

 #evinsl



WELCOME

With our palms pressed together as if in prayer pose, head slightly bowed, we welcome you to Sri Lanka. Ayubowan.

We are lucky enough to call this magical island our home and have created this short guide to share with you some of what we have experienced and found in this rapidly changing destination.

Beach holidays are fun and if that is what you came for you will not be disappointed. But if you venture off the beach for a moment you'll discover a tropical paradise of colour, culture, fauna and flora that will delight you. Sri Lanka is the 'resplendent isle'; the island of serendipity where magic happens.

Our short guide is a suggestion of what is out there and what we like. It acts as a helpful pointer towards interesting experiences to hopefully enrich your holiday.

Whilst Sri Lanka...and the south coastal area in particular is rapidly changing the underlying charm of her people seems immovable. We hope that your discoveries here are testament to that and we wish you a wonderful stay.



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THE
SRI LANKA
GUIDES



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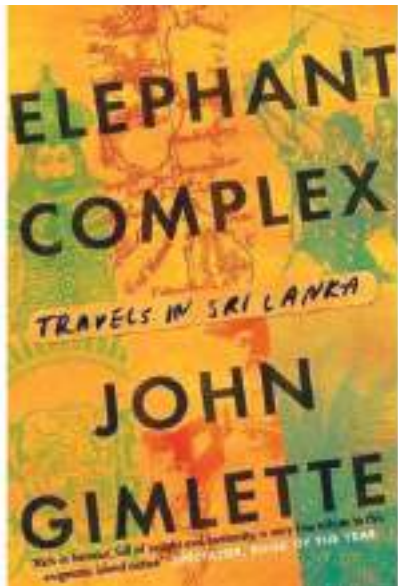
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JOHN GIMLETTE'S BEST BOOKS

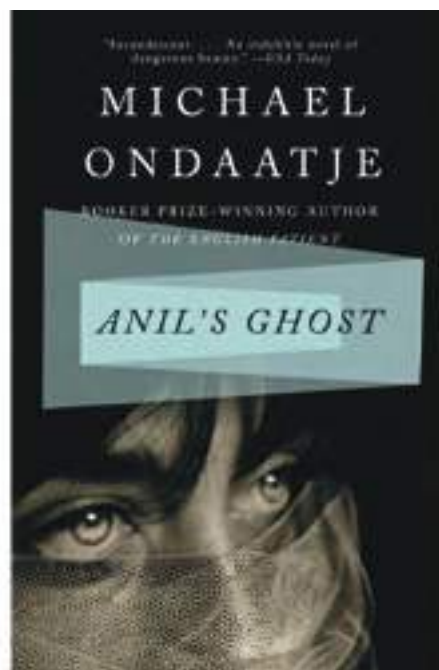
Travel writer John Gimlette picks his favourite books on Sri Lanka. His latest book, **Elephant Complex: Travels in Sri Lanka**, is published by Riverrun at £10.99



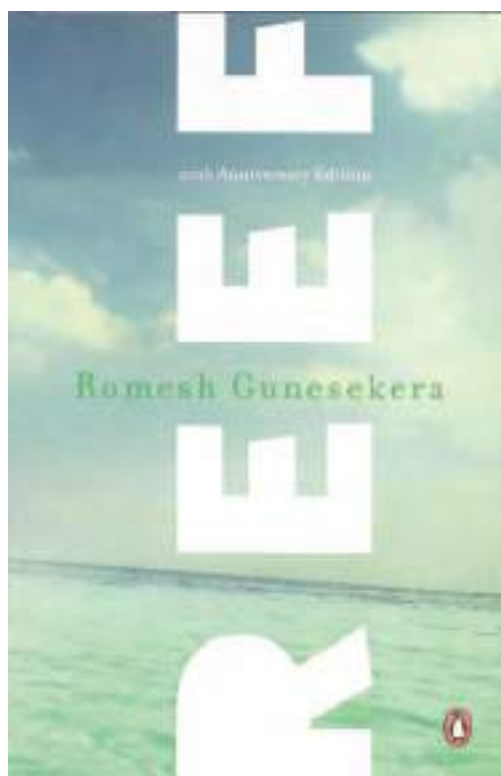
Landfalls: On the Edge of Islam from Zanzibar to Alhambra by Tim Mackintosh-Smith, 2010 (John Murray, London). There are plenty of outsiders who've tried to portray this perplexing island including Paul Bowles, Hermann Hesse, DH Lawrence, Pablo Naruda, and William Dalrymple. My favourite modern work is this one, in which the author sets off up Adam's Peak, in pursuit of the medieval traveler, Ibn Battutah.

An Historical Relation of Ceylon by Robert Knox, 1681 (Royal Society, London). Shipwrecked on the island in 1659, Knox would spend the next 20 years as a captive of the King of Kandy. Although tetchy and dour in matters of the human heart, his descriptions of Kandyan life are magical. They still inform our understanding of the kingdom, and would inspire a novel (Robinson Crusoe).

Anil's Ghost by Michael Ondaatje, 2000 (Bloomsbury, London). Strangely, for a country where English is a minority language, there's a strong tradition of Anglophone novels. For me, this is the best: an exquisite and sinister tale, set during a JVP revolt and a time of insidious terror.



Reef by Romesh Gunsekera, 1994 (Granta, London). I loved this curious tale of love and cooking, and read it in a single sitting. There's something delicious on every page, and also something indefinable, smoldering away in the subtext.



In the Line of Duty by Gamini Goonetilleke (Unigraphics, 2008, Colombo). Memoirs of the civil war are slowly emerging from all sides. But this one really caught my eye. Written by an army surgeon, it describes the challenges presented by heat, thirst, siege conditions and landmine injuries. It so intrigued me that I tracked down its author, and we've been friends ever since.

The Road from Elephant Pass by Nihal De Silva, 2003 (Vijitha Yapa, Colombo). Don't be put off by the sensational cover, and a giddy blurb. Whilst this is a novel about fugitives during the war, it also brings to life the conflicting passions of that time. Much of it is set in the wilds of Wilpattu, where – ironically – the author was killed by a landmine.

Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka (UN, March 2011). Needless to say, the Civil War has generated mountains of paper. Much of it is merely opinion, and the full facts have yet to be determined. The difficulty lies in working out what happened at the very end, on the Nanthi Kadal Lagoon. This document was produced by UN investigators, and - although controversial - it's curiously readable. It's also available free on the internet, and has been a key resource for all the commentaries that followed.

SOUTH COAST HIGHLIGHTS

You've hit the beach, haggled at the markets and maybe even taken a train trip or two. But what does Sri Lanka have to offer in the way of travel experiences? Here are some of our favourites:



See the sights by seaplane.

Initially set up as an air taxi service to beat the traffic, Cinnamon Air now offers private luxury charter flights on request. Swooping down to just 500 feet above sea level, or flying above Sri Lanka's famous UNESCO world heritage sites such as Sigiriya Rock or Galle Fort are unforgettable experiences. As Sri Lanka boasts eight world heritage sights viewing by seaplane you may be able to tick off more than you ever imagined in a single day.

Website: www.cinnamonair.com

Email: sales@cinnamonair.com

Tel: +94 11 2 475 475

Or by helicopter...

A little noisier than the fixed wing but perceptively more extravagant, a heli ride is truly memorable.

Helitours arrange personalised flights and as they have greater flexibility when landing. Combine this with a romantic lunch ...is there a better way to propose?

Website: www.helitours.lk

Email: helitourstickets@slaf.gov.lk

Tel: 0113 144944 / 0112 441671

Whale watching

Sri Lanka has some of the best whale watching opportunities in the world and plays home to many species of whale including the world's largest, the elusive Blue Whale, as well as Orcas and many dolphin species. During the main season of Dec to April your chances of spotting a blue whale are very high. Nothing will quite prepare you for your first sighting. There are many firms offering outings. One of our favourites for comfort is Ocean Safari:

Website: discoverborderlands.com

Email: [journeys@](mailto:journeys@discoverborderlands.com)

discoverborderlands.com

High tea at the Amangalla

The grand old lady of Galle Fort Hotels has been sensitively renovated and is a step back in time. Fortunately the cuisine has modernized and High Tea on the verandah with homemade scones, homemade jams, cream, a variety of cakes and teas followed by fresh passion fruit blinis is a treat. Leave the small kids behind.

Location: Church Street, Fort, Galle

Email: amangalla@aman.com

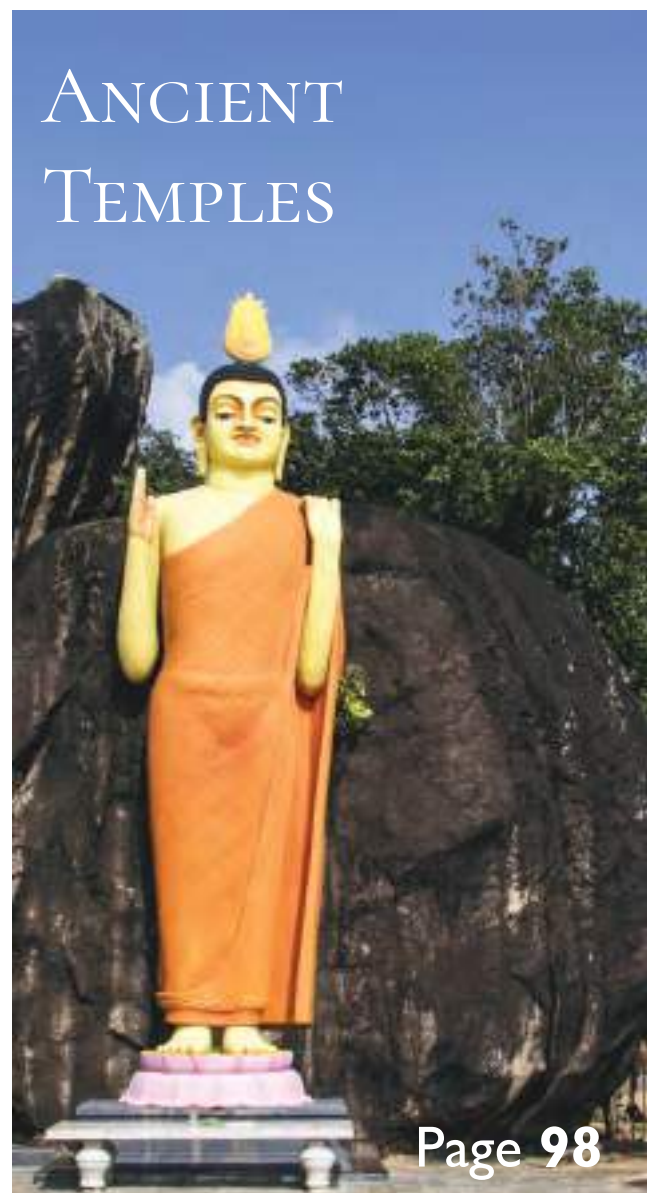
Tel: +94 91 223 3388

Charter your own private yacht for the day

Take a catamaran for the day and either sail out to the whale feeding area or down the coast to a bay where you drop anchor. Snorkeling, swimming and stand-up paddle boarding are all on offer. Stay on board for sunset and sundowners. Also on offer are private sailing lessons, rent a RIB, and group sailing.

Website: sail-lanka-charter.com

Tel: +94 71 440 5000



A Ladies Day @63 Pedlar St.

When the general hustle and bustle of Sri Lanka proves too tiring there's only one thing for it - book in for a little retail therapy, a yummy lunch in an ancient courtyard, pampering and peace. In 63 Pedlar Street you will find several surprises: Tallentire House provides exclusive designed fabrics, cushions, tableware, aprons, curtains and more. Mimimango produces clothes and accessories for goddesses that sparkle and shine. Poonie's Kitchen delivers fresh organic salads and wicked cakes and was voted one of the Top Five cafes in Sri Lanka; and Galle Fort Spa offers indulgent massage treatments, facials, pedicures and more. A few hours @63 will revive and energise your senses.

Location: 63 Pedlar Street, Galle Fort

Go gem shopping

Once known as Ratna-Dweepa meaning Gem Island, Sri Lanka has long been known for its quantity, quality and variety of precious and semi-precious stones. Marco Polo is believed to have once said the island had the best 'sapphires, topazes, amethysts, and other gems in the world'. Ratnapura is the source of many of the island's best

gems, but you will find high quality stones all over. Galle Fort positively sparkles due to the number of shops. Walk around, make sure you know what you are buying and pass the calculator back and forth until you get the best price.

Tea Estate and Factory

A captivating setting and a rewarding day out, the Handunugoda Estate is owned by author Herman Guneratne. Take a guided tour around the plantation and watch demonstrations and the harvesting of white tea. Tasting is encouraged. Handunugoda is an eco-friendly estate that considers its impact on the environment and never uses pesticides or insecticides. Call ahead to book your visit or to arrange specialist tea-tasting days. Tel: +94 77 329 0999 (Herman) www.devostea.com



mimimango



63 Pedlar St, Fort, Galle / www.joedenmimimango.com

SOUTH COAST WITH CHILDREN



Of course, children are very happy splashing around in the villa pool or building sandcastles on the nearby beach. But even for them there will come a time when they want to try something different. When that time comes, we recommend some of our tried and tested favourites below:

Fly a kite

It's one of life's simple pleasures, and one that Sri Lankans seem to enjoy more than most. Most towns tend to have their designated

'kite-flying' spots, but send one sky-bound almost anywhere to give the kids a taste of one of the country's favourite pastimes. In Galle you'll often find people flying them from the ramparts - for a couple of hundred rupees spent on a colourful kite, you can join in and entertain the kids for hours. If you are in a villa or have made friends with hotel staff ask them to teach you how they make a kite. It will open your kids' eyes a bit wider and be fun.



Idle bikes

+94 (0) 777 906 156

www.idlebikes.com



Get up close with wildlife

Sri Lanka is famed for her easy access to wildlife. In a single day you can see the largest land mammal (the endangered Asian Elephant) and the largest on the planet (Blue Whale) but the country teems with smaller ones. Yala National Park (see page 105) is the place for Leopards. Even though SL has the highest density of leopard on earth these majestic cats are shy. Udawalawa (see page 106) has many elephants and the best run orphanage in the country (Udawalawe Elephant Transit Home). Other animals you might see include the buffalo, sloth bear, samba deer, crocs, snakes (Weligama Snake Farm), wild boar and many others. Look up and you quickly see that the birds have it... there are hundreds of endemic birds and many water ways and parks set aside for them.
www.srilanka.tourism-asia.net/bird-santuaries.html

Ride a tuk tuk

For children young and old, the first ride in a tuk tuk will be one to remember; bumping along the roads, zipping in and out of other vehicles, fresh air blasting in your face. It's fun! If you're concerned with speed or driving style, don't be shy, tell the driver to slow down!

Ride a bike

Everyone loves a bike ride...even teenagers. Idle Bikes – everything is in the name - are based in Dalawella and offer bespoke tours with bikes for children, helmets, bells and water. They have a support tuk tuk on call if needed - though it's more likely you'll struggle to get the children off the bikes at the end of the tour! Rides vary in duration and gradient. Half price for children 12 and under. www.idlebikes.com
Email: info@idlebikes.com
Tel: +94 (0) 777 906156



Take a surfing lesson

Depending on the age of your children (not recommended for toddlers!) some of the southern beaches offer fantastic conditions for beginner surf lessons. Some of the better beaches for newbies are Welligama and Devata, though do expect a few tumbles and splashes as they learn. There are loads of surf places. If you are close to Devata we recommend asking the guys at The Shack (page 43) who know the best teachers.

MY SOUTH COAST

Written by: Neve Coleman,
Age: 9

Walk on the ramparts at sunset

I like to walk on the ramparts at sunset because it is relaxing and the view is amazing. You can also see men jumping off a 5 metre high rock which is called Flag Rock.

Shack surfing lessons

The Shack is a good place to surf, eat and swim. The surfing lessons cater well for adults and kids. You can surf at the long end of the beach, or in front of The Shack. The Shack is placed at Dewata beach.



Safari at Yala National Park

Yala safari jeep tours are morning and evening for 4 hours, but he'll also do 6 to 7 hours. In the jeep you can see deer, bee eaters, crocodiles, elephants and lots more things. I love the front of the jeep because it's fun and you can see more.

Idle bikes (bike tour)

Idle Bikes is very fun as well as educational. You can see Sri Lanka's paddies, landscapes and the village houses. Idle Bikes have kids bikes for ages 5 to 18 years, as well as grown up bikes so the parents can go with them!

Lighthouse Hotel

(breakfast buffet and pool)

The best thing about the Lighthouse is that it has lots of facilities including a gym, pool, buffet, beach tour, spa, room service and a tennis court.

GALLE TOWN

Galle, the capital of the Southern Province, is located in the south-west of Sri Lanka approximately 120km south of Colombo. It is the fourth largest city in the country with a population of approximately 110,000.

Galle's natural harbour and geographic location has attracted traders from Europe, Asia and the Middle East for centuries - though it was originally discovered by mistake when the Portuguese explorer Lourenco de Almedia was blown off course en-route to the Maldives in 1502. He docked here and established the initial fortifications of Galle Fort (see page 22)

Development outside the Fort walls is most commonly referred to as Galle Town and whilst still a town of trade, it caters more for tourists than Persian Spice merchants. However it continues to thrive and yet maintains the olde world charm of a historic trading centre. Exploring the winding streets, haggling for fresh tuna at the fish market, or tucking into some local delicacies with the residents will confirm why this town continues to be so popular. Galle also boasts one of the most beloved test cricket grounds in the world where local hero Murali took his 800th wicket on the last ball of his last over before retiring.

It has to be said that most shops that will interest you will be located inside the Fort but there are one or two worth mentioning.



SHOP & EAT

The Old Railway

42 Havelock Place

The Old Railway Shop is home to fashion designer Catherine Rawson's collection. She creates a range of clothes, from a quirky eccentric one-off to the more essential item for a tropical climate. The cosy cafe upstairs, run by Catherine's husband Rasika, overlooks the platforms of Galle Station and has a lot of character and an enticing blackboard menu for both the savoury and sweet tooth. A great lunch or coffee stop outside the Fort.

UNIQUE & FUN

Manjari

Wackwella Road

If kitsch is your thing, this plastic fantastic 'department' store (The 'Harvey Nics' of Galle) should be on your list. Check out the top floor for a good selection of fabrics.

FINE DINING

The Sun House \$\$\$

Upper Dickson Road

The Sun House offers a unique trip back in time to the languid lifestyle of the planters. Once the home of a Scottish spice merchant, this colonial house - built in the 1860s - is a boutique hotel. It is well known for its fine dining, privacy and eclectic interior, as well as for cocktails or a chilled beer in Dick's Bar.

Insider tip: Not a 'drop in' restaurant so pre-book.

Tel: +94 91 222 2624

www.thesunhouse.com

SUNDOWNERS

Lady Hill

Upper Dickson Road

Lady Hill's open air Harbour Bar offers (close to) a 360 degree view of Galle and beyond. The view, along with the reward of a cold one, makes it a great spot for a sundowner and worth the climb up the stairs. Get there by 5:30pm.

SHOPPING

Samage Wines

2nd Cross Street

Wine in SL is expensive....and to be perfectly frank, outside of restaurants and Colombo, not very good. If you need to stock up then head here and our advice would be to buy only screw top. Check with your villa manager re drink laws as they will surprise you.

Wicks

2nd Cross Street

Located next to Samage with many clothing items straight out the factory. As with all such shops one time you go you'll find nothing but the next time you'll walk out with 'half the shop' at a fraction of what it would cost at home.

Beach fisheries

Matara Road (next to Navy Camp) & Baladaksha Mawatha Road (outside of Fort Ramparts)

Situated on the shoreline, these fisheries offer an opportunity to observe the daily haggle over the best catch, or even to select your own. If you see a crowd and are wondering what they are looking at – go see! Time it well and you may be invited to assist the fishermen pull in the catch of the day for that photo gem!

Fruit and veg market

Sri Lanka boasts 29 varieties of banana and several of them will be hanging over a fruit stall in the main market. These markets are well worth a stroll around and remember if you try you buy. Best advice – haggle with a smile.



ACTIVITIES

St Mary's Cathedral

Prison Road

St Mary's, built in the 19th century, is the Cathedral of the Roman Catholic Church of Galle. Its twin grey coloured bell towers are a dominant landmark on Galle's skyline. The Church is always open for visitors and provides another vantage point to view the town and ocean. It offers an alternative example of Galle's colonial history outside the Fort walls. Services are also held here. **Insider tip:** Good for photos with the morning sun.



Fortaleza

An exclusive collection of
boutique hotels in the Galle Fort.



reservations@fortaleza.lk
www.fortaleza.lk

No. 9 Church Cross Street,
Galle Fort, Sri Lanka
+94 (0) 77 339 3397

GALLE FORT

The Fort is both unique and enchanting and in 1988 was awarded UNESCO World Heritage status as one of the best examples of a Dutch-built fortified city in South Asia. It is a harmonious hybrid of colonial European and South Asian architectural styles.

