

amanwella

Experience Guide





Writer Leonard Woolf described Sri Lanka's exquisite south coast a century ago saying, "The evening air is warm and gentle. An enormous sky meets with an enormous sea." Nothing much has changed. The beaches scalloping the coastline are as pristine as they were when this tear-shaped island was called 'Serendib' by the ancient Persians, its jungles reveal ancient temples and holy caves, and its national parks are home to a plethora of indigenous species including elephant and leopard.

Claiming its own beach on an extensive property just minutes from the fishing village of Tangalle, Amanwella is truly a destination unto itself on this breathtaking coastline. Whether relaxing poolside, doing yoga in the coconut grove, learning to cook a Sri Lankan curry, fishing in the bay or whiling away time in the library, it is impossible to feel at a loose end. Yet to not venture beyond the resort's boundaries would be to miss experiencing a unique culture and unparalleled natural beauty. The resort offers a broad range of personalised activities and excursions, both offshore and into the island's lush interior.





Ocean-based Adventures

The south coast's golden beaches are lapped by the Indian Ocean, with some bays boasting world-class surfing breaks and others the gentlest swell. Not just a playground for human visitors, the coastline is a diverse ecosystem: Blue whales pass by on their annual migration and the beaches are nesting sites for five different turtle species. Learn to surf with a local pro, watch turtles hatching by moonlight or spend a day deep sea fishing. Amanwella can arrange private transfers, a personal guide and a delicious picnic lunch – just don't forget your swimwear and sunscreen.



Ocean-based Adventures

Rekawa Turtle Conservation Project

Watching turtles laying their eggs or baby turtles hatching and making their way over the sand and into the sea by moonlight is an unforgettable experience. Just 10km east of Tangalle, Rekawa runs an award-winning community turtle conservation project that employs ex-poachers of turtle eggs to protect one of Sri Lanka's most important sea turtle nesting sites. Five different turtle species they lay their eggs in the sand here every night throughout the year. The best time to see turtles is between January and April, and Rekawa's record is 23 turtles visiting in one night. This two- to three-hour excursion includes private transfers, entrance fees, gratuities and refreshments.

Whale and Dolphin Watching

The south coast of Sri Lanka is considered one of the best places in the world to see blue and sperm whales. As well as the whales, large pods of spinner dolphins and the occasional turtle frolic in the calm waters off the continental shelf south of Dondra Head. It is a good idea to take sunscreen and your swim wear with you. We recommend either taking a picnic along or booking lunch at the stunning Mirissa Hills for their legendary rice and curry lunch. We will provide you with cold drinks and snacks. The journey to the Mirissa usually takes one and a half hours by car. While the excursion can last between 3 to 5 hours, depending on the sightings. The whales customarily pass the southern coast of Sri Lanka between December and April. Recommend starting early in the morning for best viewing options. You travel to the edge of the continental shelf, 6km south of Dondra Head, the most southerly point of Sri Lanka.



Lagoon Floating Lounge

The serene waters of Mawella Lagoon provide an ideal setting for sunrise or sunset canapes aboard Amanwella's floating lounge. With a glass of champagne in hand, drift along the verdant shoreline and out into the tranquil deep, spotting pelicans, kingfishers and other water birds as the calm surface reflects the sky above.

The biggest lagoon in the Hambantota District, Mawella lies just a 10-minute drive from Amanwella. This experience takes about 90 minutes, with recommended departure times at 06.30am or 05.00pm. A must for nature lovers, the evening experience also offers the chance to witness fruit bats as they take flight for a night of hunting.

Surfing

Surfing can be arranged on one of two nearby beaches which are both within a ten minutes' drive from Amanwella. Unakaruwa has a right-hand break that is usually only suitable for advanced and professional surfers. Nilwella is ideal for beginners as it has a sandy bottom and both right- and left-hand breaks.

Surfing can be done at any time of year and will be dependent on the weather on a particular day. The best waves are usually between April and November. This package includes 2-3-hour surfing, vehicle transfers, boards and beverages. Private surf instructor is available for addition charge.

Snorkeling

Snorkeling is possible at Amanwella amongst the rocks off the southern headland, close to the swimming pool. Complimentary masks, snorkels, fins, and life jackets may be obtained from our lifeguards at The Coconut Grove.





Adventures on Land

Sri Lanka's historic and cultural heritage embraces more than 2,000 years. Known as Lanka – the 'resplendent land' – in the ancient Indian epic Ramayana, the island has numerous other references that testify to the region's natural beauty. Islamic folklore maintains that Adam and Eve were offered refuge on the island as solace for their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, while Asian poets, noting Sri Lanka's geographical location and lauding its beauty, called it the 'pearl upon the brow of India'. Amanwella offers personally tailored excursions to explore the south coast's villages, temples and national parks.



