Read

Narrative, historical, more than one place. 42 pieces, and the cats who wrote some of them.

Every piece

1. Fact 14 November 2026

   The Cochin kings who had to become temple hermits, and how Portugal ended the custom, 1505 to 1510

   A 1500 custom forced Cochin kings to retire to temples as hermits. A 1510 crisis over succession led Portugal to abandon the rule forever.

2. Fact 14 November 2026

   Royal death taboos and the fishers' golden tribute at a feast for 15,000 guests

   The fishers' head laid a golden fish, a silver net and sand and salt before the new king. Visscher reported 14,000 or 15,000 Brahmins feasting for three days. Purchas noted 100,000 people receiving alms.

3. Fact 14 November 2026

   Royal death taboos: a year without razors, betel, or European forts

   Cochin residents went without turbans for ten days. The new king kept a year-long penance. For twelve months he could not shave his beard or cut his hair.

4. Fact 14 November 2026

Royal death taboos: kingdoms stopped and fishing banned under pain of death
Royal death taboos froze daily life across kingdoms: no business, no marriage ceremonies, no umbrellas, and no fishing. Rulers banned fishing under threat of death because they feared the dead king's soul had moved into a fish.

5. Fact 14 November 2026

Royal death taboos: sanctified deathbeds and bricked-up walls in Kerala
How did Kerala's ancient royals handle death to keep their palaces pure? Read about sacred retreats, wall breaches, and the sealing of royal palaces.

6. Fact 14 November 2026

How one monsoon, the great flood of 1341, rebuilt Kerala's coastline and started a new calendar
A flood in 1341 reshaped Kerala's coastline and started the Puthuvaippu Era.

7. Fact 14 November 2026

The idol smuggled in a bread-basket: the Bhimmum crisis, 1791 to 1859
In 1589, the Konkani community of Cochin acquired a revered metal idol known as the Bhimmum. The idol's turbulent history spans from a 1719 disappearance to an 1853 bread-basket smuggling, ending with a settlement in 1859.

8. Fact 5 November 2026

The Bharani festival at the Bhagavathi Temple of Kodungallur

For seven days, only castes classed as polluting could enter the outer precincts of the Bhagavathi Temple at Kodungallur and touch the shrine.

9. Fact 5 November 2026

Samkēthams: temple-run republics of pre-modern Kerala

In pre-modern Kerala, major temple domains known as Samkēthams ran as almost self-ruling republics. Their councils held full power over their lands and could punish even a king.

10. Fact 5 November 2026

The Zamorin and the Chavers at Mamankam

At the Mamankam festival, the Zamorin faced repeated attacks from suicide squads known as Chavers, sent by the Valluvanad Raja.

11. Fact 5 November 2026

Odi: the black art of pre-modern Kerala

In pre-modern Kerala, the black art of Odi terrorized the countryside. Odiyan sorcerers were said to take animal forms and cause madness or death, so people wore protective yentrams.

12. Fact 5 November 2026

The coronation ritual of a new Zamorin of Calicut

Before taking the throne, a new Zamorin of Calicut crossed the Kallayi River by boat and chewed betel leaf. The ritual placed him outside the orthodox caste.

13. Fact 5 November 2026

The Revathi Pattathānam and its learned assembly

The Revathi Pattathānam was a yearly gathering of learning at the Tali temple. It ran from the 14th century to 1928, with the Zamorin of Calicut as royal patron.

14. Fact 5 November 2026

The origin of Calicut's bazaar

According to the Keralolpatti, a merchant named Ambaresan stored gold in the Zamorin's palace at Calicut. Years later he found it untouched and offered half, but the Zamorin refused. Convinced that the Zamorin was truthful and righteous, Ambaresan founded Calicut's bazaar.

15. Fact 5 November 2026

The Cochin coronation vow

Ancient custom required Cochin kings to hold their rightful coronation at Chitrakutam. Rama Varma swore he would hold his coronation only there. The Zamorin kept the area, so later Cochin Maharajas never had a traditional coronation or wore a crown.

16. Fact 5 November 2026

Boiling oil ordeal settled trade disputes in 1710 Malabar

In 1710, the Zamorin of Calicut and the English East India Company agreed to settle trade disputes with a fire ordeal. Merchants proved honesty by reaching into boiling oil.

17. Fact 5 November 2026

The Ankam duel in traditional Kerala

In traditional Kerala, people settled deadly offenses through a formal duel called an Ankam. Professional champions fought to the death before a local chieftain, with wagers up to 1,000 fanams.

18. Fact 5 November 2026

    The Smartha-Vicharam tribunal in traditional Kerala
    In traditional Kerala, an elaborate caste tribunal called Smartha-Vicharam looked into charges of sexual misconduct against Namboodiri Brahmin women.

19. Fact 5 November 2026

    Kerala's Kudakkallu and Topikkallu burial monuments
    Distinct prehistoric burial monuments stand across Kerala's laterite plains and hills. Archaeologists found burial urns, pottery, iron tools and beads beneath their capstones.

20. Fact 5 November 2026

    Chavittunatakam, a Christian theatrical form
    In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Christian community leaders and foreign missionaries wanted an art form that could tell biblical narratives to Christian audiences. Chavittunatakam was that art form, and its stamping gave it the nickname "platform-breaker".