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Galle Fort Lighthouse



The narrow but numerous streets are packed with delights, and its easy-going yet bustling atmosphere is thanks to the blend of commerce and culture. While the opportunities to shop and eat seemingly increase every week, it continues to retain an air of lives little-changed for centuries. Prominent landmarks include the National Maritime Museum, Reformed Dutch Church, Mosque, Amangalla Hotel, library and lighthouse.

The Fort's population is both Buddhist and Muslim so please keep this in mind when walking around by being sensitive to local customs and attitudes. The ramparts are a beautiful place for a dawn or sunset walk - the regulars will be pleased to see you and will seek to exchange greetings - and at the weekend or on public holidays it'll be crowded with local tourists from all over the country.

The Fort is always open and free to enter. If anyone advises you need to buy a ticket or visit the tourist office please ignore them.



ACTIVITIES

Walking Tours of Galle Fort

It is possible to wander the ramparts and streets freely and easily, but if you wish to learn more about the Fort's history and culture we recommend a guided tour with Galle Fort Walks. Shanjei offers personal and interactive tours; be sure to let him know what your interests are, whether it's history, culture or food, as he'll tailor the tour to your requests.

+94 772-283-001 shanjei@gmail.com

Insider tip: It can get hot in the Fort and we advise you walk (with a guide or self-guide) either early morning or late afternoon.

Fort Beach

Whilst there are several small beaches under the ramparts the main one is accessed via steps close to the Lighthouse. It's perfect for an early morning dip or snorkeling - if you don't mind a few spectators. The beach is popular on national holidays and weekends. Insider tip: A pre-breakfast swim for those staying within the Fort.

Galle Fort Market

A small market nestled under the sprawling Banyan Trees in the Court Square (Saturdays 9am - 6pm). Vendors showcase a variety of products from specialist food stalls to products made by local artisans. Worthy of a browse.

Cricket

Sri Lanka's love and passion for cricket is visible almost everywhere, and just outside the Fort, the Galle Cricket Ground is famed as one of the most scenic in the world. Everything from regional to international test matches take place under the shadow of the ramparts. Tickets are available at the ground, but for a unique perspective and most favoured by the Barmy Army, join the crowds on the Fort's ramparts. Tickets are not required although an 'entrepreneur' may appear asking for a 'donation'.

Alternatively, you'll see local amateur matches played at Court Square (complete with a rubbish bin for stumps) as well as on the Fort's ramparts, accessed via Rampart Street. Spectate or join in... When in Sri Lanka!
Fixtures: www.cricschedule.com
Tickets: www.srilankacricket.lk



SPA

Galle Fort Spa

63, Pedlar's Street (above Mimimango)
Located in an 18th Century house and refurbished in an elegant but minimalist style, a feeling of calm envelops you as you enter. Beautify or pamper yourself from head to toe with one of the signature massages created by owner Lucy who has trained in Australia and Asia.

Insider tip: Ideal for a pamper on a special occasion (pre-booking is essential for large groups).

Tel: +94 77 725 2502

www.gallefortspa.com

The Amangalla Spa,

Church Street

A beautifully appointed spa with a luxurious colonial feel. Each treatment includes time in The Baths; the hydro, sauna and steam room pre/post your massage or Ayurvedic healing. Men can pop into the in-house barber shop for a traditional shave. A full menu of treatments can be emailed to you on request by phoning the hotel. Booking ahead is essential.

Tel: +94 91 223 3388

www.amanresorts.com

SHOPPING

The shopping scene within these historic walls is evolving faster than we can print so we advise you simply stroll around. The list below is not meant to be extensive but just to mention a few of our favourites.

Mimimango

63 Pedlar St

Develop a goddess complex as you enter the opulent world of designer Jo Eden's Mimimango where you will find evening wear, playful beach chic and tropical glamour adorning the rails, as well as a vast array of accessories and trinkets.

+94 91 224 2702

www.joedenmimimango.com



Tallentire House

63 Pedlar St

100% cotton fabrics; twills, voiles and canvas by British textile designer Lindsay Taylor. All fabrics - printed in India and stitched in Sri Lanka - are sold by the metre and made up into a fantastic array of interior products and clothing.

KK Collection

71 Pedlar St

An elegant collection of clothing, art, furnishing fabric and stylish homeware curated by acclaimed interior designer and Kahanda Kanda (see Koggala) owner, George Cooper. This trendy store is housed in an impressive converted villa, complete with a pond in the courtyard. Made to order home furnishing service also available.

Tel: +94 (0) 91 494 3700

www.kahandakanda.com

Barefoot

Corner of Church St and Pedlar St

This is a treasure trove of handloom soft toys, handmade clothes and accessories in their renowned bright fabric; a reliable souvenir pit-stop. Barefoot is also well-regarded locally for its books and you'll find an enticing variety of local authors and coffee table collections. Barefoot's flagship store is found in Colombo (see page 110) +94 91 222 6299
www.barefootceylon.com

The Three by TPV

43 Leyn Baan St & Pedlar Street

Even on a dull day you'll need sunglasses at these super bright boutiques! All the items including home accessories, clothing and jewellery, are hand-picked by 'The Three', the Swedish/Latvian trio: Thomas, Patrick and Vadim. Browse for a unique gift. +94-91 223 1003

Embark

33 Lighthouse St

Proceeds from the sale of Embark products go towards country-wide projects of animal rescue and treatment, puppy adoption and educational programs. You'll find a variety of branded pooch-inspired merchandise.
www.embarkpassion.com

Spa Ceylon

Corner of Lighthouse St and Pedlar St & Lighthouse St

This uniquely Sri Lanka brand has numerous stores across the island including the Airport, if you miss your chance while you travel. Stores are filled with Ayurveda luxuries, all beautifully packaged, including incense candles, natural oils, toiletries and balms. A go-to souvenir shop for a luxury gift. Also sold in Barefoot on Pedlar Street.

Stick no Bills

Church St

Iconic retro-style travel posters of old Ceylon exhibited in the flagship gallery, along with a collection of rare travel and film posters from the late 1800s through to the early 1980s. These make a perfect holiday souvenir. Most designs are also available as postcards which you can also post in-store.
www.sticknobillsonline.com

Decorista

19 Pedlar St

A Sri-Lankan owned small and stylish shop selling a thoughtful selection of homeware items, historic maps, clothes and hand-printed fabrics and furnishing. Suited to shoppers who find the chock-a-block souvenir shops a little too overwhelming.

FOR QUALITY GEMS & JEWELLERY



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Head Office: 30 Hospital Street, Fort
Galle / laksanagem@hotmail.com

Branch: Star Jewel, 04 New Lane I, Fort,
Galle / starjewelfort@gmail.com

Orchid House

Hospital St & Dutch Hospital

A great local independent souvenir shop packed with almost everything you could possibly want. Owned and run by Yameen, a long time resident of the Fort with support with support of his friendly and helpful staff. Worthy of a browse in A/C cool.

Odels

50 Pedlar St

(also accessed via Leyn Baan Cross St)

One of 20 stores across the island, Odel's 'Luv Brand' boasts the largest department store in the Fort offering an extensive selection of high quality gifts, homeware, clothing and crafts. Odels prides itself in stocking 'home grown brands'. +94 (091) 2223120

Exotic Roots

Lighthouse St

Family owned and run, this colourful collection of art, home decor, antiques, clothing and jewellery are all selectively hand-picked or made 'in house' by Catherine. Both Catherine and her daughter Asia exhibit their own beautiful vivid artwork. At the time of writing there are plans to open a small cafe in the courtyard. Worth checking out.

www.exoticroots.com

Historical Mansion Museum

34 Leyn Baan St

Located in one of the oldest buildings in the Fort this free to enter Museum contains rare coins, pottery, weapons and other interesting items dating from pre Portuguese period. The Mansion also houses an art gallery and gem store.



Tea

We suspect tea is on most souvenir shopping lists and gift boxes are sold in many of the souvenir shops mentioned above. The store below is dedicated to tea.

The Withered Leaves

Dutch Hospital (second floor)

Sip your miniature free cup of tea while you peruse the variety of blends in stylish designed gift tins or learn more about its origin from the interactive touch screen. Ideal gift for a tea lover. Well worth popping in!

Jewellers

At the last count there were some 60 jewelry shops within these historic walls with more on the way. We do not know them all and our list below is meant only to give a few of those we do know. Our advice is to walk around, take your time and compare.

Jo Jo

78 Pedlar St

A great collection of bespoke pieces and antique jewellery designed by Mangala.

Tel: +94 912 244 644

MM Ibrahim

47 Church St

One of the 'elders' of the Fort gem scene owned and managed by Saffa Ibrahim.

Tel: +94 912 234 253

Laksana

30 Hospital St

Another of the 'seniors' when it comes to jewelry in the Fort owned and run by Ameen

Tel: +94 77 790 0170

Pedlar's Inn Jewellery

Pedlar St

Part of the Pedlar Inn chain of outlets run by Munchie.

Tel: +94 (0) 912 227 199

EATING OUT

Similar to the shopping scene, the variety of places to eat continues to evolve, and there are many more than we list here. Stroll around, take your time, venture off the main streets, and go where the mood grabs you.

Poonie's Kitchen \$\$

63 Pedlar St

A hidden oasis set in a private courtyard (accessed via Mimimango boutique), Poonie's provides a much needed respite from the hustle and bustle of the fort streets. Unwind over mouth-watering salad, healthy dishes and the best carrot cake and delicious fresh juices.

Insider tip: Fresh, organic Salad Thali.

Amangalla \$\$\$\$

Church St

The majestic focal point within the Fort, this exclusive colonial hotel is a 'must-visit' during your stay. The Zaal (the Great Hall), which has an elegant ambiance with high ceilings and chandeliers, provides the perfect place to while away an afternoon under the breeze of an antique fan and sip a cool drink. The menu consists of traditional Sri Lankan and European fare.

Insider tip: Afternoon high-tea. (See page 11) Tel: +94 91 223 3388



Fortaleza \$\$\$

Lighthouse St

Situated on the corner of Church Cross Street and Lighthouse Street in the heart of the Fort, this atmospheric restaurant is set around a cosy courtyard and serves up a thoughtful menu with Asian and Middle-Eastern influences. It's one of our favourites.

Tel: +94 91 223 3415

proudly in the entrance hall. Open to outside guests the Frangipani filled courtyard is calming retreat. South Asian and Mediterranean inspired menu. Booking ahead is essential.

Insider tip: Enjoy a good selection of wines and unwind in the candlelit courtyard.

Tel: +94 91 224 7977

www.thefortprinters.com

The Fort Printers \$\$\$

36 Pedlar St

There is a classic and elegant feel to this 13 suite boutique hotel. Over the last two centuries it has housed a college a bank and a printing company. An antique press stands

Crêpe-ology \$\$

53 Leyn Baan St

Set among the rooftops of the Fort, Crêpe-ology feels like a hidden gem despite its popularity. Choose from sweet and savoury crêpes with an impressive range of fillings. There is

a separate air-conditioned dining area connected to the main restaurant with a play corner for younger customers.

+94 91 223 4777

www.crepe-ology.lk

Sugar Bistro \$\$

Dutch Hospital

Chilled out dining in the Dutch Hospital, Sugar offers up a selection of well-done western classics and a solid wine list. A small but stylish interior with wraparound cushioned seating. Alternatively, you can opt for a table under the stars in the Dutch Hospital's courtyard.

Insider tip: Check out the Sugar Daddy...a burger with it all.

The Tuna and The Crab \$\$\$

Dutch Hospital (ground floor)

Darshan Munidasa, one of Sri Lanka's top chefs, serves a menu of fresh Sri Lankan seafood cooked in Japanese style - available in all three of his Colombo establishments.

The bento boxes or the chilli crab make for some fine Asian dining in uber modern surroundings. Indoor seating only.

Insider tip: Some of the best crabs in the south!

Church Street Social \$\$\$

Church St

Fort Bazaar hotel is a tastefully upgraded 17th century Fort townhouse that opens its restaurant doors to walk-ins.

Tasteful in more ways than one; the menu boasts gourmet dishes with Moroccan, Turkish and Middle Eastern influences served in the stylish modern (A/C) restaurant. All of this is echoed on the verandah, the perfect spot for taking in day-to-day Fort life. At time of writing they had No liquor license so, BYO.

Insider tip: Eggs Royale with roti (below) for the perfect brunch
+94 77 363 8381



Pedlar's Inn Café \$\$

92 Pedlar St

Proud to be the first coffee shop café inside the Fort, Pedlar's occupies the entire ground floor of what was once the British Post Office. A great spot for languid loafing in the A/C or people watching from the verandah/street seating... Watch for the occasional instagrammer posing by Pedlar's classic Morris Minor, or hashtag yourself. **Insider tip:** For those with a sweet tooth... Pistachio ice cream from their own gelateria (another first in the Fort!).

+94 91 222 7199

www.pedlarsinn.com

Calorie Counter \$\$

Cnr of Lighthouse St & Pedlar St

Another Colombo-born restaurant that has spread its wings to Galle. A selection of healthy breakfasts, smoothies and lunch/dinner dishes, some of which are split into food types allowing you to monitor your calories - you may need a calculator! Eat healthy, stay healthy! is their motto. +94 11 2 580 989
www.caloriecounter.lk

Coconut Sambol \$

68 Church St

Possibly the narrowest restaurant in the Fort this characterful café is an experience. Five curry dishes,



along with rice and their signature coconut sambol, are displayed in clay pots for you to help yourself. We recommend them all, as well as returning for seconds. Pricier than curries from other local restaurants but still good value.

Insider tip: Mint and lime juice.

A Minute By Tuk Tuk \$\$

Dutch Hospital (second floor)

Perched on the second floor of the Dutch Hospital with uninterrupted sea view as well as fresh sea air, this is one the coolest restaurants in Fort. The menu has a good mix of western and local favourites, but the standard can be a little hit or miss. Watch out for taxes.

Insider tip: Calamari Twist to start.

NIGHTLIFE

With an early curfew, there are limited options in Galle Fort. If you wish to explore the nearby nightlife beyond the Fort's closing hours, see Unawatuna (page 46).

Most of the hotels in the Fort offer bar service to outside guests. Our favourite is the Amangalla veranda on Church Street.

Tap House by RnR

Dutch Hospital

Situated in prime position on the ground floor of the Dutch Hospital, this attracts tourists in need of a cold beer. Despite the bar set-up (complete with a juke box), the stools are usually empty and most punters enjoy the courtyard outside, next to the Aurora Bastian. Despite the name, there's no guarantee of beer on tap, although it will be chilled and refreshing.

Fort Dew

Rampart Street

The ideal place for a sundowner overlooking the ramparts is situated next to the Buddhist temple. The laid back atmosphere is complemented by the unspoilt site of the sun dropping in the ocean. **Insider tip:** Get in early to secure the best view.

NOTES

GALLE FORT HISTORY

1344 Ibn Batuta- the Moor from Tangiers, passed through Galle on his return from Adams Peak. Merchants from Portugal, Arabia, Malay, China and the Southern Indian ocean were plying their trade here.

1411 The Chinese General Cheng Ho was dispatched by the Chinese Emperor Yun Ho, of the Ming Dynasty to capture the Buddha's tooth, and passed through Galle. He commemorated the visit by leaving a tri-lingual inscription- Chinese, Tamil and Persian- that is now housed in the National Museum.

1505 The Portuguese sail into Galle-having been blown off course on their way to the Maldives.

1625 The Black Fort, or Santa Cruz as it was then known, was completed.

1640 The Dutch capture Galle. At daybreak on the 8th March, the Dutch laid siege, with 12 ships. After 18 days the fort fell with a battle on the beach under the

coconut trees, more than 3000 men died. The cost of life was high- 'Gold in Malacca, lead in Galle' was how it became known. De Coster was the commander who took Galle. Akersloot bastion is named after his birthplace and it is the site of the first breadfruit tree in Ceylon

1684 The New Oriental Hotel (now the Amangalla) building was originally built as 2 houses. It then became the Dutch Military Officers' headquarters.



1796 23rd February the Dutch handed over the Fort to the English, without a shot being fired.

1810 The last duel was fought on the Star Bastion, on the 17th November, between Capt. James Brown and Capt. John Parker, both of the 2nd Rifles Regiment. There is no record of what the duel was over, but it was won by Capt. Brown, who ended up in the courts. His trial was the first trial by jury in the country.

1848 The old British Lighthouse was built, with 2 oil lanterns on a high tower, at the Flag rock bastion at the end of Lighthouse St.

1871 21st February the Anglican church of All Saints was completed on the site of the old court house (1780's). The altar is said to be built over the site of the gallows.

1873 A new sea wall was built in Colombo, and the main harbour of Ceylon moved from Galle to Colombo, putting Galle to sleep for a century.

1873 The British cut a new gate through the Ramparts between the Moon and Sun bastion to ease the congestion within the Fort.

1883 The clock tower was built to commemorate Dr. P. D. Anthonisc for all his good works in the local community.

1889 November - a heated meeting took place at the NOH, to stop the Government proposal to demolish the Fort Ramparts, as they had already done in Colombo. The multi ethnic committee of 16 included O. L .M. Macan Markar, C. P Hayley and Dr. P. D. Anthonisc.

1889 The Buddhist temple was built on the site of an old Portuguese church.

1927 The racecourse in front of the ramparts was officially declared as a cricket stadium.

1939 The Old British Lighthouse burnt down. The lighthouse keeper, Mr. K. N. Fernando, jumped to his death escaping the flames.

1940 The Department of Archaeology given jurisdiction over the Fort.

1940 The new Lighthouse was built on the Utrecht bastion, 92 feet above the low water mark. The beam is visible 15 miles out to sea, and on a clear night more than double that.

1948 Sri Lanka was granted Independence from Great Britain.



1969 The Fort was declared an archaeological Preserve, and was to be maintained by the Department of Archaeology.

1972 Ceylon changed her name to Sri Lanka.

1992 On the 9th May, Galle Fort and its fortifications became a UNESCO World Heritage site.

THE SRI LANKA GUIDES

2004 The Tsunami. Galle Fort and its ramparts provided an amazing protection for its residents and guests. Many people lost their lives in the Galle area.

2007 Galle Literary Festival established.

2009 The end of 26 years of civil war with the LTTE.



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DAY TRIPS FROM GALLE

We define a “day trip” as a long drive but not so long that you need to stay overnight. Whether you want to be at one with nature or to discover Sri Lankan architecture and the island’s main produce, we have listed a few below that we think are well worth

Geoffrey Bawa’s Lunuganga Estate

Distance: 1.5 hour drive

Geoffrey Bawa is one of Sri Lanka’s iconic figures and is regarded as having been one of the most important and influential Asian architects of the 20th Century. The Lunuganga Estate was his country home and the gardens were his muse and experimental laboratory for new ideas. The house is now a hotel and the gardens are open only at certain times of the day so calling ahead is essential. A beautiful and fascinating place to while away an afternoon.

Sinharaja Rainforest

Distance: 2.5 hour drive

A dense rainforest, Sinharaja is both a UNESCO world heritage site and a designated Biosphere

Reserve. Here you can spot many species endemic to Sri Lanka including mammals such as the Golden Palm Civet, and birds such as the Sri Lanka white-eye. Lizards, gekkos and many beautiful butterflies are also in abundance. Two main nature-trail paths begin at Kudawa Conservation Centre and wind their way through the tropical forest.



Bird Sanctuaries

Distance: 2-3 hour drive

If you are a birder then rejoice as Sri Lanka is without doubt a bird-watcher’s paradise. There are an estimated 425 different bird species making it their home of which 26 are endemic to the island and both Bundala National Park and Kalamatiya bird sanctuary are within a day trip. Both provide a wonderful opportunity to spend a day observing and, if you’re lucky, you’ll spot rare species such as the Black-capped Purple Kingfisher or the Slatybreasted Crane.



An early - the earlier the better - start from Galle and binoculars are a must! Bundala:

Distance from Galle - 3 hour drive.

Kalamatiya:

Distance from Galle - 2 hour drive.

Safari - Yala or Udawalawa

Distance: 3.5 hour drive

Herds of elephants, bathing water-buffalo and the elusive leopard (Yala), crocs, bear, wild boar and much more. These are just a few of the species you're likely to see on a Sri Lankan safari. Yala and Udawalawa National Parks are two of the south coast's finest and well worth a trip.

All daytrips can be booked through the Eden Villas concierge, Udeshika, The concierge service is available to all visitors at a cost of Rps 7,500 for the duration of your stay.

