

SOUTH INDIA NOMAD'S KERALA BACKWATERS

—CRAFTED TO SURPASS EXPECTATIONS—



NOMADPHOTO
EXPEDITION

"Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him."

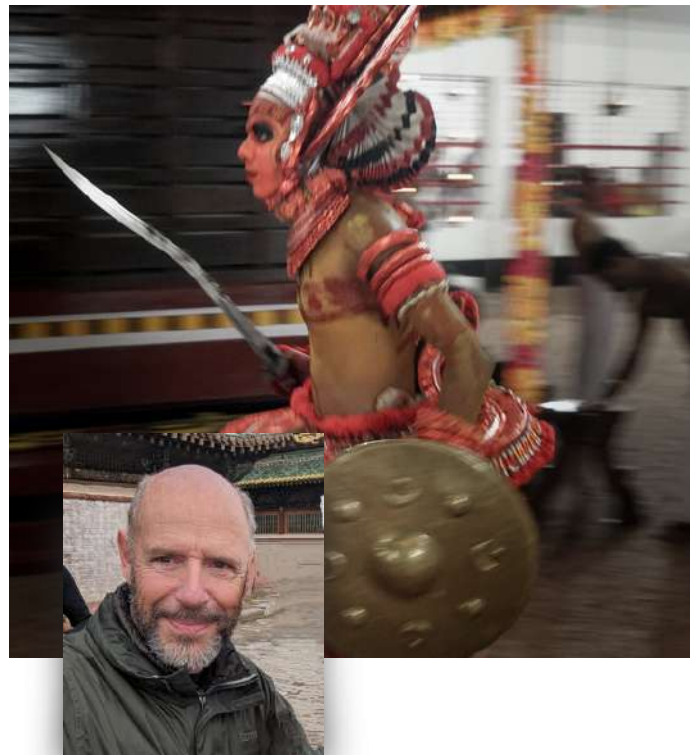
DESTINATIONS FADE, EXPERIENCES LAST.

Join me on an extraordinary photographic journey through India's most vibrant traditions and landscapes.

Capture the electrifying **Theyyam Festival**, where deities come to life, the grandeur of **Kerala's Elephant Festival**, and the timeless charm of **Cochin's heritage**.

From mesmerizing rituals to our **private boat** in the serene backwaters, this curated expedition offers unparalleled opportunities to document India's soul through dynamic festivals, cultural encounters, and breathtaking scenery—ensuring unforgettable images at every turn.

Harry Fisch
FOUNDER





**TOURIST TRAPS ARE FOR SELFIES; WE CREATE EXPERIENCES
FOR PASSIONATE PHOTOGRAPHERS**



THE THEYYAM GODS
THE SACRED TRANSFORMATION.

Theyyam performers enter a divine trance, believing they embody gods, not just represent them. Through ritual, drumming, and intense devotion, they transcend human identity, channeling ancestral spirits. Villagers revere them as deities, seeking blessings and guidance. This sacred transformation, passed through generations, blurs the line between mortal and divine, preserving ancient spiritual traditions.