21. Fact 5 November 2026

    The "Hortus Malabaricus": a book on the plants and medicines of tropical Asia
    People from different cultures took part in the scientific work behind the "Hortus Malabaricus," a twelve-volume book on the plants and medicines of tropical Asia. Dutch Gov. Hendrik Adriaan Baron Van Rheede led the work in Cochin, and the volumes appeared in Amsterdam between 1686 and 1703.

22.

Fact 4 November 2026

Martial training halls in traditional Kerala

Martial training in traditional Kerala took place in underground halls called Kalaris, where floors of cowrie shells rubbed with oil prepared students for combat.

23. Story 8 April 2026

The marathon mail runners of Fort Kochi Post Office

The green Anchal post box outside Fort Kochi Post Office is a reminder of Kerala's old postal system, when runners took mail eight miles a day on foot. The site has served as a postal hub since the 1500s.

24. Story 6 April 2026

Coz Layover Cafe, Mattancherry: iced coffee in a 600-year-old trading street

An iced coffee stop on Bazaar Road in Mattancherry, a street that traded pepper and spices for six hundred years. Coz Layover Cafe now fills a former pepper warehouse.

25. Story 4 April 2026

Santa Cruz Basilica in Fort Kochi and its painter Antonio Moscheni

Antonio Moscheni painted the interior of Santa Cruz Basilica in Fort Kochi. He died on Nov. 15, 1905, four days before the church was consecrated.

26. Story 3 April 2026

Wall paintings on Poovath Street

Ginger the cat, a self-described ally, joins a mural painting day on Poovath Street.

27.

Story 3 April 2026

Mesmerized by Kathakali. Daily shows in Fort Kochi

Ginger the cat discovers Kathakali, Kerala's 400-year-old dance-drama, and shares what makes the performances special.

28.

Story 20 March 2026

See the kavaru bioluminescence: science behind the glowing water near Kochi

Kavaru is the blue glow seen in the Kumbalangi and Chellanam backwaters near Fort Kochi from March to May. Millions of small organisms called sea sparkle make it.

29.

Story 12 February 2026

When Fort Kochi was a merry-go-round of colonial powers, Bastion Bungalow's history

The Portuguese built Fort Immanuel in 1503 and the Dutch had built a bungalow on the Stromberg Bastion by 1667. Read about the museum, the Dutch kitchen and the tales of secret tunnels.

30.

Story 31 January 2026

A day at the Paradesi Synagogue

Follow Alleppey, a cat from Cats of Kochi, through the oldest functioning synagogue in India, and meet a ghost-cat in the clock tower.

31. Story 27 June 2025

    Mattanchery Palace: a royal walks among royals
    Mia the cat explores Mattancherry Palace and finds it disability friendly. There is a stairlift at the entrance and information in braille inside.

32. Story 24 June 2025

    Music and memories: inside the Mehboob Memorial Orchestra
    Mehboob Memorial Orchestra is a community music space in Fort Kochi, named after singer Bayi Mehboob. Fridays at 6:30 p.m. are open for karaoke in Hindi, Malayalam and Tamil.

33. Story 20 June 2025

    Fugudo: dance tradition of Kerala's Konkani-speaking Kudumbi community
    During a getaway to Mattancherry, Bandit the cat overhears a song and meets Maya of the Kudumbi community. She explains Fugudo, a folk dance with songs in Old Konkani, and its closing song, Marauli.

34. Story 12 June 2025

    The real story behind Kochi's Chinese fishing nets
    Aroo tells the story of Mama Aroo, who sailed with Zheng He and later drew a fishing net design on the shore at Fort Kochi.

35. Story 25 April 2025

Chavittu Natakam - the Indian Opera with Christian roots from Kerala

Uncover Chavittu Natakam, Kerala's unique blend of opera, dance & drama influenced by Portuguese history. Learn about its powerful chenda drumming, chavittu footwork, Kalari combat & sung epics like Charlemagne.

36. Story 9 March 2025

Luna: the hyperactive sustainability correspondent with a fridge-climbing habit

Luna is the sustainability correspondent at Cats of Kochi. She has written an award-worthy series on the Kochi Water Metro. She also climbed the refrigerator.

37. Story 9 March 2025

Ginger: the historian of human follies

Ginger, historical correspondent and skeptic-in-residence at Cats of Kochi, documents the endless parade of human folly. He shares a close bond with Bandit, his three-legged friend, and comes as a package deal requiring patience.

38. Story 9 March 2025

Alleppey, the culinary explorer of Fort Kochi

Alleppey is the food correspondent and café critic for Cats of Kochi. He explores Fort Kochi's cafés with boundless enthusiasm.

39. Story 9 March 2025

Aroo: The Matriarch Who Runs the Show

Aroo explains how she got her name and why she answers to Arvind. She says she is considering adoption in India and beyond.

40.

Story 9 March 2025

Mia, the princess of Fort Kochi

Mia, a ginger cat with a little sass, guides readers around Kochi. Her first adventure explores Teapot cafe, a cozy spot filled with stories.

41.

Story 9 March 2025

Bandit: the three-legged editor with a penchant for mischief

Bandit, Editor in mis-Chief at Cats of Kochi, on his start at Animal Rescue Kochi and his days of editing and napping in Fort Kochi.

42.

Story 5 March 2025

Cleo: the rebel skater with eyeliner to die for

Cleo is a two-month-old kitten at Cats of Kochi. She rides a skateboard, interrupts editorial meetings, and wears natural eyeliner that would make influencers jealous.