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Email: udeshika@villasinsrilanka.com

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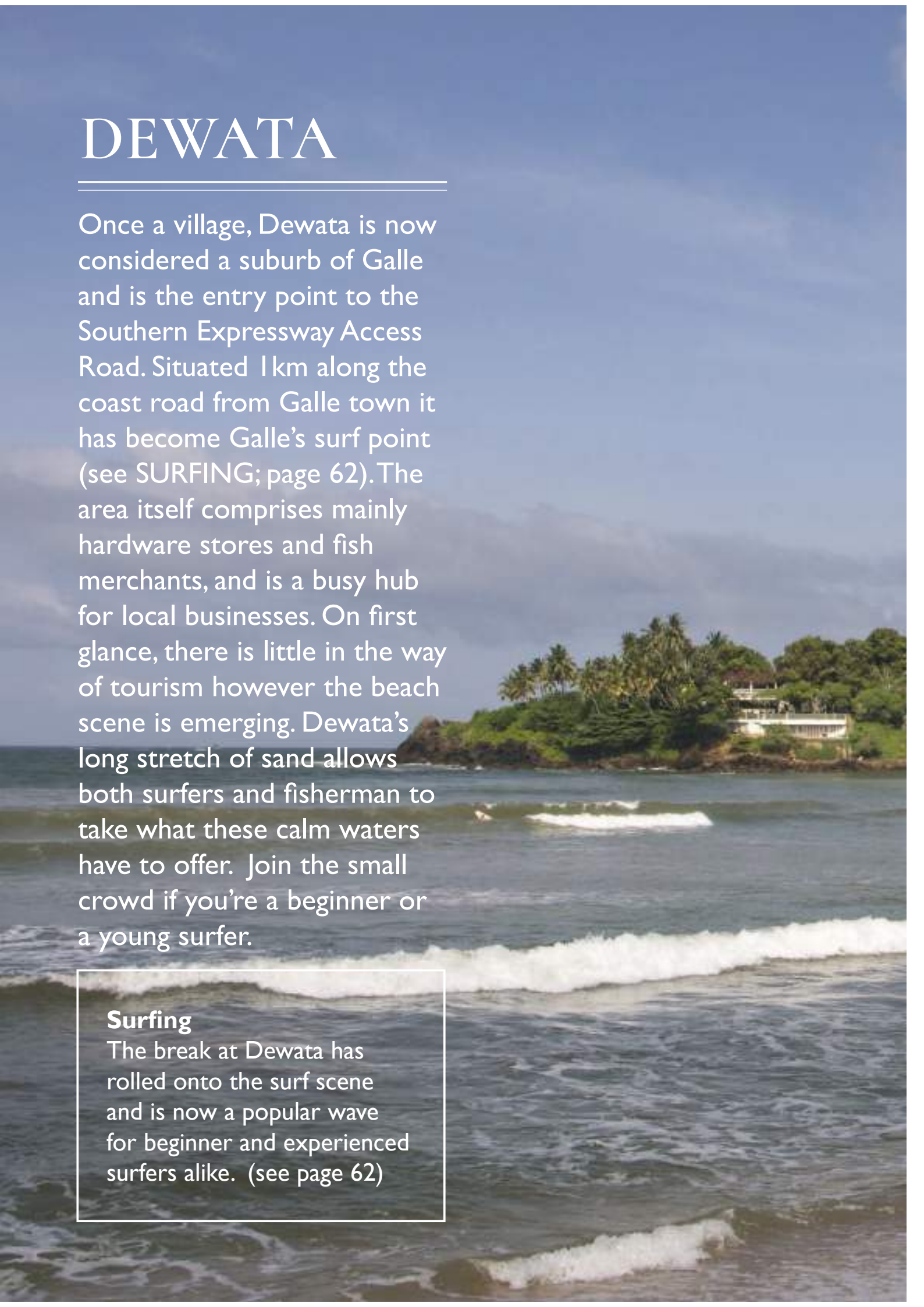
info@souk58.com
#souk58design

DEWATA

Once a village, Dewata is now considered a suburb of Galle and is the entry point to the Southern Expressway Access Road. Situated 1 km along the coast road from Galle town it has become Galle's surf point (see SURFING; page 62). The area itself comprises mainly hardware stores and fish merchants, and is a busy hub for local businesses. On first glance, there is little in the way of tourism however the beach scene is emerging. Dewata's long stretch of sand allows both surfers and fisherman to take what these calm waters have to offer. Join the small crowd if you're a beginner or a young surfer.

Surfing

The break at Dewata has rolled onto the surf scene and is now a popular wave for beginner and experienced surfers alike. (see page 62)



EATING OUT

The Surf Shack \$\$

Matara Road

This casual beachfront cafe has become Dewata's go-to hot spot on the beach for expat families and in-the-know tourists looking for a surf break. The inventive menu is a step up from your typical beach restaurant... Oh and they make their own cheese! Whether you're a surfer or spectator, it's a comfortable place to hang out for the day.

Insider tip: Breakfast after a morning's surf.



Madeena Hotel

Matara Road

Madeena is an institution amongst the locals, fresh rotis, kotu and hoppers are served street side while inside, favourites such as their famous biryani are dished up for crowds of locals. The restaurant gets busy in the evening and stays packed until late night. A popular spot for those in need of late night nourishment returning from the bars of Unawatuna.



ACTIVITIES

Soul Riders

Next door to The Surf Shack

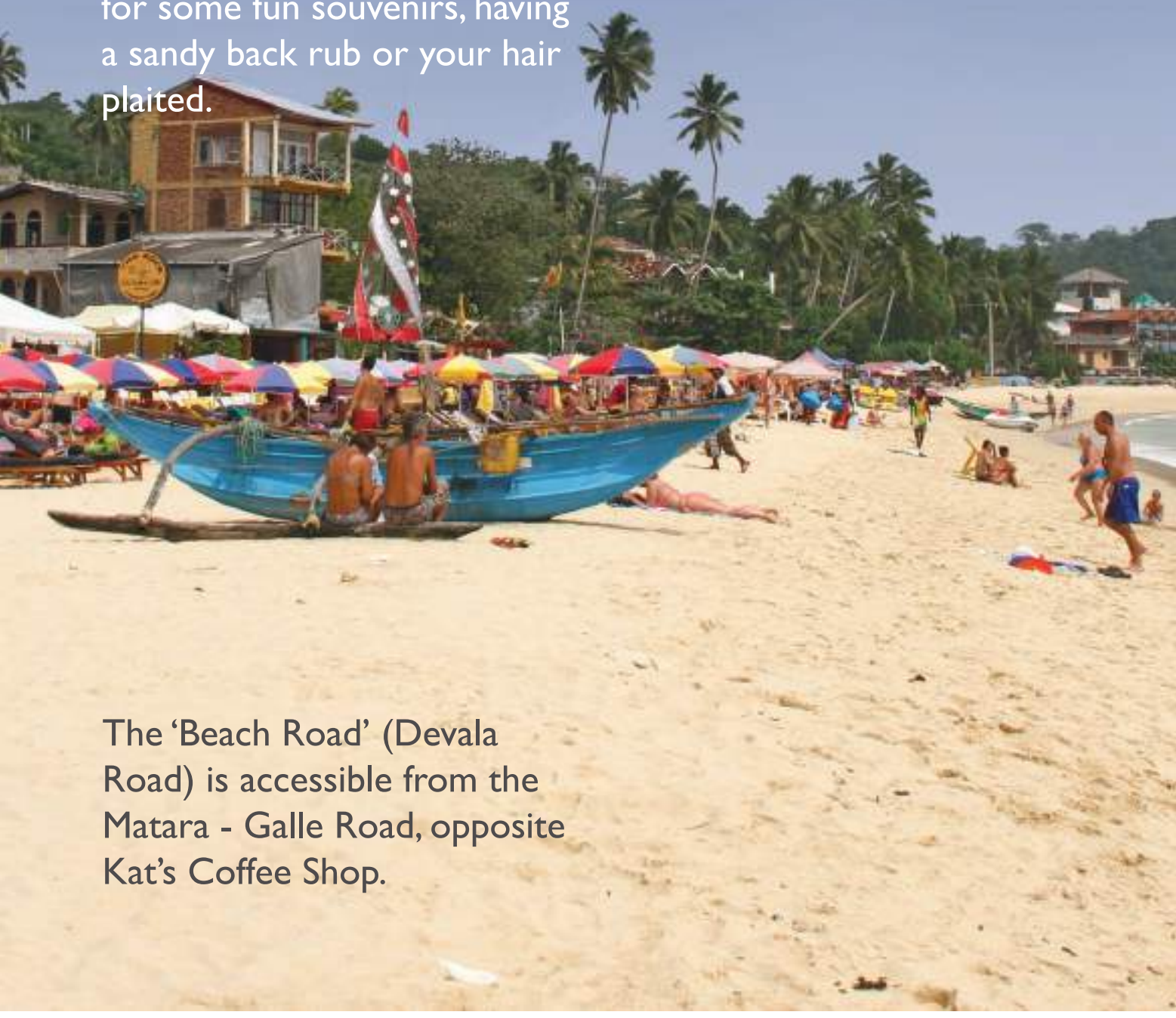
Hire a Royal Enfield - an icon of the motorcycling world - for the day or for an extended tour of Sri Lanka. One of the best ways to see the island. If renting independently, Soul Riders will advise on best routes and accommodation on request. Check out the website for the latest tours on offer.

+94 (0) 91 5702122

www.soulridersbiketours.com

UNAWATUNA

Unawatuna is a coastal town famous for its beach which was once lauded as being amongst the most beautiful bays in the world. Fame led to popularity and it is now best described as 'backpacker' fun. Worth a visit if you enjoy a lively ambiance and bartering for some fun souvenirs, having a sandy back rub or your hair plaited.



The 'Beach Road' (Devala Road) is accessible from the Matara - Galle Road, opposite Kat's Coffee Shop.

EATING OUT

Due to its popularity with tourists there is an abundance of restaurants on Unawatuna's beach and if sand between your toes is the thing then we simply recommend you stroll up and down until the atmosphere tickles you sufficiently. Well worth a visit and setback from the beach are these few we've listed.

Bedspace Kitchen \$\$\$

Beach Road (located in the garden of Bedspace guesthouse)

Open 12pm to 3:30pm and 6pm to 10pm.

A culinary treat and The Sri Lanka Guides top choice in Unawatuna. Regular Dinner Parties are also held on special occasions - call or check out the website to find out their next event.

+94 (0) 91 225 0156

www.bedspaceuna.com/fb/dining-and-drink/

Hopstars \$\$

Beach Road (below Bedspace Beach)

We award all the stars for Bed Space's new joint. An ingenious take on the Sri Lankan hopper with an international twist; try the Eggs Benedict hopper with smoked salmon. Definitely worth the journey to the end of the beach road for a hearty brunch.

Le Café Francais Bakery \$\$

Beach Road

Located in the garden of Kahuna Hotel, this delicious French-owned hexagonal-shaped bakery is a rare treat. It has our vote for the best croissants in the South. Popular with local expats who will pop in to collect their artisanal bread. Eat in or take away.

Kat's Coffee Shop \$\$

253 Matara Road

Located on the main road between Galle and the south coast, it's an ideal spot if you're in need of a decent coffee. The tempting display of homemade cakes may be hard to resist, and light bites are also available. Occasionally open for events in the evening, including a trivia quiz night.

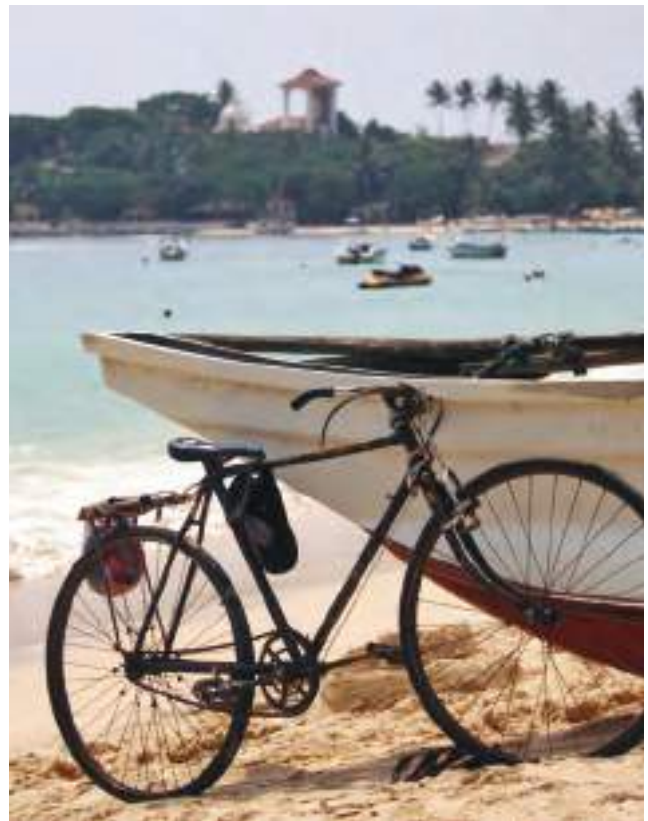
ACTIVITIES

Scuba Diving

There are several dive centres in the Unawatuna area, but one of the best is Pearl Divers which offers advanced and beginner PADI courses, day trips and night dives, as well as an intro to scuba in the privacy of your villa pool. (+94 91 22 42015 www.pearldivers.lk)

Beach

Unawatuna Beach has expanded in appearance as well as development in recent years as a result of government initiatives following significant erosion caused by construction of breakwaters. Today this allows for dining and sunbeds to sprawl even further onto the sand. The sea here is relatively safe to swim but keep an eye out for an increasing number of jet skis. The shallower waters are close to the temple end of the beach, which is popular with local tourists during the weekends and national holidays.



NIGHTLIFE

The beachfront and lanes are packed full with the usual mix of backpacker bars, late night watering-holes and even some space to strut your funky stuff.

The selection of establishments is large but mostly the same; offering up cold beers, strong cocktails and bass heavy sound systems. The wide beach does provide some respite from the cacophony of beats the closer you get to the sea, our tip is to sit as close as possible if you don't want to shout – but do watch out for the incoming tide! The best way to find your spot for the night is to walk along the sand and see

what looks good. **Lucky Tuna** is a relaxed bar in the middle of the beach and a good spot to plan your next move. If you're happy to pay the entrance fee for a late night boogie **Kingfisher** and **Riddim**, located at either end of the beach, are your best bet – look (or reach) for the lasers - both host club nights and international DJ's during season.

As with all tourist hot-spots, please keep your belongings close and don't take anything valuable. Some of the more 'lubricated' beach boys are always on the lookout for an easy way to fund the next drink.



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DALAWELLA & TALPE

Beyond Unawatuna, the road hugs the coastline through the villages of Dalawella and Talpe. Private villas and hotels sit along most of this stretch of coast road, attempting to keep the palm-lined turquoise waters to themselves. Luckily we know of a few beach access routes and top places to eat!



EATING OUT

Wijaya Beach \$\$\$

Matara Road, Dalawella

Wijaya has maintained a reputation for consistency serving up a varied menu of delicious crab curry, pizzas, fresh tuna sashimi and wraps amidst a chilled beach side scene. Wijaya Beach is the 'local' for expats living in the area and is one of our favourite spots for a sundowner. www.wijayabeach.com/

WB - Why Beach Villa \$\$\$

127km marker, Matara Road

A stunning beach club. WB's Italian owners have put together a truly authentic menu with all the best bits of Italian cuisine. Visit for sumptuous lunch, then spend the afternoon snoozing it off on one of their sun loungers or swimming it off in the lagoon. Booking is essential. Also a great venue for a special occasion. **Insider tip:** Arrive for sunset cocktails before indulging in treats the kitchen has to offer that evening. +94 77 666 3137 www.whybeach.com

The Beach Club \$\$\$

126km marker Matara Road

TBC is a beach side restaurant with a pool making it a top choice for families. There's even an A/C bar for those struggling with the heat.

As we go to print new management have taken over and are giving TBC a little TLC...but we are sure it will remain family friendly. **Insider tip:** Oven-baked pizzas are one of the best along the south coast. +94 91 228 2647 www.talpebeach.com



Why House \$\$\$

Mihiripenna Road

A boutique hotel within a three acre walled garden, Why House exudes a feeling of peace and tranquility, yet is a mere ten minute walk inland from Dalawella Beach. Henrietta and her team are amazing hosts. Booking ahead is essential. **Insider's tip:** If we had to choose, the Singapore Noodles (above) gets our vote. +94 777 650 439 www.whyhousesrilanka.com

ACTIVITIES

Idle Bikes

This is an absolute ‘must-do’. Depending on your level of fitness you can choose your route, ranging from a two-hour loop around the flat paddy fields, to an all-day trip up into the hills. You will be led by knowledgeable and passionate guides across verdant rice paddies, tea plantations and the jungle, spotting colourful wildlife along the way. Kingfishers, peacocks and monkeys are some of the common sights. A couple of rest stops are planned en route to give you a chance to take it all in, with water and thambili (fresh king coconut water) provided. Child & baby seats and children’s bikes are also available free of charge.

www.idlebikes.com

+94 77 985 5500 (Lakshman)



The Beach

Dalawella Beach is a small but perfectly formed beach protected by a reef on one side with a surf break at the other. Ideal for swimming, turtle-spotting, and surfing. Despite its popularity, particularly in season, it continues to be one of the more relaxed and tranquil beaches along the South Coast. Join the Instagrammers, and walk beyond Frog Rock to the ‘Instafamous’ swing.

Insider tip: Access via Wijaya Beach (see EATING OUT) and watch the sunset behind the iconic Frog Rock.



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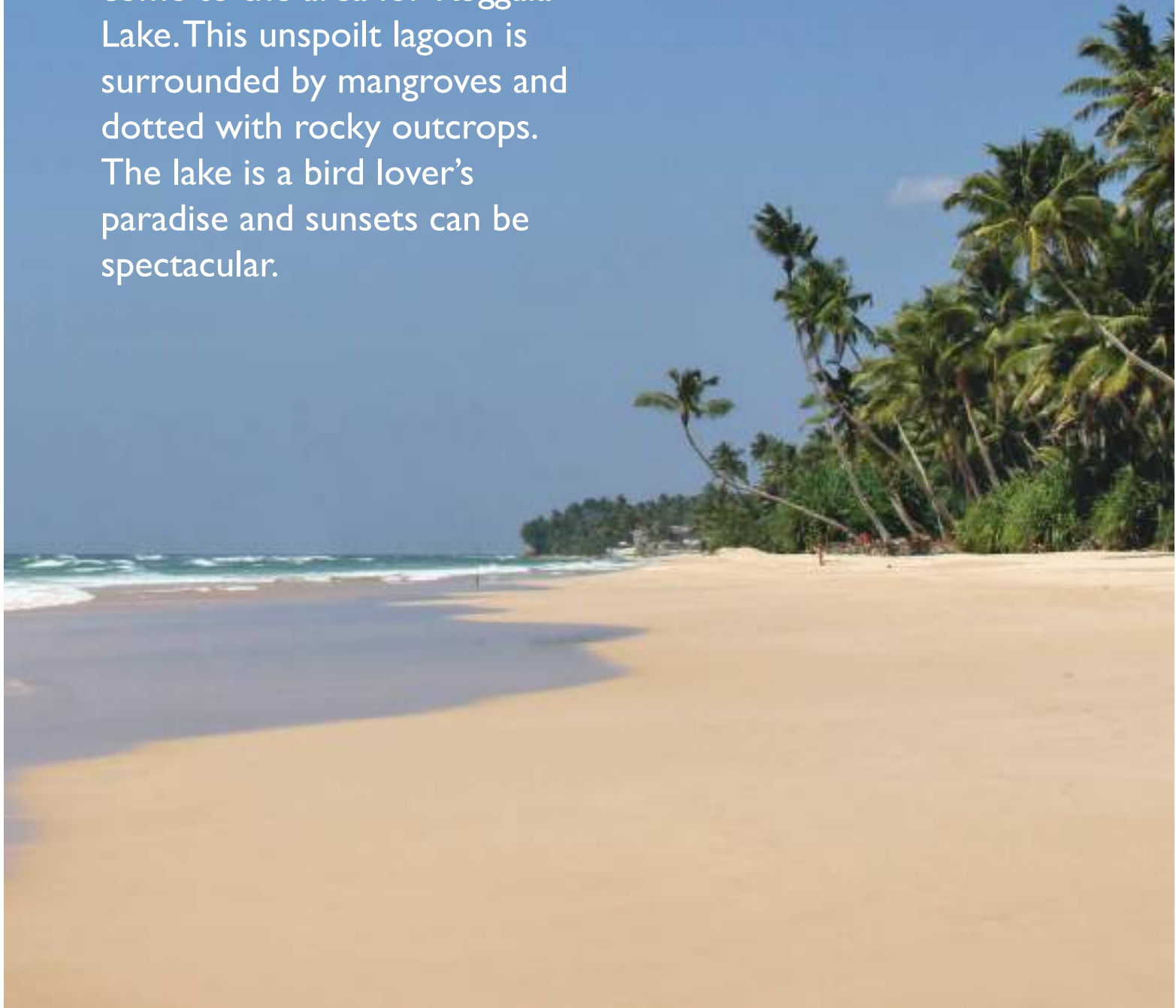
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KOGGALA & HABARADUWA

Koggala & Habaraduwa boast one of the best beaches on the South Coast, access on the Habaraduwa side for hanging palms and perfect sand. Most tourists, unless staying at one of the many luxury villas, come to the area for Koggala Lake. This unspoilt lagoon is surrounded by mangroves and dotted with rocky outcrops. The lake is a bird lover's paradise and sunsets can be spectacular.



EATING OUT

KK Beach \$\$\$\$

The newly opened beach offering in the KK Collection this 12 room hotel sits on what some describe as the best beach this close to Galle. It is given this title thanks to it being largely undeveloped – long may that continue; its soft sand; its 1km length; and the warm ocean that seasonally laps on to the sand (out of season it gets rough). The hotel has a pool and there is a charge for outside guests but it's a great place to grab some lunch/drinks pre and post a long lovely beach walk.

