



Tisara Villas... *an oasis of tranquility*

Information Guide

TISARA VILLAS - INFORMATION GUIDE

Directions to Tisara Villas from Colombo:

Drive to Habaraduwa town which is about 6 km after Galle. At Habaraduwa town turn left at the clock tower. Drive 400 meters until the road splits. There is a sign for Tisara Villas. Keep to your right. Drive another 100 meters and you will see another sign for Tisara Villas where you turn left. Drive 20 meters. The Villa phone number is 09 12283303.

Arrival:

When you arrive staff will open the gates and welcome you to the property. The room boys will transport your bags to the villas, some of which are about 200 meters away from the entrance. You will be welcomed with cool face towels and a welcome drink.

Villas:

Each villa is 1,850 square feet and has 2 bedrooms with attached bathrooms, living room, dining room, fully equipped kitchen, terrace and a private garden. There is a main key to the villa as well as keys to each bedroom. In one bedroom there is a safe installed inside the closet. Both bedrooms are air-conditioned.



Management:

Neel is the Manager of Tisara Villas. You may find his office near the Laundromat. Neel is very vigilant at keeping tabs on the place and he comes everyday from 08:30-12:00 and again from 5-8.30PM. His contact details are: 077 600-7518.

Security:

Tisara Villas has a high wall around it and you can really relax once you are through the gates and over the lotus pond. There is 24-hour security and security personnel patrol the internal perimeter every hour or so at night. Tisara Villas is a private gated community for the exclusive use of the guests. No outsider is allowed inside unless invited by a resident guest.

A safe is provided in every villa to store your valuables. If you are going out for the day, give the room boys permission to enter the villa and clean the rooms. Or else they will wait until you return in order to clean the villa.

Since the main entrance is always manned by security and the high walls prevent the children from running outside, Tisara Villas are perfectly child-friendly and you can safely allow the kids to roam the gardens without fear of them wandering on to the street. With the diversity of wild-life, it is always an interesting adventure for kids to roam around the gardens.



WI-FI:

The entire property has free Wi-Fi access. The password for Wi-Fi is : tisara56789. Wi-Fi is fast. In keeping with our concept of an eco-friendly nature resort, we do not have television or phones in our villas.

Power:

Sri Lanka uses 220 v power. Each villas has a couple of multiple plug adaptors. If you need additional adaptors, please ask any of the staff for one.

Air Conditioners:

Each bedroom is equipped with a ceiling ventilator fan and an air conditioner. Though most guests use the ceiling ventilators, sometimes it is nice to turn the A/C on to cool off on a humid evening. Just press the power button on the remote control and make sure the snow flake A/C signal is showing on the screen and have it on minimum temperature. Remember to turn it off when you leave the room.

**Mosquito Nets:**

The four-poster beds in every room have a mosquito net. Tuck these in around the mattress and climb in and out as if you're getting in and out of a tent. Such is life in the jungle! Mosquitoes aren't an issue during the day but at certain times during the evening, they can become a bother. There are mosquito coils in every villa that the staff will light every sundown which keeps mozzies away. The staff will also provide you with

citronella infused mosquito repellent armbands which you can wear around your wrist or ankles to keep mozzies away.

Ironically if you leave all the windows and shutters wide open all day to allow for the breeze and close the doors in the evening, it lessens the amount of mosquitoes inside the villas than when you batten down the hatches! Naturally this is up to you, dear guest!

Ceiling Fans:

We provide ceiling ventilator fans in the bedrooms, living room and dining rooms. In keeping with our environmentally sensible policies, please turn off the fans and air conditioners when not in the villa.

Cleaning:

One of the room boys will come in to make your bed and sweep the floors and clean the bathrooms sometime between 10 and 12 Noon every day.

Bed Linen:

Bed sheets are changed every three days minimum. If you require that they be replaced more frequently, please instruct the room boys.

Towels:

The fresh white towels are for shower and bath while the green towels are for use by the pool or for the beach. In keeping with our environmentally friendly policies, if you want the towels changed, please place the used towel on the ground. Unless you place them on the ground the staff will not replace your towels when cleaning.