**THEYYAM PERFORMERS ENTER A DIVINE TRANCE, BELIEVING
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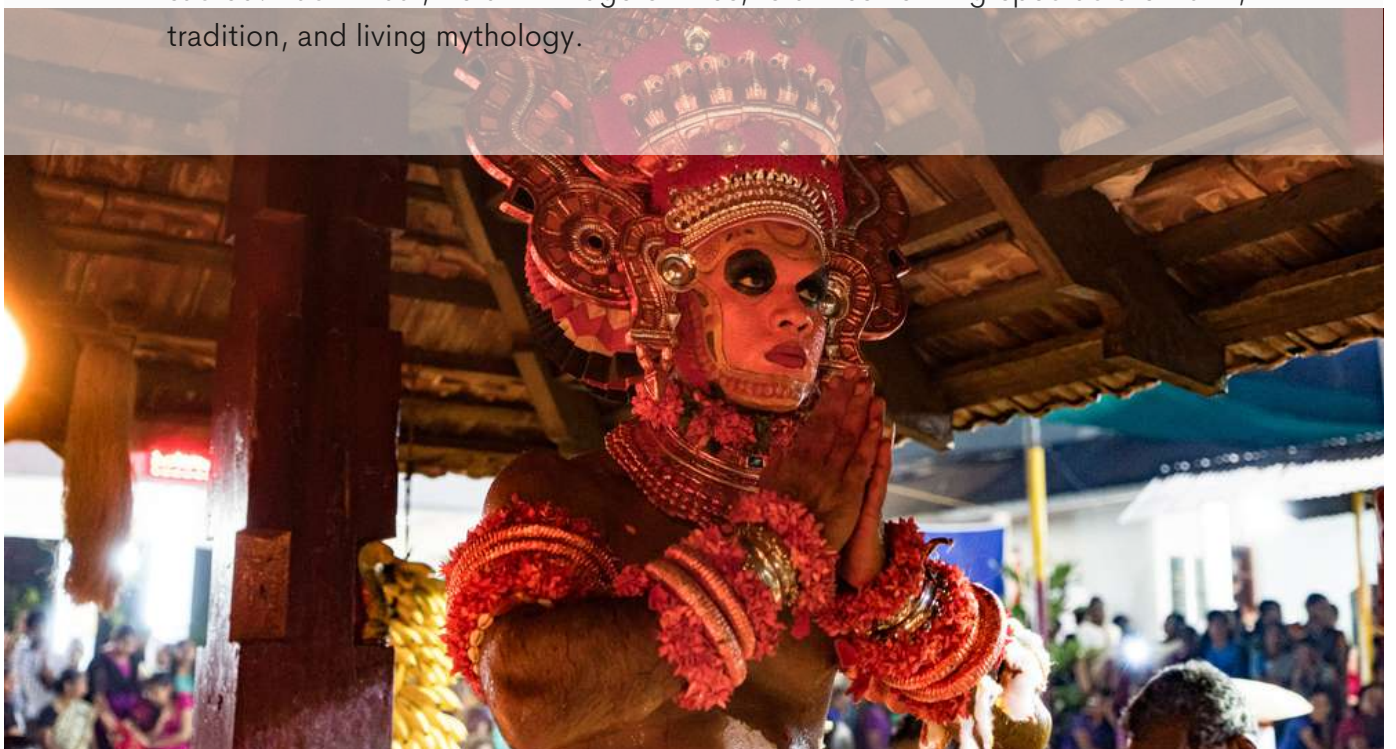
IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING THERE; OUR PASSION IS BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES.

PREPARING THE GOD

THE SACRED TRANSFORMATION.



In the heart of Kerala, Theyyam brings gods to life. Vibrant costumes, fiery dances, and rhythmic drums transform performers into divine beings. Through trance and storytelling, they bless devotees, bridging the human and the sacred. Each ritual, held in village shrines, is a mesmerizing spectacle of faith, tradition, and living mythology.





**IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING THERE; OUR
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We drift through Kerala's backwaters aboard a luxurious houseboat, where tradition meets indulgence. From our private deck, we watch emerald waters reflect swaying palms, while a gentle breeze carries the scent of spice and earth. Inside, plush suites and gourmet cuisine cocoon us in comfort. With every ripple, we surrender to the timeless rhythm of Kerala's serene waterways, a journey of pure elegance and tranquility.



