

## The Dancing Ganesha Culinary Journey of South India January 17 - 29, 2007

Mindful Journeys with Usha and Ami Bedi, owners/chef of the Dancing Ganesha Restaurant in Milwaukee, are pleased to present a culinary trip to South India in January 2007.

The Dancing Ganesha, co-owned by the mother-daughter team, has been selected by Zagat as one of the top restaurants in the country this year. The participants of this journey will be introduced to the rich culinary traditions in its exotic and original surroundings. It promises to be inspiring, educational and entertaining.



We invite you to join us in exploring the richness of the spice, tea and coffee plantations, the incredible beauty of Kerala and the warmth of the people!

Usha Bedi, co owner and chef of Dancing Ganesha in Milwaukee, WI has had a very eclectic culinary history that spans four continents and 4 matrilineal generations. Born in Tanzania, Usha lived in a home with many brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles. She learned strictly vegetarian cooking from the elder women in the family and was heavily involved in preparing meals for the whole family from young age. When she moved to India in her teens, she had her first forays into non-vegetarian cooking from her future mother in law. When Usha moved to England in her early twenties, and finally to Milwaukee in 1976, she faced the immigrant cook's challenge of preparing traditional meals with virtually none of the necessary ingredients available.

Ami Bedi, co-owner and wine buyer of Dancing Ganesha loves to eat her mom's food. After finishing her undergraduate degree in 1995 she decided to take some time off and open a restaurant with her mother. The first year involved coming up with a concept and design with her mother for the restaurant. One year turned into many and Ami has conquered the daunting task of putting together an extensive wine list with exceptional and offbeat wines that actually pair with Indian food.

Dancing Ganesha aims to support as many locally owned small businesses as possible. Wine is selected from more small production wineries. Produce and



meat suppliers are locally owned and run. Usha's goal is to provide the community with healthy handcrafted meals of the quality that she would serve to her own family. Her belief is that cooking is like alchemy, giving her the ability to take the most ordinary ingredients and turn them into art. She offers traditional Indian dishes from several different regions of India alongside more eclectic and off the wall dishes of Usha's own creation. The focus is not on the colonial concept of Indian food which is what most people have come to expect. The ingredients

are the freshest and most health conscious possible. Dancing Ganesha has remained in the critic's and reader's choice list in Milwaukee every year since opening in 1997. This year find's Dancing Ganesha in Zagat's Top American Restaurants.

### *Itinerary*

#### January 17-19, 2007 U.S. - Cochin - Kumarakom

Depart the U.S. in the evening of January 17 and arrive at Cochin Airport in the morning of January 19. You will be met on arrival by our representative and transferred to your hotel, located on an island in the Backwaters of Kerala. Relax in the afternoon with an ayurvedic massage or a swim in the lovely pool, overlooking Lake Vembanad. Meet your fellow travelers for cocktails before dinner at the hotel.



Coconut Lagoon Hotel [www.cghearth.com](http://www.cghearth.com)

**Kumarakom:** an unbelievably beautiful paradise of mangrove forests, emerald green paddy fields and coconut groves interspersed with enchanting waterways

and canals adorned with white lilies. Situated on the Vembanad Lake, in this small water world you'll come across plenty of traditional country crafts, boats and canoes that will take you into the heart of the scenic lake.

### January 20, 2007 Kumarakom

After breakfast and leisurely morning, transfer by a motorboat to Emerald Isle, a Syrian Christian Home on the Backwaters. Enjoy a traditional Banana Leaf lunch. After lunch board a traditional rice boat converted into a houseboat. The cruise will take you through the backwaters, rivers and canals. Visit the villages, old temples and church along the waters. Snacks and tea will be provided on board. Cruise back to the resort around sunset.

Coconut Lagoon Hotel



### January 21, 2007 Kumarakom

After a leisurely breakfast, transfer by motorboat to Philipkutty's Farm to enjoy a cooking class and exquisite lunch. The farm is an opportunity to experience life on a plantation, in the caring company of a family who extends their warm hospitality. You will be taken on a tour of the plantation that cultivates coconut, nutmeg, cinnamon, vanilla, pepper, banana, cocoa, etc. Jumbo prawns and pearl spot are found in the farm's canals. Transfer back by boat to Coconut Lagoon for arrival around sunset.

Coconut Lagoon Hotel

### January 22, 2007 Kumarakom

Morning at leisure to enjoy a yoga class and/or ayurvedic treatments at the resort's health center. Around lunchtime the resort's chef will prepare a cooking demonstration followed by a lunch. Late afternoon lecture on Ayurveda by the hotel's physician. Enjoy an evening boat cruise to watch the glorious sunset over Lake Vembanad with a sitar and tabla player.