Hot Water:

There is a solar powered hot water system in each villa. If the sun shines for more than 2 hours, which is almost everyday, the solar system is more than adequate for your hot water needs. If the skies are overcast or you need an almost boiling hot shower you may want to flick the immersion switch. It's the only switch in the power box by the refrigerator in the kitchen which will be switched down. Flick it up whenever you want a boost of piping hot water. Or else ask a room boy who will gladly turn it up for you.

You can use tap water for the kettle and to clean your teeth and for showers. The water comes from the city mains as well as from a deep well in the property and is chlorinated to kill off any bacteria.

**Bath Tub:**

The black outdoor bathtub is great not only for a soak under the stars but also to bathe your young children.

Laundromat:

The villas have a Laundromat with washers, dryers and irons. The room boys will do the laundry for you or else you can do it yourself. Cost is \$7 per load to wash, dry and fold.

Kitchen:

Each villa has a fully equipped kitchen with a 2 door refrigerator, electronic gas hob, pots, pans and cooking utensils, cutlery, crockery and glassware for 6 people. The refrigerator is stocked with soft drinks, beer and wine, which can be used against payment.



Drinking Water:

There is a giant bottle of drinking water in each villa free of charge. Room boys will gladly replace these when finished. There is ice in the freezer for your usage. Ask the room boys to bring you more when you run out.

Washing-Up:

If the cooks have prepared something for you and brought it to your villa, they will do the washing-up.

Food and Meals:

Guests may purchase their own groceries and prepare the meals themselves if they choose. The staff will be happy to purchase whatever provisions you require from the market on your behalf.

Breakfast is always included and is served from 08:30 - 10AM at the poolside tables or in your own villa.

You may order meals from the *a la carte* menu which will be served either in the outdoor poolside restaurant or in your own villa. There is a menu in every villa as well as in the kitchen by the pool. The cooks will also offer a variety of daily specials for lunch and dinner depending upon what is available fresh in the market.

Usually the chefs will ask what you like to eat either during the day or by 5PM and serve it where you wish at the time you wish. Our curries are great, remember to ask them for curd and mango chutney to go with it! Salt and pepper calamari, the grilled chicken or swordfish with mashed potatoes and vegetables, chermoula crusted kingfish, the sushi and sashimi platter, crispy skin roast pork, fresh oysters or spaghetti with clams or mussels are also excellent choices. For the vegetarians we recommend Thai green papaya salad, soups, pastas and vegetable moussaka. Banana fritters are great as desserts or you can always enjoy a platter of fresh tropical fruit or some buffalo milk curd and treacle.



You can buy fish from the market on beach side of Habaraduwa junction and give it to the chefs to prepare for you on a barbecue grill with fries and salad or potato salad, tomato and avocado salad. If you want a Barbecue for your group, just ask the manager the day before or latest in the morning and you can have it set up outside your villa or by the pool. The staff will prepare the meat and fish you buy for a small charge. They will basically handle the whole thing, you just provide meat and or fish. You will need to pay one of the gardeners for a sack of coconut shells he will procure separately for the barbecue.

Alcohol:

The villas offer beer and wine. If you wish to buy spirits, the closest liquor store is in Unawatuna which is 15 minutes up the road. A case of 15 large Lion Beer will cost you about \$15. Wine is about \$12 bottle for a decent bottle. If you are coming for a longer stay, we recommend buy as much as you can at the airport duty-free shop. The Lindberg sauvignon seems to be the best cheap white at \$11. There are also red merlots that go for around \$12 that's okay as well.

Supermarket:

The closest is in Unawatuna but it's not up to much so it's worth going the extra mile to Galle to the Keells Super Center which is the most upscale supermarket in town. It has everything including ice cream, tonic, extra large packs of diapers etc. Softlove and Drypers are the best brands. The Pampers they sell in town are Chinese fakes and give nappy rash. It is also recommended that families with babies buy loads of baby wipes and bring them along as they are ridiculously expensive here.

Pharmacy:

There is a small pharmacy about 300 meters from the villas on the road to Habaraduwa. They stock the standard items one would need including headache pills, shampoo, mosquito spray etc. Keells Super Center also has a pharmacy.

