



Just you, your board and the waves under the glowing sunrise

The ocean breeze blowing through Arugambay provided relief from the tropical sun as we explored the famous holiday destination. Once predominantly known for its fantastic waves, Arugambay now invites visitors to explore its diverse attractions throughout the year. Arugambay has been recognised by Lonely Planet as the eighth best destination to visit in Asia for 2018.

Words Gayathri Kothalawala

Photographs Menaka Aravinda

While being popular among travellers, the southeast coast of Sri Lanka retains its rural charm, human alterations only enhancing what nature has kindly bestowed upon the land. Well away from the modern, fast paced way of life the southeast coast has a more laidback approach.

We visited Arugambay at the beginning of summer and were fortunate to observe orange-clad pilgrims on their annual pada yathra pilgrimage resting by the roadside or walking across paddy fields where farmers were busily reaping the harvest. Herds of cattle and goats lounged under the shade cast by trees while birds flew overhead.



The amazing seascape is the star attraction in Arugambay

As we got closer to the town centre, quirky shops, restaurants and hotels replaced these idyllic sights. The streets were teeming with both international and Sri Lankan travellers. Despite the busy foot traffic, it was soon apparent that life in Arugambay is deliciously slow-paced and relaxed.

Having reached Arugambay, it is natural to make our way to the sea. Surfers patiently straddling their surfing boards waiting for the perfect wave added an extra flare of colour to the turquoise waters of the bay. On the beach, holidaymakers lounged on the beach, working on their tans.

Arugambay is one of the world's best surfing locations, yet, today Arugambay is no longer limited to surfing or a season. Travellers can take advantage of its convenient distance from the Kumana National Park also known as Yala East, to see the wildlife of Sri Lanka; the lagoons in Pottuvil, Urani and Panama offer up-close views of elephants, crocodiles and bird species; there are religious and historical sites to visit; exploring the area on bicycles and stunning sun rises to observe. Arugambay is a destination for everyone and there is no specific time to visit. The weather is glorious throughout the year.



After a busy day of harvesting paddy

A visit to this part of the island is best done leisurely, over lingering days where you can tick off the items on your itinerary one by one with no particular rush. We simply idled at the beach, watching the surfers riding the waves as the sun began its descent and dusk coloured the sky. We could see the land curving to form the wide bay, and as darkness began to gather, fires were lit up all along the beach, creating a fiery glowing line.

Stars began to twinkle in the sky, and it was time to think of the cosy warmth that only a good night's rest on a comfy bed can give. Luckily for us, the greater Arugambay area that includes Whisky Point have perfected the art of hospitality and the intrepid traveller can select the perfect accommodations from a host of hotels in and around Arugambay.

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The Blue Wave Hotel, Arugambay



A stone elephant welcomes you to Blue Wave Hotel

Blue Wave is a three-star hotel situated along the main road of Arugambay. As you enter the lobby, an elephant carved out of a single slab of stone greets you. Comfortable chairs placed

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around the lobby lures the travellers to sink into their cosy depths and bask in the cool breeze that flutter throughout the area.

Blue Wave focuses on recreating a home away from home for the guests who come to find rest and relaxation within its walls. 30 deluxe rooms and a family suite with an additional interconnecting room offer spacious accommodations and comfort. The family suite offers a private entrance so that the residents' privacy is ensured.

King-sized beds in double and triple rooms are perfect for families. However, Blue Wave offers three additional twin rooms and four rooms with interconnecting facilities for large families. There is a room that has been designated for differently abled guests' convenience as well. Each room from the first floor up offer private balconies.



The makings of a comfortable stay

As the only star class hotel in Arugambay, Blue Wave Hotel is equipped with facilities that bring Arugambay closer to the comforts and conveniences the guests have left behind at home. Each room offers both hot and cold water, cable TV, ironing and other facilities. The

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hotel provides ample parking as well.

Customer satisfaction is one of the highest priorities at Blue Wave, which focuses on treating the guests like family members. The Hotel believes that happy children make happy parents, and thus, caters zealously to the needs of their young guests. Guests with young children are provided with baby cots, and should the child wish for a particular food item, the Blue Wave restaurant is willing to oblige to their requests.

