



Enchanting TAMIL NADU



Issue: 17

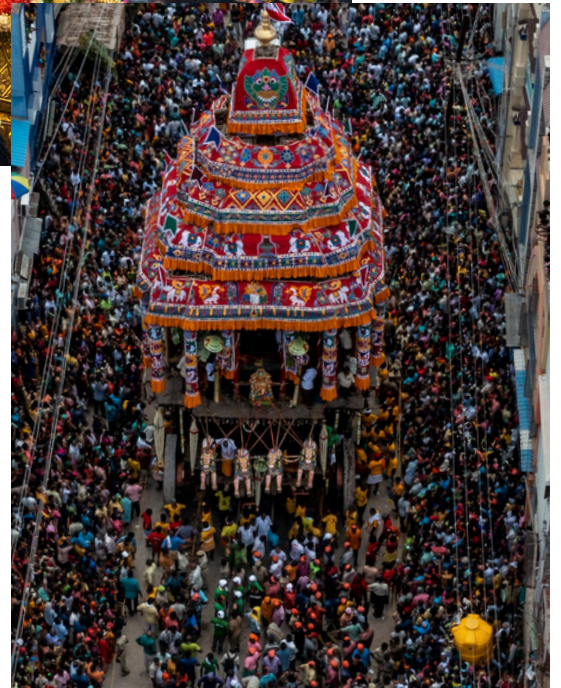
A Tamil Nadu Tourism Newsletter

April, 2024



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DEVOTEES FLOCK TO WITNESS MEENAKSHI THIRUKALYANAM



MADURAI CHITHIRAI FESTIVAL

The annual 15-day Chithirai festival commenced on April 21, 2024, at Madurai. A sea of devoted pilgrims gathered at the Meenakshi Sundareshwara Temple to partake in the sacred union of Lord Sundarshwar and the Goddess Meenakshi. Tamil Nadu Tourism in collaboration with the district administration, organised the festival. The celebration commenced with the ceremonial hoisting of a flag, known as *Kodi Yetram*. Culminating at the Kallazhagar Temple nestled in the Alagar Hills of Madurai, the final days of the festival honour Lord Kallazhagar, revered as the brother of Goddess Meenakshi and an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Legend narrates Lord Kallazhagar's journey from Azhagarkoil to attend the marriage of his sister, Goddess Meenakshi, where he symbolically crosses the Vaigai River astride a golden horse.

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Following the hoisting of the flag is the coronation of Goddess Meenakshi as the sovereign of Madurai. Subsequently, the *Dikvijayam*, where the newly crowned queen ventures onto the battlefield to reunite with her consort.

The Meenakshi Kalyanam is a celestial union representing the divine matrimony between Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Shiva (Sundareshvara) in Madurai. Notably, elaborate processions featuring the revered images of Meenakshi and Sundareshvara grace the streets, prominently carried on the *Pushpa Pallakku* and *Yanai Vahanam*. The Chariot festival, or *Ter Tiruvila*, occurs on the subsequent day, wherein the newlywed deities are paraded through the city in an ornate chariot to meet their subjects. The culmination of the festivities arrives with the Alagar festival, affiliated with the Vaishnava Kallalagar temple. This event features a poignant reenactment of Vishnu's rejection to enter Madurai, culminating with his return to Alagar Koil, depicted within a mandapam in Madhichiyam, situated amidst the Vaigai river's expanse.



Devotees dressed as gods and goddesses during *Dikvijayam*

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Tamil Nadu Tourism organized the Chithirai Cultural Festival at Thirumalai Nayak Palace from April 21, 2024, to April 25, 2024. As part of the event, international visitors were treated to the spectacle of the Meenakshi Sundareswarar Thirukalyanam. The five-day Cultural Festival featured a range of cultural programs, including Bharatanatyam and various Tamil folk dances. Both foreign tourists and locals alike reveled in the rich cultural experiences offered.