Doctor & Medical Care:

There is a physician with offices in Habaraduwa town, which is only 600 meters from the villas. Dr. De Silva treats all the foreigners in the area and speaks English well and makes house visits to Tisara Villas. He can be contacted at 0773 036400. If your babies or children need any medication from him, request that he provides you with the brand name medicines and not the Indian generic brands as sometime they cause allergies for children.

Hemas Private Hospital in the centre of Galle is good for emergencies or for more serious medical issues.

Local SIM Cards for Mobile Phones:

You can buy one quite easily for around \$5 at any one of the mobile operator agents in Habaraduwa town which is about 400 meters from the villas. You need to present your passport to purchase a SIM card. A 1,000 rupee credit should suffice for your local calls for about two weeks. The phone centers also offer phone cards to make overseas phone calls.



**Ayurveda Massage:**

Jayalath is our Ayurveda masseuse. He is the guy with a big moustache and a smile hanging around the office most days from 3pm onwards! The feedback from most of our guests is that he is actually pretty darn good! His charges range from 1,400 upwards for an hour or more. The Manager Neel or any of the boys will be more than happy to set up a time for you.

If you want a really good European masseuse, call Lucy, a British Expat from Hong Kong who is based in Galle. Contact her at 0772 178906. Prices range from Rs. 5,500 per hour.

Tips for Staff:

There are 16 staff at Tisara including room boys, chefs, gardeners etc. the fairest way to tip is to give the Manager a lump sum when you leave equivalent to minimum \$5 dollars per head which he will then divide equally among the team. However, tipping or how much to tip is entirely at your discretion.

Baby Sitters:

We are able to provide baby-sitters for a few hours during the day or at night as long as prior notice is given and we are able to get one of our regulars. The fee is around \$15 per day.

Birdlife:

Birdlife at Tisara is fantastic, with more than 40 species spotted. There is a bespoke Tisara Villas birdlife guide in every villa which tells you all the species that have been spotted here.

**Snakes:**

There are no dangerous snakes at Tisara to worry about. There may be an occasional rat snake that might slither in the garden but they are completely harmless. The only nuisance are very occasional (we've encountered them twice in two years) sightings of fast moving red hairy centipedes which can give you a painful but far from fatal bite. The coconut trees also have an occasional scorpion but they are usually hidden in the vegetation and do not come out.

Monkeys:

A troop of howler monkeys come through our gardens most mornings. They are very curious and like to say hi! but won't dare hit the ground or come into the villas. Most times they are quite content to stay atop a tree and watch their human cousins frolicking by the pool. They are amazing but we request that guests not feed them because once monkeys lose their fear of humans, they do tend to become a big nuisance and end up brazenly coming up to your table while you eat and help themselves to your breakfast!

Mountain Bikes:

There is a fleet at Tisara which are free of charge for guest's use. You may occasionally need the security staff to pump the tires. One has a baby seat as well for families looking to explore the countryside. The small country roads away from the main street takes you to delightful vistas of Sri Lankan rural countryside with paddy fields, cinnamon plantations, small tea holdings, streams and lakes.

Tuk-Tuk Drivers:

The ubiquitous tuk-tuk is how everybody gets around town. Unfortunately Tisara Villas has no control over the tuk-tuk drivers some of whom are rather rude or would much rather try to sell you excursions and souvenirs than provide transportation. The Villas can't be responsible for them as they are not employees of Tisara Villas.

However, after years of hearing complaints and praise from our guests, we have a few tuk-tuk drivers that we can recommend to our guests. Sunil is the best and most pleasant of the local tuk-tuk drivers. He will need minimum 15 minutes notice and will send another tuk-tuk if he can't make it. Sunil: 0774 331614.

Ajith is the other excellent tuk-tuk driver, based at Wijaya Beach. He will send his brother Asantha if he can't make it. Ajith: 0777 208725. These guys have good tread on their tyres, drive sensibly, do not try to sell anything you don't want to buy and since the inception of the villas, we have not once heard a complaint about them.



Tuk-Tuk Rates:

Here are approximate prices for tuk-tuks. Ask the staff who will also be able to give an estimate of how much a tuk-tuk ride should cost.

