

SUNSETS IN SRI LANKA

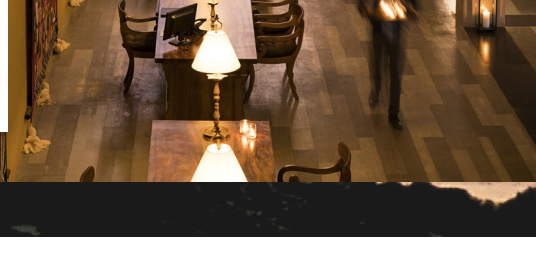
PW'S COLETTE DISCOVERS WHY SRI LANKA IS TOP OF THE HONEYMOON HOTLIST FOR 2018...

I've been hearing a lot about Sri Lanka being *the* destination to visit in 2018. So, what attractions does the 'tear drop of India' have to offer? Beautiful beaches, stunning scenery, wonderful wildlife... to name just a few. Excited to discover the culture of the region, I headed to Anantara's Sri Lankan properties, Kalutara on the southwest coast and Peace Haven Tangalle further south.

ANANTARA KALUTARA

With the most peaceful beachfront setting, Anantara Kalutara is a hidden gem. Waking up to views of the neighbouring ocean, you're guaranteed to feel totally serene and at one with your surroundings while staying here. If you want a 'get away from it all' honeymoon, an escape from modern-day life where you can spend one-on-one time with your new partner, then *this* is the place.

Let's cut to the chase and get to the important stuff; food! The resort's offering of restaurants is, quite simply, *incredible*: Taste your way around the world, with the very best of Thai, Indian and Chinese cuisine at Spice Traders; indulge in hearty Italian at Acquolina; or experience a taste of Sri Lanka at buffet restaurant, Olu. Whatever pleases your palate, chances are you'll find that *at least* one out of the array of



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options here is exactly to your taste.

One of my favourite features about the Kalutara resort is the rich interior design and décor; envisioned by Sri Lanka's most famous architect, the late Geoffrey Bawa. The spaces feel elegant – simplistic yet filled with culture. To understand the design further; Bawa's nearby estate makes for the perfect day trip; exploring the rooms and grounds where he once roamed is inspiring and humbling all at once. Still run by the very same staff that kept the property when Bawa was alive, their passion for the architecture, and the architect, really comes across as they take you on a guided tour of the grounds. This is a must while staying at Kalutara.

ANANTARA TANGALLE PEACE HAVEN

Turn the journey down south to Tangalle Peace Haven into an adventure by planning some exciting stops along the way. The first: Galle Fort, an ancient citadel packed with history and charm. A walking tour of the monument offers, not only a glimpse back in time, but unrivalled views of the surrounding ocean.

Next up: Handunugoda Tea Estate. Now, as a tea-lover; this was one of my favourite experiences. Listening to the owner's fascinating tales and learning all about the tea-making processes and their antioxidant properties (plus, of course, trying every tea I could get my hands on) made for a lovely afternoon.


The third and final stop: my second

home for the week. Tangalle Peace Haven is very different to Kalutara – this hotel is much bigger in size and sits directly on a secluded stretch of Sri Lanka's southernmost coastline.

If you consider yourself a foodie, the resort offers a Spice Spoons Sri Lankan cookery class that is not to be missed. Waking up early, a tuk-tuk carts you off to the local fish, spice, fruit and veg markets, accompanied by a member of staff, to learn about the trades, talk with the locals and select the ingredients that will soon be turned into a Sri Lankan feast.

Back at the resort, one of the experienced chefs will then take you through the secrets of his trade, cooking up a storm that you'll later enjoy for lunch. It's a wonderful experience not to be missed.

Now, Sri Lanka is renowned for its beautiful, natural surroundings that offer endless activities that visitors to the region can enjoy. Waking up at 4am might seem impossible on most days, right? Well, what if there's a chance of seeing elephants in the flesh? Udawalawe National Park, just a short distance from the hotel, is the place to go for such opportunities. On safari, my breath was taken away as the sun rose, revealing elephants, jungle cats, peacocks and monkeys all roaming freely in their surroundings!

Ending the trip with a relaxing glass of wine at the hotel's Il Mare restaurant, perched on a cliff edge facing the ocean, is the perfect way to reflect on the experience of a lifetime that Sri Lanka guarantees. 



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Nightly rates at Anantara Kalutara start from £209 for a Premier Garden View Room on a B&B basis. Nightly rates at Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle start from £218 for a Premier Beach Access Room on a B&B basis.

anantara.com

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