

Glimpses of India

(Part 2) Coorg



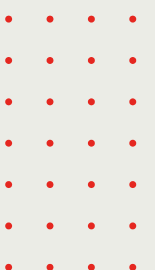



II Coorg




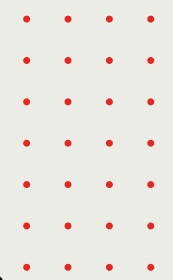

Coorg is coffee country, famous for its rainforests and spices.






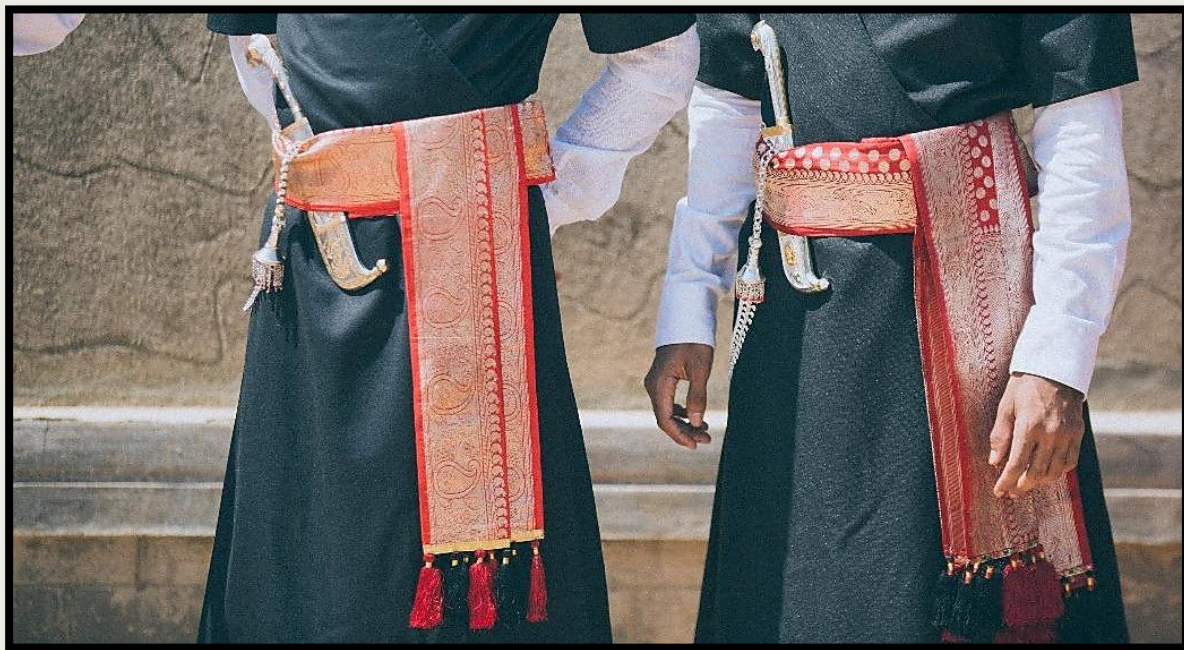
MIDWAY between Mysore and the coastal town of Mangalore sits a piece of heaven that must have drifted from the kingdom of god. This land of rolling hills is inhabited by a proud race of martial men, beautiful women and wild creatures. Coorg, or Kodagu, the smallest district of Karnataka, is home to evergreen rainforests, spices and coffee plantations. Evergreen rainforests cover thirty per cent of this district. During the monsoons, it pours enough to keep many visitors away. The season of joy commences from September and continues till March. The weather is perfect, with some showers thrown in for good measure. The air breathes of invigorating coffee. Coffee estates and colonial bungalows stand tucked under tree canopies in prime corners.

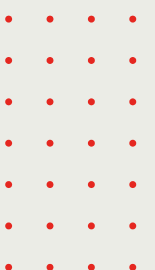





The fiercely independent people of Coorg are possibly of Greek or Arabic descent. As one story goes, a part of Alexander's army moved south along the coast and settled here when return became impractical. These people married amongst the locals and their culture is apparent in the martial traditions, marriage and religious rites, which are distinct from the Hindu mainstream. The theory of Arab origin draws support from the long, black coat with an embroidered waist-belt worn by the Kodavus. Known as kuppia, it resembles the kuffia worn by the Arabs and the Kurds.




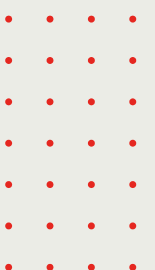






Coorgi homes have a tradition of hospitality, and they are more than willing to recount numerous tales of valour related to their sons and fathers. The Coorg Regiment is one of the most decorated in the Indian Army, and the first Chief of the Indian Army, General Cariappa, was a Coorgi. Even now, Kodavus are the only people in India permitted to carry firearms without a licence.

The river, Kaveri, obtains its water from the hills and forests of Coorg. Mahaseer — a large freshwater fish — abound in these waters. Kingfishers dive for their catch, while squirrels and langurs drop partially eaten fruit for the mischief of enjoying the splash and the ripple effect in the clear water. Elephants enjoy being bathed and scrubbed in the river by their mahouts.





The most laidback individuals become converts to the life of high-energy adventure with river rafting, canoeing, rappelling, rock climbing and mountain biking. Numerous walking trails in this region are a favourite with trekkers. Birds, bees and butterflies are there to give you company. Macaques, Malabar squirrels, langurs and slender loris keep a watchful eye from the tree canopy. I do, however, prefer to step aside for wild elephants.

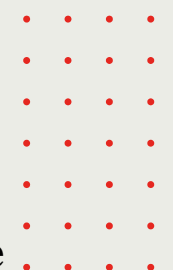














The climb to the Brahmagiri hills brings you into a panoramic view of the entire misty landscape of Coorg. A walk across the rope bridge leads to the sixty-four-acre island of Nisargadhama. Running into Buddhist monks from India's largest Tibetan settlement, at nearby Bylakuppe, is a bonus. The monks, in red, ochre and yellow robes, are amongst the many surprises that wait to be discovered by visitors searching for the heart and soul of India, right here in Coorg.



**Thank
You**