Koggala:

150 rupees to go one-way to 1.5km east to Koggala Beach Hotel.

200 rupees to go 2km east to the Fortress Hotel.

You can also walk there along the beach, or back from there. It's a stunning half hour stroll on the best beach in the south coast and if it gets too hot you can always step up onto the road and hail a tuk-tuk!

300 rupees to go 3km east to **the Rock**, the best surf break on the south coast, a great stretch of sandy beach with good waves and no reef to worry about. It's a beautiful no frills local surf spot.

350 rupees to go 5km east to **Easy Beach**, a no frills surf hotel. The cheeseburgers are pretty good and sunset at the front of the bar-restaurant or at a table in the big garden is lovely.

300 rupees to go 2.5km west to **Club Aqua** at **Hotel Cantaloupe** a great fun Ibiza style club night run by a Dutch girl named Claudia. **The STRIP**, which is right next door to Cantaloupe, is a cool no frills beach bar. You can turn right at Wijantha's Chinese restaurant on Koggala beach and walk 2km to these places along the beach for sundowners or stagger back from them late at night if you can't find a tuk-tuk!

300 rupees to go 4km west to **Why Beach**, an Italian owned private dining experience on the beach. The food has gone downhill a little but it's still a pretty good joint, especially for decadent lunches. You need to call to book as you do for **Nico's Bistro and Beach Club** 100 m further along the road. Swanky beachside place for lunch or evening meals owned by Nico and Kamal, a very glamorous couple from Mumbai. She is India's answer to Cindy Crawford crossed with Davina McCall, the famous TV host. Both Why Beach "WB" and Nico's accept only cash only so be prepared.

400 rupees to go to the **Frangipani Tree** boutique hotel on the beach with a great pool run by a Pakistani investment banker called Shahzad Malik. Good coffees and lunch here. Worth emailing info@frangipanitree.com in advance if you want to turn up and eat and hang out for the day. At sunset here there is an incredible natural phenomenon. From November-March tens of thousands of giant swallows come to roost in the trees at the beach front of the sweeping lawns. It's really quite breath-taking.

450 rupees to go to 5km west up road to **Wijaya Beach** aka **Notting Hell** - best lagoon for swimming in whole of southern Sri Lanka. Overpriced but great food and a wicked vibe. Especially the pizzas and prawn and mango curry is delicious. Contact owner Mahendra 0777 903431. It's a veritable paradise in the mornings before it gets too busy and social.



If you find it too crowded check out the places that surround Wijaya on the same beach strip for any cancellations. If you want to hire a moped you can ask Mahendra or Ajith and they should be able to get you one for around \$10 per day.

550 or 600 rupees to go 6km west, just beyond Wijaya to Unawatuna. Loads of beach front cafes, restaurants and bars here. **Happy Banana** is good fun they have pretty wild parties there. **Kingfisher** is mostly a chilled place on beach. Best calamari on the coast. **Unawatuna Beach Resort** most expensive and impersonal but has a Footrub & spa type of place that offers massages, manicures and pedicures on site. Worth climbing up to the temple overlooking Unawatuna for sunset. Beautiful views west and east along the coast.

650 rupees to go to **Japanese Peace Temple** and or **Jungle Beach** 8km east close to Galle. Peace temple is great lookout spot. The Japanese monk there has a cockney accent from his years manning the Battersea Park Peace Temple prior to this one. Jungle Beach is quite good for snorkeling.

750 rupees to go 30 minutes into Galle and into **Galle Fort** itself. This UNESCO World Heritage site is INCREDIBLE!

In the Galle fort the **Amangalle Hotel** is great for lattes and people watching from the terrace, **Mama's Rooftop Bar** in the fort is great for sundowners and getting a view over the whole fort but the food is disappointing. **Deco on 44** on Lighthouse Street is a new trendy art-deco style boutique hotel with very good food and the **Barefoot Gallery** is good for buying wooden toys and tat while **Pedlars** is a good café with a pretty good jeweler. Right across the street there is a shop full of absolutely fabulous tropical beach wear.

