

## **Painting and Yoga Retreat in Kerala with Omara Retreats**

***Find Balance, Creativity and Wellness in the Heart of Kerala!***



**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January to Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2027**  
**Alleppey, Kerala, Southern India**

Join us for a restorative retreat in the heart of Kerala, where art, movement, and mindful living come together. Enjoy daily yoga and qi gong, guided painting sessions, and time to slow down amid lush landscapes, backwaters, and coastal rhythms.

No prior experience is needed. The yoga and painting sessions are welcoming and accessible to complete beginners as well as experienced practitioners. Open to all who are curious, creative, and ready to unwind.



### **What's Awaiting You:**

- **Daily Yoga & Qi Gong Sessions:** Start your mornings with gentle, accessible yoga and qi gong practices that will awaken your body, enhance your energy flow, and bring deep relaxation. Under Nicky's expert guidance, you will nourish your mind, body, and spirit.

- **Creative Painting Workshops:** Let the soothing land- and seascapes of Kerala inspire your artistic spirit as you immerse yourself in guided painting sessions, tailored for all levels of experience. Whether you're a beginner or seasoned artist, Ione's personalized approach will help you unlock your creativity.
- **Holistic Wellness:** Learn the art of mindfulness and connect deeply with your body and surroundings through ancient practices that promote health, relaxation, and inner peace.
- **Kerala's Natural Beauty:** Unwind in Kerala's natural and bustling surroundings, with tropical backwaters, coastal living, and space to slow down and breathe.
- **Cultural Immersion:** Explore Kerala's vibrant traditions and local cuisine for a truly holistic experience including the opportunity to experience a variety of affordable Ayurvedic massage treatments, conveniently located opposite the retreat venue.



### Why Choose This Retreat?

- **Expert Guidance:** Learn from two highly experienced, empathetic instructors: Nicky and Ione will guide you and ensure personalized adjustments are made throughout the retreat. With a small group, we ensure an individually tailored and intimate experience.
- **Peaceful Location:** Set within Kerala's coastal landscape and close to lush waterways, offering space to slow down while staying connected to the vibrant life around it.
- **Create and Heal:** This retreat blends the power of art, movement, and mindfulness to offer a transformative experience for your mind, body, and spirit. Whether it's through the brushstrokes of a painting or the flow of yoga, this retreat will inspire creativity, heal the body, and calm the mind.

Embrace a life-changing journey that nurtures your creativity, mind, and body. **Book your spot today** and discover the transformative power of art and yoga in Kerala! Let the colourful beauty and vibrancy of Kerala inspire you – inside and out!

We welcome an accompanying friend/ partner who is not participating on the course.

### Location

Our base is Neela Waters, a beautiful house right on the beach in Alleppey, Kerala. We have exclusive use of the house for our retreat and this coastal corner is where you will receive your Alleppey-based workshops, yoga/qi gong sessions and included meals.

[ioneharrisonart@gmail.com](mailto:ioneharrisonart@gmail.com)

[www.ioneharrison.co.uk](http://www.ioneharrison.co.uk)

07508621515



Cost per person £945 for the course.

What's included:

- Four painting or sketching workshops with expert art teacher
- Daily yoga and qigong sessions with expert yoga/ qi gong teacher
- Enjoy breakfast each day with a generous spread of tropical fruits, tea, fresh coffee, fruit juices, toast, eggs, granola, and a flavourful traditional Keralan breakfast.
- Daily lunch featuring a variety of flavourful, traditional Keralan dishes
- Full day excursion to explore waterways on a houseboat
- A full-day cultural excursion, including visits to nearby temples, rice paddies, and a traditional backwater house.
- Welcome drinks and dinner on arrival day
- Farewell drinks and evening barbecue on final day
- Use of all art materials
- Use of all yoga equipment
- Odomos insect repellant

What's not included:

- Accommodation (Note – for recommended accommodation options – please see below)
- Flights
- Evening meals/drinks (except on the first and last day)
- Insurance
- Visa
- Staff gratuities
- Transport to and from airport (this can be arranged – please enquire for details)
- Ayurvedic massage





## Your tutors

### Ione Harrison – painting

Ione is a contemporary landscape artist and art tutor with over 30 years' teaching experience. She works mainly in watercolour and ink, taking inspiration from the landscapes, colours and textures that surround her. Her aim in her teaching is twofold: that you feel supported to develop confidence and skill in using the wonderful medium of watercolour; that you enjoy a restorative, creative time playing with paint.