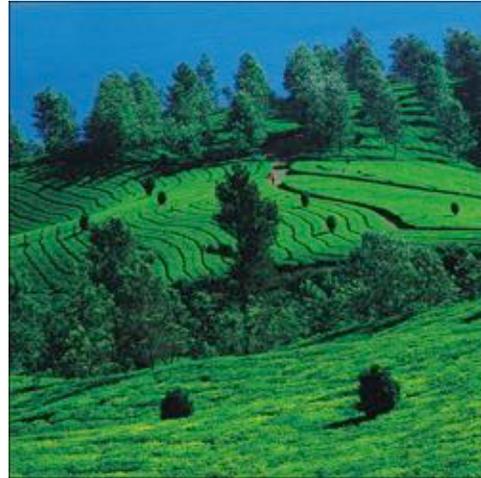
Coconut Lagoon Hotel

### January 23, 2007 Kumarakom - Thekkady.

After breakfast you will depart for a four hour drive to Thekkady. On the way lunch at a Plantation Bungalow where you enjoy a delicious Kerala home cooked feast and meet the owners of the rubber tree plantation. After Lunch view a

rubber plant extraction demonstration, and continue your drive to Thekkady. Check into your hotel, **the Shalimar Spice Garden Resort**, situated in a spice plantation.

**Thekkady:** The very sound of the name conjures up images of elephants, unending chains of hills and spice scented plantations. Here, in the crisp, cool air of the Western Ghats, is one of the finest wildlife reserves in India. The splendid artificial lake formed by the Mullaperiyar Dam across the Periyar River adds to the charm of the Park. This is the only sanctuary in India, where you can have the unique experience of viewing wildlife at close quarters from the safety of a boat on the lake. The greatest attraction of Lake Periyar, however, is the herds of wild elephants that come down to play in the lake.



#### January 24, 2007 Thekkady

After breakfast, visit the spice plantation of the resort. Enjoy a swim in the pool and an ayurvedic massage at the hotel. Late afternoon take a boat ride on Lake Periyar for game viewing. Dinner at your hotel, **the Shalimar Spice Garden Resort**

#### January 25, 2007 Thekkady

After breakfast visit the local spice markets, followed by a cooking demonstration by the chef at Spice Village. Spend the afternoon back at your hotel or explore the lovely stores at Periyar for some wonderful Indian clothing and artifacts.

**Shalimar Spice Garden Resort**

#### January 26, 2007 Thekkady – Cochin

After breakfast drive to Cochin. On the way enjoy a delicious lunch at Serenity, a beautiful old bungalow. Arrive in the late afternoon at your hotel, the **Brunton Boat Yard** in Cochin. [www.cghearth.com](http://www.cghearth.com)

**Cochin:** A leisurely walk through the city is the best way to discover historic Fort Kochi. An obscure fishing village that became the first European township in India, Kochi or Cochin has an eventful and colorful history. The city epitomizes

the diversity of Southern India, with Portuguese, Chinese, Dutch, Middle Eastern, Jewish and British influences, contributing to the town's vibrant culture. The result of these cultural influences is seen in the many examples of Indo European architecture that still exists here.

### January 27, 2007 Cochin – Alleppey - Cochin

After breakfast, drive to Alleppey, an ancient port town, where you will be welcomed by the ladies of the Lion's Club. After a visit of the town to view their efforts to maintain the heritage, you will enjoy a fabulous home cooked feast in a lovely home, prepared by the ladies. Return to Cochin in the late afternoon to



enjoy a sunset boat cruise on Cochin Harbor, passing through Wellington Island and ending up at the Chinese Fishing Nets.

These huge cantilevered fishing nets are the legacy of one of the first visitors to the Malabar Coast. Erected here between 1350 and 1450 AD by traders from the court of Kublai Khan, these nets are set up on teak wood and bamboo poles. Overnight at your hotel, [Brunton Boat Yard Hotel](#)

### January 28, 2007 Cochin

After breakfast visit the Dutch Palace Museum, Saint Francis Church, and walk through the Jewish Town visiting the Synagogue. Bargain in the lovely antique shops in the old part of the town. In the early evening, witness the make-up session that is demonstrated before a Kathakali dance performance, the popular art form of Kerala, referred to as the first theater imagination of the world, owing to its elaborate costumes, ornaments and facial make-up. Farewell dinner at the Malabar Residency House.

[Brunton Boat Yard Hotel](#)

### January 29, 2007

After breakfast you will be transferred to the International Airport, where our representative will check you in for your international flight home.

### January 30, 2007

Arrive back home in the early afternoon.