Church Street in Galle fort has a bunch of quaint and interesting gift shops. **The Church Street Gallery** is an amazing little shop that sells vintage Ceylon and bollywood posters and reproductions while **K-K**, Prince Charles' interior designer George Cooper's home furnishings shop is well worth checking out. Walking the fort ramparts from the lighthouse to the cricket stadium after 4.30 and before sunset at 6.30 is one of the highlights of Southern Sri Lanka.

750 rupees to go to 7km east to **Bay View Guesthouse** in Weligama Bay - our favorite no frills beachside joint, located right on amazing sandy bottom beach break great for learning to surf, 20 min south of us. Kids love it here as big wide sand beach. Beautiful for sunset and the surfer dude's sons Reshan and Asoka have a fun beach bar here.

250 rupees to go to 1.5km east to the **Spice Garden** where you can get a pretty good cheap massage and from where you can hire a canopied boat and driver for 1-2 hrs for about 4500 rupees or \$45 to take you round the lake, to temples and cinnamon hut on an island on the lake. Really beautiful. Best time to do the latter is 4pm as all the wildlife comes out and it's cooler. Ask Sunil or Sudat, the houseboy from the Villa to call and book for you.

Snake Farm: Sunil will also take you here if this kind of thing rings your bell.



1,200 rupees to go one way 12km to **Mirissa Beach** - beautiful beach with some cool beach bars and restaurants - **Bay Moon** is our favorite bar, **Sudu Weli** is our favorite restaurant with great simple fish barbecues. These are towards the western headland best for body surfing and with a good right hand reef break beyond Weligama Bay. 40 minutes to get there along the coast in a tuk-tuk, 30 minutes in a van. Nice day out. Sweeping views back to Galle and down to Matara from the temple on the hill behind beach here.

Return Tuk-Tuk Trips:

You basically negotiate a little less than double if you want the driver to wait for you while you are in any of these places. It's kind practice to offer him a few hundred rupees advance if he is waiting for you for more than an hour so he can go and get some lunch. If you hire a tuk-tuk driver to be with you all day the least he will expect is 1,500, probably more like 2,000 or even 2,500 or 3,000 if you go far and have him waiting for ages.

Travelling by Tuk-Tuk:

It's your call but it's recommended that you use Sunil or one of his friends when you are heading anywhere from Tisara Villas as they have been very reliable and honest with all our guests and come highly recommended. Be aware that a ride in a tuk-tuk is sensory overload! But it is the easiest way of getting around especially with kids. If you want to hire a driver and van for longer excursions you can call Manjula - expensive but very reliable - or Nalin, the brother of Mahendra who owns Wijaya, who will provide one with good drivers. You are looking at 1,500 - 2,000 rupees to go into Galle one-way by van so it is much more expensive than a tuk-tuk.

Surfboards:

Best to hire is from Bertie, the owner of **Bay View** in Weligama. Your tuk-tuk driver will strap these suckers to the roof of the tuk-tuk and take you to the best surf breaks.

Scuba Diving:

Unawatuna Dive Center is a PADI certified diving center with several highly experienced diving instructors. The season for Scuba diving is from around November - April. A PADI certification course runs around \$400 while a daily dive is around \$40. The dive center has all the necessary equipment and wetsuits that are included in the price.



Street Food:

You'll probably be woken up most days by the melodies of the village bread van which seems to favor *jingle bells*, *it's a small world* or *green sleeves* competing in the distance every morning as they do their rounds. You'll soon get used to it! Annoying his music may be, but the food is first rate! The spicy pastries, fish filled buns and sweet bread rolls are perfect for breakfast or as a snack.

Also in Habaraduwa on beach side just to the right west of clock tower set back into a bunch of shops there is a pretty good roti shop doing chicken and rice etc. at super cheap prices. There is also an excellent roti shop on the main beach lane in Unawatuna.

You can buy king coconut or *thambili* from the roadside for 30 rupees per coconut. This is the best thirst quencher for on a hot summer day... all full of nature's goodness and no calories!



Places to Eat:

Wijaya, a legendary beach club in Thalpe has some of the best seafood and cocktails. A no-frills place on the beach, Wijaya is the favorite hang-out of the ex-pat crowd in Galle area. They have a wood burning pizza oven that churns out very good pizzas as well as a wide selection of seafood dishes.

