not be killed. Narada hit upon a plan, and assumed the form of a cock and waited at a place called Vazhukkamparai. When the marriage party reached there on its way to Kanyakumari, Narada crowed aloud. Shiva's party on hearing this thought that it was dawn and the auspicious hour had passed. The wedding party decided to return to Suchindrum, greatly disappointed.

As the bridegroom's party didn't turn up, the disappointed bride vowed to remain a virgin. All the items collected for the marriage turned into sand and pebbles resembling rice. The multi coloured sand found abundantly on the sea shore at Kanyakumari is attributed to this incident.

Banasura heard about the beauty of Kumari and wanted to marry her. She bluntly declined his proposal. The demon decided to win her by force. A fierce battle ensued and in the end the Goddess used Her Chakrayuda and slain Banasura. All the Devas were watching this and were delighted and sang hymns in praise of Devi Kumari.

Places of Interest

In Kanyakumari

Devi Kumari Temple

Situated on the seashore, this temple is dedicated to the virgin Goddess Devi Kanyakumari. The Devi stands as a charming young girl in Her penance, with a rosary in Her right hand. A sparkling nose jewel sheds lustrous radiance. The image, made of blue stone, is believed to have been installed by sage Parasurama. The temple is open to the public from 4.30 am to 11.45 am and again from 4 pm to 8 pm. Festivals: Navaratri (Sep-Oct), Car Festival (May-June)



Kanyakumari Temple

Swamy Vivekananda Rock

An impressive memorial to Swamy Vivekananda has been erected on a rock situated some 200 metres off shore. In the year 1892, Swamy Vivekananda came down to Kanyakumari and sat in meditation on one of the twin rocks before he set out abroad as India's leading religious crusader. Inaugurated in 1970, the memorial is an Indian architectural masterpiece. The entire memorial mandapam is similar to that of Sri Ramakrishna Temple at Belur and the entrance is designed on the style of Ajanta and Ellora cave temples.

The rock on which the memorial stands has, in puranic tradition, been known as the 'Sripaada



Statue of Swamy Vivekananda

paarai', blessed by the holy feet of the Devi. On this rock there is a small projection resembling human foot which has been revered as Sripaadam. According to legends it was on this rock that Goddess Kanyakumari did Her penance. This special significance and sanctity attached to this rock might have prompted Swamy Vivekananda, an ardent devotee of Kali, to venture across the sea for his long meditation.

In the main hall there is a life-size bronze statue of Swamiji in his standing 'parivrajak' posture. Adjoining the main hall is the dhyana mandapam where devotees can sit and meditate in a serene atmosphere.

There is a belief that the original Devi temple was built on this rock or somewhere near this and the rock itself was part of the mainland. The sea might have eroded the main land and turned the rock into an island, resulting in the shifting of the old temple to the present site. This rock is approachable only by boat which provides a pleasure cruise into the sea.

Ferry services to the rock memorial are available from 8 am to 4 pm. Ferry charge is Rs.20 and entrance fee to the Rock Memorial is Rs.10 per head.



Thiruvalluvar

Saint Thiruvalluvar

The Tamil Nadu Government has installed a statue of Saint Thiruvalluvar who gave us quintessential words of wisdom known as Thirukkural. The stone statue is 133 feet high including the pedestal. The pedestal is 38 ft high representing the 38 chapters in the first part of the Kural (Virtue) and the 95 ft statue represents the total chapters in the second and third parts of the Kural, Wealth and Love. Thus the statue symbolises the themes of wealth and love based on virtue.

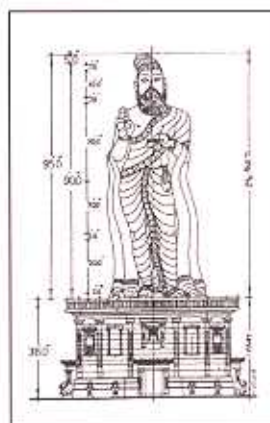
The pedestal is surrounded by an artistic mandapam known as alankara mandapam. Surrounding this mandapam stand statues of ten

elephants. To help the visitors to worship the holy feet of the saint 140 steps are constructed inside the mandapam.