Over the course of this retreat, you will explore both traditional and experimental watercolour techniques to create paintings that are full of atmosphere and texture. The emphasis of the workshops is very much on play and exploration – be prepared to go with the flow.

For more information about Ione please visit her website: [www.ioneharrison.co.uk](http://www.ioneharrison.co.uk)

For any questions about the painting elements of the course, please email  
[ioneharrisonart@gmail.com](mailto:ioneharrisonart@gmail.com)



### Nicky Owen Thomas – yoga, meditation, qi gong

Nicky Thomas is an experienced yoga and qi gong teacher in York and has been teaching classes for over 13 years. As a teacher, Nicky is passionate about helping people improve their health and well-being via movement, mindfulness, and other holistic approaches. Nicky is also an experienced acupuncturist and tutor at The Northern College of Acupuncture in York, where she provides clinical supervision and mentoring to students training to be acupuncturists, as well as delivering classes in Managing Pain, Anxiety and Stress Management, and Mindfulness and Movement.

As part of the retreat, Nicky is looking forward to offering morning and evening sessions of Yoga and Qi gong in the beautiful and peaceful setting of Neela Waters in Kerala. Both are deeply relaxing fluid practices combining movement, breath, and meditation to cultivate a sense of inner calm, ease tension, improve energy, and restore a feeling of inner balance and relaxation. This retreat is a perfect opportunity to be guided through re-vitalising and restorative movements that will help you unwind and recharge your batteries.

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For more information about Nicky please visit her website: [www.nickythomasyork.com](http://www.nickythomasyork.com)  
For any questions about the yoga/qi gong elements of the course, please email  
[nickyjanethomas123@gmail.com](mailto:nickyjanethomas123@gmail.com)



### Accommodation

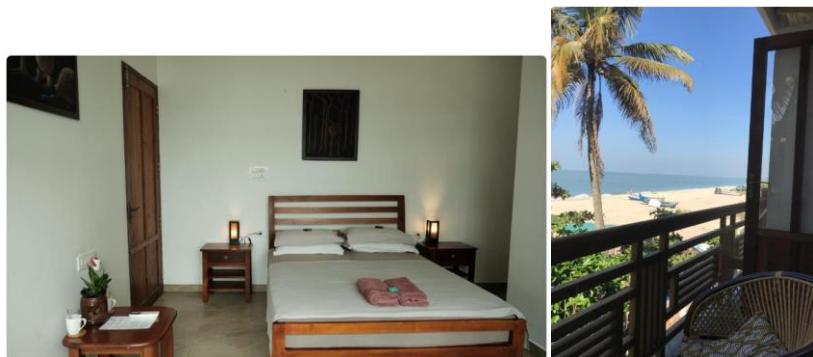
Accommodation is not included but we recommend staying at:

[Neela Waters](#). Contact details: **Joanna 00 91 87144 22334**. (Please note that booking directly will give you a better rate than via booking.com)

[Holiday Beach Resort](#) – hotel to the left of Neela Waters. This can be booked directly through Joanna. Contact details: **Joanna 00 91 87144 22334**.

[Monkey Tribe](#) – hotel to the right of Neela Waters. Contact details:  
<https://www.monkeytribe.com/monkey-tribe-alleppey>

Prices start from approximately £20 a night.



### Flights and extending your travel in India

To help you with your travel plans, we have linked up with an experienced travel consultant, Julian Snow, who can help with booking flights and is also able to help you plan and organise the rest of your stay in India. Julian has over 30 years' experience arranging personalised itineraries and is able to accommodate every budget – from basic to 5 star.