Fortress Hotel, is an ultra-luxury hotel about 2km from the villas that serve up fancy foods in their restaurants. Good food and a highly rated spa but the prices too are rather extreme.



Peacock, on the Unawatuna strip has excellent crabs and seafood.

Long Beach Resort, a 4 star resort for mass tourism in nearby Koggala has an *a la carte* restaurant and a buffet which serves up some pretty good food. The prices are quite reasonable. If you are looking for some action during Christmas Eve or New year's Eve, they put on a huge barbecue on the beach with a fireworks display and dancing.

Nico's is a great café-bakery playing classical piano music and serving delicious croissants etc at back of Olanda Antiques in the Galle fort.

Nearest Beaches:

Closest beach is **Koggala Beach** which is basically 700 meters from the villa and in the back of Habaraduwa town. You can walk or bike there in the morning or late afternoon when it cools down. We don't advise it during the midday heat as there is barely any shade. Giant 3km stretch of sandy beach which ends up at the large Koggala Beach Resort complex. There is a place called **Wijantha's Chinese Restaurant** - basically a shack selling beer and dubious food with a big surf board mounted next to it and with sun beds. It is directly in front of the Habaraduwa clock tower junction. 10 min walk from the villas. A great spot for pre-breakfast or late afternoon dips although the waves can be quite chunky. Epic sunsets. If you decide to walk back to Habaraduwa junction from The Fortress, Koggala Beach Hotel (1.5-2km walk east along the beach) or Hotel Cantaloupe (2km stroll west along the beach) you should look out for Wijantha restaurant's giant upright surfboard as otherwise it's easy to overshoot. If you



are boiling by this stage you can ask a tuk-tuk at Habaraduwa junction to take you back to the Tisara gate for 75 rupees.

All longer staying guests at Tisara Villas get a free tuk-tuk ride to **Koggala Beach Resort** where they have plenty of sun beds, beach towels and an amazing beach frontage of more than 2 km. All Tisara guests also receive a 15% discount on food

and beverages at the resort. Koggala Beach Hotel has without a doubt the best beach in the southern coast of Sri Lanka. Even though there are 3 large resorts, the beach is so vast that one feels that there's nobody else around.

If you wish to travel to **Hikkaduwa beach**, the best bet is to hop in a local bus from Habaraduwa junction for 25 rupees. Sweaty and nerve wracking if you keep your eyes open but cheap! A lot of shops, restaurants, bars and clubs. Scuba diving and other water sports available.

Unawatuna beach is a mere 4 km from Tisara Vilas and they have a lovely bay with golden sands. A lot of action with many beach clubs, dive centers, nightclubs and discos.



Turtle Hatchery:

On the fringes of Koggala town is a small turtle hatchery that first opened in 1996. In an effort to promote responsible tourism and conservation, the hatchery buys turtle eggs off fishermen, in an attempt to discourage them from poaching & selling the eggs for food.



Visitors are educated on the importance of protecting turtle life, via the hatchery's facilities that care for newborn turtles until they are ready to be released back into the ocean, an experience that some lucky visitors may even have the opportunity to do themselves first-hand. The wide sandy beaches that exist round the island of Sri Lanka are utilized by several of the marine turtles for laying their eggs. The

commonest of these are the Loggerheads and the Leathery turtle while the green turtle is less common.

Koggala Beach Hotel with its 2km beach sees hundreds of turtles who come on full moon nights to lay eggs. The resort has been involved in conserving turtles since the late 1980s and to date have released more than 20,000 baby turtles. They have 4 species of turtles that come ashore to lay eggs and the resort will inform when a turtle comes in to lay eggs or when the baby turtles have hatched so you can visit and observe this miracle of nature.

Koggala Lake:

The largest lake in the island spanning more than 25,000 acres, Koggala Lake is an unspoilt ecological haven a few hundred meters away from Tisara Villas. The small islands scattered in the lake are ideal for bird watching at sunset. This beautiful turquoise lagoon is just a couple of kilometers away from Habaraduwa town and is dotted with rocky islands & fringed with mangroves. The lagoon teems with birdlife & supply prawns, oysters, crabs and clams in abundance. Motor boat trips & catamaran rides take you to the smaller islands around the lagoon, each showcasing a unique experience in itself.