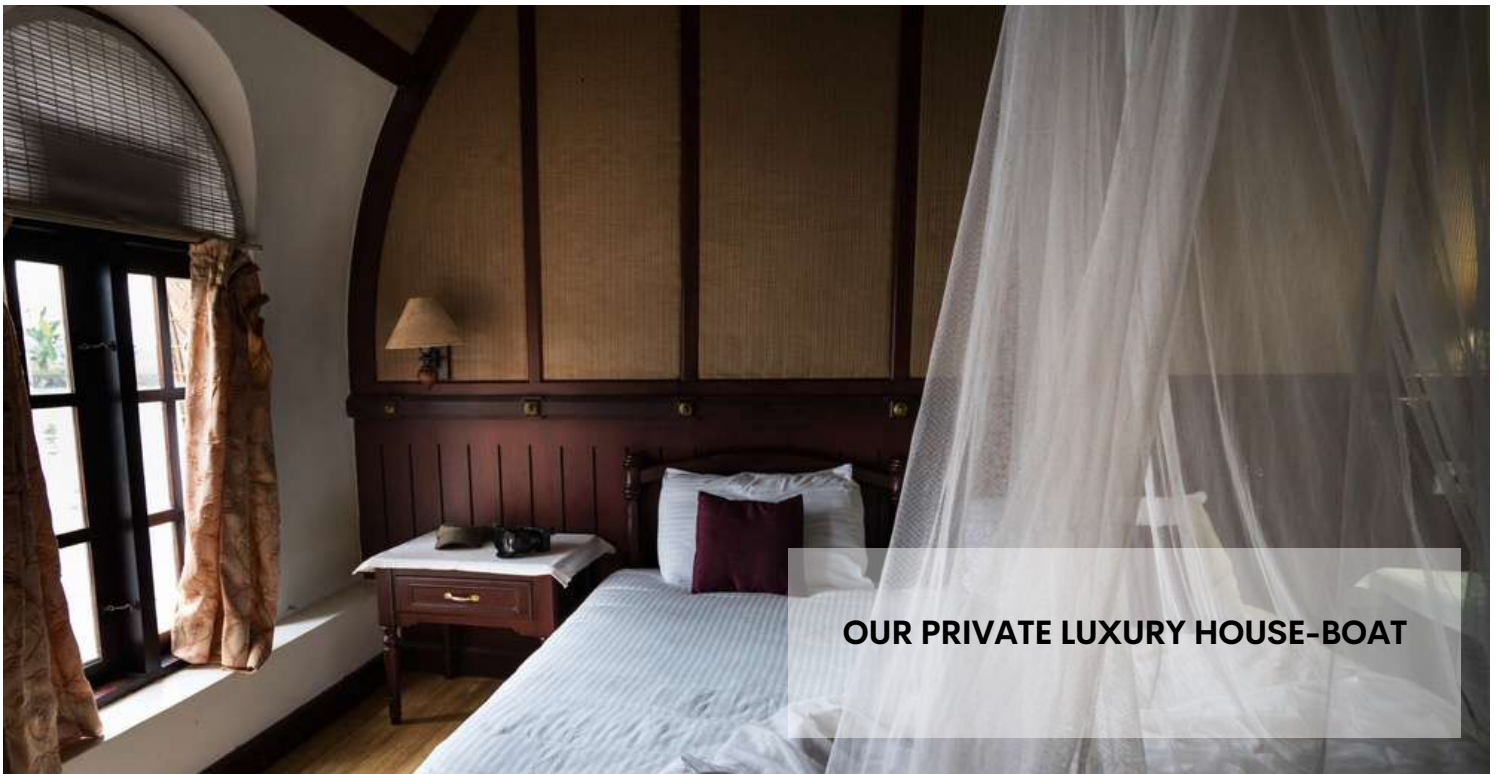
OUR PRIVATE LUXURY HOUSE-BOAT



**IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING THERE; OUR
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OPPORTUNITIES.**



Kerala's luxury houseboats, or kettuvallams, glide through serene backwaters, offering elegance and comfort. These floating retreats feature plush bedrooms, open decks, and gourmet dining, blending tradition with modern luxury. Guests savor panoramic views of lush landscapes, coconut groves, and tranquil villages. Personalized services, private chefs, and curated experiences make it an unforgettable escape



OUR PRIVATE LUXURY HOUSE-BOAT



TOURIST TRAPS ARE FOR SELFIES; WE CREATE EXPERIENCES FOR PASSIONATE PHOTOGRAPHERS

BEHIND THE CURTAINS

Private session with the performers

Kathakali is a classical dance-drama demanding years of intense training. Performers dedicate 8 to 10 years to mastering intricate hand gestures (mudras), facial expressions (abhinaya), and dynamic movements inspired by martial arts.

Rigorous physical conditioning strengthens their bodies, while deep study of Sanskrit and Malayalam verses enhances storytelling.

Elaborate costumes play a crucial role in their transformation, with towering headpieces and layered skirts weighing up to 30 kg (66 lbs). Despite this, performers move with precision, embodying gods, demons, and legendary heroes.

**PRIVATE KATHAKALI
PERFORMANCE**





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**PRIVATE KATHAKALI
PERFORMANCE**



JOURNEY WITH MEANING, WHERE AUTHENTICITY SHAPES EVERY EXPERIENCE

We immerse ourselves in the magic of Kathakali with an exclusive private performance in our own theater. Without the distractions of a large audience, we witness every movement and expression up close, feeling the raw intensity of this ancient art form. As the performers prepare, we watch them apply intricate makeup and don elaborate costumes, transforming into gods, demons, and legendary heroes before our eyes.