[ioneharrisonart@gmail.com](mailto:ioneharrisonart@gmail.com)

[www.ioneharrison.co.uk](http://www.ioneharrison.co.uk)

07508621515

Please email Julian with your travel plans and queries and he will be happy to help:  
[julian.snow@360privatetravel.com](mailto:julian.snow@360privatetravel.com)

#### **Testimonials from previous participants:**

*Ione and Nicky's Kerala retreat was truly exceptional and exceeded our expectations in so many ways. Teams from both the UK and India had clearly worked hard together to ensure everything was thoughtfully and professionally organised, allowing participants to relax completely and immerse themselves in the experience.*

*What stood out most was how genuinely inclusive the retreat was. Whether completely new to watercolour painting, yoga, qi gong, or with years of experience, we all felt supported and encouraged. Teaching was sensitive and adaptable, so no one ever felt out of their depth but instead saw their confidence and creativity grow throughout.*

*The way Ione and Nicky brought the group together was remarkable. There was a real sense of connection and shared joy, fostered effortlessly through the structure of the days and the generous, open spirit of them both. By the end of the week, we felt like a small community, jokes were shared and friendships forged.*

*The excursions added richness to our experience with visits to temples and a magical river boat trip, immersed in nature in the rice paddy fields and everyday life in Kerala; a rich and inspiring balance to the creative and movement practices.*

*Overall, this was a deeply uplifting, and beautifully curated retreat. We came away feeling restored and inspired, both creatively and physically. I would wholeheartedly recommend this experience to anyone, regardless of experience or ability, who is looking for a retreat that is inclusive, enriching, and genuinely transformative.*

*What a wonderful retreat, with really friendly people and lovely leaders. The setting of the retreat (in Kerala) made it exceptional. Yoga and Qi Gong (new to many) provided the opportunity for movement and quietness, and the water colour painting sessions were so helpful to learn how water colour works and various techniques, which resulted in paintings to take away. Great for beginners like me. Thank you so much Ione and Nicky for a thoroughly enjoyable retreat! Loved it so much, I'm rebooking for next year with my sisters.*



## THE SMALLER PRINT

### Full Itinerary – subject to change

Day 1 Tue 13 Jan

- Arrival day. Settling in
- 5pm Short grounding yoga practice and meditation to settle after travel
- 7pm Welcome drinks and dinner.

Day 2 Wed 14 Jan. Alleppey based.

- 8am Start the day with gentle yoga to stimulate your creative spirit and then enjoy a nourishing breakfast.
- 10.30 am Head to the roof terrace at Neela Waters for your first watercolour painting workshop: sea and beach.
- 1.30pm Lunch followed by free time to swim, explore, indulge in ayurvedic massage, take a siesta, ,or continue your painting journey.
- 5.00pm Sunset qi gong session followed by drinks and dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 3 Thur 15 Jan. Excursion day.

- After a gentle yoga session and breakfast, we will take a riverboat to explore the Backwaters of Kerala. A guided sketching session and lunch are part of this special day trip. There will be plenty of opportunity to sketch the Backwaters while on the boat.
- Return to Alleppey for dinner.

Day 4 Fri 16 Jan. Alleppey based.

- 8am Start the day with gentle yoga to stimulate your creative spirit and then enjoy a nourishing breakfast.
- 10.30 am Head to the roof terrace at Neela Waters for your watercolour painting workshop: Backwaters.
- 1.30pm Lunch followed by free time to swim, explore, indulge in ayurvedic massage, take a siesta, ,or continue your painting journey.
- 5.00pm Sunset qi gong session followed by drinks and dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 5 Sat 17 Jan. Excursion day.

- 8am Start the day with gentle yoga and then enjoy a nourishing breakfast
- 10am Air conditioned bus trip to two local temples: **Mannarasala Temple** and **Ambalappuzha Sri Krishna Temple** before heading to the rice paddies to take a short boat trip to a traditional backwater house for Qi Gong and sundowners.
- 7pm Return to Alleppey for dinner.

Day 6 Sun 18 Jan. Alleppey based.