National Parks

Within two hours by car from Amanwella, a brace of national parks promises wildlife sightings to rival the most celebrated African game reserves. Elusive leopards and wild elephants roam Udawalawe National Park, while Bundala attracts huge numbers of migratory birds. Yala is the country's second largest National Park and home to at least 44 mammalian species.

Bundala National Park

This park 45 minutes east of Tangalle is an area of open scrub around the coast, offering great opportunities for bird watching, with around 150 reported species and the occasional sighting of elephants and crocodiles. The salt pans attract a vast number of migratory shorebirds, making this 6,216-hectare park one of the most important wetlands in Sri Lanka. The best time to visit is between November and March, when the winter migratory birds arrive. Numerous grey langur monkeys populate the larger trees and in the scrub jungle you may also come across jackals, hares, and spotted deer. We recommend a morning visit to Bundala, departing at 6.00am. Once inside the park, guests are transferred to a 4WD jeep and accompanied by a park tracker. This 5-6-hour activity includes transfers, entrance fees, park tracker and 4WD, food and beverages.

Yala National Park

Located two hours northeast of Tangalle; Sri Lanka's most visited wildlife reserve covers an area of 1,260 km. The park's wildlife has its own distinctive charm, with huddles of colorful painted storks perched on the edge of lagoons between the dozing crocodiles, fantailed peacocks kicking up clouds of dust, while monkeys chatter on the treetops. The park's most famous residents are its elusive leopards.

We recommend either a morning visit, departing at 0500Hrs or an afternoon visit, departing at noon. Once inside the park, you are transferred to a 4WD jeep and accompanied by a park tracker. This 7-8-hour activity includes transfers, entrance fees, park tracker and 4WD, food and beverages.



Udawalawe National Park

This National Park is situated one and a half hours northeast of Tangalle. This is one of the island's most popular national parks, with a total size of 30,800 hectares, along with the bordering reservoir. It is best known for its elephants (estimated to number around 400, including six tuskers) and bird watching opportunities. It is primarily open parkland traversed by a main river and numerous streams which make elephant sightings particularly accessible. Often the pachyderms can be seen in herds of up to 100 or more. Other animals include spotted deer, langur monkeys, jackals, hares, monitor lizards, migratory birds, wild boar, and water buffalo.

We recommend either a morning visit, departing at 06.00am or an afternoon visit, departing at 01.00pm. Once inside the park, you are transferred to a 4WD jeep and accompanied by a park tracker. This 6-7-hour activity includes transfers, entrance fees, park tracker, 4WD and food and beverages.

Mulgirigala Rock Temple

This temple is situated a half hour north of Tangalle. It is a monastic site on an isolated 210-metre-high rock rising almost vertically out of the surrounding forest. The rock was the site of an important discovery, the Tikaola - leaf scripts discovered in the 19th century by George Tumour. These scripts offered a key to the translation of Sri Lanka's most informative ancient text, the 'Mahavamsa'. This stepped path is separated by platforms where cave temples, featuring murals and Buddha images, can be explored. We recommend an early morning or late afternoon visit to Mulgirigala when it is cooler. If you leave at 4:00 pm, you can enjoy sunset at the top of the rock. The climb to the top can be quite tiring, at over 500 steps, and modest attire is recommended. This 3-hour activity includes vehicle hire, entrance fees, a guide, gratuities and non-alcoholic beverages.

Biking

Just 15 minutes away from the hotel, guests can visit a typical Sri Lankan village, Palathuduwa. Ensnared in rich paddy fields and a long-established lifestyle redolent with the local culture, guests can experience the daily life of the local inhabitants. From here, there are mountain bikes available to take you on a scenic journey through the countryside for 12km into nature and the entire splendor it has to offer, ranging from lush foliage to exotic wildlife. There will be an opportunity to enjoy a scrumptious picnic and visit a Buddhist temple along the way, creating the perfect blend of exertion and pacification at the end of the two hour and thirty-minute experience, to nurture mind, body, and soul.





Adventures by Air

Travelling by helicopter or seaplane is an exciting way to see this spectacular country from the air. Helicopter flights from Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) in Colombo to Tangalle take just 60 minutes. Shorter flights to Galle or slightly longer journeys inland to Sigiriya and the Cultural Triangle or the tea plantations of Sri Lanka's fabled Hill Country can also be arranged.



