



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:

a	'u' as in bud	a~	'a' as in play
aa / A	'a' as in father	ea	'e' as in hey
i	'y' as in happy	ai	'ai' as in buy / high
ee / I	'ea' as in bead	o	'o' as in row
u	'oo' as in good	O	'o' as in row
oo / U	'oo' as in food	au /ou	'au' as in how / pout
Ru	'r' as in hurting		

Kannada has 21 consonants:

b	'b' as in bed	p	'p' as in pig
c	's' as in supper	q	'q' as in quest
d	'k' as in kid	r	'r' as in row
f	'd' as in dog	s	'r' as in feather
g	'ph' as in phone		'ss' as in hiss
h	'g' as in go	t	'z' as in haze
j	'j' as in jello	v	't' as in top
k	'h' as in help	w	'v' as in victory
	'dg' as in edge	x	'w' as in weight
	'c' as in cat		'cks' as in kicks
			'z' as in haze

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

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.	Nimmannu nodi santhoshavaythu.

Etiquette

Please	Dayavit.t.u.
Thank you	Vandenegalo
You're Welcome	Tamage suswagatha
Yes	Havdu
No	Illa
Excuse me (getting attention)	Illinodi
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
Elder Sister
Younger Sister
Grandfather
Grandmother
Husband
Wife
Children

Tamma
Akka
Tangi
Ajja / taata
Aji
ganDa
henDathi
makkaLu

Food and Drinks

Breakfast
Lunch
Eggs
Rice
Coffee
Water
Beans
Potato
Apple

Vegetables
Salad
Butter
Milk
Sugar
Tea

Thindi
Oota
Motte
Anna
Kaapi
Neeru
huraLikaayi
Aaloo geDDe
sEbu Orange
kittaLe
Tarakaarigalu
kOsaMbari
beNNe
Haalu
Sakkare
Chaa

Cost

How much is this?
I don't want it.
Expensive

Idhakke yeshtu
Nanige beda.
Dhubaari

Time of Day

Now
Before
Morning
Afternoon
Evening
Night

Iga Later
Amele
Modalu
Beligge
Madhyana
Samje
Ratri

Useful Words and Phrases

I can't speak Kannada
(well). Do you speak
English? Help!
Look out!
I don't understand
Where is the toilet?
Police!
I need your help.
I'm lost.
I lost my bag.
I need a doctor
Who?
Where?
When?
Why?
What?
Which?
I don't know.

Nanage Kannada barodilla.
Nimage English baruththaa?
Sahaaya maadi
Jopaana
Nanage artha vaguthilla
Shouchalaya
Arakshaka
Nimma sahaya bekagidhe.
Nanage daari thappide.
Nanna cheela kaledu hoyithu.
Nanage doctor beku.
Yaaru
Elli
Yaavaga
Yaake/Eke
Enu
Yaava/yavudu
Gottilla

Numbers

1	Ondhu	16	Hadinaru
2	Yeradu	17	Hadinelu
3	Mooru	18	Hadinentu
4	Naalku	19	Hathombathu
5	Aidhu	20	Ipathu
6	Aaru	30	Muvathu
7	Yelu	40	Nalavathu
8	Yentu	50	Aivathu
9	Ombattu	60	Arvathu
10	Hathu	70	Yapathu
11	Hannondu	80	Embathu
12	Hanneradu	90	Tombathu
13	Hadimooru	100	Nooru
14	Hadinalku	1,000	Ondu savira
15	Hadinaidhu	1,000,000	Hathu laksha

The Kannada Alphabet

Vowels

ಅ ಆ ಇ ಈ ಉ ಊ ಋ ೠ ಎ ಏ ಐ ಒ ಓ ಔ
a ā i ī u ū ṛ ṝ e ē ai o ō au
[ʌ] [a:] [i] [i:] [u] [u:] [r̄/ru] [ri:/ru:] [e] [e:] [aj] [o] [o:] [aw]

Vowel diacritics

ಕ ಕಾ ಕಿ ಕೀ ಕು ಕೂ ಕೃ ಕ್ಷ ಕೆ ಕೇ ಕೈ ಕೊ ಕೋ ಕೌ ಕಂ ಕಃ
ka kā ki kī ku kū kṛ kṣ ke kē kai ko kō kau kaṃ kaḥ

Consonants

ಕ ka [kʌ] ಖಿ kha [kʰʌ] ಗ ga [gʌ] ಘ gha [gʰʌ] ಚಿ cī [tʃʌ]
ಚ ca [tʃʌ] ಛ cha [tʃʰʌ] ಜ ja [dʒʌ] ಜ್ಞ jha [dʒʰʌ] ಞ ña [ɲʌ]
ಟಿ ta [tʌ] ಠ tha [tʰʌ] ಡ da [dʌ] ಢ dha [dʰʌ] ಣ na [ɳʌ]
ತ ta [tʌ] ಥ tha [tʰʌ] ದ da [dʌ] ಧ dha [dʰʌ] ನ na [nʌ]
ಪ pa [pʌ] ಫ pha [pʰʌ] ಬ ba [bʌ] ಭ bha [bʰʌ] ಮ ma [mʌ]
ಯ ya [jʌ] ರ ra [rʌ] ಲ la [lʌ] ವ va [vʌ]
ಶ śa [ʃʌ] ಷ ṣa [ʃʰʌ] ಸ sa [sʌ] ಹ ha [hʌ]
ಱ la [lʌ] ಱ್ಷ kśa [kʃʰʌ] ಜ್ಞ jna [dʒʱʌ]