

# Men's Journal

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**DISASTER ON K2:**

Inside Mountain Climbing's Deadliest Day

*Australia's*

# Hugh Jackman

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## TWO-WEEK TRIP

Navigating the backwaters of Kumarakom in Kerala, India



## KERALA, INDIA

High peaks, not high tech, define the southern state of Kerala.

FROM ARABIAN SEA BEACHES TO THUNDERING PEAKS TO SANDALWOOD forests packed with elephants, monkeys, and tigers, Kerala is the Indian California. Home to the country's largest mountains south of the Himalayas — mist-shrouded Anai Mudi (8,842 feet) is the highest — and a surprising Catholic influence, it's the easiest place in India to find a proper drink. In the Keralan countryside that means visiting "toddy bars," rustic blockhouses serving a fermented coconut hooch with a lighter-fluid burn that's actually *softened* with bites of chile pepper.

One of the coolest ways to cover the high points is a 12-day, 439-mile "Royal Odyssey" bike tour (\$3,450; [pedalerspubandgrille.com](http://pedalerspubandgrille.com)), which rolls from Madras through ancient temple complexes and tea plantations before finishing in Trivandrum. If you're making your own way around the area, skip the overhyped Periyar National Park and wildlife sanctuary (where you'll encounter far more screaming schoolkids than noble pachyderms) and head for the mountain village of Munnar instead. Surrounded by hundreds of square miles of hillside intricately cultivated with tea and spice plantations, surreal Munnar is a great base for trips to the waterfalls of Eravikulam National Park or the more remote jungle of Pambadum Shola National Park.



## THE MJ ITINERARY

**DAYS 1-4:** From Delhi, Jet Airways ([jetairways.com](http://jetairways.com)) serves the Kerala hub of Cochin. Decompress for two days at Koder House (\$150-\$400; [koderhouse.com](http://koderhouse.com)) in touristy Fort Cochin (beachside Fort Cochin, not sprawling Cochin proper).

**DAYS 5-11:** Rent a car with a guide/driver to tailor a week of hiking, rock climbing, kayaking, or biking from MJ-tested Wilson's Tours (91-484-221-7405). In Munnar the T&U hotel ([from \\$88; tanduleisure.com](http://from $88; tanduleisure.com)) has commanding views of a tea-carpeted valley; Adventure Kerala ([adventurekerala.com](http://adventurekerala.com)) leads rock-climbing and mountain-biking excursions; other highlights include the lush valley at Kakkayam Reservoir and the Athirapally and Vazhachal waterfalls in the Sholayar forest. —PATRICK FREEMAN

## PERU

Experience Peru's greatest hits with a huge dose of adrenaline thrown in.

## THE MJ ITINERARY

**DAY 1:** Finally, outfitters are getting creative with their Peru itineraries. Latin America specialist Adventure Life ([adventure-life.com](http://adventure-life.com)), for one, leads a multisport trip from Cuzco to Machu Picchu. American, Continental, and Delta have the most one-stop flights to Lima ([aa.com](http://aa.com); [continental.com](http://continental.com); [delta.com](http://delta.com)). When you arrive, check into Hotel Carmel ([from \\$80; hotelcarmel.com.pe](http://from $80; hotelcarmel.com.pe)), in coastal Miraflores.

**DAY 2:** Fly to Cuzco, which sits at more than 11,000 feet, and spend the day acclimating. **DAYS 3-7:** The next five days are an adrenaline-fueled journey to Machu Picchu that includes hiking, whitewater rafting the Urubamba River, and a screaming mountain-bike descent from a 14,000-foot pass into a rain forest. **DAYS 8-11:** See Machu Picchu, soak in hot springs in the town of Aguas Calientes, and kayak Lake Titicaca, exploring its Floating Islands and staying in the homes of indigenous families. —C.M.



## TAHITI

Forget the beach — Tahiti's real gems are offshore and inland.

## THE MJ ITINERARY

**DAYS 1-2:** The well-heeled, languid Tahiti of honeymoon fame is on the verge of an adventure boom, thanks to canyoning, the country's surging new sport, and, of course, its flawless waves. Catch Air Tahiti Nui ([airtahitiniui-usa.com](http://airtahitiniui-usa.com)) direct from either coast to Papeete on the main island of Tahiti. Drop your bags at the Intercontinental and pony up for a glass-bottom overwater bungalow (\$550; [ichotels.com](http://ichotels.com)). Trust us, it's worth it. **DAY 3:** Let an outfitter such as Luxury Adventures ([luxuryadventures.co.nz](http://luxuryadventures.co.nz)) bring you inland and guide you through the island's secret canyons, where sheer, jagged mountains, waterfalls, and lush jungles give way to lava tubes revealing violent geologic origins. **DAYS 4-10:** Spend the bulk of your trip aboard an all-inclusive surf charter such as the Haumana, a 120-foot power cat complete with a crew of 16 (\$5,400; [quiksilvertravel.com](http://quiksilvertravel.com)), which will surgically place you on top of the best fishing and surfing in the Tuamotu atolls for seven days straight. At this time of year, every other surfer will be paying oversize baggage fees on his way to the North Shore of Oahu while you enjoy the same perfection with a fraction of the crowds. —B.M.