On the ground floor, near the restaurant area is the largest swimming pool in Arugambay with a depth of four feet, with attached baby pool.

The bar, overlooking the blue pool sparkling under the sun, is spacious, well lit and offers a pool table and an overhead projector. The ground floor also offers the only gymnasium in Arugambay so that guests can maintain their fitness routines.



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The blue waters of the pool sparkle under the sun

From the balcony on the second floor guests can enjoy panoramic views of the sea, this is also ideal for small functions. A banquet hall, which can accommodate 250 pax offers a more spacious area for special functions and conferences.

An Ayurveda massage centre where two qualified masseuses provide Ayurveda treatments presents an opportunity for the guests to take better care of their bodies after a day spent outdoors.

Two daily tours allow the guests to experience the wonder of the Kumana National Park. Blue Wave also offers camping excursions and village tours to Kumana as well. Guests are also encouraged to visit all surf points for surfing.

Blue Wave offers a range of international and Sri Lankan cuisine and an a la carte menu. The restaurant takes into consideration guests' needs and its schedule is designed to offer the best possible dining hours for the guest.

At Blue Wave, the guest is within easy reach of the exhilarating streets of Arugambay and the beach. The hotel incorporates all the comforts of home with the best possible hospitality and its airy spaces and high ceilings subtly foreshadow you of the utter freedom that your vacation has in store for you.



The Blue Wave Hotel
The Blue Wave Hotel Road, Arugambay, Pottuvil 5

Arugambay for Everyone, Every Day!

(+94 63) 492 9929

reservations@thebluewavehotel.lk

bluewavearugambay.com

Dream Garden, Whisky Point



A garden paradise



Christa Schoen and Andrea Capuccini,
Founders/Directors with their daughter Stella

The luscious and vibrant garden that greets the visitor does justice to Dream Garden's name. Situated close to the Urani Lagoon and beach, the landscape is a welcome surprise within the tropical climate that surrounds it.

Located within sight of two famous surfing destinations, Whisky Point and Pottuvil Point, Dream Garden is a veritable garden where two villas, two apartments and six bedrooms provide hospitality to guests. Hanging from the trees near the reception area are bird nests, furthering the illusion of a garden.

Flowering trees and well-paved pathways lead the guests further into the complex. Flora is a common theme within the complex, with floral art hanging on the walls and even the room keys engraved with natural scenery.

Dream Garden offers a plethora of services to their guests. The fully air conditioned rooms are spacious and furnished for comfort, offering Wi-Fi facilities, cable TV, fridges and safety deposit boxes. Hot water is supplied by solar panels installed on the roofs, and guests who reserve the villas or apartment are entitled to laundry services.

The premises also contain a shallow swimming pool and a miniature waterfall that cascades down to the pool and its rhythmic tinkling noise can be heard from the restaurant, which is situated nearby.

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Dream Garden has the sole bar in Whisky Point and offers a range of beverages including exciting cocktails and various types of liquor. With a coffee machine and pizza oven placed within the restaurant, customers are treated to genuine Italian coffee and pizza prepared with ingredients imported from Italy. The Sri Lankan cuisine prepared with the right amount of spices can be enjoyed by any international traveller.

The open-air area where you can lounge in comfort either reading a book or simply relaxing makes it ideal for the yoga classes conducted during the day.



A miniature waterfall cascades into the pool

One of the unique features of Dream Garden is its water filter system where guests can enjoy clean drinking water from any tapline in the resort. This initiative by Dream Garden is an effort to preserve the environment from plastic water bottles. Dream Garden arranges transport for the guests as well as safaris to Kumana National Park and safaris to the Urani lagoon. The guests are also treated to stunning sun rises.

Bursting with plant life and bird song, Dream Garden is a great place for experienced surfers as well as novices to stay. While professional surfers can easily surf to their hearts' content, Dream Garden offers surfing instructions and surfboards for guests staying at the

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villas or the apartment.