Helicopter Tour to Sigiriya or to the Hill Country

This involves soaring above the surrounding plains to towering heights and to the cloud hugging rock of Sigiriya, which is regarded by many as one of the wonders of the world. We can arrange a day trip to Sigiriya, leaving Amanwella at 08.00am and coming back at 03.00pm via an Airbus Helicopter AS350B3.

Guests first fly over lush greenery, mountains, waterfalls, and the hill country capital of Kandy, before making a final stop near Sigiriya. A driver and tour guide will be waiting to take you to the top of the citadel. The citadel of Sigiriya rises sheer and impregnable out of the plains of the dry zone, sitting atop a huge outcrop of gneiss rock towering 200m above the surrounding countryside.

Helicopter Tour to the Hill Country

For those who would like to visit Sri Lanka's fabled Hill Country with its tea estates and mountains, Amanwella can arrange a day trip leaving at 8 am, again via an Airbus Helicopter AS350B3 with a scenic flyby of Adam's Peak, Sri Lanka's most sacred mountain. After landing at Hatton, you will be met by a car and driver and take you on a tea plantation tour before having lunch and proceeding back to the helicopter.

This activity only includes return transfers from Amanwella to Tangalle helipad. The cost of vehicles, guides and meals will be calculated at the time of booking, according to what you wish to do when you are there.



Cultural Insight

Sri Lanka claims the world's second-oldest continuous written history – one that chronicles the Indo-Aryan Sinhalese or 'People of the Lion', who arrived from northern India around 500 BC to establish magnificent Buddhist kingdoms on the central plains, and the Tamils of Dravidian stock, who arrived a few centuries later from southern India. Colonised by the Portuguese, the Dutch and finally the British, the island gained independence in 1948. Amanwella delights in offering insight into the rich cultural heritage of this fascinating country and its many influences.



Pottery Village

The quaint village of Palapotta is a 25-minute drive from Amanwella through scenic Beliatta Road. It is home to the family of master - potters Sophie Nona and Asoka Nona. For many years, Asoka and family have molded, with the aid of simple tools, clay pots for curd bowls, and various sizes of pots for water storage and open-fire home cooking. The terracotta clay raw material is sourced from two nearby riverbeds and the firing of the semi-finished products is amazingly done in open pits with a mixture of wood, rice and coconut husk. Visiting guests are greeted with warm smiles from the eldest to the youngest member of the household and are encouraged by the pleasant disposition of the talented family to try their hand at this simple yet all-important art form.

Village Nature Walk

Amanwella is situated close to Wellawathuara Village. An early morning or an evening stroll along the village paths that wind through the jungle provides an interesting insight into daily village life. Chances abound to also view the diverse plants and wildlife in the area including monkeys, migratory birds, monitor lizards, hares, and mongoose. This 1-hour walk is complimentary for guests.



Market Visit

Tangalle is a ten-minute drive east of Amanwella and is a typically bustling Sri Lankan town. Its large fishing fleet and busy harbor, make for an interesting experience. The daily fish, fruit and vegetable markets provide a colourful insight into real Sri Lankan life. It is recommended to leave for the markets early in the morning for the freshest produce. Tangalle is also host to a colourful market on Wednesdays and Sundays where villagers come from all over the region to sell their wares. On Saturday, a market is also held in Dickwella, which is a town twenty-minute drive west of Amanwella. These are not the sort of markets visitors will return with laden handicrafts to take home, instead they offer a genuine Sri Lankan experience and the opportunity to spot a variety of unusual and wonderful wares. This 2-3-hour activity includes the vehicle and nonalcoholic beverages.



Navajeevana Centre

Our ethos at Amanwella is very much about supporting the community around us, and the Navajeevana Centre is endlessly deserving for the amazing work it does with the disabled and disadvantaged of Hambantota district. Founded in 1987, Navajeevana started off as a health centre and pre-school for children but has grown to become the primary organisation in the area working with people of all ages who face challenges. Open Monday to Friday, the Centre offers a beautiful coffee shop with sea views and a craft shop selling handmade gifts ranging from table linen to jewellery. All proceeds go to the Navajeevana community.