Kahanda Kanda \$\$\$\$

Angulugaha (8km from Habaraduwa)

KK is an enchanting low-level ten-acre tea estate about 30 minutes inland from Galle. Booking is essential and small kids are encouraged not to come.

+94 91 228 6717

www.kahandakanda.com

Tri Restaurant

Koggala Lake

Inventive contemporary cuisine in stunning Koggala Lake location with gorgeous views. Reservations required and again, no small children.

www.trilanka.com +94 77 770 8177

Fortress Hotel \$\$\$\$

Matara Rd, Koggala

This luxury hotel not only has one of the biggest entrance gates on the south coast, it also offers four unique dining spaces with a wide range of cuisines & specialities.

www.thefortress.lk

ACTIVITIES

Boat tour & Cinnamon Island

Tours, or 'safaris' as they're commonly advertised, on

Koggala lake are a memorable experience. The 30 km long lake and scattered islands provide - at times - the illusion of isolation.

Like most activities that rely on the appearance of wildlife, early morning or late afternoon is the best time. Usually incorporated into the tour itinerary is a visit to a local cinnamon farm - expect a brief demonstration on the harvest of cinnamon followed by a sales pitch of the beloved spice.

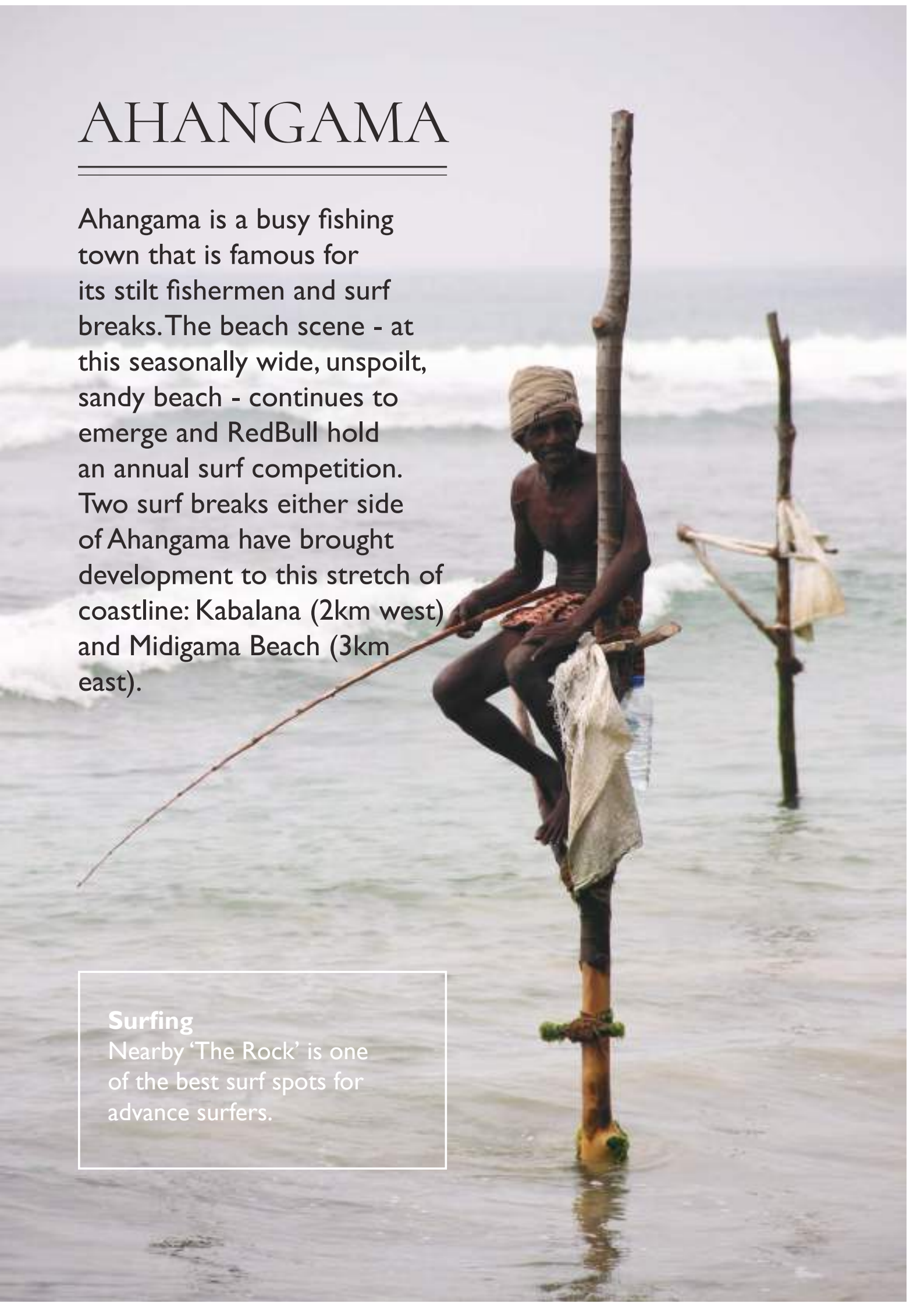
Insider tip: If you don't pre-book with a guide prepare to haggle for a 'good price' on arrival (several boats are lined up near the bridge east of The Fortress Hotel).

AHANGAMA

Ahangama is a busy fishing town that is famous for its stilt fishermen and surf breaks. The beach scene - at this seasonally wide, unspoilt, sandy beach - continues to emerge and Red Bull hold an annual surf competition. Two surf breaks either side of Ahangama have brought development to this stretch of coastline: Kabalana (2km west) and Midigama Beach (3km east).

Surfing

Nearby 'The Rock' is one of the best surf spots for advance surfers.



EATING OUT

There are limited Western standard restaurants in Ahangama itself but nearby:

Café Ceylon \$\$\$

Kabalana, 2km east along the coast
Situated on the land side of the coast road opposite 'the Rock' (one of the best surf spots) and a rather peculiar hotel with butter coloured Egyptian figures, this seafood restaurant has a large garden and a relaxed ambience. It serves well as a respite from the heat on the beach - a reason to make the journey to this village - or if you're staying close by, an evening out.

The Sandhya \$\$\$\$

Kabalana Beach

Architecturally stunning, this new boutique hotel thankfully opens its doors to non-guests to dine. It has an exclusive villa feel, as opposed to a hotel and boasts floor to ceiling glass walls for an unobstructed sea-view. As much care and precision has been considered in the kitchen; meals designed around fresh local produce and a menu that evolves with the season. Pre-booking is essential.

www.thesandhya.com

+94 765 700 007

Kanteen Kabalana \$\$

Matara Road, Kabalana Beach

A simple stylish cafe setting (not a canteen as the name might suggest!), serving Sri Lankan inspired dishes with variations on the rotti as its staple. A go-to lunch spot pre or post surf. **Note:** Open only in season (September to April).

Cape Weligama \$\$\$\$\$

On the border of Midigama and Weligama this 5 star luxury hotel and villas has one of the most spectacular views along this coastline. Not cheap and atmosphere depends on numbers but the food is good and the setting romantic.

ACTIVITIES

Stilt fishing

The characteristic pose of a fisherman atop a stick is unique to Sri Lanka and graces many a postcard. The fishermen have cottoned onto this tourist attraction, so look out for being invited to pose for the camera... Be warned, you will be expected to pay so to avoid misunderstanding negotiate first. Stilt fishermen cluster in fishing spots close to the shoreline and are visible from the roadside. **Insider tip:** A true fisherman will be fishing early morning and evenings!

WELIGAMA

As you drive along this pretty coastal bay you'll notice the unique Taprobane Island, a 1920's private mansion perched atop a small islet, jutting out of the coastline. A picturesque view and photo opportunity - though not open to visitors. Weligama does however have a handful of worthy stop-offs and activities listed:

Surfing

The break at Weligama is perfect for beginners. The breaks to the West, such as Fishermans & Jungle Beach, are good for experienced surfers



EATING OUT

WI5 \$\$\$

WI5 is a trendy hotel and bar with typical beach club vibes, serving food throughout the day as well as a wide selection of drinks. If you're missing your Taittinger or Dom Perignon, this is the place to be. Even the sign inside the bar reads 'save water, drink champagne'. And who are we to argue?

Marriott Hotel \$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$

Well you cannot miss it. Standing 12 floors above the sand struts this hotel. As we go to print it is poised to open but we're sure there will be a cocktail or two to be had at some point.

Hangton Rooftop \$\$

Hangtime Hostel, No. 540 Weligama Bypass Road

Open morning until late, this laid-back rooftop cafe offers a menu of burgers, salads and wraps. It's popular 'hang out' with surfers and travelers alike, and our recommended spot for breakfast or lunch pre/post surf. Hang in a swing while you eat, or overlook the bay from the high stall breakfast bar. No child menu but child friendly dishes.

Tiki Clifftop \$

Fishermans Bay

A rustic bar in both looks and facilities, but with one of the best views over Weligama's bay. Worth visiting for a quick drink for the views alone.

ACTIVITIES

Top House

Top house is a beautiful, working cinnamon estate of 25 acres just inland from Weligama. The cinnamon grows on the steep slopes of a high hill in this cinnamon heartland. At Top House they harvest and peel the cinnamon quills, grind fresh cinnamon powder and distil precious oil from the leaves in an artisan steam distillery. The English owners offer private tours covering the range of activities and also provide a home-made lunch at the main house up-top, with spectacular views over Weligama and the Indian Ocean. www.tophouse.lk

Kushta Rajagala

Inland of Weligama's main beach road, Kushta Raja Gala is a Buddhist sculpture carved into the rock, which serves as a temple for locals. Relatively little is known about its age, origin or meaning, though it is likely a depiction of Mahayana Buddhism from the 6th - 7th Century AD.



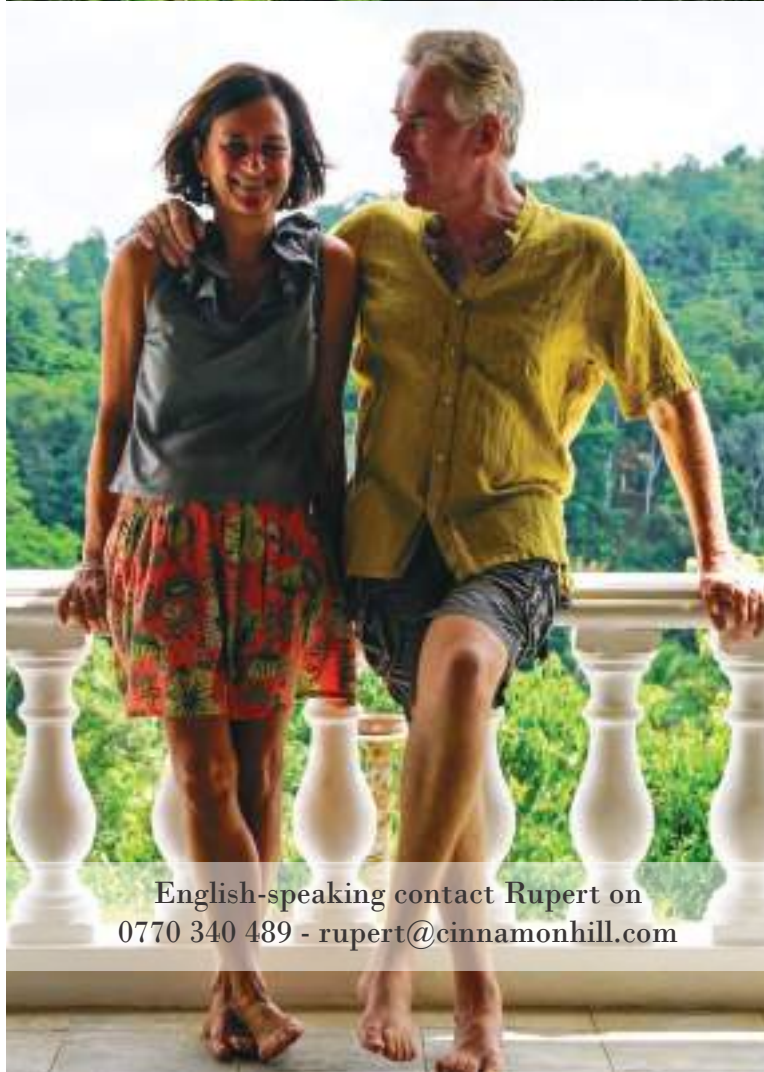
Snake Farm

Horagoda Road,

On arrival, don't be surprised when you're guided to what looks like - on first glance - a Sri Lankan house with no resemblance to that of a farm. The family owned 'snake farm' pride themselves as being a conservation centre (albeit in their family home). Whilst sitting on their verandah, you will be introduced to a variety of snakes including the python, Cobra and krait. Watch the handler nonchalantly handle the snakes - or have a go yourself, if you can bear it. +94 77 796 8320

Top House Weligama

Private tours of a working
cinnamon plantation plus
lunch in a spectacular setting



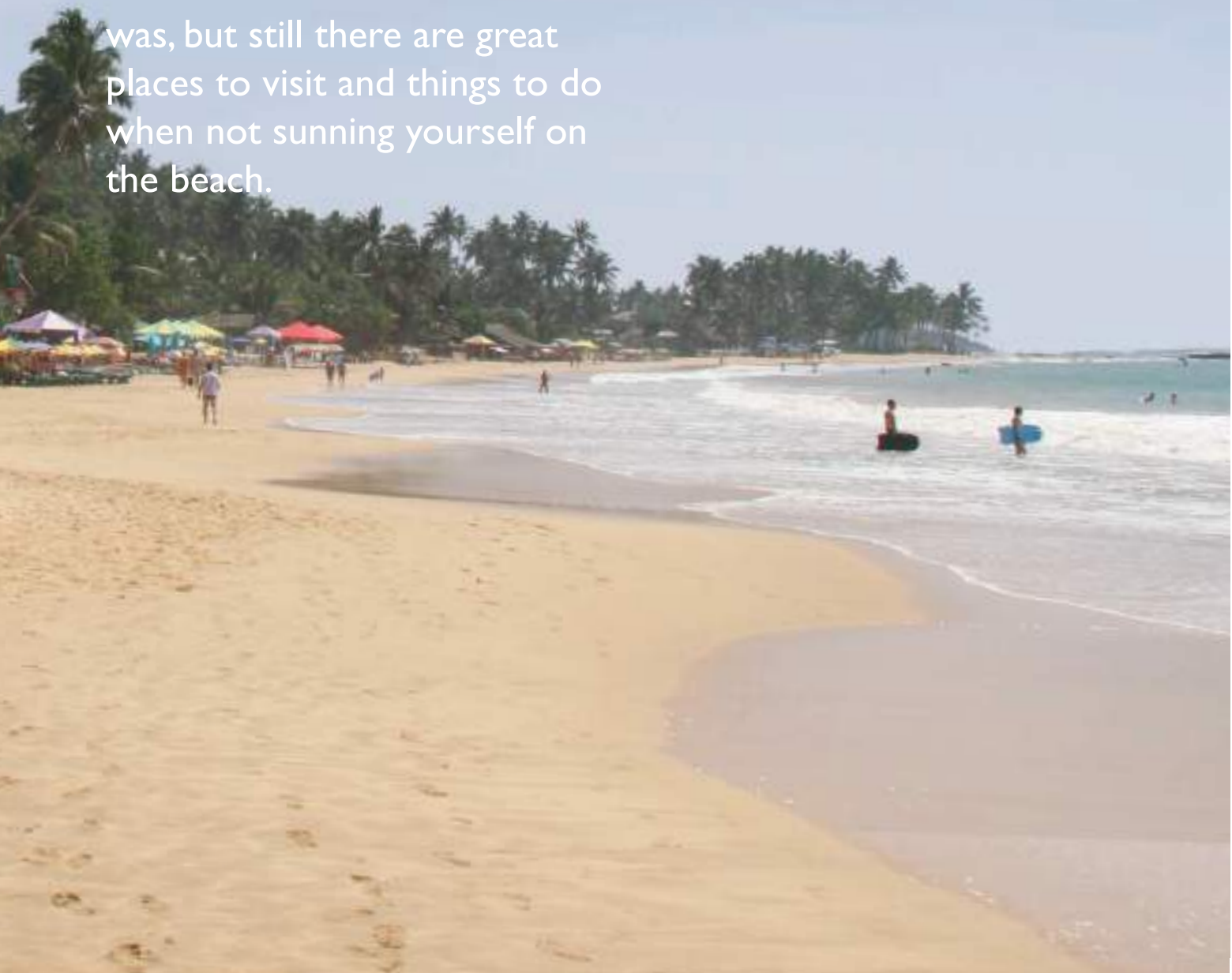
English-speaking contact Rupert on
0770 340 489 - rupert@cinnamonhill.com



Sinhalese & English-speaking contact Manula
on 0771 099 889 manulasuvinda@gmail.com

MIRISSA

A popular half-moon bay with a sweeping sandy beach, Mirissa is also a renowned surfer's paradise thanks to its large waves; enjoy the sea with caution as the waves have been known to dump near the beach. Never turn your back to them! Recent tourism developments mean this area is not as relaxed as it once was, but still there are great places to visit and things to do when not sunning yourself on the beach.



EATING OUT

Papa Mango

A hidden Mirissa gem, this beach-side cafe and bar has only been open for two seasons but is already one of our favourites. Located just east of Mirissa's main beach, it is tucked away into its own cove offering some peace from the main beach, and is a great place for a sundowner cocktail. In peak season, the sun will set directly in front of your sea-facing table.

Note: at the time of print, Google Maps had wrongly pinned Papa Mangos, follow the beach road east away from Galle until you reach it on your right hand side.



No. 1 Dewmini Roti Shop

Tucked away in the back streets is this small, family-run roti shop. A long-time favourite with travellers,

the shop has none-the-less remained the same over the years, and the roti taste is authentic - as testified by Sri Lankans. It's worth noting that they won't offer take away, so be prepared to eat sitting in their quaint outdoor seating area.

Mirissa main beach

Once relatively chilled out it has become far more commercial recently. A walk along the beach front today offers a whole host of the usual beach-side cafes and bars to choose from so stroll along the sand and see which one takes your fancy. One of the larger hotels is Paradise Beach Club, a nice spot to stop and take in the views.

ACTIVITIES

Whale Watching

The whale watching season is December to April and this coastline is a fantastic opportunity to spot the blue whale and sperm whale alongside dolphins and sea turtles. There are loads of operators offering group whale watching outings so if you are on a tight budget this will be your option. If the budget allows we recommend you book a private boat with Ocean Safaris or Mirissa Water Sports.

SURFING IN SRI LANKA



For those who don't mind travelling with a little salt and sand in their shorts, Sri Lanka is a surfer's paradise on steroids. In fact, year-round reef breaks and seasonal swells make Sri Lanka the best-kept secret in surfing. You ready to take the drop?

The team at HABU Global, a lifestyle brand dedicated to the sport of surfing, have spent a lot of time in these waves testing our surf tees, rash guards, and boardshorts. HABU is an acronym for "Hook A Brother Up" so we'll go ahead and hook you up with the basics of surfing in Sri Lanka.

SEASONS FOR STOKE

The coastal belt from the capital city of Colombo to the crescent-shaped Arugam Bay boasts some of the island's most impressive surf spots. Although you can find clean waves any time of the year, the south-west coast is best from late October through April thanks to consistent swells and great weather. Check out Weligama if you're a newbie or an intermediate out-of-practice. Travellers passing through from early June to October may want to chase waves along the south-east coast as the season

transitions to Arugam Bay. As for specifics, you'll come to discover that doing your research and scouting the perfect break is all part of the fun.

A common misconception about Sri Lanka is the "monsoon season". Although bouts of storms can occur, the months from June to September are typically well-tempered with only occasional rainfall. This means less crowds and cheaper rentals. Plus, if you're afraid of getting wet why are you even reading this?



SAFETY 101

From ankle-biters to barreling waves, every surfer must make safety a priority regardless of ability - don't be afraid to ask those on the beach. Keeping the sea a safe place cannot be overstated so be sure to follow these tips when out surfing:

1. Know your limits. Choose where you surf very carefully and know the conditions of the break. It's okay to challenge yourself but be sure to stay in your lane too.

2. Don't surf alone. Grab a mate and share the stoke! If solitude is your thing, simply paddle within earshot of your buddy.

3. Keep your board close. Don't let go of your board when diving under waves. Only let go of your board if absolutely necessary and make sure no one is behind you or nearby.

4. Be aware of rips. These currents are strong, fast channels of water moving seaward. If you find yourself being pulled out to sea, remain calm and paddle parallel to the shore until you are out of the rip, look for whitewater which typically pushes towards shore.

DON'T BE A KOOK

Surfing takes practice, patience, and faith in something you can't control. What you can control is not grating everyone else in the water. The most critical thing a surfer can do is follow the rules of the line-up. This is the place just outside the breaking waves where surfers wait for their turn. The etiquette of surfing is universal yet often skimmed over by surf schools. Here's a simplified version:

1. The surfer on the inside of the wave closest to the peak has the right of way. Never drop in on a surfer as it's the biggest offense in the world of surfing.
2. Paddle wide of the break to avoid any surfers catching their wave. Going around the surf is the best way to avoid collisions and breaking waves that can quickly exhaust you.
3. Let others know which direction you're planning on surfing. When catching the wave, don't be afraid to make some noise to keep others out of your way.