Dream Garden is a beautiful blend of both coastal and inland features, balancing the beach with the lush greenery of a garden. Guests will be able to get the best of both worlds while indulging in the services offered by the hotel and the amiable hospitality of the staff.



Dream Garden

Whisky Point, Urani, Pottuvil

(+94 63) 205 0754

info@dreamgardensrilanka.com

dreamgardensrilanka.com

The Coconut, Whisky Point



Sit under the shade and enjoy the fish spa



A M Naleem, Proprietor

The Coconut lies facing Whisky Point, and throughout the property there is an indefinable sense of tranquillity that guests perceive almost subconsciously. The vast land upon which it sits is serene, and birdsong fills the air.

At The Coconut, life is wonderfully unhurried; guests can bask in the gently mellow atmosphere from any point within the complex, as there are hammocks hung under the shade of the trees for that very purpose.

There is a charming rusticity to The Coconut that is further enhanced as the guests walk into their respective rooms. Three of the double rooms have a charisma that comes from simple facilities, ceiling fans and traditional mosquito nets that remind you of childhood nights at your own home.

There are three triple rooms that are air-conditioned and a deluxe room in addition to the double rooms. Each room has a terrace connected to it with comfortable lounging chairs.

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Two minimalist cabanas, circular in shape with thatched roofs, offer accommodations to travellers who are looking for a more simple and modest stay. The cabanas are equipped with mosquito nets and fans in line with their modest facades.

The capacious restaurant welcomes the cool breeze that blows in from the ocean. Once you exit the restaurant area, you find a circular pond. Standing next to the pond is a tree with a branch hanging directly over the pond. Attached to the branch is a wide swing with a comfortable cushion. Guests can choose to either sit on the swing or simply sit around the bank of the pond and dip their feet into the pond, which also functions as a foot spa. Sitting in the shade provided by the tree as dozens of tiny fish nip at your feet can be an extraordinary experience and The Coconut is unique in offering this particular experience to the travellers who come to Arugambay.



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A spacious family room

Travellers can also make use of the excursions organised by The Coconut to explore the Urani Lagoon or the Kumana National Park. An opportunity to take a step back from the fast paced way of life, once a guest enters The Coconut; they are enveloped by a sense of serenity. The expansive property offers ample parking spaces.



The Coconut
Whisky Point, Urani, Pottuvil
(+94) 77 420 3674
thecoconut.homestay@gmail.com

Paper Moon Kudils, Whisky Point

Arugambay for Everyone, Every Day!



The thatched-roofs of the Kusini and Kadal provide a colourful contrast to the red-tiled Kudils



Arugambay for Everyone, Every Day!

Perumal Partheepan, Partner and Executive Director

Paper Moon Kudils is the first hotel to arrive in Whisky Point, a favourite surfing spot among surfers of all proficiency levels, and provides a unique twist on hospitality.

There are 20 kudils- so named based on the colloquial term for living spaces. Ten of these kudils are located on the garden side and marked as Paper Moon one, with the other ten located on the pool/restaurant side and marked Paper Moon two.

Each kudil has the same basic features; a king-sized bed with attached bathroom and veranda. Despite its simplicity, a kudil has a snug aura that invites guests to feel at home. The airy rooms have ceiling fans as well as air conditioners with space to accommodate an additional single bed.

The Kusini, or the restaurant has a warm ambience created by its wooden furniture, floor and thatched roof. From the restaurant area, the guests can observe the live action in the open kitchen where wholesome and spicy meals are freshly prepared. In naming the restaurant, the owners have once again paid homage to the Sri Lankans who make their homes in the southeast coast of Sri Lanka: 'kusini' is the Tamil word for 'kitchen'.

Paper Moon Kudils has its own garden where papaya trees, cabbages, eggplants, manioc, peanuts and other vegetable are grown. These fresh produce are used in the kitchen to prepare wholesome meals that the guests enjoy.



The Kusini offers delectably wholesome meals prepared with organic ingredients

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Stepping off from the Kusini, the guest comes upon the pale blue Water Hole, the swimming pool surrounded by sun beds. The first swimming pool in Whisky Point, the Water Hole reminds the guests of the elephants who come to the nearby water holes in search of water. A shower stands next to the water hole, and a sandy lounging area with colourful beach umbrellas spreads out before it, leading up to the beach and the nearby Whisky Point.