HARVEST TRAILS OF TAMIL NADU

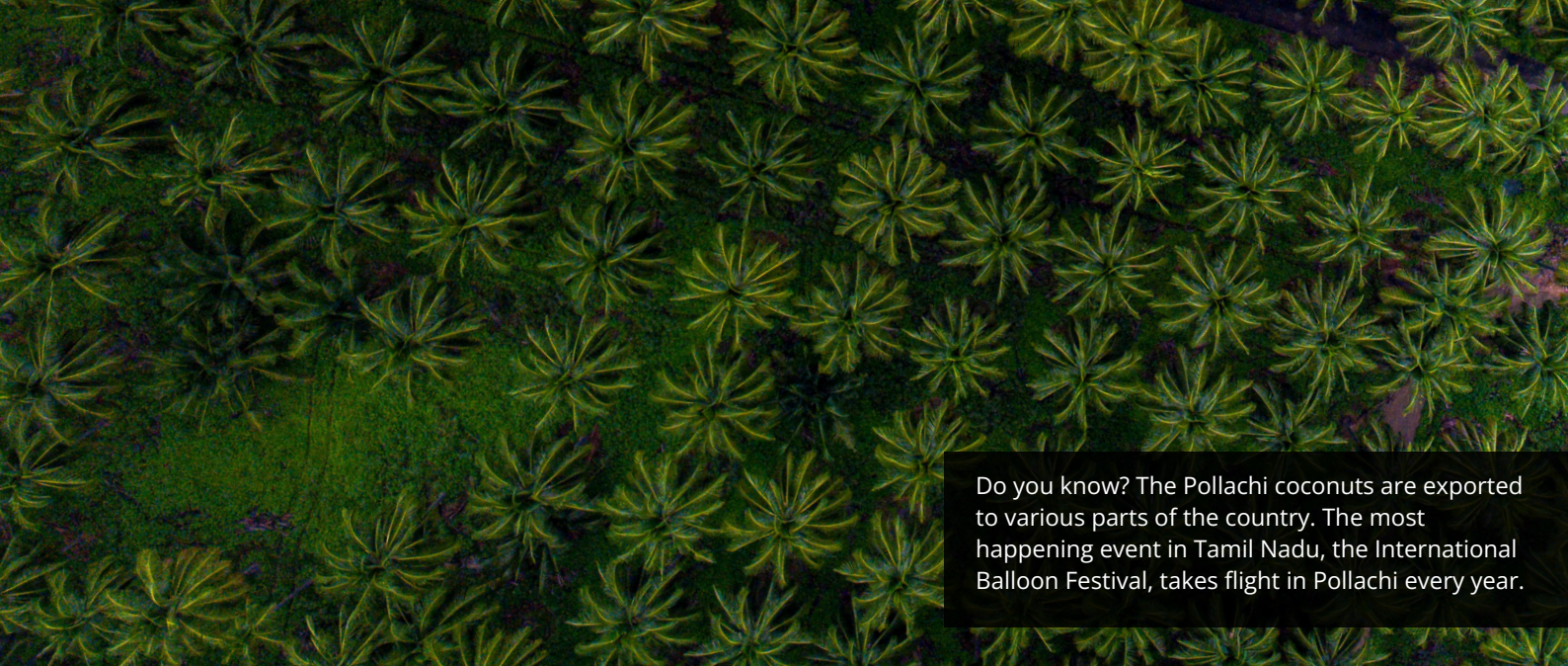
In the heart of the countryside, where fresh air caresses your soul and the early sunshine wraps you in its comforting embrace. Far removed from the relentless bustle of urban living, awakening to the view of verdant fields and the delightful company of domestic critters. Ahh, doesn't this sound like pure bliss?

If you're yearning for a getaway that goes beyond the ordinary, you've reached your destination. With its rich vegetation, Tamil Nadu beckons travellers to experience farmlands unlike any other. From the joy of handpicking fruits amidst the orchards to relishing farm-to-table delicacies, it's a voyage that promises the freshness of the land with every bite.

As you explore the farm tourism offerings in Tamil Nadu, you'll be captivated by the beauty of the countryside. Wander through the orchards and vineyards, and feel a deep connection to the land and its rich agricultural heritage.

Farm tourism allows you to reunite with nature through sustainable agricultural practices in a fun, educational, and recreational setting. Get hands-on with farm animals, from feeding and milking to experiencing the joy of farm-to-table meals crafted from freshly harvested ingredients. As the sun downs, take a stroll through the captivating natural beauty and rich biodiversity of the region, immersing yourself in its serene charm.





Do you know? The Pollachi coconuts are exported to various parts of the country. The most happening event in Tamil Nadu, the International Balloon Festival, takes flight in Pollachi every year.

Farm tourism extends far beyond the tasks of planting, weeding, and irrigation. It's a gateway to traditional rural crafts and skills such as pottery, basket weaving, and the captivating art of beekeeping. As for beekeeping, buzz over to the Pechiparai Horticulture Farm in Kanniyakumari. This 15-acre farm is a paradise for those enchanted by the sweet world of honey, boasting an apiary renowned for its production of exquisite Kumari honey. Additionally, the farm hosts a diverse array of spice plants, encompassing clove, nutmeg, curry leaves, avocado, mangoes, bush pepper, Manilkara zapota (chickoo), and other botanical delights. The catch here is that you can purchase any produce that interests you and upon exiting, you can take home a sapling as a keepsake. These saplings continue to grow, serving as living mementoes of your visit.

As you venture forward, prepare to sip on the trendy allure of the Pollachi coconut, just 40 km away from Coimbatore. Nestled amidst these coconut plantations are numerous accommodation options where you can spend the night surrounded by tall sky-reaching coconut trees. Experience the delightful sweetness of Pollachi coconut, a tropical treat packed with essential nutrients. With its flesh tender, smooth, and velvety texture each bite keeps you feeling your best. Whether you're enjoying it raw or adding it to your favourite recipes, Pollachi coconut is sure to be a highlight of your culinary adventure. So come along to this coconut city to cose, celebrate, and clasp a coconut.