Lastly, be respectful. We're lucky to cruise these sapphire shores with one another. It's a journey that enables us to be completely



consumed by nature and the awe of working alongside the ocean is both humbling and empowering. Dunstan Wickramasekara, a HABU ambassador and lifelong Sri Lankan Surfer, summarizes it perfectly: "The ocean belongs to everyone".

Best of luck out there! Visit HABUGlobal.com to see our products and learn about the legends of Sri Lankan surfing. Feel free to drop us a message and tell us about your surfing experience in Sri Lanka too. We're always keen to Hook A Brother (or sister) Up.



H A B U

www.habuglobal.com

Author: Joe Santini
dropaline@habuglobal.com

TANGALLA

WELIGAMA

GALLE FORT

10

9

8

7

6

4

5

3

2

1

THE
SRI LANKA
GUIDES

TOP 10 SURF SPOTS



Good for
beginners
and learners



Intermediate
and
experienced
surfers

1. Dewata

Ideal for beginners

2. Wijaya Beach

Reef break

3. The Rock, Kabalana

Classic A-Frame

4. Ram's Right, Midigama

Advanced reef break

5. Coconut point

A-frame, point break

6. Jungle Beach

Left & Right

7. Weligama

Great to learn

8. Mirissa

Right, reef break

9. Medawatta

Good for beginners

10. Hiriketiya

All year break

SRI LANKAN FOOD



Sri Lanka knows food.

A list of national dishes could fill a book, leaving most tourists confused at what's available, and what to order. Our suggestion is to work your way through them all and delight in what each can offer. But if you'd rather understand a little more about what you're eating, we've put together a list of the most common dishes you're likely to see, and a brief explanation of what goes in to each.

SHORT EATS:

Sri Lankan snacks/street food

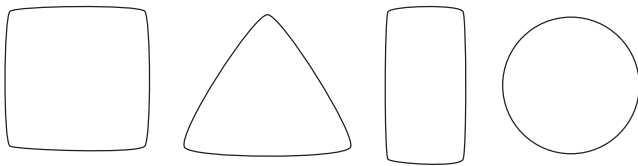


Roti

A popular flatbread; typically whole meal flour is mixed with salt, water and oil then cooked on a skillet and served hot and fresh.

Filled roti

Usually a roti filled with vegetables, meat or egg (the latter being our personal favourite), and shaped into a square (egg), triangle (vegetable), rectangle (meat, usually fish) or circular (pol roti) then cooked lightly on a skillet pan. A great snack, any time of day.



Pol Roti

A dense, circular flatbread that will fill you up until way past lunchtime. Made with shredded coconut and flour, mixed with onion. Served with Seeni Smabol.

Kottu roti

Kottu Roti translates to 'chopped bread'. Imagine roti mixed with various ingredients such as vegetables, egg or meats, chopped together with spices. You'll likely hear the chopping from local 'hotels'. A Sri Lankan street food favourite.

Cutlets

Breadcrumb covered patties, filled with spiced vegetables, fish or meat. A popular breakfast or mid-morning snack.

Hoppers:

You'll find a huge variety of Sri Lankan hoppers anywhere you travel, so much so that they are deserving of their own section. A favourite for breakfast, lunch, dinner or a snack. Below are some of the most common:

Plain Hoppers

A savoury crepe-like bowl made from rice flour and water, usually cooked in a special high-sided hopper wok.



Egg Hoppers

As per Plain Hoppers, but with an egg cooked inside it. Often served with sambol to sprinkle inside. Perhaps Sri Lanka's most famous food export.

String hoppers

Rice flour and water are mixed together in the same way but this time sieved through to make it into strings. Steamed, and then usually served with curry and/or sambol.

SAMBOLS & STAPLES:

On the side to compliment the main

Pol Sambol (coconut sambol)

Freshly grated coconut mixed with onion, chilli and other ingredients to taste. This side dish is served with most meals.

Dhal

Made primarily with lentils and coconut milk, other ingredients in this dish will vary depending on the chef but will likely include turmeric, chili and curry leaves. That said, this is not usually a spicy dish, more a home-cooked comfort food.

Seeni Sambol

Caramelised spicy onion sambol, a favourite for all meal times.

CURRIES:

The delicious Sri Lankan Curry

Sri Lankan curry

fish, meat or vegetables

The base of many Sri Lankan curries is similar; coconut blended with onion, garlic, chilli and a variety of spices. Popular main dishes include fish (thanks to the abundant catch found in Sri Lanka's waters) as well as vegetarian options including jackfruit, ladies fingers and gotukola, amongst others.

Brinjal Moju

One of our favourites, sliced brinjal (aubergine) is mixed and fried with onion, chilli and a whole host of flavours and spices including garlic, ginger, turmeric and curry leaves. The magic touch in this dish is the addition of sugar and vinegar to the fryer, creating a delicious sweet caramelised paste.



Leave the cutlery on the table....

You will not see a single Sri Lankan - from the President down - eat with cutlery so 'when in Rome'. Using fingers to eat allows you to mix flavours more than when using a fork and the relationship with your food will enhance. Some tips: First wash your hands, use your right one only and do not lick your fingers whilst eating; do not let the food rise above your middle knuckle. Roll the ingredients together and then bring to your mouth using your thumb to push it in. Wash your hands when you have finished.



W15

WELIGAMA

506, New Galle Road,
Weligama

T: +94 (41) 225 4422
E: reservations@w15.lk

www.w15.lk



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www.w15escape.lk



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E: reservations@av15.lk

www.av15.lk



SRI LANKAN DRINKS

In our opinion, Sri Lanka has some of the best drinks available in the world; some famed around the globe, others still our little secret. Here we share them with you:

Ceylon tea

One of Sri Lanka's most famous exports, and definitely it's most famous drink - Ceylon tea is planted, grown and picked right in our heartlands. For an any-time-of-day pick me up, this is the one to turn to. Beware Sri Lankans like sugar and generally milk is powdered and hot.

Samahan Tea

Relatively unknown outside of the country, Samahan tea is a household staple for most Sri Lankans. A mix of natural herbs and spices, this tea is said to cure coughs and colds though it's also suitable as an everyday energising drink. We suggest you pack some in your suitcase to take home.

Fresh coconut water

There is perhaps nothing more satisfying than picking your coconut

from the offered selection, then watching the seller quickly hack the top off, pop in a straw, and serve. Nature's goodness at its very best. The orange coconut is Sri Lanka's most popular, and is known as a King Coconut, or Thambili.



Kolakenda

This herbal drink, sometimes served as a soup, is a surprising mix of green leaves (often Gotukola, Ranawara, and Welpenela) with blended rice, water, coconut powder and salt. It probably goes without saying that the taste is unique, but given the obvious health benefits contained, it's probably a taste worth acquiring.

Lassi

A favourite across many parts of Asia, this chilled mix of juice, yoghurt, milk, cardamon and sugar has long been popular on a hot Sri Lankan day. Most lassi stores will offer a choice of fruit flavours.

Lion Beer

Synonymous with Sri Lanka, Lion Beer is everywhere and at 4.8% is a great quencher. Sold in 330ml cans or a punishing 625ml bottle.



Toddy

The palm tree is a good source of edible produce; coconuts of course but also coconut syrup, palm sugar and toddy (also known as palm wine) - the latter a popular alcoholic drink made by fermenting the sap of the coconut flower. At around 5%, it's light on alcohol, though often thought to be strong on taste, commonly described as a mix between cider and vinegar. We leave you to make your own mind up.

Colombo Seven Gin

As Sri Lanka latches on to global trends, it seems the current popularity of Gin has not been overlooked. Distilled in Colombo using a unique mix of spices and plants including curry leaves, ginger and cinnamon, this new gin brand has described itself as a 'Sri Lankan take on a London dry gin'. And if ever there was a theory to be tested, we think this is it!

Arrak

Also from the palm tree, but much more potent than Toddy, Arrak usually has a high alcohol percentage - so choose your tasting session wisely! Widely considered the national drink of Sri Lanka, its taste can be likened to whiskey or rum and like these there is a varied quality. Our advice is ask for the best and try it mixed with lemonade, coca-cola, ginger beer or as a cocktail - Arrak Sour or Arrak Attack!



MATARA

While Matara is not often described as picturesque, it does have its charms. Despite being a working town awash with the hustle and bustle of daily Sri Lankan life there are a few worthy attractions and restaurants and here we outline our top picks:





ACTIVITIES

Matara Fort

An area of historic interest, though don't expect anything much in the way of shops or restaurants. Built by the Portuguese in the 1500's; on a quick walk around the square you'll pass the oldest building within it - the Dutch Reformatory Church built in 1706, and a clock tower built by the British in the 1800's. On the ocean front south facing is an old Rest House that provides a nostalgic place for a cold drink and a buffet curry if you're there at lunch time.

Star Fort

The small Star Fort was built in 1765 by the Dutch in order to offer further protection to the main fort and houses a museum that reveals interesting facts about Matara and its surrounding area. While visiting it's worth noting the interesting design of the building - a six pointed star (hence the name) as well as looking out for terrapins soaking in the sunshine in its surrounding moat.

Matara Promenade

This long promenade stretches alongside Matara's coastline, and is a pleasant place to wander. It's

interesting to walk slowly and get the chance to mingle with Sri Lankans and perhaps see a bit of local life. If the weather is nice you'll witness young courtships taking place under the protection of umbrellas to shield lovers not only from the sun but also watchful eyes of nosey neighbours and authoritative parents.

Polhena beach

The closest beach to Matara town, Polhena is also a safe place to swim. Not yet on the tourist map, sunbathers and swimmers are minimal meaning you have this small cove, almost to yourself. If you're lucky you may spot some stilt fishermen at work here too. Amenities nearby are minimal - you'll find small stalls selling clothes aimed at tourists, and a store to pick up essentials such as drinking water.

Dondra Lighthouse

Not strictly Matara, but only a 15 minute drive is Dondra, the southernmost point of Sri Lanka. Here, you'll find a working lighthouse - which at 49 metres also stands proudly as Sri Lanka's tallest. All the materials for the Lighthouse were imported from England, and it is well-maintained today. No admission into or up the

the lighthouse is permitted without permission from the Sri Lanka Ports Authority, but the view from below is impressive enough to warrant a trip.



EATING OUT

Galle Oriental Bakery

A small, local-run bakery selling breads and stuffed rotis. It's a shabby yet charming old building, worthwhile stopping at as you're passing by for a mid-morning or afternoon snack.

The Dutchman's Street

This restaurant is the first and only of its kind in Matara and is the place to come to refuel while in the area. Spacious and modern with a quirky design it serves western cuisine such as paninis and pastas, alongside coffee and fresh juices. The restaurant's garden extends down to the beach, and during busier seasons you'll find a food truck outdoors serving barbecued food as well as hot, fresh rotis.

Insider's tip: Leave Matara Fort via the exit diagonal to the clock tower and The Dutchman's Street is on your left.



TALALLA

Talalla is a small town, 10km east of Matara along the southern coastal road. It is known mainly for its one mile long pure gold sandy beach. Despite being considered one of the best beaches along the south coast most of the development that currently exists is subtle and behind the tree-line making it a lovely picturesque beach walk. Fleets of local fishing boats are most often the sole occupants at the west end to complete the idyllic tropical beach scene. For an amazing view, walk up the steps of the Panorama Hotel at the east corner. Insider tip: 15 minutes from the resort is a secret surf spot for advanced surfers... Expect A-frame waves up to 8 feet high, especially between April - September!

EATING OUT

Look up 'Eating out' in other locations in close proximity. One of our favourites may only be five minutes up the road! For those wishing to eat along Talalla beach itself the options are limited and we recommend you just wander along the beach and see if the mood grabs you.

Talalla Retreat

Beach front, Talalla South

Surfing/yoga/spa. Talalla Retreat offers yoga teachers, therapeutic and indulgent spa treatments plus surfing in a lush tropical setting. Pop in here and ask for details.

<http://www.talallaretreat.com>
+94 4122 59171





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DICKWELLA

A few km further east of Talalla (22km east of Matara) is this small coastal market town. The large bay bordering the town is popular with locals and as we go to print small places are beginning to emerge to cater to international visitors. If you are nearby on a Saturday and want to see some local life we'd recommend a morning stroll along the beach followed by a visit to the local food market.



ACTIVITIES

Fish market

Kudawella Fishery Harbour
(6km from Dickwella)

If you don't mind an early start and the smell of freshly-caught fish, visiting a local fish market is eye-catching. At prime time, colourful fishing boats are packed bow to stern on the harbour, all wishing to show off their catch to local merchants. Carry small change as you will be asked to pay Rs100 (at the time of writing) on entry. Insider tip: Follow the crowds or listen for the Sinhala word "loku" (meaning big) to see the best catch of the day. If you can bear it, continue to admire as the fishermen attempt to cut the fish with a machete, and a saw if necessary!

EATING OUT

UTMT

(Underneath The Mango Tree)

Arriving at the Austrian owned and managed UTMT, there is a real 'wow factor'; it's an explosion of colour. This boutique hotel and spa has a restaurant and bar worthy of The Sri Lanka Guides approval. Outside guests are also offered bookable appointments at the spa, tennis court and cinema - the latter of which has an impressive line up of the latest films.

Insider tip: Book ahead for an intimate meal for two - otherwise, join a communal table and make some friends.

www.utmthotel.com

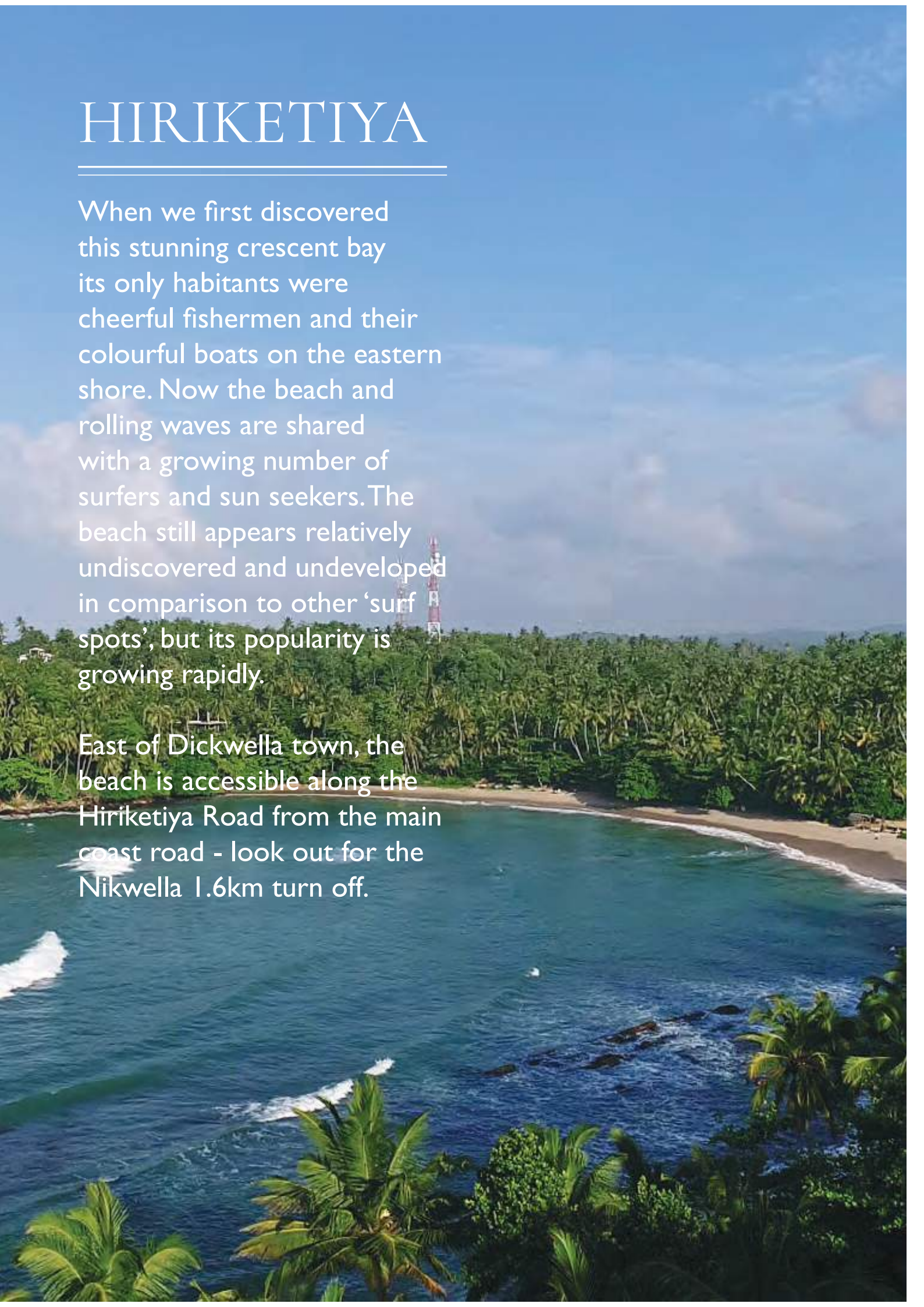
+94 41 20 30 300 (reservations)



HIRIKETIYA

When we first discovered this stunning crescent bay its only habitants were cheerful fishermen and their colourful boats on the eastern shore. Now the beach and rolling waves are shared with a growing number of surfers and sun seekers. The beach still appears relatively undiscovered and undeveloped in comparison to other 'surf spots', but its popularity is growing rapidly.

East of Dickwella town, the beach is accessible along the Hiriketiya Road from the main coast road - look out for the Nikwella 1.6km turn off.



ACTIVITIES

Hummanaya Blow Hole

Kudawella

The only known blow hole on the island, this is a well maintained tourist attraction costing Rs250 on entry (at the time of writing). It's a gentle walk through a small fishing village, passing local kiosks selling dried fish en-route, before a short ascent to the viewing platform. Before the final climb, keep an eye out for what we have coined 'Crocodile Rock' in the small bay to your left. **Insider tip:** Go at high tide on a windy day. During monsoon it can reach up for 30m.



Yoga at Salt House

Salt House hosts daily morning classes (call to find out the weekly timetable) in the elevated open-air Shala. **Insider tip:** Complete your cleanse with a superfood smoothie or reward yourself with a homemade cake.

EATING OUT

Salt House

Hiriketiya Road

Located 50m behind the fishing boats, this small open air cafe-style restaurant sits amidst the jungle, making up for the lack of sea view. The menu is based on 'all of the good things you miss from home', and is dominated by rightly-named 'legendary' burger. Once you've chosen your style, the next challenge is to amalgamate all layers in one bite...good luck! Across the lawn from the restaurant is a small bar that serves cocktails.

www.salthousesrilanka.net

+94 041 225 6819

Dot's Bay House

Restaurant & Bar On the beach

(follow the signs for happy hour)

This laid back restaurant and bar is on par with Beach House for a sundowner and a bite to eat. Deck chairs and cushioned comfortable seating are set back from the beach along the small estuary, and sprawl out from a colourful shipping container which is home to the small bar and decorative blackboard menu. Once you've sunk into their circular cushioned chairs, you'll find it hard to move on. Expect friendly relaxed service.



Beach House

On the beach

Australian run, this laid back beach cafe bar sits directly on the sand, serving simple food and cold beer - complete with personalised stubby holders. Staff are attentive and friendly. Surf lessons are also

available. **Insider tip:** Great spot for a sundowner.

www.beachhousehiriketiya.com

Dot's Surf Shop & Cafe

(closed during low season) has a similar vibe on the Nilwella Road, towards the 'Nilwella 1.6km' turn off.

