

03

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# TROPICULTURE

CULTURES AMPLIFIED

## FEATURED NEWS

*PCR testing facility at BIA is Now Open.*



*Sri Lanka is listed as one of the best countries to travel as voted by Condé Nast Traveller's Readers.*



*Tropiculture UVA Expeditions - "Roads Less Travelled"*





## PROLOGUE

At Tropiculture, we know that a holiday in Sri Lanka is more than an experience of a lifetime – it's a mindset. Our beautifully curated destination holiday plans are the sure-fire anecdote of evoking one's wanderlust with the island's panoramic blue seas and cloud-flecked skies, lush and green foliage, golden beaches and soaring mountains and the hospitality of warm & loving people – ticking all the boxes in your bucket list for a well-deserved getaway. The longing to travel to distant safe spaces after inevitable and costly realities of the pandemic seems to only get heightened with time. By travelling with Tropiculture, we will help you to capture the breathtaking beauty of a tropical isle and its gentle people, as if it is carrying the warmth of sunshine into your next cold winter's day.

## PCR TESTING FACILITY AT BIA IS NOW OPEN!

We are pleased to announce the establishment of a PCR testing laboratory on airport grounds to perform PCR tests and issue reports in three hours for foreign tourists who require a PCR test on arrival to Sri Lanka. Travellers who require this test can exit the airport and take a short drive to the testing facility which is a mere 5 minutes away. The test will be conducted for a fee of US\$40 per person. The results are set to be released in three hours.

The laboratory, which operates under the supervision and regulation of the Health Ministry, is outfitted with technology that meets international standards, and it is anticipated that it will put an end to the mandatory hotel quarantine process.

Source: Sri Lanka Ministry of Health



# ONLINE HEALTH DECLARATION AT BANDARANAIKE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

In response to the current changes in passenger travel dynamics, Airport and Aviation Services Limited (AASL) has taken the initiative to implement an Online COVID-19 Health Declaration System at the Bandaranaike International Airport. The primary goal of implementing this system is to minimize the use of physical form filling and start encouraging passengers to use an online platform, thereby limiting physical contact and passenger process time. Furthermore, because the Health Authorities will be able to receive passenger information ahead of time, they can monitor the passengers' health records while lowering waiting times.

The system can be accessed via the following link on AASL website [www.airport.lk](https://www.airport.lk). [https://www.airport.lk/health\\_declaration/health\\_declaration](https://www.airport.lk/health_declaration/health_declaration)

01. Passengers must complete and submit the web application form by attaching the documents related to the health declaration - Vaccination card on the first and second doses. - A PCR test report must be completed within 72 hours of embarkation.
02. After submitting the online form, passengers will receive an email with a QR code.
03. Passengers' information will be given to airport health officers before they arrive, and the information provided by the passengers will be reviewed.
04. Passengers who have completed their health declaration forms online should scan the QR code at the health declaration counter upon arrival. With the implementation of this pilot project at BIA, AASL expects to provide a convenient travel experience for its valued passengers, and after two weeks of testing, this service will be made widely available to benefit passengers arriving in Sri Lanka.



# CHILDREN WITH ONE PFIZER DOSE CONSIDERED FULLY VACCINATED ON ARRIVAL TO SRI LANKA

Children between the ages of 12 and 18 who have received at least one dose of Pfizer Vaccine two weeks before departure will be considered fully vaccinated upon arrival in Sri Lanka, according to the Director-General of Health Services.

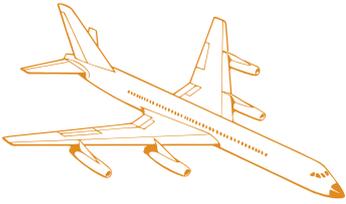
Source: Sri Lanka Ministry of Health



"SRI LANKA LISTED AS ONE OF  
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TRAVEL IN 2021 AS VOTED BY  
CONDÉ NAST TRAVELLER'S  
READERS."