- 8am Start the day with gentle yoga to stimulate your creative spirit and then enjoy a nourishing breakfast.
- 10.30 am Head to the roof terrace at Neela Waters for your watercolour painting workshop: Kerala Sunset.
- 1.30pm Lunch followed by free time to swim, explore, indulge in ayurvedic massage, take a siesta, ,or continue your painting journey.
- 5.00pm Sunset qi gong session followed by closing reflection.
- 7.00 Drinks and barbecue on the terrace. This will be an opportunity to celebrate the journey we have been on; potential next steps; how to develop a yoga/creative practice that nourishes the spirit, mind and soul.

Day 7 Mon 19 Jan

- 8am Gentle yoga
- 9am breakfast
- 10.00 Farewells and departure

**While participation is encouraged, everything is optional – if you feel you want to skip a yoga or painting session, that's entirely up to you.**

- If you have any questions at all about any aspect of the yoga/qi gong sessions, please contact [nickyjanethomas123@gmail.com](mailto:nickyjanethomas123@gmail.com)
- If you have any questions at all about any aspect of the painting sessions, please contact [ioneharrisonart@gmail.com](mailto:ioneharrisonart@gmail.com)

#### **What to bring:**

- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Suncream
- Swimming things and beach towel
- Any medications
- Shoes/sandals you can walk in comfortably for our trips
- Insect repellent – Odomos is highly recommended
- Scarf or modest clothing (shoulders and knees covered) for town and temple visits

#### **For Yoga**

- Loose, cool clothes

#### **For Painting**

- Any favourite sketching or painting materials. All materials are provided but a full list of art materials will be given on booking so you can bring any you already have.

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Which is the nearest airport to Alleppey?

The nearest airport is Kochi International airport, which is around 2 hour 30 minutes drive. A taxi can be arranged to pick you up – it will cost around £30 one way. Please message Joanna for transfer booking.

2. How much should I expect to pay for a flight from the UK?

This will cost around £600 with an airline such as Emirates.

3. What would be a good budget for the week?

A total budget of £2000 will cover the course, flights, accommodation, evening meals and a couple of massages.

4. Do I need a visa for India?

Yes – you can buy a tourist e-visa from India Visa Online. <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>  
You can from 28 days beforehand.

5. Where are good places to travel on to from Alleppey?

You could travel into the mountains to see the nature reserves and tea plantations of the Western Ghats, or further north or south on the coast to visit quiet beaches. Or you might want to consider flying back from a different airport in India and exploring further afield.

6. What if I've never painted before?

That's no problem – Ione is very happy to accommodate beginners. The painting sessions will be guided step by step.

7. What if I've never done any yoga or qi gong before?

Not a problem – Nicky will make any adjustments necessary to ensure you can work within your limits and feel comfortable and restored in the yoga/qi gong sessions.

8. Do I need to get any jabs before I travel?

Vaccines for Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Diphtheria and Tetanus are recommended for most travellers. We would advise checking with your GP before travel.

#### **Terms and Conditions**

#### **Payment**

The fee for the painting and yoga course with included excursions and relevant meals is £945.

£400 deposit is required at the time of booking to secure your place on the course. Please pay by BACS to **Omara Retreats sort code 20 98 98 account number 33411192 using your name and Kerala** as a reference. If you would prefer another payment option, please email [ioneharrisonart@gmail.com](mailto:ioneharrisonart@gmail.com)

The remaining balance of £545 is due by 13<sup>th</sup> October, i.e. 3 months before the course starts. Please make this payment by BACS to **Omara Retreats sort code 20 98 98 account number 33411192 using your name and Kerala** as a reference.

If you would prefer another payment option, please email [ioneharrisonart@gmail.com](mailto:ioneharrisonart@gmail.com)

#### **Cancellation and refund policy**

If you cancel your place on the course

- prior to 13<sup>th</sup> October 2026, you will receive a full refund of any payments towards the course less £50 administration fee.
- between 14<sup>th</sup> October 2026 and 1<sup>st</sup> December 2026, you will receive 50% refund of any payments towards the course
- between 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2026 and the course start date of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2027, no refund will be payable

If we have to cancel the course for any reason you will receive 100% refund of any payment made to Omara Retreats towards the course.

#### **Insurance**

You are responsible for taking out adequate and valid travel insurance to cover your individual needs and circumstances.

By booking on the course, you confirm acceptance of these terms.