WELCOME TO YOUR ADVENTURE



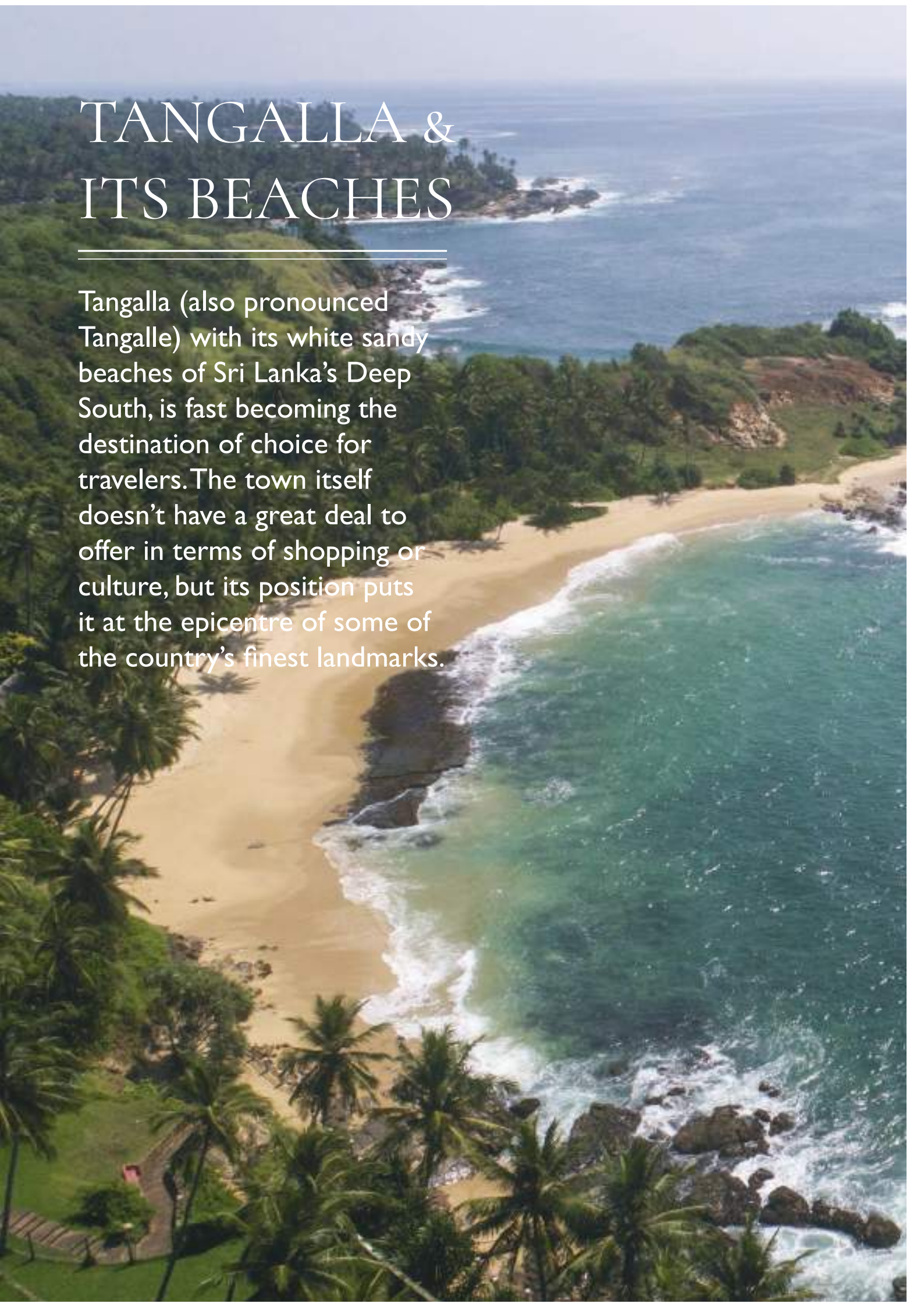
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TANGALLA & ITS BEACHES

Tangalla (also pronounced Tangalle) with its white sandy beaches of Sri Lanka's Deep South, is fast becoming the destination of choice for travelers. The town itself doesn't have a great deal to offer in terms of shopping or culture, but its position puts it at the epicentre of some of the country's finest landmarks.



Tangalla's beaches are the ones you see in magazines; picturesque palm trees lazily droop over the soft white sands while turquoise water gently laps against the shore. Tiny crescent bays and undiscovered gems dot the coast west of Tangalla, and to the east are the vast largely deserted beaches favoured by nesting sea turtles. There are many beaches east and west of Tangalla and we've listed a few. If you find something new (and want to share!) please let us know.

As with all beaches - especially deserted ones - take care in the water. Ask the locals or fisherman before swimming or surfing as the rip tides and currents are extremely strong. There are no lifeguards so if the locals say don't swim then, however alluring that morning break looks, don't!

BEACHES

Mawella

7km west of Tangalla

A small fishing village, known for its 2km sweeping bay protected by a needle point headland to ensure calm water throughout the year. The beach itself is mainly inhabited by a vibrant array of fishing boats, with the odd sunbed dragged on from a guesthouse or beach shack.

Being a blissfully quiet stretch of sand, it's ideal for a long walk. Admire the fisherman in action at dawn or dusk

Goyambokka

4km west of Tangalla

While this is now bordered by the sprawling Anantara Hotel, the beach still feels like a well-kept secret. Secluded, with transparent waters and surrounded by trees, its relaxed peaceful atmosphere makes it one of the 'less discovered' beaches. Look out for the beach turn-off, Goyambokka Road, just west of 193km post.

Rekawa

10km east of Tangalla

You are more likely to see turtles than tourists on the beach of Rekawa village. During mating season the Greenback, Hawksbill and even the Gargantuan Leather Back can be found laying their eggs on the beach, but only at night and best not to disturb them! In the day you can watch them swim gracefully in the waves. If you're lucky enough to witness any of these ancient beings drag themselves up the beach remember to respect them, do not interfere and allow them some space.

Mediketiya

East of Tangalla

For those in search of a livelier atmosphere, Mediketiya is the place to head. The stretch provides you with the usual mix of backpacker shacks and mid-range watering holes.

Forewarned

Please be advised that we recommend that you do not walk along beaches alone and to always carry a sarong with you in case you wish to cover up. Sri Lankan ladies are fully clothed when on the beach or in the sea and if you reflect on this a little it'll give you an insight into local attitudes. As with all beaches anywhere never leave valuables unattended.

EATING OUT

In comparison to the east coast and the major cities, Tangalla on the whole is a little behind the times in terms of choice and standards. Even so, we've picked some amazing spots - in and around Tangalla - where the food & service are top notch and sure to satisfy.

CoCo \$ \$ \$

Tangalla

Set in a luxury colonial villa on the beach, CoCo Tangalla serves up a

mouth-watering menu with local seafood as the staple. **Worth noting:** lunch is a two course affair with a light but filling main, followed by a delicious dessert; whereas dinner is three courses of Sri Lankan spiced locally sourced joy. www.cocotangalle.com
+ 94 (0) 81 720 1115

Buckingham Place \$\$\$

East of Tangalla, Rekawa Beach

Not to be confused with a certain London residence, Tangalla's Buckingham is owned and run by long term resident Mr Nick, who can be found at the helm. The menu is mostly Sri Lankan, but the chefs are renowned for going off-piste if the daily fresh produce inspires them. Buckingham Place won't disappoint. Booking ahead is essential. www.buckinghamplace.lk
+94 (0) 47 348 9447

Mamboz \$\$

East of Tangalla, Rekawa Beach

Delicious freshly prepared cuisine in an uber chilled setting on a vast beach. Mathew, the owner, is a trained Thai masseur so combine a light lunch, a gorgeous beach walk with a fabulous massage. Call Mathew for directions. Booking ahead essential. www.mambozbeach.com
+94 (0) 777 777 688

Amanwella \$\$\$\$\$

West of Tangalla

Don't be surprised if some A-list celebrities, or the president himself, is on the next table. Located on a stunning bay, the food, wine and setting is one of the best in the country and the service is second to none. The menu changes with the seasons and what's available locally, but there are some fine imported meats for those missing home. Booking for dinner essential
www.aman.com/resorts/amanwella/
+94 (0) 47 224 1333

Anantara

Peace Haven Tangalla Resort \$\$\$\$

West of Tangalla

The resort is set amidst 21 acres of coconut plantation so you'll be pleasantly surprised when a buggy appears at the foyer to take you to your restaurant of choice. Anantara offers two fine dining restaurants; Il Mare, an Italian restaurant and Verele which is teppenyaki inspired. If it's the setting as opposed to cuisine that sways you, Il Mare boasts a panoramic sea view whilst Verele is semi-enclosed inside a giant shell-like structure.

Il Mare: open on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

Verele: open on Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Maya Villa \$\$\$

North/inland from Tangalla

Situated 8km inland from Tangalle, in a small village called Aranwella, this stylishly restored wallawa (old mansion) is run as a boutique hotel and restaurant. If you've never had the opportunity to gaze across a vast rice paddy field then go for lunch - it's a must do as the views of the paddy are stunning. Booking is essential.

www.mayatangallesrilanka.com
+94 (0) 47 567 9025 / 6



Shangri-La Hotel \$\$\$\$\$

Hambantota, 36km West of Tangalla

The second of the two Shangri La's in SL this is the 300 suite beach and 18 hole golf resort set over 58 hectares with several restaurants, bars and a spa giving Chinese and Ayurveda treatments.

www.shangri-la.com/hambantota/shangrila/
+94 (47) 788 8888



YOGA

Yoga has, not surprisingly given its proximity to where it all began in India, caught on in Sri Lanka and we'd need to dedicate a whole book (there's an idea) to the various shalas, rooftops, paddle boards, beach side platforms and other places where it is on offer. The island attracts practitioners from all over the world with their own unique styles and techniques – the trick is finding the one that works for you. In every beach location and café you'll find a notice board and images of bendy people with smiley faces offering classes. If you are staying in a villa and want a teacher to visit you call Eden Villas Concierge Dept and they will help (Udeshika – 091 223 2568). If you prefer to drop in to one of the more established shalas try one of these:

Sri Yoga Shala

Set in a stunning location with daily yoga classes from a long list of teachers from around the world. The shala offers workshops and special events including meditations and gong baths. See their website for a full list of what and who is on. www.sriyogashala.com
+94(0)777 903 431

Tri

On the shores of Koggala lake in a purpose built studio Lara Drummond, founder of Quantum Yoga, leads classes and workshops 3 days a week. She also offers private tuition. Booking essential. trilanka.com/yoga/ info@trilanka.com +94 (0)777 708 177

Niyagama Retreat

Specialising in Vinyasa Flow and Aerial (Hammock) Yoga, teacher Elke de Silva offers retreats in a beautiful location overlooking a tea plantation in the hills close to Galle. www.niyagamahouse.com
+94 (0) 77 461 86 99

Salt House

Based in Hiriketiyá Cristal is an Ashtanga Vinyasa & Yin instructor certified via Yoga Alliance. She teaches to all levels and capabilities and is available for private villa tuition or for drop in classes at Salt House in Hiri. www.salthousesrilanka.net
+94 041 225 6819

BEST VILLAS TO RENT

Sri Lanka's South Coast has some truly amazing villas. Rural colonial chic, beach front contemporary style or an architectural masterpiece the choice is yours. Here are some of our favourites.

For more information or to make a booking visit www.evinsl.com.



TALALLA HOUSE

West facing across the magnificent Talalla Bay. Seven en-suite bedrooms, roof-top garden, direct beach access, Yoga Shala, personal Chef. From US\$650 per night



CLAUGHTON HOUSE

Stylish hill top villa designed by Geoffrey Bawa. Seven acre gardens and superb ocean views. Direct beach access with surf break. Five en-suite bedrooms, TV/games room, poolside BBQ, massage room, Yoga Shala, personal Chef. From US\$ 1,500 per night



MEDA GEDARA

An expansive and elegant villa with Seven en-suite bedrooms including a children's bunk room, large living room, dining room, outdoor terrace, cinema. Direct beach access, yoga Shala. Large pool with water slide. Personal chef. From US\$ 875 per night



KUMARA

With three king size bedroom suites set in private walled gardens Kumara is a rural escape. Close to beaches of Weligama and Mirissa. Pool side thatched pavilion, large open plan living and dining room. Personal chef. From US\$500 per night



IVORY HOUSE

Tranquil paddy fields surround colonial chic. The blend of Dutch colonialism and modern design creates a calm and cool interior. Four en-suite bedrooms, large verandah, pool & pavilion. Personal chef. From US\$475 per night



SKYE HOUSE

Located on one of the best stretches of beach close to Galle this large house has five en-suite bedrooms including a children's bunk room, TV games room with a pool table and table football. Playground and swings. Yoga area. Beach BBQ. Personal Chef. From US\$900 per night



WALATTA

Designed to create a physiologically stimulating environment and topped with a living roof. Three en-suite bedrooms, roof garden, TV room, pool, direct beach access. From US\$500 per night



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— IN —
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VILLAS FOR SALE

If the idea of retiring to your own home after a day on the beach appeals then Sri Lanka, as a year-round destination, is well worth considering.

The foreign ownership laws allow non-nationals to lease a property for up to 99 years, in their own name. If obtaining freehold is important, similar to elsewhere in Asia, it is possible to own up to 49% of a property owning company.

As with investing in any asset in any country careful due diligence is vital

For more information on the advertised properties or sales inquiries please contact Jack Eden:
jack@villasinsrilanka.com
+94 (0) 91 223 2568



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Magnificent 4 bedroom villa a few km inland from Weligama, set on a private 8 acre cinnamon estate.

CULTURAL ETIQUETTE



Cultural etiquette requires residents of Sri Lanka to take care in maintaining the tenets and traditions of Buddhism, and this extends to tourists, particularly while visiting temples or during religious festivals.

As these ceremonies always take priority you may find traffic disruption during religious festivals so please regard such situations as opportunities to witness the rituals,

dancers, and celebrations that help make Sri Lanka so special.

We hope that while you're here you'll make time to visit a temple or two (see page 98) where you will doubtlessly find Sri Lankan hospitality warm and welcoming. To prepare you for your visit, we've created a basic guide to cultural etiquette so that you may get the most out of your visit.

- Please dress conservatively. Long skirts or trousers, tops with sleeves.
- If you are in a sleeveless top many temples will require you to use scarves and sarongs to cover shoulders. We recommend you to keep one for emergencies on trips outside the villa.
- Wear light colours on your visit; white is ideal but any colour in the range from white to light blue is ok.
- Always remove your shoes and head gear at the designated entrance. Signage, or a shoe pile outside the temple should make it obvious as to where this is required.
- Show respect by turning off mobile phones, removing headphones and using a low voice while speaking.
- You are welcome to join local residents in prayer and to offer incense and flowers as you wish.
- During ceremonies and prayers, please keep talking to a minimum (or not at all) and do not walk around.
- During a ceremony, please always sit on a level lower than the monks.
- Do not touch a monk even to shake hands. Simply place your palms together in front of you,
- Do not sit too close or touch a statue of Buddha or its raised platform.
- Do not point using your finger, instead use your right hand, with palm upwards.
- Do not point your feet at another person or Buddha statue while sitting.
- There are no restrictions on taking photographs, although it is polite to request permission.
- Please respect “Do not enter” signs as these are likely the most sacred parts of the temple.
- When exiting, don’t turn your back from a Buddha statue immediately, back away a few metres first, then turn and walk.

TEMPLES

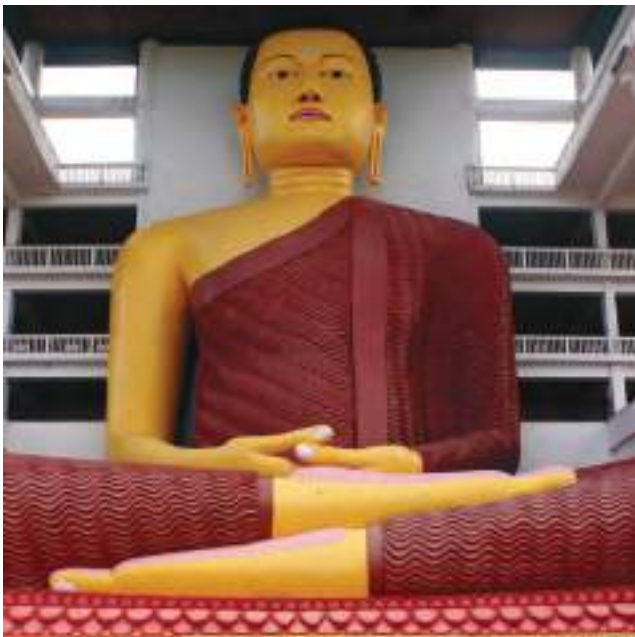
Temples are found everywhere in Sri Lanka - from the humble to the spectacular and are a very important part of the country's cultural community. No matter where you're staying, you'll likely find a temple nearby. You are welcome to visit any, large or small, and experience traditions and customs that date back to ancient times.

Katalua temple

Kogalla

The crumbling walls of this atmospheric temple give away its age. Katalua Temple has stood in this quiet location for 200 years and is a peaceful place to visit. The ancient dagga (stupa) still stands proud and locked away is an indoor shrine that can be opened on request. Buddhist murals cover the walls and ceiling of the shrine, while flowers and offerings are placed at Buddhas' feet. **Inside tip:** A visit in the early afternoon will, on most days, ensure you have the entire temple grounds to yourself.





Weherahena Buddhist Temple

Dondra

Prepare yourself for quite a sight as you enter the Weherahena Temple. At around 39 metres, the Buddha statue here will make you feel rather small! Wander to the end of the grounds, and be sure to take the stairs down to what is said to be the first and largest tunnel temple in the world. Entrance fee to the underground side of the temple is a donation of around 250 rupees, and you'll be guided through a labyrinth of murals depicting Buddhist tales.

Paravi Duwa Temple

Matara

Commonly known as Matara's island temple, it's not difficult to see why. A bridge takes you from mainland Matara across to a temple on an island in the sea - the sight

of which is rather spectacular. As temples go, it's not the most intricate or interesting, but it is perhaps worth the wander across the bridge for the unique experience itself.

Yatagala Raja Maha Viharaya

Yatagala

About 10 mins from Galle, Yatagala Temple is a lovely one to visit. Peaceful and calm, it is a 2,000-year-old rock temple surrounded by rice paddy fields and panoramic views.

Paragoda Temple

Dewata

Often called the Japanese Peace Pagoda, this temple has uninterrupted views of Galle Fort and the Indian Ocean. An immense and tranquil temple built and lived in by Japanese monks.

Insider's tip: The Peace Pagoda is close to Unawatuna, so you can reward yourself or the kids with a swim afterwards.





Mulkirigala Rock Temples

Mulkirigala

Known as the 'mini-Sigiriya', the rock at Mulkirigala rises roughly 200 metres from the surrounding terrain. Steep steps take you up to the dagoba (stupa) at the top via a complex of seven cave temples built on five terraces carved into the rock. The cave walls are covered in murals depicting stories from Buddhist texts and filled with statues of the Buddha. The views from the summit are unsurpassable. **Insider's tip:** Arrive early to start your climb in the cool of the day.

Kataragama Temple

Kataragama

Sacred to Buddhist's, Hindu's and the indigenous Vedda's, Kataragama is a pilgrimage town and it's well worth a visit. The temple complex houses Buddhist, Hindu & Islamic places of worship and is a symbol of unity throughout the country.

Wewurukannala Temple

Dickwella

This temple is dominated by a 48 metre statue of the seated Buddha, built in the 18th century - the largest in Sri Lanka. The temple houses further Buddha sculptures and Buddhist paintings depicting heaven and hell.

Sudarmalaya

Galle Fort

The only monastery inside Galle Fort, its location affords it an unusual history and design. During Sri Lanka's colonial times, parts of today's structure was a church and parts used as a storage facility. Large areas of the temple still hold this unique colonial design today.



Please remember to always be respectful when visiting places of religious significance. Cover shoulders and legs and remove your shoes before entering. See **page 96** for our guide to cultural etiquette.

NOTES

ELEPHANTS



Native to Sri Lanka and the largest of the three sub species of Asian Elephant the *Elephas Maximus Maximus* stands between 6ft - 11ft (3.4m) and can weigh up to 5,400kg.

Their population has fallen by almost 65% since the early 1900s and today they number somewhere between 2,500 – 4,000. Due to this dramatic fall in number they have been declared an endangered species protected under SL Law. In fact killing one carries the death penalty.

The primary threat to these intelligent beings is, surprise surprise, human inspired. Sri Lanka has amongst the highest incidence of human elephant conflict

anywhere in the world and it has led to the loss of both elephant and human life. Destruction of habitat through forest clearing and the elephant's near insatiable appetite for cash crops such as sugar cane, bananas as well as other fruits, compounds the problem of an ever increasing human population.

Within Sri Lanka these magnificent sentient beings carry enormous symbolic, cultural and economic importance and so we thought we'd pen this short article to spread news of their plight and seek everyone's help.

The *Elephas Maximus Maximus* is highly intelligent and self-aware with a very large and highly

convoluted neocortex. This is the part of the brain involved in higher order functions such as sensory perception, cognition, generation of motor commands, spatial reasoning and language and is a trait shared with humans, apes and certain dolphin species. They exhibit a wide variety of behaviour, including that associated with grief, learning, non-maternal infant care, mimicry, play, altruism, use of tools, compassion, cooperation and memory. In short these awesome animals are really very gentle, intelligent and sensitive.

We therefore join the growing chorus around the globe that the best place to observe them is in their natural habitat, from afar, and to be aware that if they are kept otherwise it is cruel. Under no circumstances should you ever ride an elephant or get so close to take a selfie and we encourage you to turn your back to anyone who offers the opportunity. In a July 6, 2017 BBC news article Claire Marshall, the Environment Correspondent, writes that an elephant in the jungle would never allow a human close enough to pat it and most certainly not allow one on its back. To be able to allow such acts means the spirit of the elephant has been broken using cruel and violent means.

“The cruel trend of elephants used for rides and shows is growing - we want tourists to know that many of these elephants are taken from their mothers as babies, forced to endure harsh training and suffer poor living conditions throughout their life”

Dr Jan Schmidt-Burbach,
Global Wildlife and veterinary adviser
at World Animal Protection

People often think that an elephant in captivity is domesticated, and so it's OK to have it under human command. But the reality is that they have never been domesticated like dogs or horses. Even if born in captivity, they are still wild animals, and need to be “broken” to take tourists on rides or perform in shows. This process is exceptionally cruel and painful.

