Basic Kannada for Travelers

This is a brief introduction to Kannada, a south Indian language spoken in the Karnataka state of India. This introduction provides basic instruction about pronunciation and important words and phrases. Kannada is one of the official languages of India, predominantly spoken in the state of Karnataka, including the city of Bangalore. During your stay in Karnataka, the ability to communicate in Kannada will greatly enhance your experience. Even if you do not plan on studying the language in-dept, we strongly suggest learning and using the basic greetings and phrases. The locals will greatly appreciate your efforts and will be all the more welcoming to you during your stay.

Pronunciation

Kannada is written in the Kannada script, which is also used to write some of the other native languages of Karnataka: Tulu, Kodava, Takk, and Konkani. The script has forty-nine characters; however different characters can be combined to form compound characters. In this guide we will not use the Kannada script, but a list of the Kannada characters can be found at the end of this document.

Kannada has thirteen vowel sounds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>‘u’ as in bud</td>
<td>a~</td>
<td>‘a’ as in play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aa / A</td>
<td>‘a’ as in father</td>
<td>ea</td>
<td>‘e’ as in hey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>‘y’ as in happy</td>
<td>ai</td>
<td>‘ai’ as in buy / high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ee / I</td>
<td>‘ea’ as in bead</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>‘o’ as in row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>‘oo’ as in good</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>‘o’ as in row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oo / U</td>
<td>‘oo’ as in food</td>
<td>au / ou</td>
<td>‘au’ as in how / pout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ru</td>
<td>‘r’ as in hurting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kannada has 21 consonants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>‘b’ as in bed</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>‘p’ as in pig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>‘s’ as in supper</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>‘q’ as in quest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘k’ as in kid</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>‘r’ as in row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>‘d’ as in dog</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>‘ss’ as in hiss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>‘ph’ as in phone</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>‘t’ as in top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>‘g’ as in go</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>‘v’ as in victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>‘h’ as in help</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>‘w’ as in weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>‘dg’ as in edge</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>‘cks’ as in kicks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>‘c’ as in cat</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘z’ as in haze</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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I
‘l’ as in love
‘ie’ as in pie
‘ee’ as in flee
m
‘m’ as in mother
n
‘n’ as in nice
y
‘y’ as in yes
z
‘z’ as in haze

There are also two characters that are called yogavaahac, which are part-vowel and part-consonant. They are the anusvara (am) and the visarga (ah).

Greetings

Hello
Namaskara
How are you?
Neevu Chennaagidira
I am fine.
Naanu chennagiddene
Fine, thank you.
Chennagiddene. Dhanyavaada
Goodbye
Hogibitt barthene

Introductions

What is your name?
Nimma hessarenu?
My name is...
Nanna hesaru...
Nice to meet you.
Nimmamnu nodi santhoshavaythu.

Etiquette

Please
Dayavit.t.u.
Thank you
Vandenegalo
You’re Welcome
Tamage suswagatha
Yes
Havdu
No
Illa
Excuse me (getting attention)
Ilillinodi
Excuse me (begging pardon)
K-shamisi
I’m Sorry.
Nannindha thappaihu
Good morning
Shubha munjane
Good evening
Shubha sanje
Good night
Shubha ratri

Relationships

Mother
Amma / taayi
Father
Appa / tande
Son
Maga
Daughter
magaLu
Elder Brother
aNNa
Younger Brother  Tamma
Elder Sister  Akka
Younger Sister  Tangi
Grandfather  Ajj / taata
Grandmother  Ajj
Husband  ganDa
Wife  henDathi
Children  makkaLu

Food and Drinks

Breakfast  Thindi
Lunch  Oota
Eggs  Motte
Rice  Anna
Coffee  Kaapi
Water  Neeru
Beans  huraLikaayi
Potato  Aaloo geDDe
Apple  sEbu Orange
Vegetables  kittaLe
Salad  Tarakaarigalu
Butter  kOsaMbri
Milk  beNNe
Sugar  Haalu
Tea  Sakkare

Cost

How much is this?  Idhakke yeshtu
I don't want it.  Nanige beda.
Expensive  Dhubaari

Time of Day

Now  Iga Later
Before  Amele
Morning  Modalu
Afternoon  Beligge
Evening  Madhyana
Night  Samje
          Ratri
### Useful Words and Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Kannada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can't speak Kannada (well).</td>
<td>Nanage Kannada barodilla.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you speak English?</td>
<td>Nimage English baruththaa?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help!</td>
<td>Sahaaya maadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look out!</td>
<td>Jopaana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't understand</td>
<td>Nanage artha vaguthilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the toilet?</td>
<td>Shouchalaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police!</td>
<td>Arakshaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need your help.</td>
<td>Nimma sahaya bekagidhe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm lost.</td>
<td>Nanage daari thappide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I lost my bag.</td>
<td>Nanna cheela kaledu hoyithu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need a doctor</td>
<td>Nanage doctor beku.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
<td>Yaaru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td>Eli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When?</td>
<td>Yaavaga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Yaake/Eke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What?</td>
<td>Enu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which?</td>
<td>Yaava/yavudu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't know.</td>
<td>Gottilla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>14</th>
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<tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ondhu</td>
<td>Yeradu</td>
<td>Mooru</td>
<td>Naalku</td>
<td>Aidhu</td>
<td>Aaru</td>
<td>Yelu</td>
<td>Yentu</td>
<td>Ombattu</td>
<td>Hathu</td>
<td>Hannondu</td>
<td>Hanneradu</td>
<td>Hadimooru</td>
<td>Hadinalku</td>
<td>Hadinaidhu</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadinaru</td>
<td>Hadinelu</td>
<td>Hadinentu</td>
<td>Hathombathu</td>
<td>Ipathu</td>
<td>Muvathu</td>
<td>Nalavathu</td>
<td>Aivathu</td>
<td>Arvathu</td>
<td>Yapathu</td>
<td>Embathu</td>
<td>Tombathu</td>
<td>Nooru</td>
<td>Ondu savira</td>
<td>Hathu laksha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Kannada Alphabet