The Kadal is the chill-out lounge and is just a short walk away from the Water Hole. Raised above the ground on a platform, the Kadal's combination of dancing (rocking) as well as sleeping (lounging) chairs, stunning views of the ocean and the sound of waves crashing against the beach are capable of lulling the guest to a relaxing stupor. The Tamil word 'kadal' means 'sea' and is the perfect name for this chill-out area from where you can hear the constant thunder of waves.



Lounge on the sun beds near the Water Hole as the sun sets

Paper Moon Kudils also offers surfing lessons and organises safaris to the Kumana National Park and the Urani Lagoon. Transport is also arranged according to guests' requirements, together with a daily free service to and from Arugambay.

The hotel further enhanced its services by installing a Haagen-Dazs ice cream freezer in the Kusini, offering a selection of exciting flavours from the internationally renowned ice cream brand to its guests.

Its location near Whisky Point is unobtrusive and the uninterrupted silence is perfect for guests to luxuriate in each other's company. Life at Paper Moon Kudils encourage guests to be self-sustained; surrounded by a welcoming staff, guests can enjoy a different way of life.

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Paper Moon Kudils
Whisky Point, Arugambay
(+94) 71 997 9797
booking@papermoonkudils.lk
papermoonkudils.lk

Arugambay Roccos, Arugambay



Arugambay Roccos offer uninterrupted views from the Main Road to the beach



A M Naleem, Partner and Executive Director

Arugambay is a vibrant tourist destination, and its vivaciousness is perfectly echoed at Arugambay Roccas. It is designed in such a way that Arugambay Roccas has the distinction of being the only hotel to offer an uninterrupted view from the main road to the ocean. Arugambay Roccas is built following a cube theme which evokes a modern, European style and design.

Stepping through the glass doors of Arugambay Roccas, guests are greeted at the Square – the restaurant area. Once seated at one of the comfortable tables, guests can observe the action in the kitchen where food is prepared per the request of the guests. The glass walled Square offers amazing views of the bustling main street on one side. On the other, guests can also observe coconut and neem (kohomba) trees leading up to the Water Cube-swimming pool.

A staircase off The Square takes the guest to The Space, the floor above The Square, which has a romantic atmosphere particularly at night. The seating area is open to the cool breeze wafting from the sea, carrying just a hint of salt in it. Guests can enjoy delectable meals at The Space while revelling in the gentle wind.

The visitor steps outside the Square to the grassy lawn bordered by coconut and neem trees. The pathway across the lawn leads up to the Water Cube. At the attached pool for children, young guests play in the water.



The Water Cube looks like a fairy tale oasis

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Beyond the Water Cube is the beach leading up to the sea. The wide stretch of beach between the Water Cube and the ocean offers numerous sunbeds under colourful beach umbrellas where guests can lounge: reading, napping or simply getting a tan.

22 perfectly symmetrical cubes- commodious rooms with attached bathrooms face the stunning turquoise blue waters of the sea, surrounding the Water Cube. Of the 22 cubes, 11 are located at ground level and offer verandas where guests can sit reading a book or napping, while the remaining first floor 11 cubes offer balconies where guests can enjoy the breeze and observe the seascape. The air-conditioned rooms offer hot water and Wi-Fi. Whilst the interior is compact and has a simple layout, there is elegance within the rooms.



Evenings are great at Arugambay Roccas

Arugambay Roccas organises Kumana safaris and Urani Lagoon safaris for its guests. Its location off the main street of Arugambay allows the guests to reach other locations. Free transport is provided to and from Paper Moon Kudils in Whisky Point within a short amount of time.

Being the sister property of Paper Moon Kudils, Arugambay Roccas also offer Haagen-Dazs ice cream to both international and Sri Lankan guests who come to Arugambay, once again

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redefining hospitality.



Arugambay Roccas
Main Street, Arugambay
(+94) 71 810 9999
booking@arugambayroccos.lk
arugambayroccos.lk