## Cape Weligama, Ceylon Tea Trails & Wild Coast Tented Lodge Voted as Top 25 Resorts in Asia: Readers' Choice Awards 2021.

Conde Nast Traveler recently released its annual Readers Choice Awards, which rank the best cities, countries, islands, resorts, and hotels. While Sri Lanka was listed as one of the best countries to travel to in 2021, Resplendent Ceylon (Cape Weligama, Ceylon Tea Trails, and Wild Coast Tented Lodge) were named among the Top 25 Resorts in Asia. The awards are based on an annual reader survey in which over 800,000 readers participated. Readers have revealed that, with restrictions easing and the industry opening up, the majority of travellers are yearning for travel now more than ever. Seeking out remote regions and encouraging slow travel. For the past couple of years when travel was more of a privilege than a right, we're hopeful this inspires the future traveller to travel to Sri Lanka and experience the best of what the island has to offer.



## NEW AIR CONNECTIVITY TO SRI LANKA

With many flights resuming services to Sri Lanka, we are witnessing a surge in tourist arrivals since its relaxed travel restrictions for fully-vaccinated tourists last month. As our island offers unique experiences round-year with favourable weather conditions and plenty of sunshine, the pearl of the Indian Ocean beacons as an ongoing hot pick for those with itchy feet and wanderlust.

We are also thrilled to report that Sri Lanka is to welcome new air connectivity as follows;

**AIRFRANCE** / Air France instating thrice-weekly flights via male to Colombo.



LOT Polish Airlines together with Rainbow (one of the top three Polish tour operators expected to promote Sri Lanka as a premier destination for Polish and other European visitors in Asia) to resume twice-weekly direct flights to Sri Lanka from 7 December until the end of the winter season.



Eidelweiss flights operate weekly from Zurich to Colombo directly.



Singapore Airlines resume daily flights from Singapore to Colombo.



Emirates, Qatar & Ethihad has increased the frequency of flight schedules to Colombo.



Sri Lankan Airlines (UL) commenced direct flights from Sydney to Colombo thrice-weekly.

# UVA EXPEDITIONS

## A "Roads Less Travelled" Story

One of the many wonderful aspects of our island is that anyone can bask in the glory of nature without having to flee too far from the centres of busy metropolitans. Within a few hours of drive from Colombo lies perhaps one of the most scenic landscapes in all of Sri Lanka.

An anthropologist would define Uva as a haven for Sri Lanka's aboriginal people – the Veddhas. To a tea-taster, Uva denotes the best cup of tea in the world. To a devout Buddhist, it would mean the holy presence of Lord Buddha, from whence the first visit to Sri Lanka was made, preaching a sermon to the primitive tribal people who inhabited those parts. To a traveller, well, Uva means all this and plenty more! Scenically Uva is unbeatable if you manage to take a train ride through the regions. But, for us who travelled by road, weaving through the narrow roads of the countryside, the experience felt almost ethereal.

We felt nothing short of excitement to go exploring the hidden gems that lie beneath the surface. From hiking in the cool and crisp weather of Ella to soaking up breathtaking views of the highlands to spending an evening with Aboriginal people to enjoying views of other-worldly sunrises/sunsets through our lenses and steeping in the pools underneath majestic waterfalls, our journey through the captivating Uva was an intangible experience we look forward to sharing with the world very soon!

*Editors' Note: Stay tuned for more elaborate highlights from our recent trip to Uva on Tropiculture social media. We have a range of videos and stories coming up that will undoubtedly awaken your sense of wanderlust!*

## GIVE BACK...

During our recent visit to Uva, we stumbled upon an orphanage for girls by mere chance in the remote parts we had planned to explore. Concealed from the limelight of a vast world, the orphanage named "Kadurata Lama Niwasa" is maintained under the unwatchful eye of the Department of Probation and Child Care Services of the Uva Provincial Council.