The foundation stone for the statue was laid in 1979. Five hundred sculptors were engaged for this work under the able guidance of Dr. Ganapathi Sthapathi and the work was completed in 1999. The statue was inaugurated on 1st January 2000 by Dr. Mu. Karunanidhi, the then chief minister of Tamil Nadu.

Statistical details of the statue

Height of the statue	- 95 ft
Height of the pedestal	- 38 ft
Height of the face	- 10 ft
Height of the body part	- 30 ft
Height of the legs	- 20 ft
Length of the forearm	- 10 ft
Length of the palm leaves	- 10 ft
Width of the shoulders	- 30 ft
Length of the matted hair	- 5 ft
Total weight	- 7000 tons



The rocks for the sculpture came from Sirudhamoor, Pattumalaikuppam and Ambhasamudram Hills.



Gandhi Memorial

Gandhi Memorial Mandapam

There is a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi who had visited Kanyakumari in 1925 and 1937. It is constructed at a place on the seashore where his ashes were kept before immersion in the sea on 12th February 1949. The Mandapam is built in Orissa style of architecture and designed in such a way that on his birthday, 2nd October, the rays of the sun, through a hole on the roof, falls exactly on the place where the urn was kept.



Kamaraj Memorial

Kamaraj Memorial

As a tribute to K.Kamaraj who served as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and who was a great freedom fighter, the Government of Tamil Nadu constructed a memorial at the place where his ashes were kept for public to pay homage before immersion in the sea. Many rare photographs of Kamaraj and his meeting with various leaders are displayed in this Memorial.

View Tower and Telescope House

The picturesque landscape of the confluence of the three seas and the breath-taking views of sunrise and sunset can be enjoyed from this Tower through a telescope. It is situated near Hotel Tamil Nadu. Visiting hours: 5 am to 7 pm. Entrance fee: Rs. 3 (adults), Rs.2 (children).

Murugan Kundram

This hill shrine is situated about 3 km from Kanyakumari on the way to Nagercoil. It is dedicated to Lord Muruga (Karthikeya). One can have a beautiful view of sunrise and sunset from the hillrock.

Wandering Monk Exhibition

This is located in Kanyakumari town. Terracotta designs depicting incidents of Swamiji's wanderings (Bharat Parikrama) and pictures of various places visited by Swamiji are exhibited here.

The building is designed on the spiritual architecture of the Orient. Roofing is made with brick corbelling. The formation of the building

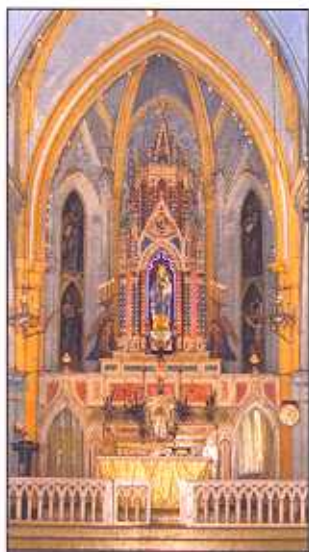


Wandering Monk Exhibition

represents the Meru of Srichakra and expresses the flame of fire raging within the monk which helped him to enlighten the whole world.

Church of Our Lady of Ransom

This Church dedicated to Our Lady of Ransom is situated on the main road near the railway station. It is 153 ft high, 153 ft long and 53 ft broad. Atop the church is a 10 ft high golden cross. The church is built in the Gothic Roman style. Historic evidence shows that St.Thomas and St.Xavier had visited this church. The festival is during the month of December.



Church - front view and the altar

Vivekanandapuram

It is the headquarters of the Vivekananda Kendra, situated one km from Kanyakumari Township. There is an imposing statue of Swamy Vivekananda as a wandering monk and a unique pictorial exhibition. Neat and comfortable accommodation is available here for tourists. A self-contained centre, Vivekananda puram has a post office, Bank, dispensary, library and a canteen. Free bus service to and from Kanyakumari township is available at frequent intervals. Vivekanandapuram beach offers a panoramic view of the sun emerge from the ocean.

Personality development camps for children and youth, yoga camps, national integration camps etc. are some of the services offered by the Kendra.