A crunchy, munchy vibrant veggie packed full of vitamin K is harvested from July to February in Ooty, Nilgiris district. The sub-tropical highland climate of Ooty sustains consistently mild and pleasant temperatures year-round, making it ideal for carrot cultivation. Ooty's perfect climatic conditions, with temperatures ranging from 15°C to 20°C, enable carrots to achieve their vibrant colour. But when in Niligiris, don't let slip on the tea trails. Let's spill the tea on Nilgiris tea. With a history tracing back to the late 1800s, Nilgiris tea is like a zen master in a teacup. Not only does it reduce stress and help boost your mood, but it's also available in a variety of forms, each with unique characteristics and flavour profiles. The most common types of Nilgiris tea include black, green, oolong, white and herbal tea.



THANJAVUR CHRONICLES



Architecture Heritage Walk



Tamil Nadu Tourism, in collaboration with the Thanjavur Tourism Promotion Council organised an architectural heritage walk on April 7, 2024, emphasising the heritage architectural structures of Thanjavur.

The walk commenced from Big Temple Fort and concluded at the Old Collector's Office in Thanjavur, including notable sites such as the Moat, Four Main Streets, Thermutti, Palace Advisor's House, Granary, various lanes, Nallukal Mandapam, Kasukadai Street, Palace Fort Wall, Arms Tower, Bell Tower, Sangeeta Mahal, Palace Tank, Sarjah Mahal, Marsh Hall, Ranees Tower, Tanjore Medical School, GA Canal, and Irwin Bridge.



Architects Mr Shakthi Murugan and Mr Navalava led the walk, providing insights into the city's architectural history spanning from the Chola period to the British period. The participants were taken on a captivating journey through Thanjavur's rich history and cultural legacy.

Thanjavur - World heritage city

With its roots deeply intertwined with the grandeur of the Chola dynasty, Thanjavur resonates with a rich heritage and legacy. Tamil Nadu Tourism, in collaboration with the Thanjavur Tourism Promotion Council, organised a lecture titled "Treasures of Thanjavur Heritage Talk," held on April 13, 2024, at the Thanjavur Museum. Dr. Govindarajan Deivanayagam took the podium to discuss "Thanjavur - A World Heritage City, highlighting the city's cultural and historical significance.



The lecture encompassed various topics, including the distinctive Dravidian architecture, geographical features influenced by the Kaveri River, the historical Fort and Moat, culinary traditions, and indigenous arts. Dr. Deivanayagam elaborated on how these elements collectively contribute to Thanjavur's potential as a World Heritage City.



Thanjavur Handicrafts



The GI-tagged Thanjavur Dancing Doll steals the spotlight at every Navratri Golu display. Tamil Nadu Tourism, in association with Thanjavur Promotion Council, led a workshop on the making of the Thanjavur Dolls on April 27, 2024, at the Thanjavur Museum. Over 75 students and individuals took part in the session and observed as the artists demonstrated the intricate process of crafting these dolls. Attendees got hands-on experience sculpting and painting these beautiful dolls.





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DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

— (A Govt. of Tamilnadu Undertaking) —



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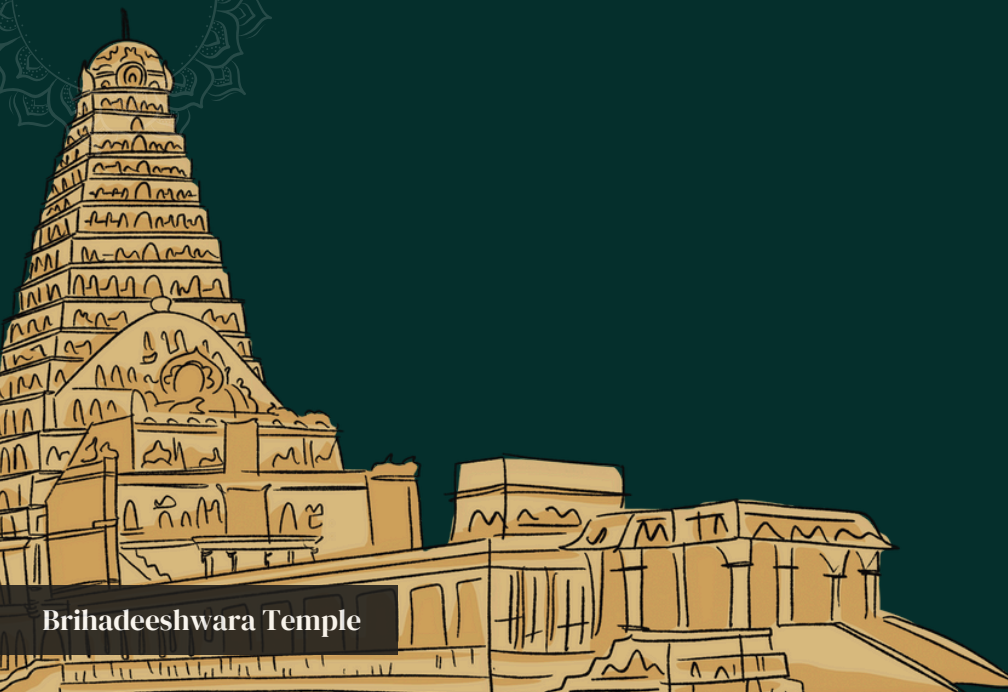
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Brihadeeshwara Temple



Thiruvalluvar Statue