Home to thirty-three girls (aged between 6 years to 21 years), they receive their education at a nearby Tamil school in Badulla. Currently, to our dismay, the children are left without any government funding except for the US Cents 0.50 per child provided by the Government probation office every month. While their rented house agreement is due to expire in 3 months, with the funding available from a couple of donors overseas, they were able to buy a piece of land and start construction of a permanent home. However, because of the effects of the pandemic, monthly funds for children's expenses and the construction of the new home has been crippled furthermore.

Supporting the mission to do good and give back to our local communities, at Tropiculture, we decided to help them move into their permanent home as soon as possible, providing necessary financial aids as well as contributing towards their upkeep and monthly expenses after the move. In the meantime, we are organizing a special collection drive for donating essentials for the children which will include sanitary items, toiletries and, clothes to be handed over immediately upon collection including gifts for the Sinhala and Tamil New Year in April 2022.



# *In the Limelight!*

## Roo Mansala Boutique Villa | Sigiriya

Roo Mansala, or "alluring home" in English, is located in the cultural triangle of Sri Lanka. The Sigiriya Rock Fortress (named the world's eighth wonder) and the Pidurangala Rock are within 1 km of each other. The eco-friendly hotel combines the Rock Fortress's old architecture with modern boutique living. They employ environmentally friendly materials and are aware of the importance of conserving energy and water. They also operate in an environmentally responsible and economically sustainable manner, managing garbage in a systematic manner. They've planted around 300 trees on their land since the purchase.



## The Merchant | Galle Fort

Built during the 'Century of lights', in the year 1710, by the Dutch, The Merchant is more than three hundred years old (in age). A luxurious boutique hotel with 14 rooms, boasts 4 deluxe rooms, and breathtaking balconies. Galle Fort is surrounded by a rampart wall first built by the Portuguese in the 1500s. It was later adapted by the Dutch and British and is also known as Dutch Fort. 'The Merchant' offers a wide variety of exciting outdoor excursions and water sports and an eclectic mix of yesteryear charm.

## Wild Glamping | Gal Oya

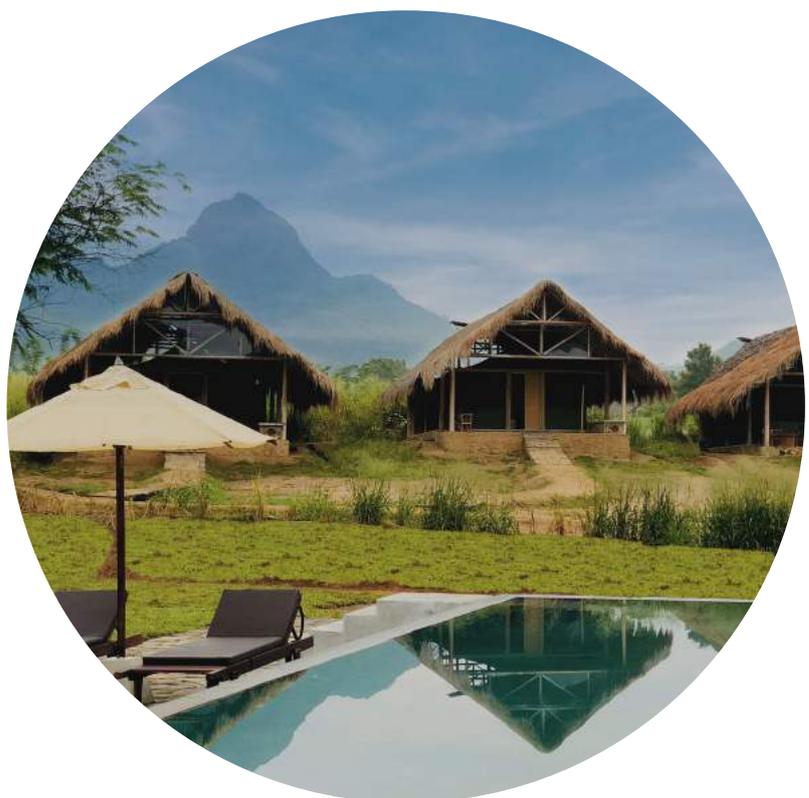
Wild Glamping – Gal Oya located in a beautiful & charming village 'Rathugala', is surrounded by a picturesque man-made lake. Built on 30-acre land of what used to be an abandoned Chena cultivation is presently metamorphosed into an impressive natural structure decked with an organic plantation thus, complementing and enhancing the sustainability value of the property. Wild Glamping baring a unique concept is perfect for a relaxing getaway away from the should anyone wish to be disconnected from society for a few days.