Guhanadeeswara Temple

This is a 1000 year old Shiva Temple of the Chola period, situated on the main road, near the Railway station. Visiting hours: 6 am to 11.15 am and 5 pm to 8.40 pm.

Baywatch

It is a water theme amusement park located at a distance of 2 km from Kanyakumari on the Kovalam road. It is open from 10 am to 7.30 pm. Entrance fee: Rs.200 for adult and Rs.150 for child.

Tourist Information

Govt of Tamil Nadu Tourist Office -

10 am to 5.45 pm (Tel : 246276)

Hotel Tamil Nadu - Ph: 246257, 246258

Kendra information centre at the Railway station.

Important Telephone numbers

Govt of Tamil Nadu Tourist Office	246376
Executive Officer, Town Panchayat	246379
Vivekandana Kendra	246250
Poompuhar Shipping Corporation	246 270
Baywatch	246565, 246563
Exe. Officer, Kanyakumari Temple	246223
Exe. Officer, Suchindrum Temple	246420
State Transport Coporation	246019
S.T.C. Bus stand	246255
Police station	246224
Railway station	246247
Post Office	246221
Telegraph Office	246140

Around Kanyakumari

Vattakottai

This 18th century circular fort overlooking the sea was built by the Dutch. It is 6 km from Kanyakumari. It is a good picnic spot. One can enjoy a sea bath here, in calm surroundings.

Suchindrum

The Sthanumalaya temple at Suchindrum, 13 km on the way to Nagercoil, is venerated by both the Vaishnavites and Saivites. The deity is a single lingam known as Sthanumalaya, representing the triple aspects of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma.



Suchindrum Temple

The temple is known for its 18 ft high statue of Hanuman, the musical pillars, tall gopuram and architectural beauty.

Sothavilai Beach

This beautiful beach is 12 km from Kanyakumari on the west coast road, near Puthalam. It is one of the best natural beaches of this district.

Nagaraja Temple

This temple at Nagercoil, 20 km from Kanyakumari, is dedicated to the serpent god Nagaraja. The prasad distributed here is only sand, scooped out of the ground where the image of the deity is enshrined. The temple garden is famous for its Naga flower (*couropita gynensis*), a symbolic representation of Nagaraja.



Nagaraja Temple

St. Xavier's Church, Kottar

This church at Kottar, a suburb of Nagercoil, was constructed in memory of St. Xavier who once visited the coastal areas. The church was built in 1600 AD. In 1930 it was raised to the status of a cathedral. The annual festival is celebrated during Nov-Dec.

Padmanabhapuram Fort and Palace

The pomp and style of Travancore strikes rich in the minds of the visitor whenever one visits Padmanabhapuram fort and palace. Padmanabhapuram was once the capital of the erstwhile Travancore kingdom. Many temples were built inside the fort among which Sri Neelakantaswamy temple, Sri Ramaswamy temple, Sri Subramaniaswamy temple and Saraswathi temple are important. Ramaswamy



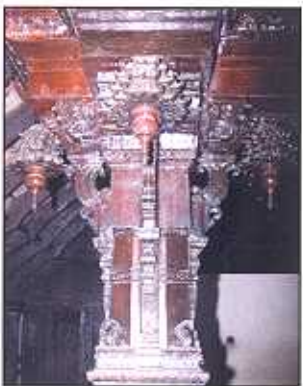
Sothavilai Beach

temple was built by Marthanda Varma in 1744 AD. Scenes from Ramayana are seen in beautiful wood carvings inside the temple.

The Padmanabhapuram palace is actually a palace complex, containing 14 palaces spread over an area of 6.5 acres. The palace is a unique feature of the ancient Kerala architectural skill. The building is always cool and quiet. Wood, laterite, burnt bricks, granite and lime were used for construction. A special combination of charcoal from burnt coconutshells, lime, white part of eggs and various vegetable extracts were used for the shining black floors. Traditional oil lamps provide light. The place is enriched by wood carvings and murals of 17th and 18th century. There is a museum on the southwest corner of the palace where stone



Padmanabhapuram Palace



Padmanabhapuram Palace

inscriptions, wooden and stone sculptures, weapons of the royal family are on display.