The air fills with the rhythmic beats of drums and haunting chants as the story unfolds through mesmerizing gestures and expressions. With the freedom to take photos, we capture every vivid detail—the bold colors, dramatic eyes, and powerful movements. This is Kathakali like never before—intimate, personal, and an unforgettable journey into tradition and mythology.



PRIVATE KATHAKALI PERFORMANCE



**TRAVEL DEEPER AND CONNECT WITH
MOMENTS THAT TRULY MATTER**

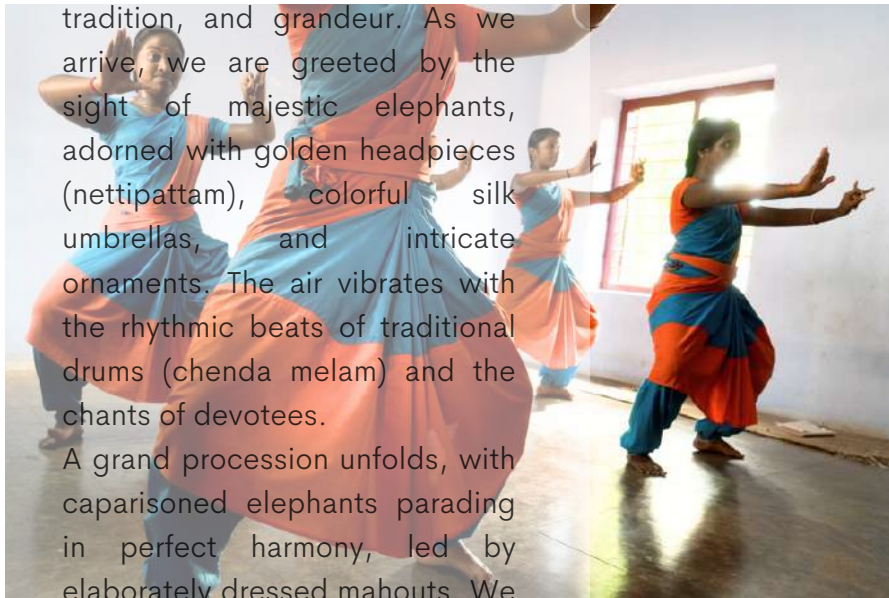
THE ELEPHANT FESTIVAL

A MESMERIZING TRADITION

The Elephant Festival in Kerala is a mesmerizing blend of devotion, tradition, and grandeur. As we arrive, we are greeted by the sight of majestic elephants, adorned with golden headpieces (nettipattam), colorful silk umbrellas, and intricate ornaments. The air vibrates with the rhythmic beats of traditional drums (chenda melam) and the chants of devotees.

A grand procession unfolds, with caparisoned elephants parading in perfect harmony, led by elaborately dressed mahouts. We

watch breathtaking cultural performances, from classical dance to temple music, as the festival reaches its peak. The energy is electric, the atmosphere divine. As we capture these unforgettable moments, we become part of Kerala's living heritage, celebrating the deep bond between people, culture, and these magnificent creatures.



WHAT IS THEYYAM



Theyyam is raw, powerful, and nothing like anything you'd see on a stage or in a temple. It's real, lived faith — not for show, but for the people. Truly unforgettable. It is one of the wildest and most fascinating things I've ever seen.

It's not a performance in the usual sense; it's a full-on spiritual experience that happens in small villages in northern Kerala, India.

Imagine a mix of ritual, dance, fire, mythology, and intense belief — all happening right in front of you, up close.

THEYYAM PERFORMERS ENTER A DIVINE TRANCE, HE IS GOD

So here's how it goes: late at night or sometimes early morning, people gather in a temple courtyard or a sacred grove. It's not some fancy temple, more like a small open space surrounded by trees and lamps. Everyone's barefoot, super respectful, and you can feel something powerful in the air.

Meanwhile, in a nearby hut, the Theyyam performer is getting ready — and when I say ready, I mean transformed. He paints his face in wild, vibrant colors — red, white, black — all very symbolic. His costume is massive: a huge skirt made of palm leaves, layers of fabric, bells, and a headpiece that's like four feet tall. It takes hours, and once he's in it, he doesn't look human anymore.