Tea Factories & Spice Gardens:

The Handunugoda Plantation & Tea Centre is very popular for visitors who wish to obtain a comprehensive knowledge of the workings of tea, rubber & cinnamon Plantations. Sri Lanka was famed for its spices and the Southern province produces the best cinnamon in the world. Also visit a spice garden at Habaraduwa which grows spices and herbs used for Sri Lankan cuisine and medicines.





Martin Wickramasinghe Folk Museum:

A stunning location and one of Koggala's must-visits, this folk museum is inspired by and built upon the ideologies of Martin Wickramasinghe, Sri Lanka's most renowned Sinhalese writer of the twentieth century. The museum showcases the country's traditional cultures and was restored together with the eco-system that surrounds it with the aim of transforming Koggala, the place that is described in most of Wickramasinghe's works, to a more tangible reality for those who have read his writings and those who are looking for a firsthand experience in the heart of the writer's stories. The legend of his ancestral house is a rather interesting one given the fact that this piece of architecture was able to survive two world wars. The museum sits magnificently in a lush seven acre garden surrounded by several species of trees. Along with exhibits of the highly respected writer's personal collection, photographs & memorabilia & some history about the area, the museum also houses fascinating exhibits from traditional Sri Lankan life: everything from catching fish to chasing off malevolent spirits. The exhibits are interesting & well displayed, with information in English & Sinhalese.



Kottawa Reserve:

Easily recognizable by its towering dense canopy, this relatively small rainforest hosts a wide variety of exotic and endemic flora. The species are labeled to educate and the reserve makes for a wonderful excursion. A half days trip from Tisara Villas.

Sinharaja Forest Reserve:

Situated approximately 50 km away, it's the last major, undisturbed area of rainforest in Sri Lanka. This UNESCO World Heritage Site has hundreds of species of animals unique to Sri Lanka.

Hiyare Rain Forest:

Get off the beaten track and discover Hiyare rainforest - a lush 600-acre picture-postcard rainforest located just 40 minutes drive from Koggala. It's a veritable paradise for wildlife enthusiasts, with over 118 bird and 77 butterfly species.



Unawatuna Beach:

One of the finest locations in the world for surfing, Unawatuna Bay offers an idyllic bay with plenty of water sports and nightlife.

**Surfing from Ahangama to Midigama:**

The coast from the village of Ahangama to the village of Midigama, located between Koggala & Weligama Bay is one of the best surfing areas in Sri Lanka & attracts long-term surfers.

Diving and Snorkeling:

Sri Lanka offers world-class Scuba-Diving and Snorkeling tours. A multitude of tropical fish, magnificently colorful coral reefs and fascinating ship wrecks can be explored at several locations off the southern coast of Sri Lanka, providing breathtaking snorkeling and scuba diving opportunities. Unawatuna is the closest while Hikkaduwa, Mirissa and other spots also offer diving.

Galle Fort:

The Capital city of the Southern Province, Galle Fort was built by the Portuguese in the 16th century and is designated a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site. The old part of town is compact so you can explore by foot. A tour of the fort's fortified walls is the highlight of a visit to Galle.



Stilt Fishing at Ahangama:

A few kilometers from the Villas are something unique to the island, fishermen perched on sticks planted in the sea and fishing with a rod and line. This ancient form of fishing requires great skill and is practiced only in this region.



Kataragama - Murugan Kovil:

The domain of God Skanda, located in the Deep South of Sri Lanka, adjoining the popular Ruhuna Yala National Park and ancient Sithulpawwa Buddhist Monastery, Kataragama is a multi-religious sacred city that contains a Buddhist temple, Hindu shrine and Islamic Mosque. Mahawamsa, the great historical chronicle of Sri Lanka reveals the participation of warriors of the Kshatriya clan from Kataragama on the occasion of the arrival of the Bo sapling of Bodhi Tree, under which Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment in Bodh Gaya was brought to the city of Anuradhapura 2,300 years ago. Kataragama is one of the holiest shrines for Buddhists and Hindus of the island.