Timings : 9 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 4.30 pm.
Monday holiday. Entrance fee: Adults: Rs.10,
Children: Rs.5.

Thiruvattar

This Vaishnavite temple dedicated to Adikesava Perumal is situated 46 km from Kanyakumari on the way to Trivandrum. The Lord here is seen in a reclining posture.

Thirparappu

Thirparappu, a pavilion of beauty and sacredness, is situated 10 km from Thiruvattar. River Kodayar makes its descent here and a temple dedicated to Lord Mahadeva is situated near the falls. Thirparappu is a good picnic spot. Entry fees: Rs. 2.

Mathoor Thotti paalam

This is perhaps the longest and tallest bridge - actually a trough - in Asia, having a height of 35.4 metres and length of 384 metres across a canal, which is shouldered by 29 tall pillars.

Kumaracoil

This Muruga temple is situated at the foot of Velimalai. The deity in standing posture is 6 feet



Thirparappu Falls

tall. Hundreds of devotees come here on Fridays and during festivals.

Keralapuram

The Vinayaka of Keralapuram, near Thuckalay, is a puzzle to everyone, as the deity changes its colour. It remains black for six months and white for the remaining six months.

Chitharal

It is a rockcut Jain temple. One has to walk about a kilometre from the foot of the hill to reach the temple.

Accommodations at Kanyakumari

Hotel Seaview
Hotel Singar International
Hotel Tamil Nadu
Seaview Lodge
Hotel Cape Residency
Lakshmi Tourist Home
Hotel Sebaa Palace
Hotel Maadhni
Manickam Tourist Home
Hotel Shivas Residency
Triveni Tourist Home
Hotel Sangam
Hotel Sankar's Guest House
Hotel Samudra
Sri Krishna Lodge
D.K.V. Lodge
Hotel Sagar
Gopi Nivas Lodge
Vivekananda Kendra
Hotel Ganga Lodging House
Vinanchi Araichi Tourist Home

Railway Timings

From Nagercoil (Via Tirunelveli)

6352	Nagercoil-Tiruppathi Exp	- 4.55	- Thu, Sun
6356	Kanyakumari-Howrah Exp	- 7.05	- Sat
6340	Nagercoil-Mumbai CST	- 7.05	- M,Tu, W,F
6128	Guruvayoor-Chennai Exp	- 6.10	- Daily
6080	Nagercoil-Chennai (Spl)	- 19.00	- Sun
2641	Kanyakumari-Nizammudin Exp	- 13.35	- W
2534	Kanyakumari-Chennai Exp	- 17.35	- Daily
6124	Ananthapuri Exp	- 18.10	- Daily
	(Tirvandrum - Chennai)		(Ex.Mon)

From Nagercoil (Via Trivandrum)

1082	Kanyakumari-Mumbai CST Exp	- 5.55	- Daily
6525	Kanyakumari-Bangalore Exp	- 11.35	- Daily
6317	Himsagar Exp	- 14.30	- Fri
	(Kanyakumari-Jammu Tawi)		
6336	Nagercoil-Gandhidam Exp	- 13.30	- Thu
6357	Nagercoil-Howrah Exp	- 14.30	- Sun
6127	Chennai-Guruvayoor Exp	- 21.45	- Daily

Train timings are subject to change. Please get them reconfirmed with Railway authorities.

Bus Timings

Trivandrum	05.45	06.00	06.30	07.00	08.00
	09.00	12.00	13.00	14.00	15.00
	18.45	19.30	21.15		
Kovalam (Trivandrum)	06.20	14.00			
Ernakulam	08.00	09.00			
Chennai	09.30	13.45	14.00	18.30	20.30
Madurai	07.00	08.00	11.15	14.30	16.10
	20.30	22.45			
Rameswaram	07.30	19.00			
Kodaicanal	20.45				
Ooty	17.45	18.30			
Bangalore	17.30				

Bus and Train services to all important towns in South India are available from Nagercoil, 18 km from Kanyakumari.

Photo Credits :

Photo Arts, West Maxi Street, Madurai

Kerala

Kanyakumari District Tourist Centres Map

(not to Scale)

The boundary, Road and Places are
stylised for easy identification