He is the god.

WHAT IS THEYYAM



THE THEYYAM BEGINS TO CIRCLE THE SHRINE, HIS DANCE A MIX OF RHYTHM, STORYTELLING, AND DIVINE POSSESSION. HE ENACTS MYTHS—BATTLES, BLESSINGS, VENGEANCE, AND JUSTICE—THROUGH GESTURES, CHANTS, AND FOOTWORK. AT TIMES, HE STOPS TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO DEVOTEES, OFFERING BLESSINGS OR WARNINGS BELIEVED TO COME FROM THE DEITY ITSELF.

When the drums start — boom, boom, boom — it's game on. The Theyyam bursts into the space, dancing and moving in this intense, almost hypnotic way. The crowd goes silent. Some people pray, others just stare in awe. The energy is unreal.

The Theyyam begins to circle the shrine, his dance a mix of rhythm, storytelling, and divine possession. He enacts myths—battles, blessings, vengeance, and justice—through gestures, chants, and footwork. At times, he stops to speak directly to devotees, offering blessings or warnings believed to come from the deity itself.

And— in some versions, like the fire Theyyams, the performer literally walks through flames. Barefoot. No fear, no pain. People believe he's possessed by the deity, and honestly, watching it, you might believe it too.

The whole thing is part storytelling, part blessing, part spiritual ritual. He interacts with the crowd, gives messages, even personal advice — as if the god is speaking through him. It can go on for hours, deep into the night.

WHAT IS THEYYAM

FOR THE PEOPLE WHO PRACTICE IT, THEYYAM IS NOT SYMBOLIC.
IT IS REAL. WHEN A PERFORMER TAKES ON THE ELABORATE
COSTUME, FACE PAINT, AND TOWERING HEADGEAR OF A
THEYYAM, HE BECOMES THE DEITY ITSELF.

THE TRADITION

This ancient ritualistic art form, dating back over 1,500 years, blends religion, theater, music, and storytelling. It's one of the most fascinating examples of "living tradition" in the modern world, where belief, folklore, and performance come together in a community-driven expression of faith.

A Glimpse Into the Divine

The word "Theyyam" is derived from "Daivam," the Malayalam word for God. For the people who practice it, Theyyam is not symbolic. It is real. When a performer takes on the elaborate costume, face paint, and towering headgear of a Theyyam, he becomes the deity itself. For the duration of the ritual, the performer is no longer seen as human — he is worshipped as a god.

Unlike classical Indian dance forms performed on stage for ticketed audiences, Theyyam is performed in open temple courtyards, village shrines, or sacred groves called "kavus." It is free, accessible, and communal — a gift from the divine to the people.

RITUAL MEETS PERFORMANCE

Each Theyyam has a story — often drawn from local mythology, legends, or ancestral spirits. There are more than 400 different Theyyams, each with a unique name, makeup, costume, and backstory. Some are fierce warrior gods; others are compassionate goddesses or tragic heroes.

The preparation is intense. Performers spend hours applying intricate face paint, donning flame-colored costumes made of palm leaves and cloth, and attaching massive headdresses that can rise several feet tall. Once ready, they dance, chant, and invoke the spirit of the deity, often entering a trance-like state.



WHAT IS THEYYAM

THE PREPARATION IS INTENSE. PERFORMERS SPEND HOURS APPLYING INTRICATE FACE PAINT, DONNING FLAME-COLORED COSTUMES MADE OF PALM LEAVES AND CLOTH, AND ATTACHING MASSIVE HEADDRESSES THAT CAN RISE SEVERAL FEET TALL.

Drums beat in frenzied rhythms. Torches blaze. In fire Theyyams — like the famous Kandanar Kelan Theyyam — the performer even walks through fire or dances in burning embers, seemingly unaffected by pain. For villagers watching, it's a powerful moment — not just a show, but a spiritual blessing.

ROOTED IN THE PEOPLE

What makes Theyyam especially compelling is its egalitarian soul. Historically, Indian society has been shaped by caste divisions. But in Theyyam, the performer — often from an indigenous or marginalized community — takes on the role of God, while Brahmins and upper-caste priests bow before him.

It's a subtle but revolutionary act, where divine power is not claimed by the elite but accessed through the community. For centuries, Theyyam has served as a form of social commentary and a tool for inclusion, justice, and local memory.

