

# COORG CULTURE AND CUISINES

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## ABSTRACT:

*The well-being of Kodavas and our sacred homeland, Kodagu, can only be ensured if the present misconceptions about our history and our true faith are removed. Only by this awareness can we convince ourselves and others that we are not Hindus as made out to be, but a distinct tribal community with our own language, faith, customs and traditions. Kodavas are the original settlers of Kodagu. Kodagu and Kodavas need Constitutional protection to preserve our unique culture and traditions. The Kodava tribe live in the Kodagu region of Karnataka, which lies in the Western Ghats. Kodavas are land owners with houses of their own and good education therefore do not meet the criteria laid down for measuring the backwardness of a community. Kodavas are a rare and unique tribal community in India.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Coorg is a famous place for its wonderful delicious cuisine. Even though it is a part of South India, the taste of South Indian dishes of Coorg grants it a different level. Coorg is also called Kodagu and is known for serenity and its nature's bounty. Coorg is referred to as the 'Scotland of India'. This district is home to an ancient clan with mind blowing martial abilities called 'Kodavas'. The people of Kodagu make high use of spices, curry leaves and coconut in their food preparation. Among the local dishes, pork, paputt, Akki Roti, Kaumbutt, etc. are the main mouth watering dishes. Kodavas follow the clan system and are known for their unique family names. One of the most important festivals for Kodavas is 'Kailapodh'. During this festival the Kodavas worship and honour the weapons carried by Kodavas. The harvest festival celebrated by the Kodava community is called 'Puthari'. These festivals are conducted in the form of grand ceremonies and used to light up the entire district. Coffee and pepper plantation contributes to the population's income source. Every Kodava has their own plantation and their own home. Every Kodava family has their own gun. The gun is used and shot during festivals and various ceremonies. It is also used as a method of communication. The Coorg culture is beautiful and has a mystical charm to it. The Kodava community constitutes one of the most significant aspects of the Coorg tradition and culture. But due to globalisation, the younger generation of the Kodavas is moving out of their district to other parts of Karnataka or

to different states. The Kodava tribes uniqueness is also reflected in their attire. Males wear 'Kupya Chale' and 'Peeche Kathi' while females have a different style on draping their sarees. The most striking feature of this tribe is the equality among men and women.

## OBJECTIVE

To describe the culture and cuisines of Coorg.

To show the evolution of the culture and different dishes over time

To showcase the rich heritage of Coorg.

## UNIVERSE AND SAMPLE SIZE

The data is collected from my parents and grandparents who have been witness to the cultural

change and various dishes. I have also taken a lot of info from the book “My Coorg Chronicles”.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

There are two types of literature: oral literature and written literature. Oral literature is the kind of literature that has been handed down orally over generations; Literature that has been recorded in writing is called written literature. Oral literature of Kodagu comprises the Kodava Baalopat (songs of Life), Chaavupaat, (songs of Death), Makkala paat (children's songs), proverbs and sayings and so on.

The moola purusha or creator of Kodava literature is Appacha Kavi. He can rightly be credited with the honour of creating Kodagu's first written literature. Appacha Kavi set aside his entire life for the pursuit of the enrichment of Kodava vocabulary and Kodava literature. Unfortunately, he was unable to get the required support from the gentry of Kodagu that kept him going strong. One can discern the deep troubles that he underwent, by reading some of his letters in which he penned down the journey of his difficult times. These are some excerpts from the letters he wrote to Dr. I.M. Muthanna, his contemporary, and one of the most prolific writers and historians of Kodagu.

In present day Kodagu, people are only familiar with the four plays of Appacha Kavi. It is rather pitiful that a large collection of Kannada musical plays and Kodava Takk devotional songs exemplifying his brilliance in the field of theatre and poetry were never printed or published. This has indeed been a huge loss in the history of written literature and for the enrichment of the local language – Kodava Takk.

He composed the Yayati Nataka in 1906, Savitri Nataka and Subramanya Nataka in 1908 and the Kaveri Nataka in 1918. It is admirable that for the plays that he authored, he himself played the protagonist's role. Then, in 1926, a heavy misfortune befell the poet and his house was burnt down. Poverty crept in gradually and reached up to a level of desperation, where he couldn't make ends meet anymore. He even lost the patronage and encouragement from this Kodava gentry, the most important factor that kept him going. If only his circumstances were better and the opportunities aplenty, one can only wonder about the treasure trove of poetic literature this great personality could have produced.

## **COORG CULTURE AND CUISINES**

### Culture of Coorg:

The culture of Coorg is a mix of several traditions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and the local Kodava culture. The Kodavas, who are the dominant community in Coorg, have a distinct culture that is characterised by their traditional attire, language, and customs. One of the most important aspects of Coorg culture is its festivals. The Kodava Huttari festival, which is celebrated in November marks the harvest season and is a time for feasting and merry-making. Other festivals like Kailpodh and Puthari are also celebrated with great enthusiasm. Kalaripayattu. It is believed that the Kodavas developed this martial art to protect themselves from foreign invaders and wild animals. Kalaripayattu is still practised in Coorg and is a popular tourist attraction.

### Cuisine of Coorg:

Coorg cuisine is characterised by its use of local ingredients and spices. Some of the popular dishes include Pandi Curry (pork curry), Akki Roti (rice roti), and Bamboo Shoot Curry. These dishes are typically prepared using fresh ingredients and are cooked over a wood fire, which gives them a distinct flavour. Coorg cuisine also features a variety of non-vegetarian dishes, including chicken, mutton, and fish, which are often cooked with a blend of local spices. Some of the popular snacks and sweets include Kodava Kool (a drink made with coconut milk and jaggery) and Thambuttu (a sweet made with rice flour and jaggery).

Coorg coffee is also famous around the world and is grown in the region's coffee estates. The coffee has a unique flavour and aroma, which is a result of the region's soil and climate.

Coorg culture and cuisine are a reflection of the region's unique history and traditions. From the festivals to the martial art form and the local dishes, Coorg has a rich and diverse culture that is worth exploring. The cuisine of Coorg is particularly noteworthy, with its use of local ingredients and spices, and its distinct flavour and aroma. If you have the opportunity to visit Coorg, be sure to try some of the local dishes and experience the region's rich culture firsthand.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, Coorg culture and cuisine are an integral part of the district's identity, and they reflect the region's unique history, traditions, and geography. The cuisine of Coorg is characterised by its use of local ingredients, such as bamboo shoot, wild mushrooms, and spices, which give it a distinct flavour and aroma. Similarly, Coorg culture is rich in traditions and customs, including festivals like Kodava Huttari, and unique practices such as the martial art of Kalaripayattu.

Coorg's culture and cuisine have gained popularity not only in India but also around the world, with an increasing number of people seeking out the region's traditional dishes and cultural

experiences. This has led to the growth of the tourism industry in Coorg, which has provided an opportunity to showcase the district's rich culture and cuisine to a global audience.

However, it is important to note that Coorg's culture and cuisine are also facing challenges due to changing social and economic factors. Rapid urbanisation and modernization are putting pressure on traditional practices and customs, while the availability of imported ingredients is changing the nature of Coorg cuisine.

Additionally, the impact of climate change on the region's agriculture and food production is also a cause for concern.

Therefore, it is crucial to preserve and promote Coorg's culture and cuisine, not only for their intrinsic value but also for the economic and social benefits they bring to the region. This can be achieved through initiatives that support local agriculture and food production, encourage cultural education and tourism, and promote sustainable practices that protect the environment and traditional ways of life.