



## 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     |
|   | 'd' as in dog    |   | 'r' as in feather |
| f | 'ph' as in phone | s | 'ss' as in hiss   |
|   |                  |   | 'z' as in haze    |
| g | 'g' as in go     | t | 't' as in top     |
|   | 'j' as in jello  | v | 'v' as in victory |
| h | 'h' as in help   | w | 'w' as in weight  |
| j | 'dg' as in edge  | x | 'cks' as in kicks |
| k | 'c' as in cat    |   | 'z' as in haze    |

|   |   |   |                |
|---|---|---|----------------|
| l | 'l' as in love<br>'ie' as in pie<br>'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  
Ajji  
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). | Nanage Kannada barodilla.    |
| Do you speak English?         | Nimage English baruththaa?   |
| Help!                         | Sahaaya maadi                |
| Look out!                     | Jopaana                      |
| I don't understand            | Nanage artha vaguthilla      |
| Where is the toilet?          | Shouchalaya                  |
| Police!                       | Arakshaka                    |
| I need your help.             | Nimma sahaya bekagidhe.      |
| I'm lost.                     | Nanage daari thappide.       |
| I lost my bag.                | Nanna cheela kaledu hoyithu. |
| I need a doctor               | Nanage doctor beku.          |
| Who?                          | Yaaru                        |
| Where?                        | Elli                         |
| When?                         | Yaavaga                      |
| Why?                          | Yaake/Eke                    |
| What?                         | Enu                          |
| Which?                        | Yaava/yavudu                 |
| I don't know.                 | 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 | Hannonddu  | 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] ಜಿ ja [jʌ]  
ಚ ca [tʃʌ] ಛ cha [tʃʰʌ] ಜ ja [dʒʌ] ಜ್ಞ jha [dʒʰʌ] ಞ ña [ɲʌ]  
ಟ ta [tʌ] ಠ tha [tʰʌ] ಡ ḍa [ɖʌ] ಢ ḍha [ɖʰʌ] ಣ ṇa [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 ḷa [ɻʌ] ಷ್ಠ kśa [kʃʰʌ] ಜ್ಞ jna [dʒʱʌ]