Vowels

\[ \begin{array}{c}
a \quad [\text{a}] \\
\text{a} \quad [\text{a}] \\
i \quad [\text{i}] \\
\text{i} \quad [\text{i}] \\
u \quad [\text{u}] \\
\text{u} \quad [\text{u}] \\
i \quad [\text{i}] \\
\text{i} \quad [\text{i}] \\
e \quad [\text{e}] \\
\text{e} \quad [\text{e}] \\
a\text{i} \quad [\text{a}] \\
\text{a} \quad [\text{a}] \\
o \quad [\text{o}] \\
\text{o} \quad [\text{o}] \\
\text{au} \quad [\text{au}] \\
\end{array} \]

Vowel diacritics

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{ka} \quad [\text{ka}] \\
\text{kā} \quad [\text{kā}] \\
\text{ki} \quad [\text{ki}] \\
\text{ku} \quad [\text{ku}] \\
\text{kū} \quad [\text{kū}] \\
\text{kt} \quad [\text{kt}] \\
\text{ke} \quad [\text{ke}] \\
\text{kē} \quad [\text{kē}] \\
\text{kai} \quad [\text{kai}] \\
\text{ko} \quad [\text{ko}] \\
\text{kō} \quad [\text{kō}] \\
\text{kau} \quad [\text{kau}] \\
\text{kam} \quad [\text{kam}] \\
kāl \quad [\text{kāl}] \\
\end{array} \]

Consonants

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{ka} \quad [\text{ka}] \\
\text{ka} \quad [\text{ka}] \\
\text{kha} \quad [\text{kha}] \\
\text{ka} \quad [\text{ka}] \\
\text{ga} \quad [\text{gā}] \\
\text{gā} \quad [\text{gā}] \\
\text{gha} \quad [\text{ghā}] \\
\text{gha} \quad [\text{ghā}] \\
\text{na} \quad [\text{na}] \\
\text{na} \quad [\text{na}] \\
\text{ca} \quad [\text{ca}] \\
\text{ca} \quad [\text{ca}] \\
\text{cha} \quad [\text{cha}] \\
\text{cha} \quad [\text{cha}] \\
\text{ja} \quad [\text{ja}] \\
\text{ja} \quad [\text{ja}] \\
\text{jha} \quad [\text{jha}] \\
\text{jha} \quad [\text{jha}] \\
\text{na} \quad [\text{na}] \\
\text{na} \quad [\text{na}] \\
\text{ta} \quad [\text{ta}] \\
\text{ta} \quad [\text{ta}] \\
\text{tha} \quad [\text{tha}] \\
\text{tha} \quad [\text{tha}] \\
\text{da} \quad [\text{da}] \\
\text{da} \quad [\text{da}] \\
\text{dha} \quad [\text{dha}] \\
\text{dha} \quad [\text{dha}] \\
\text{na} \quad [\text{na}] \\
\text{na} \quad [\text{na}] \\
\text{pa} \quad [\text{pa}] \\
\text{pa} \quad [\text{pa}] \\
\text{pha} \quad [\text{pha}] \\
\text{pha} \quad [\text{pha}] \\
\text{ba} \quad [\text{ba}] \\
\text{ba} \quad [\text{ba}] \\
\text{bha} \quad [\text{bha}] \\
\text{bha} \quad [\text{bha}] \\
\text{ma} \quad [\text{ma}] \\
\text{ma} \quad [\text{ma}] \\
\text{ya} \quad [\text{ya}] \\
\text{ya} \quad [\text{ya}] \\
\text{ra} \quad [\text{ra}] \\
\text{ra} \quad [\text{ra}] \\
\text{la} \quad [\text{la}] \\
\text{la} \quad [\text{la}] \\
\text{va} \quad [\text{va}] \\
\text{va} \quad [\text{va}] \\
\text{sa} \quad [\text{sa}] \\
\text{sa} \quad [\text{sa}] \\
\text{sa} \quad [\text{sa}] \\
\text{sa} \quad [\text{sa}] \\
\text{ha} \quad [\text{ha}] \\
\text{ha} \quad [\text{ha}] \\
\text{ja} \quad [\text{ja}] \\
\text{ja} \quad [\text{ja}] \\
\text{kṣa} \quad [\text{kṣa}] \\
\text{kṣa} \quad [\text{kṣa}] \\
\text{na} \quad [\text{na}] \\
\text{na} \quad [\text{na}] \\
\end{array} \]