With the verdant backdrop of green and blue hues of the surrounding forest patches under the vast sky, the property accommodates 10-large tents creatively designed to fit into the concept of a traditional Sri Lankan village house.

Not more than 30 min drive from the base camp, you can easily access the Gal Oya National park that is a haven for crocodiles, deer, elephants and many rare and endemic species of birds. With a bit of luck on your side, you may even see elephants swimming between islands or going for a casual bath at the edge of the lake.

WOW factor: For the first time in a local resort, the majority of the staff hails from the last indigenous 'Veddha' community in Sri Lanka. The aim is to support the local community as well as the economic growth of the area.

The Resort does not support any mobile or WIFI devices due to the remote location.



## UPDATE ON SRI LANKA'S CENTRAL EXPRESSWAY

On November 28th, the stretch of the Central Expressway from Meerigama to Kurunegala, which is part 2 of the development project, will be handed over to the public. The public will be given access to the length of the road during a ceremony hosted by the President and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. The portion between Meerigama and Kurunegala will feature four lanes and five interchanges.

The Central Expressway segment between Mirigama and Kurunegala will allow the people to travel the approximately 39.7 km between the two places in 25 minutes and for those travelling to Kandy, Kurunegala, or Dambulla, the expressway connecting Colombo and Kandy will be quite easy. The entrance and departure points would be in Mirigama, Gampaha District, and Kurunegala, respectively.

The Central Expressway Project has been divided into four sections;

- Section 1 from Kadawatha to Mirigama at approximately 37 km
- Section 2 from Mirigama to Kurunegala at approximately of 39.7 km
- The stretch from Mirigama to Ambepussa at approximately 9.1 km
- Section 3 from Pothuhera to Galagedara at approximately 32.5 km
- Section 4 from Kurunegala to Dambulla at approximately 60.3 km

The Central Expressway's remaining parts are planned to be completed in a few years.

## CONNECT GREEN

At Tropiculture, our green mission every year is to adopt more environmentally sustainable workplace practices, not only to fulfil our corporate social responsibility but to also encourage the staff to be model green citizens. Through such initiatives, we hope to improve the well-being of those around us while we seek to protect the environment by conserving precious natural resources and minimizing damage both internally and externally relating to our travel brand.

Ever since we expelled using single-use plastic water bottles from all our tours and instead provided insulated water bottles (with a USB charged water pump to refill the water bottles), although, at a significant amount, we made it one of our top priorities quickly make an eco-friendly transformation that affected our lives as a whole. Collectively we worked towards making our workspace free of all plastic materials and follow the 3 Rs of waste management – Reduce, Refuse & Recycle even at home.

Presently, 60% of the energy consumption at our workspace is powered by solar and by next year we hope to extend solar panels covering Authenticities vehicle yard adjacent to our office which will in return convert 100% of our energy consumption to solar.

Despite being a small travel company, we love to dream big! Since we aim to decrease our carbon emissions to zero (quite a serious challenge for that matter!) we are determined to find alternates in reducing the carbon footprint supporting our ethics. Planting over 6500 trees in Digana (a suburb of Kandy) on 2 ½ acres of land was one of the initiatives we implemented in the year 2020. A process that absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through natural sinks like trees and other vegetation removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. Following this our aim to reduce our carbon footprint for next year is planting suitable vegetation on a 5-acre land in Sigiriya and creating the second analog forest in Sri Lanka over the next few years. An initiative for Tropiculture to become 100% carbon neutral by 2025!



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