Kanneliya Forest Reserve:

This reserve contains 81% of the woody plant species endemic to Sri Lanka. After an invigorating trek through the jungle you can cool down with a bath under the unspoilt waters of the Kanneliya Waterfall. Nearby **Kottawa Forest Reserve** is another must visit site for nature lovers. A live herbarium with plants and trees gives you the chance to learn more about Sri Lanka's floral heritage.

Kirala Kelle Estuary:

This is an estuary located about 30 kilometers from Koggala. A large marshland with abundant mangroves and scrub forest, this reserve contains hundreds of species of birds, reptiles, butterflies and fish. Kirala Kelle area is classified as a medium status biodiversity area.

Udawalawe National Park:

With herds of elephants, wild buffalo, Sāmbhar deer and leopards, Uda Walawe is the Sri Lankan national park that best rivals the savanna reserves of Africa, and is a definite must visit stop for every tourist. The park's 30, 821 hectares centre on the large Uda Walawe Reservoir, fed by the Walawe Ganga. It's a two-day trip with an overnight stay to observe the wildlife.





Yala National Park:

One of the most visited and the second largest national park in Sri Lanka. Consisting of five blocks, two of which are now open to the public Yala is best known for its variety of wild animals. It is important for the conservation of Sri Lankan Elephants and aquatic birds and hosts a variety of ecosystems ranging from moist monsoon

forests to freshwater and marine wetlands. Yala is home to some 215 bird species including six species endemic to Sri Lanka. The number of mammals that has been recorded from the park is 44, and it has one of the highest leopard densities in the world.

Bundala National Wildlife Park:

Located about fifteen kilometers east of Hambantota, Bundala National Park is one of Sri Lanka's foremost destinations for birdwatchers, protecting an important area of coastal wetland famous for its abundant aquatic birdlife. The park is also home to significant populations of elephants, marsh & estuarine crocodiles, turtles & other fauna, including the leopard. Stretching along the coast east of Hambantota, Bundala National Park is ideal for an overnight stay.

Dikwella Lace Centre:

See local craftswomen at work using traditional 'beeralu' bobbin lace-making techniques for which the women of Dikwella village have been famous for generations. Watch the women create beautiful lace products, explore the museum, learn how important lace has been to Dikwella.

Dondra Lighthouse:

Dondra Head Lighthouse is an offshore lighthouse. It is located on Dondra Head near the southernmost point in Sri Lanka and is the tallest lighthouse in the country. Travelling south from this point you will encounter absolutely nothing until you reach Antarctica!



Whale Watching in Mirissa:

The sea off the coast of Mirissa offers a great opportunity as it is currently a major hotspot for spotting Whales and Dolphins. The main port is Dondra Point because it is located closely to their migration path. Prime whale watching season is from November - April.



Blow Hole, Dikwella:

At Kudawela, 6 kilometers to the east of Dikwella, secreted in a beautiful beach of golden surf and turquoise sea is the only blow hole in the country and one of the handful found in the world. This is locally known as the "Hoo-maniya" - named thus because of the sound the blow hole makes before the water spurts upward.



Kongala Sudarshnaramaya:

In close proximity to Hakmana, this vihara is known among the locals as the temple with the technical school. Situated at the foot of a hill, part of which has been flattened to build the temple, it is surrounded by lush paddy fields and a rustic village. Originally built during the Kandyan period, the image house of this vihara is very interesting architecturally since it combines two functions - an image house and that of a stupa. There are only few of these dual purpose structures in Sri Lanka. The statues and paintings now visible in the image house date from around 1924.

Kataluva Purvarama Maha Viharaya:

Around 5 km beyond Koggala lies one of the south's most absorbing temples, the Kataluva Purvarama Mahavihara. The temple was built originally in the 13th century with additions in the late 19th century. This temple is renowned for its remarkable Kandyan-style paintings in the main shrine, dating from the late nineteenth century, illustrating an interesting piece of social history. Some of the Jataka tales - episodes from the Buddha's series of 550 previous lives- scenes painted here are said to be 200 years old. Cameo-style paintings of Queen Victoria & the Queen Mother too are found, in gratitude of Queen Victoria's role in ensuring the free practice of Buddhism during the British occupation of the island.