So the simple answer is don't do it. Keep your distance. If you see an elephant chained up and held captive under no circumstances pay anything to anyone who claims to have the elephant's wellbeing in mind. Do not even approach, just spare a kind and gentle thought for the majestic creature and complain to your hotel and travel agent.

NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE

There are 22 parks declared in Sri Lanka, many of which date back to colonial times. As well as those with national park status a number of other protected areas that run under government supervision can be found, including the World Heritage-listed Sinharaja Rainforest. Around 15% of the island's land area is classified as protected, covering a wide variety of terrains and it is for this reason we recommend you visit more than one. Below is a list of parks and sanctuaries situated in the South.

Bundala National Park

15 km east of Hambantota

197 species of bird have been recorded here and it's been identified as an outstanding area for birds. In 2005 the park was designated as a biosphere reserve

by UNESCO (the 4th in SL). The highlight for most is the 1000+ flock of greater flamingo that make Bundala their winter home.

Insider tip: A quiet alternative to Yala with some elephant, crocodile and turtle

Kalametiya Bird Sanctuary

Between Tangalla and Hambantota

This little-visited sanctuary attracts a number of winter migrant birds, although don't let this put you off visiting out of bird season. It is rich in birdlife and the scenery is stunning. Whether you consider yourself a birder, an enthusiast, or you simply have an appreciation for wildlife - gliding through the lagoons and mangroves on a local fishing boat is idyllic.

Insider tip: Highly recommend Gayan (+94 77 706 0920) for a morning (6am) or evening (4pm) boat tour; he comes fully equipped with binoculars, bird book and a padded seat!





Yala National Park

45km east of Hambantota

Yala is the most visited and, covering 979 square kms, the second largest national park in Sri Lanka. It is renowned for its variety of species which include elephants and one of the highest leopard densities in the world. If that hasn't rocked your jeep, it also harbours 215 bird species including six indigenous to Sri Lanka. You can only enter the park at sunrise or sunset as it is too hot for animals (and humans!) during the day.

Sinharaja Rainforest

93 km inland from Galle

Primary Tropical Rainforest with over 60% of its trees endemic to Sri Lanka, as well as some of the best treacle in the country, Sinharaja Rainforest is well worth a visit. Rare mammals (including the white monkey), exotic birds and a rogue leopard call it home (apparently!). Walking tours can be arranged in Deniyaya or Galle beforehand. **Tip:** Leech socks are a good idea and don't go in flip-flops.



Udawalawe National Park

58 km north of Tangalla

If you like elephants - this is the place for you. The park was created as a refuge for the local wildlife during the construction of the Udawalawa reservoir, and a somewhat cheeky elephant still frequents a small spit of land next to the road in the hope of being

fed - please don't feed him - he needs to get back to the herd! The landscape is unique and breathtaking and the dead trees that protrude from the reservoir add a stunning, almost surreal, backdrop to an afternoon safari!

Insider tip: Visit the excellent Elephant Transit Home and stay overnight at Banyan Camp.

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COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's major city, Colombo, is often overlooked by visitors in favour of a quick getaway to coastal retreats or inland hiking holidays. And while we're inclined to agree (it's all about escaping the city life for us too), Colombo has its charm and is more than worth spending twenty-four hours in on your way in or out of the country.

Having undergone many changes in recent years, today the city is friendly and easy-going with plenty of dining, shopping and sightseeing variety. If you know where to look, that is.

Here are our recommendations on how to spend twenty-four hours in Colombo.





Horton Place is the favourite hangout of anyone who is anyone in Colombo. Start at one end of this road and meander your way down from shop to gallery, stopping for coffee as you go.



The Saskia Fernando Gallery is a good place to start, for an introduction to Sri Lankan and Asian inspired art. The gallery curates some of the region's best contemporary artists and its white, spacious decor is a welcome retreat from the outside traffic. Underneath the gallery, you'll find **PR** - Paradise Road - A concept store, stocking local designers such as Shift and Maos. Here you'll find a good selection of high-end design clothing, kaftans, swimwear, jewellery and accessories. Directly across the road from PR is **Milk & Honey**, a great place to stock up on any childrens' clothes or toys, though more impressive is its cafe at the back serving a good selection of smoothies and health-conscious meals.

Just a few minutes' walk away is another lunch or coffee-stop option, **Cafe Kumbuk**, where you'll find delicious menu and smoothie options - we recommend the Mango-go smoothie, a mix of turmeric, mango, ginger and coconut milk.



Backing directly on to the cafe is **Prana Lounge**, a yoga and well-being studio that even offers digital detoxification (so if you think your iPhone has been emitting too many electromagnetic waves this is the place to visit!). They also have a small shop selling yoga mats and locally produced goods.

A slight detour from Horton Place is Ward Place (a 10 minute walk north from Cafe Kumbuk). Here you'll find a small retail store called **Buddhi Batiks**, selling stylish batik clothing including skirts, dresses, men's shirts and some pretty jewellery.

Kollupitiya (Colombo 03):

Perhaps Colombo's most well-known store outside of Sri Lanka is **Barefoot**, and for good reason. Famed for its traditional Sri Lankan Dumbara weaved products, you'll find a large selection of Sri Lankan goods including clothing, crafts, books and more and to take home as gifts (or to keep yourself!). Barefoot also has a live weaving work station to help you understand more about the process, as well as a popular outdoor cafe.



Just behind Barefoot's location on Galle Road are a series of leafy backroads home to some cute cafes worth popping into; **Bakes by Bella** is a favourite with Colombo's cool twenty-somethings who will often be found relaxing over coffee, cake and a game of scrabble.

Keeping on trend with much of the world is **Bubblicious**, serving Taiwanese inspired bubble tea, and nearby **The Gallery Cafe** is a more upscale setting serving meats, salads, desserts, or coffee and delicious juices. The latter is housed in Geoffrey Bawa's former office - do take a look around the upstairs space which has been preserved as it was when Bawa used it.

A pleasant ten minute walk around these Parisian-feel back streets is Geoffrey Bawa's Colombo residence, Geoffrey Bawa No. 11. Viewing is available by appointment only, Monday to Saturday at 10AM, 2PM and 3.30PM, or Sundays at 10AM - call in advance.

Pettah Market:

Pettah is a working market, much like you'll find in many parts of Asia. Head here to experience the bustling trade for anything from electrical goods, to sarees and stationary supplies. We suggest you enter from the Khan Clock Tower at one end of Main Street, a famous landmark and the market's original entrance. Look out for the unique Al Masjidah Al Jamiul Alfar Mosque halfway down Main Street for its stunning and unique red and white candy-striped facade (see page 112).

Museums and Temples:

Most of Colombo's main museums and temples are relatively close to each other. The National Museum of Colombo, housed inside a grand restored colonial building, is a great place to learn more about Sri Lanka's history and culture. From here, jump in a tuk tuk and head to the **Gangaramaya Temple** - perhaps one of the world's most unique religious buildings. You'll pass through a shrine to Buddha and into an outdoor courtyard. Continue to explore and you'll come across a museum-like space, filled to the brim with artefacts including an odd mix of jewellery, typewriters, and even a collection of classic cars at the back!





On exiting the temple take a left and walk the short distance to the temple's newer addition, the **Gangaramaya Meditation Centre**, also known as Seema Malaka; Sri Lanka's only modern Buddhist Temple, built between 1976 - 1978. Geoffrey Bawa was the architect and the temple was constructed on a pontoon overhanging **Beira Lake**. It's a peaceful place with statues of Buddha, Ganesha and other Buddhist and Hindu Gods - a fantastic space for some peace and quiet in the middle of an otherwise bustling city.

Beira Lake over which this temple sits is worth a wander around too, you'll often find young couples pedalling their way around it on the popular swan pedalos. (Note, most maps show Beira Lake as a larger water body just north of this smaller lake, but rest assured the lake with the temple is by far the most attractive. The larger lake is mainly home to industrial facilities).

Galle Face Green:

As evening falls, Galle Face Green is the place to head. The short stretch of beach comes to life at this time of day with many local vendors selling tea, food and beer, while children and adults alike fly kites high into the evening sky. At the southern end of this beach is the iconic **Galle Face Hotel**, a Colombo institution and a long standing favourite with Colombo's high society. Once you've walked along the beach itself stop in at the hotel to refresh - it's worth indulging in its famed afternoon tea served on the verandah most afternoons - call ahead to reserve. For a more relaxed dining experience here, order snacks and a drink at the pool side bar - the sea crashes right into the hotel's front a few metres away from poolside tables and is a memorable experience.



Sundowners:

One complete side of the city is sea-facing, and as such it would be rude not to enjoy the sea views with a sundowner drink. Thankfully Colombo has plenty of options on offer. **Galle Face Hotel** (see Galle Face Green opposite) is one, but the rooftop bar trend has caught on here too; head to **Sky Lounge** at The Kingsbury, **Vistas** at The Movenpick, or **On 14** at **Ozo Hotel** for perfect sun-set over the sea views. Another great option is **Station**, supposedly the only place in the capital to have a drink on the beach, feet in sand.

Dinner:

When it comes to dining, Colombo has options to suit most tastes and budgets. If you want to try local food, **Upalis**, **Raja Bojun** or **Palmera** are the best in town. They serve food all day, including at dinner time, though it's worth noting that Upali's famous lampreis

usually sell out by midday. Nonetheless, any of the dishes at these restaurants will provide a real Sri Lankan feast.

For an exceptional dining experience **Ministry of Crab** is Sri Lanka's most famous restaurant internationally, and for good reason; be sure to call in advance as they usually have a long waiting list. Close by on Hospital Street is **Botanik**, a roof top bar & bistro with a fantastic view of the impressive world trade centre. If you fancy trying something different then head to Horton Place where you'll find **August by Mama Aida** serving Middle Eastern cuisine, **Ceylon Cafe** serving Sri Lankan food in an upmarket setting reminiscent of a bygone era, and **Flamingo House** who brand themselves as 'eclectic post-colonial mayhem' - and with painted flamingos on the walls, cocktails served in bicycle mugs and after-parties until 4AM, we're inclined to agree!



A ten minute drive from here is **Park Street Mews**, former warehouses that have been converted into restaurants and bars. All the restaurants and bars are fantastic but our favourites are; **Kuuraku**, a fabulous Japanese (bring-your-own-bottle) restaurant and newly opened, **Monsoon**.

Monsoon delivers South East Asian food in a beautifully designed venue. The concept is to share dishes between family and friends, this can prove quite difficult given how delicious everything is and when it comes to the steamed chocolate brownie...impossible.

Where to stay:

Over recent years, Colombo has seen several major international hotel brands set up to compliment

some excellent local ones. Names like **Shangri La**, **Movenpick**, **Hilton** and **Grand Hyatt** are now reaching for the Sr Lankan skies. The Grande Dame of them all **The Galle Face Hotel** retains its charm, and small boutique hotels like the **Maniumpathy** are a delight.

If you're looking for the perfect place to stay pre/post-flight, or just a base out of the city, then we recommend **The Wallawwa** (pictured below). This fabulous 5* hotel is set over three acres of tropical gardens, in a restored colonial home. A place to dine, top up your tan pool-side, or enjoy a massage before your flight. The Wallawwa is only a 15 minute drive to Negombo airport.



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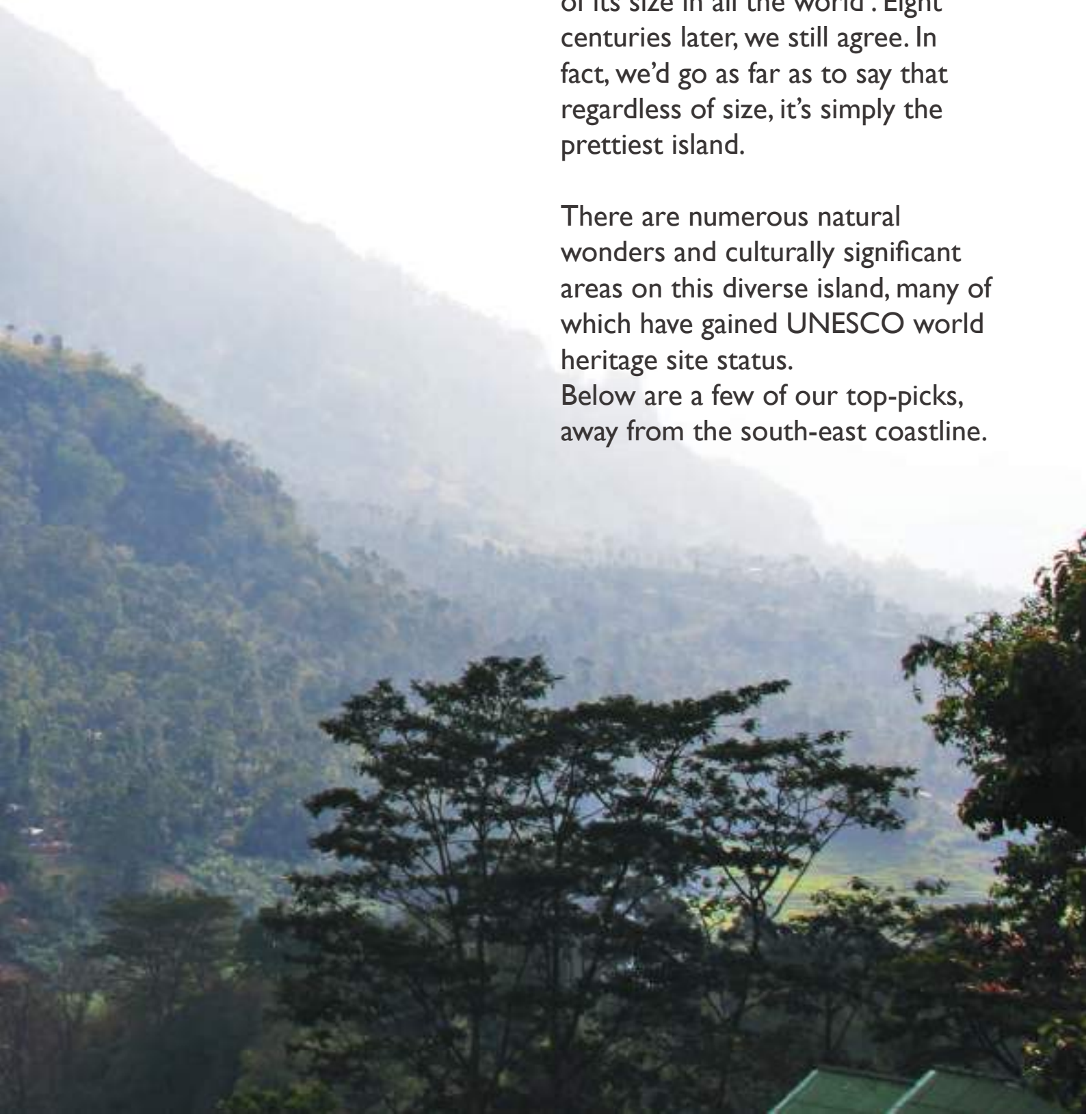
Edge of the mountains. On
the road to Nuwara Eliya

FURTHER AFIELD

In the 1300's Marco Polo described Sri Lanka as 'the prettiest island of its size in all the world'. Eight centuries later, we still agree. In fact, we'd go as far as to say that regardless of size, it's simply the prettiest island.

There are numerous natural wonders and culturally significant areas on this diverse island, many of which have gained UNESCO world heritage site status.

Below are a few of our top-picks, away from the south-east coastline.



Ella

Location from Galle:

Northeast. 4.5 hour drive.

Nestled into Sri Lanka's hill country, and surrounded by green tea plantations and farmlands, Ella is an escape from Sri Lanka's heat, and its sometimes hectic ways. The town itself is small and limited, but you don't come here to shop or party; you come here to hike the surroundings such as Ella Rock, and then to relax and unwind with hearty home-cooked meals and some of the country's freshly picked tea.



Jaffna

Location from Galle:

North. 10 hour drive.

After years of civil war, Jaffna at the Northern tip of Sri Lanka, is today at peace once again and open to tourists. It is home to many of Sri Lanka's Tamil community, and at roughly 80 km from Southern India has been heavily influenced by that nation. The city reflects this through its religion (predominantly Hindu) and culture. Walk into any of the local shopping streets or markets and you'll find southern Indian dishes such as dosa and idli being served, the holy cow roaming the streets as it's blessed by passersby and Bollywood music ringing out. Though still off the main tourist trail, things are changing and Jaffna is slowly being discovered by travellers again.



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Kandy

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Location from Galle:

Northeast. 5 hour drive

Often described as Sri Lanka's most picturesque city, it's certainly the most unique thanks to years of isolation. Over the centuries many tried to invade with no success until the 1800's. The result of such ardent protection means many surrounding ramparts remain; some converted into guesthouses, others left to grow wild and protect the

natural landscapes. Inside them you'll find the golden-roofed Dalad Maliga, home to the Sacred Tooth Relic of Buddha - much protected to this day. One of the highlights of the city's calendar is Esala Perahera (Esala Poya, July) where a replica tooth is paraded for ten nights by costumed dancers and drummers. The Peradeniya Gardens is also well worth a visit, opening originally for an ancient Sri Lankan Queen and now home to an impressive variety of trees, plants and flowers.

Nuwara Eliya

Location from Galle:

Northeast. 6 hour drive.

With colonial buildings, pretty cottages and colourful flower gardens, Nuwara Eliya is often referred to as a 'little Britain'. And given the landscaping, it's clear to see why. Indeed, it was in the late 1800's that the British brought tea to these hills, constructed many of its buildings and often whiled away a weekend drinking and relaxing in the cooler climates. Today some of the world's best tea is still produced here; Ceylon tea is one of the most famous to be exported. You may also stumble across Sir Thomas Lipton's tea estate, set up in Haputale in the 1890's and continuing to operate from here today.



Adam's Peak

Location from Galle:

Northeast. 5.5 hour drive

A 2243 metre high mountain that is held holy to Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Veddhas. This is a tough one to climb, but worth it for the views. Climb early to watch as the sunrise forms a perfect shadow of the peak itself on the rolling hills below - worth the early rise! Various tea houses on route serve sugary tea for an all-important energy boost
Insider tip: Carry warm clothing and an umbrella to protect you from the chilly winds at the top, while you wait for sunrise.

Dambulla Rock Temple

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Location from Galle:

Northeast. 5.5 hours drive.

The rock cave temple at Dambulla is a UNESCO world heritage site. It's Sri Lanka's largest and best preserved cave complex with Buddhist murals covering more than 2000 square feet, and 157 statues of Buddha, one carved from living rock and measuring an impressive 14 metres. Well worth a visit for this alone.



Ancient City of Sigiriya

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Location from Galle:

Northeast. 5.5 hour drive.

Close to Dambulla, and jutting out of the surrounding green forest sits Sigiriya rock, reaching heights of 660 feet. Atop of this rock used to sit an ancient city which, as the story goes was built by King Kasyapa and used as his palace and kingdom during his reign from 477-495 AD. Halfway up is a gateway to the kingdom built in the shape of a lion, giving understanding to the site's other commonly used name, 'The Lion's Rock'. You'll also find close to 700 Sinhala verses inscribed by visitors from the 5th through 13th centuries. Sigiriya

is one of those places, that once you've been, will stay with you forever.

Avukana Buddha Statue

Location from Galle:

Northeast. 5.5 hour drive.

Carved out of a large granite rock in 5th century AD, this imposing statue of Buddha stands around 40 feet high.

Polonnaruwa

Location from Galle:

Northeast. 6.5 hour drive.

Anuradhapura's decline was Polonnaruwa's gain, as the latter gained capital city status during the 11th - 13th centuries AD. A green and clean city today, Polonnaruwa is a pleasant place to visit.

Anuradhapura

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Location from Galle:

North. 6 hour drive.

Holding status as the country's capital for over 1000 years, Anuradhapura once housed many impressive temples and dagobas, parks and pools. Many of these are now in ruins, but make for a powerful sight. It's the city in which the Sacred Bo Tree, believed to have sprung from a sprig of the tree under which Buddha received his enlightenment, is planted and lives on today. Elsewhere, the Jetavanaramaya Dagoba enshrines part of a belt once tied by Buddha. A thirty minute drive out of Anuradhapura sits Mihintale, the Cradle of Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

Trincomalee

Location from Galle:

Northeast. 7 hour drive.

Trinco, as it is locally known, shows off its natural harbour well and with beautiful beaches a few km to the north, whale watching trips and scuba diving excursions in the season (April - September) it is well worth a visit. As with most Sri Lankan cities, Trinco is also home to many ancient sites, including the Koneswaram Temple.

Ratnapura

Location from Galle:

Northeast. 3.5 hours drive.

Known as the 'city of gems', many a dazzling beauty has been discovered in Ratnapura including sapphires, rubies, amethysts and more. No trip to the city would be complete without a visit to one of the gem mines, where you can watch and understand the sifting and washing processes that take place.

Kithulgala

Location from Galle: North.

5 hour drive.

