



travel From houseboating in South India to tenting in Northern California, a look at where to go next. By Richard Alleman.

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Floating Through India

Already an A-list destination for many savvy travelers, the Kerala on India's southwest coast is a fascinating world of canals, rivers, lakes, and lagoons teeming with boat traffic and wildlife. The news in Kerala is that it can now be explored aboard a traditional thatch-roofed rice boat called a *kettuvallom*, many recently transformed into comfortable one-bedroom houseboats and staffed with butler/cooks who prepare fresh-caught seafood as well as spicy vegetarian dishes. Poled by two boatmen, these exotic vessels ply Kerala's backwaters, passing peaceful villages, floating markets, and colorful religious pageants. Cruises range from one day to one week—and are best combined with a stay in the lakeside village of Kumarakom at either the luxurious Taj Garden Retreat or the rustic Coconut Lagoon Resort, each with a spa offering a wide range of holistic Ayurvedic therapy programs. Rates start at \$300 per day, per person, for the Taj and Coconut Lagoon, and \$200 a day for the houseboat. Contact Our Personal Guest at (212) 319-1354.