Tuk Tuk Tour

Our driver will take you on an eye-opening tour of the area and what better way to travel than in one of our local tuk tuks. Your tuk tuk will be decked out with wooden floors, Wi-Fi, and refreshing cool drinks. You can visit popular, bustling destinations such as the blowhole, harbour - a vital hub of trade, and the local market, brimming with home-grown produce. He will also take you to the beautiful sights of nature, the breathtaking local beaches of Tangalle and the lush paddy fields. The tour winds down with a visit to Galgoda Kanda temple, which dates back to the early arrival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and established by King Devanam Piya Thissa in 307 BC. Spiritual restoration is to be found here, as the monks of this temple will bless you



Culinary Experiences

Sri Lanka is renowned for its cuisine, and Amanwella celebrates its variety with a full menu of authentic dishes made from local, seasonal ingredients. In addition, the resort specialises in Asian and Mediterranean cuisines, with a focus on fresh seafood. Amanwella offers a number of unique culinary experiences both on-property and in the surrounding villages and countryside – as hands-on as you desire!



Private Beach Dinner

This can be arranged at one of two stunning settings on the beach at the edge of the ocean, either in front of The Beach Club Restaurant or in The Coconut Grove. Candles and 'ginipandans' (Sri Lankan oil torches) complement a seafood barbecue and if you are very lucky, you may see a turtle come to lay her eggs during the evening! You have the option of witnessing traditional dancers or fire limbo and can choose from a series of set menus that we have designed for you, which are available from your Guest Assistant.

Romantic Dinner

Another option is a private, romantic, candle-lit dinner by our pool or on the private terrace of your suite. A special romantic menu is available from your Guest Assistant.

Sunset Cocktails on the Beach

Nothing quite says beach holiday more than sipping refreshing cocktails on the beach at sunset. All you need to do is sit back and relax as the beautiful sunset unfolds in the sky in front of you in a myriad of breathtaking colours and listen to the calming rhythm of the ocean, as we bring you a selection of canapés and our very own signature Arrack cocktails. This truly makes for a quintessentially unforgettable experience.



Traditional Sri Lankan Cooking on Amanwella's Beach

If you would still like to learn about the Sri Lankan culinary arts, we have perfect spot at our little outdoor kitchen down in The Coconut Grove. Right on the beach, you can see the ocean and get cooled off by its breeze while creating some of the island's traditional dishes together with our Head Chef or one of his team. We suggest you do the cooking class in the late morning so that you can enjoy the dishes for lunch. This includes an accompanying chef, soft drinks, beers, all ingredients and of course, the lunch or dinner you have cooked.

Mixology Class

For the budding cocktail connoisseur amongst you, this mixology class is a perfect way to take centre stage at the Lounge and whip up all sorts of concoctions. This class is led by a professional bartender, who will give you a practical and interactive demonstration. Each participant will be given the opportunity to mix their own cocktail to enjoy. All the equipment, recipes, and ingredients for this experience will be laid out for you and you will make specially crafted signature cocktails with exotic flavours, some of which will be made with Arrack. It is a distinctly Sri Lankan distilled alcohol made from fermented coconut flowers. Your bartender will explain the history and provenance of the cocktails and make sure that you know exactly how to use all the cocktail making equipment. Your creations can then be enjoyed with lovely canapés, and you will never look at a cocktail menu in the same manner.

Mocktail Class

Not to leave out our younger guests, we host cocktail classes with non-alcoholic ingredients, so this creative experience can be enjoyed by the whole family. The class will also be hosted in the Lounge and will be a fun, interactive class for non-drinkers.



Wellness at Amanwella

The murmur of waves and gentle rustle of coconut palms soothe all who come to Amanwella. Wellness treatments incorporate indigenous herbs, plants and flowers, and experienced therapists draw on Ayurvedic traditions to ensure that every massage, facial, body polish and wrap is tailored to individual needs.



Signature Treatment

Enjoy a traditional warm-oil Ayurvedic treatment such as the signature Abhyanga massage that helps to eliminate impurities from the body while rejuvenating body and mind. India's 5,000-year-old system of preventive medicine, Ayurveda combines the Sanskrit word for 'life' with veda meaning 'science' and encourages balance in all things.

In-suite Relaxation

Spa treatments take place in the privacy of guest suites with massage beds set up in the pool courtyard or air-conditioned indoors – whichever you prefer. Every treatment begins with a gentle head massage and herbal inhalation to relax and prepare you for the treatment.

Private Yoga

Wake with the sun and join your personal yoga instructor on the beach or in a private glade. Sessions are tailored to suit individual needs, goals and fitness levels and promise that rejuvenating endorphin rush brought on by exercising in nature.

Foot Massage on the Beach

Enjoy the ultimate in relaxation with our signature foot massage on the beach. Recline in the shade, on our comfortable chairs, located at The Coconut Grove, with a glass of champagne, while your feet are gently, yet deeply massaged.

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