Sri Lanka is better known for its beach water-sports than inland water-sports. Enter the Kelani River in Kithulgala. With waters spilling into it from Adam's Peak, river rafting on the Kelani River offers highs and lows (quite literally!) for beginners and experienced rafters alike. Borderlands are a recognised rafting company who offer overnight trips from Galle. They also offer other water-based activities such as canyoning and kayaking, amongst others.



Paper Lanterns
adorn most houses
during Vesak Poya

FESTIVALS & HOLIDAYS

Sri Lanka has the highest numbers of public holidays on the planet. The nation celebrates Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian festivals so, if you are here for two or more weeks you will likely experience at least one. Most holidays will mean some kind of disruption to local services and amenities, and it's worth noting that public holidays are also dry days; no alcohol is allowed to be sold.

Poya Days

The full-moon has long been celebrated by varying countries and cultures. The practice was adopted by Buddha, who also saw many of his significant life events fall on full-moon days. In Buddhism these days are known as Poya days, which are celebrated each and every full moon (roughly once a month). Poya is widely respected by Buddhist Sri Lankans; here is a brief explanation of the significance behind each:

May - Vesak

The beginning of the Buddhist calendar, and a celebration of three significant life events for Buddha; his birth, his Supreme Enlightenment attainment, and his passing. For Sri Lankans the day has extra importance, as it was also this date that Buddha made his third and final visit to Sri Lanka.

June - Poson

On this day in third century BC, Buddhism was brought to Sri Lanka by Arahata Maha Mainda, the son of then King of India, King Asoka.

July - Esala

Celebrated for many reasons including; the day that Prince Siddhartha renounced his Royal lifestyle and began his journey, the day on which Buddha's tooth was delivered to Kandy (it remains in the Dalada Maliga temple to this day) and the day that Buddha delivered his first sermon at Sarnath, India, setting out the Four Noble Truths.

August - Nikini

Three months after the passing of Buddha, the first convocation was held. This took place in a cave at the foot of Vebhara Rock, in Rajagriha, India.

September - Binara

This is the date on which Buddha first allowed women to enter the Order of the Sangha. Buddha's aunt (and later step-mother), Mahapajapathi Gothami, was the first female to enter, followed by 500 others.

October - Vap

Historically the end of the rainy season, Vap Poya also marks the end of the three month retreat that many Buddhists begin on Esala Poya. On this day there is also traditionally a robe-giving ceremony.

November - Ill

The day on which Bodhisatta Maitriya received permission to be the next Enlightened One, with sixty disciples following and preaching his word.

December – Unduvap

The day on which India's King Asoka sent his daughter to Sri Lanka, bringing with her a Bo tree sapling, the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi. This is said to be a cut from the tree under which Buddha received his enlightenment, it sits today in Sri Lanka's Mahamevna Gardens.

January - Duruthu

Duruthu is celebrated in honour of Buddha's first visit to Sri Lanka.

February - Navam

To commemorate the appointment of two leading disciples, Sariputta and Maha Moggalana.

March - Medin

Medin was when Buddha made his first visit to his hometown following his enlightenment.

April - Bak

Commemorating Buddha's second visit to Sri Lanka, in the fifth year of his Supreme Enlightenment.

New Year Celebrations

Both Sinhalese and Tamils celebrate New Year in April, coinciding with the end of the harvest, and this is one of the most important (and biggest!) events that takes place in the country.

New Year's celebrations take place over a number of days, usually starting on 13th or 14th April, though exact timings depend on the constellation of the planets; when the sun transitions from Pisces to Aries.

Many traditions take place during this time, including clearing of the home, oil lamp lighting (known as a puja), and the making of Kiribath (a milk-rice dish). The first financial



transaction of the year is also a big event, usually with younger generations giving some cash to their elders.

Following celebrations at home people take to the streets with family and friends, neighbours throw open their doors, snacks and

sweetmeats are distributed, and the sound of firecrackers fills the air. While fun to watch and join in, be aware that the sheer number of people celebrating means you may not be able to move freely. All local businesses will also be shut during this time too.

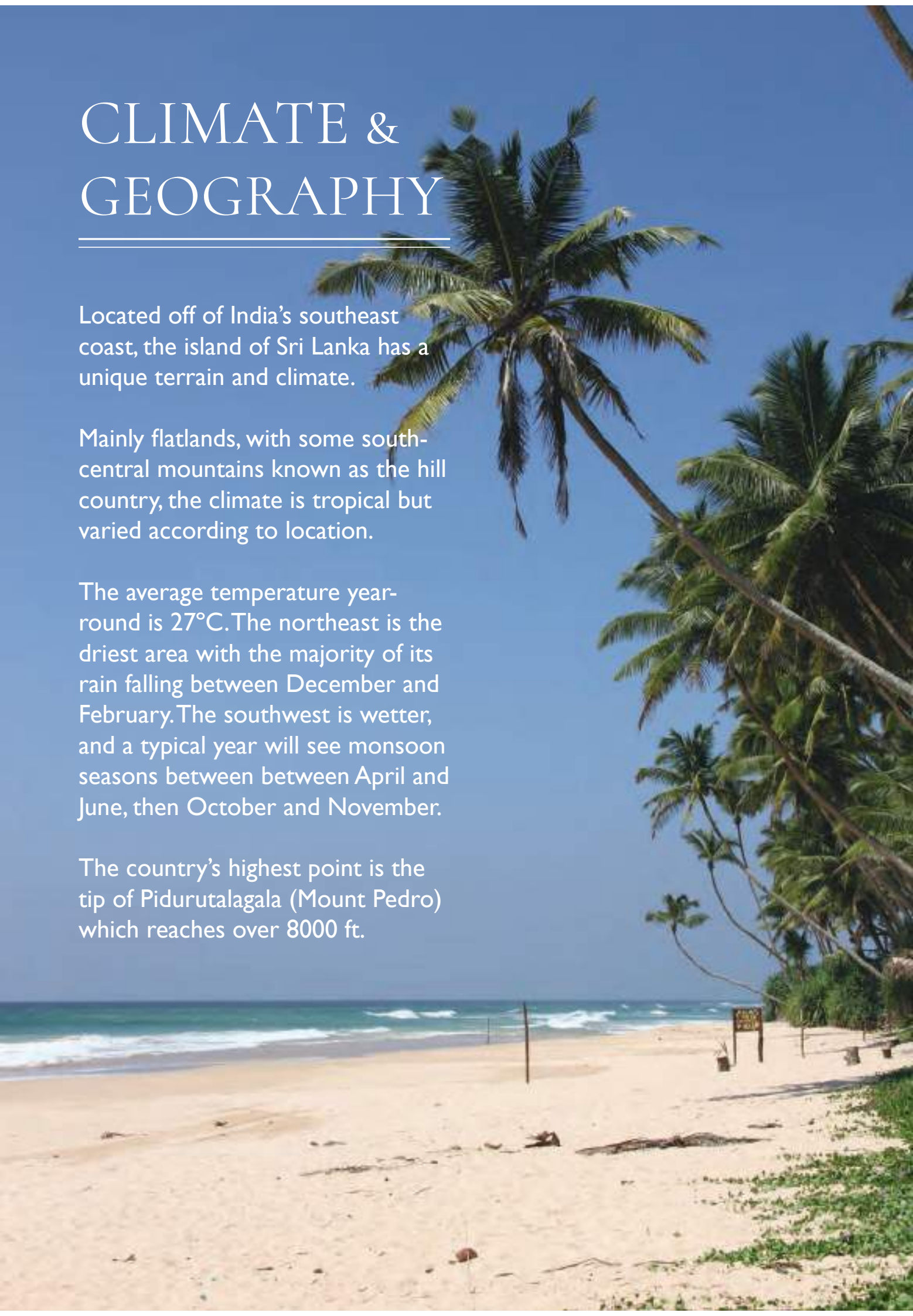
CLIMATE & GEOGRAPHY

Located off of India's southeast coast, the island of Sri Lanka has a unique terrain and climate.

Mainly flatlands, with some south-central mountains known as the hill country, the climate is tropical but varied according to location.

The average temperature year-round is 27°C. The northeast is the driest area with the majority of its rain falling between December and February. The southwest is wetter, and a typical year will see monsoon seasons between between April and June, then October and November.

The country's highest point is the tip of Pidurutalagala (Mount Pedro) which reaches over 8000 ft.



	ANNUAL	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
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GALLE													
TEMPERATURE AVERAGE C°	26	25	26	27	27	27	27	26	26	26	26	26	25
RAINFALL AVERAGE MM	187	103	86	117	242	296	207	165	155	214	340	302	177

HAMBANTOTA													
TEMPERATURE AVERAGE C°	27	26	26	27	28	28	27	27	27	27	27	26	26
RAINFALL AVERAGE MM	92	58	73	38	74	170	19	16	13	7	207	293	137

Sources: worldweatheronline.com & weatherbase.com

Average mean temperature
 Southern Coast 27°C
 Hill Country 20°C
 Lowlands 27C
 Colombo 27°C

Relative Humidity varies from 70% during the day to 90% at night.

Galle Climate

Galle has a tropical climate. As such, it does experience rainfall throughout the year, though even during monsoon seasons conditions will be dry and sunny for much of the day, with rainfall usually starting in the afternoon. The driest and sunniest months are January and February. Temperatures show little variation throughout the year. Average temperature stays around 27°C.

Population

According to the most recent census (2012), Sri Lanka's population is approximately

20,300,000 with around 325 people per square km, making Sri Lanka the 40th most densely populated country in the world.

Ethnic mix

Sinhalese: 74.9%
 Tamils: 11.3%
 Moors: 9.3%
 Other 4.5%

Religious mix

Buddhist 70.1%
 Hindu 12.6%
 Islam 9.70%
 Christian 7.6%
 Other 0.03%

Government

Sri Lanka is a democratic republic, the oldest democracy in Asia. Its political system is a mixture of presidential and parliamentary. The current President is Maithripala Sirisena, and the current Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. Both have stood in power since 2015.

USEFUL INFORMATION

International Dialing Code: **+94**

Police emergency services:
118 / 119

Ambulance or Fire Brigade: **110**
Ambulance Service: **1990**

Galle Police Station:
0 91 223 3333
0 91 223 4222
0 91 223 4962

Tourist Police: 011 242 1052

Tourist Police – Southern Range
Emergency: 0 91 223 3333
Operations: 0 91 222 2222

Hospitals:

Galle: **Karapitiya Hospital**,
Hrimbura Cross Road, Karapitiya,
Galle

Emergency No.: 0094 91 222 3341
General: 0094 91 223 2267

This Government teaching hospital provides the widest range of facilities in the area, including an Emergency Treatment Unit.

Hemas Hospital Galle:

10 Wackwella Road, Galle;
Tel: 0094 914 640 640

A privately owned general hospital, it has a 24hr outpatient service that usually sees patients promptly. The labs also operate 24 hours a day.

Hemas Hospital

Thalawatugoda:

Thalawatugoda: 647/2a Pannipitiya
Road, Thalawatugoda;
Tel: 0094 117 888 888

Hemas Hospital Wattala:

Wattala: 389 Negombo Road,
Wattala;
Tel: 0094 117 888 888

Colombo: Lanka Hospitals

formerly The Apollo Hospital
(24hrs emergency)
578 Elvitigala Mawatha, Colombo,
00500;
Tel: 1566 (Emergency) or
0094 11 5 430000

Banks and cash machines

Larger stores and hotels accept credit and debit cards, but it is always a good idea to carry some cash for the smaller shops, bars and restaurants. There are reliable cash machines and banks in and around Galle and Galle Fort, and a branch of HSBC on the outskirts of the town.

Telephone

The international country code is +94. To call overseas from a mobile the access code is 00, followed by the country code and telephone number, dropping the zero at the beginning of the number.

Local SIM cards

Local pay-as-you-go SIM cards can be purchased wherever you see the EZ-Reload sign, Dialog have the widest cover - you'll need to bring your passport as ID when you first purchase a sim card. Top ups are also available from local shops, look out for the Dialog recharge signs outside many stores on main roads.

Markets

Galle has a growing number supermarkets which stock a variety of produce including imported foods and drinks. Keells Supermarket (in Galle town) has a good bakery and butcher and also has an in-store pharmacy. Seafair (on Galle Road towards Unawatuna) is a family-run supermarket; helpful and friendly, they stock a good selection of imported brands from the UK. For fresh fruit and veg, the markets on the main high street in Galle are great, and you'll find various fish markets selling freshly caught seafood. Haggling is expected.

Transport:

Tuk-tuks, private vans, trains and buses

For local, in-region travel, Sri Lanka has varying means. You can hire your own private car and driver, travel around in tuk-tuks, or even take the train or bus.

If you choose to travel around by tuk-tuk you can also arrange with your driver to stay with you throughout the day or evening as you wish. When using tuk-tuks, always negotiate a price prior to setting off to avoid any confusion, and carry small change as you may need to pay in exact money. If you get caught out keep a sense of humour.

If you decide to take the bus, you'll find fairly extensive route coverage in Galle, and the train out of Galle can be great for day trips in any direction. Visit the Galle railway and bus stations for timetable information and to buy tickets.



Social Responsibility

Many visitors express a desire to contribute to the welfare of Sri Lanka's disadvantaged, and the conservation of its flora and fauna. There are many reputable charities and projects operating in the area that would welcome your support and participation. We recommend that you donate to a registered charity rather than individuals and that you carry out due diligence prior to doing so.

Embassies & Consulates

Embassy/ Consulate phone numbers. For a more comprehensive listing please check www.embassy-finder.com

Australia	+94 11 246 3200
Belgium	+94 11 267 4141
China	+94 11 268 8610
France	+94 11 269 8815
Germany	+94 11 258 0431
Holland	+94 11 251 0200
India	+94 11 232 7587
Italy	+94 11 258 8388
Qatar	+94 11 269 0440
Singapore	+94 11 255 0800
South Africa	+94 11 246 3000
New Zealand	+94 11 250 1139
UK	+94 11 539 0639
USA	+94 11 249 8500
UAE	+94 11 256 5053



Airline Operators

Air India

+94 11 232 3136

Cathay Pacific:

+94 11 2252157

Emirates

+94 11 470 4040

KLM:

+94 11 243 9747

Qatar Airways:

+94 11 557 0000

Singapore Airlines:

+94 11 249 9690

SriLankan Airlines:

+94 77 777 1979



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Project Hope changes lives by providing emergency family support, free pre-school education, livelihood training and positive parenting for single parent mothers giving a hand up rather than a hand out.

Help us to help children in Sri Lanka stay in loving family homes and give them a future they deserve.

To arrange a visit to Project Hope contact us at rosiemay.com

Registered UK charity 1113049

LANGUAGE

Sri Lanka has a huge a diversity of ethnic groups and various languages are spoken throughout the country. The two most widely used are Sinhala and Tamil and, while from different sources, both share common characteristics and have influenced each other's linguistic evolution. English is widely used and understood, especially in the tourist areas.

We recommend you always have any instruction repeated back to you to ensure complete understanding. Keen to please, many service providers will tell you they understand when they don't quite. Furthermore the famous Sri Lankan head waggle can lead to much confusion with visitors. Sri Lankans will appreciate any effort visitors make to speak their language, although may look quizzically at first!

Sinhalese Phrases

Good Morning	Suba Udayasanak	(Soo-bah oo-dah-sanak)
Good Afternoon	Suba Sandiawak	(Soo-bah sand-yawak)
Good Night	Suba Ratriyak	(Soo-bah rat-tree-yak)
How are you?	Kohomada?	(Ko-ho-ma-dah)
Thank you very much	Bohoma Stuti	(Bo-hom-es-too-tee)
OK / I'm fine	Hari hari	(Harry-harry)
How much is this?	Kiyada?	(Kee-yah-dah)
Too expensive	Ganang Vadi	(Ga-nang Vadi)
No, I do not want!	Eppa!	(Ep-pah)
No	Ne	(Neh)
Yes	Owu	(Oh-woo)
Delicious	Rasai	(Rass-eye)

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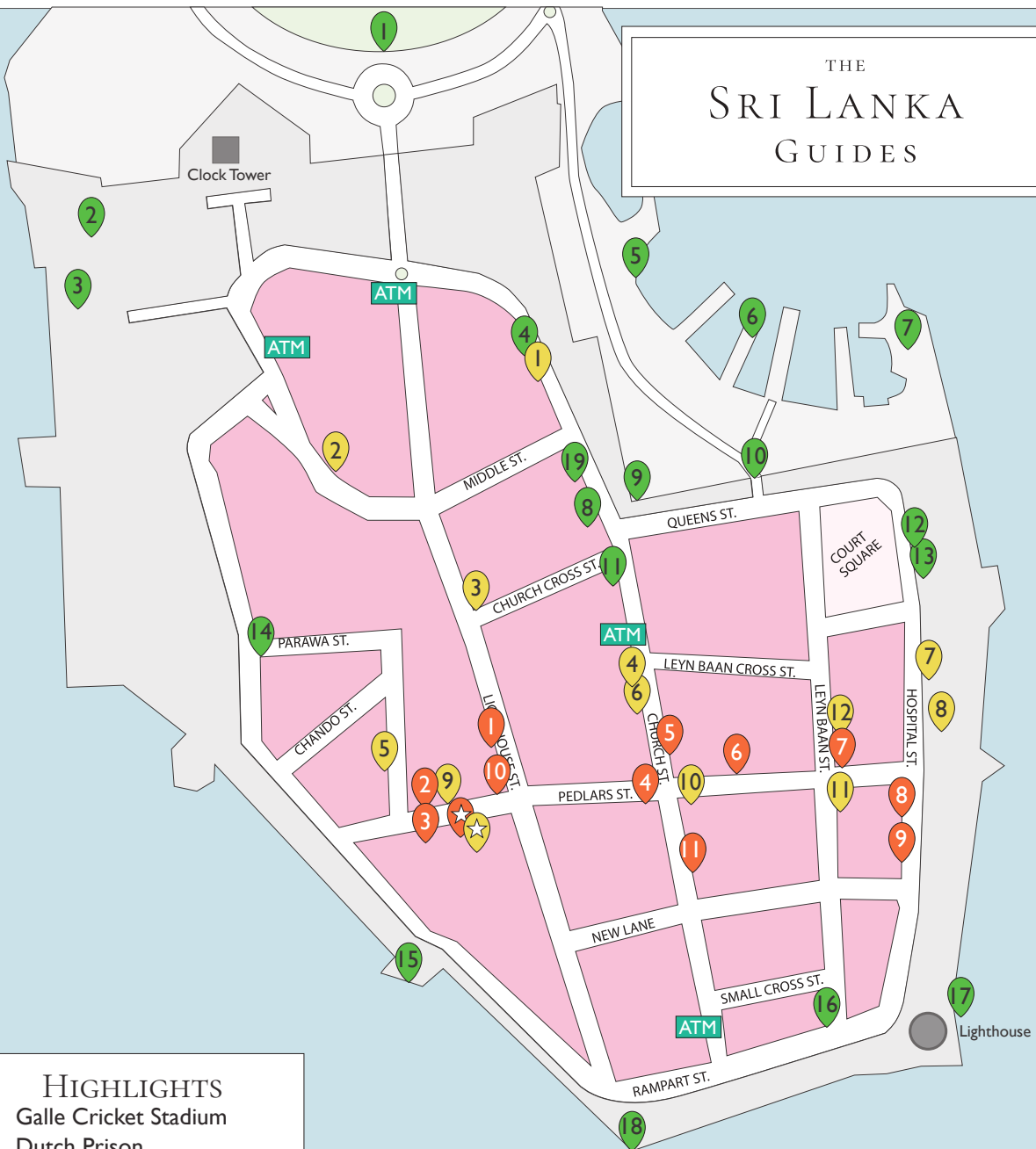
Journeys@discoverborderlands.com

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NOTES

THE
SRI LANKA
GUIDES



 HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Galle Cricket Stadium
- 2 Dutch Prison
- 3 Muslim Saint's Tomb
- 4 National Museum
- 5 Fishermans Market
- 6 Old Harbour
- 7 Portuguese Black Fort
- 8 Post Office
- 9 Maritime Museum
- 10 Old Dutch Gate
- 11 All Saints Church
- 12 Law Courts
- 13 Heritage info centre
- 14 Fort Temple
- 15 Battery point
- 16 Mosque
- 17 Fort Beach
- 18 Jumpers of Flag Rock
- 19 Dutch Church

 SHOPPING

- ☆ Mimimango
- ☆ Galle Fort Spa
- ☆ Tallentire House
- 1 Exotic Rootts
- 2 Raux Brothers
- 3 KK Collection
- 4 Barefoot
- 5 Stick No Bills
- 6 Odels Luv SL
- 7 The Three by TPV
- 8 Laksana
- 9 Orchid House
- 10 Jo Jo Gems & Antiques
- 11 MM Ibrahim Jewellers

 EATING OUT

- ☆ Poonies Kitchen
- 1 Amangalla
- 2 Elita
- 3 Fortaleza
- 4 Church St. Social
- 5 Lucky Star
- 6 Galle Fort Hotel
- 7 Tuna & Crab
- 8 Sugar Bistro
- 9 Pedlars Inn
- 10 Fort Printers
- 11 Crepe-ology
- 12 House of Food, Deli

Map not to scale / locations correct at time of print July 2017 / © villas in sri lanka

