

Arugambay Surf Resort: Feel The Nature



As we step into this beachside guesthouse, we are greeted by a friendly “hello”. Cabanas, complete with thatched roofs, stand on one side, while we are led into an open restaurant overlooking the Eastern coast, where surfers climb the rising waves. We’re at Arugambay Surf Resort, where the cheerful owners are ever ready to welcome their guests with open arms inviting them not only to just feel the nature of Arugam Bay, but also to be part of their family.

By Madhushala Senaratne | Photography by Mahesh Bandara

Located just minutes away from the Arugam Point, regarded as one of the best surf points in Sri Lanka, the guesthouse has been designed very much in keeping with the nature of the area. Having been born as a small shop that served the weary fisherfolk of Arugam Bay, the Surf Resort traces its roots to the 1970s.

“My father started this,” says M H A Raheem, its Managing Director, recalling the early days. Once a simple fishing village, Raheem’s father who had come to Arugam Bay in the 1970s made a living by selling rotti to the fishermen. As time went, a few tourists were also seen roaming the area, and as more people sought his rotti, several beachside huts were set up for visitors to dwell in.

His father had then received help from a lady who was working at the Hilton in Sydney, says Raheem, adding that she trained him to prepare dishes to suit the food styles of the Westerners. The name Arugambay Hilton was also coined during this time. Raheem later joined his father, helping him develop the guesthouse, and currently works with his four brothers at the hotel. A few others have also joined the staff of the Surf Resort.

With time, the business gathered momentum, and the name was changed to Arugambay Hillton and new facilities were introduced. Later, it was renamed Arugambay Surf Resort and currently it provides 12 guesthouses including cabanas and luxury rooms. Both Eastern and Western menus are served at the beachside bar, and guests can sway in the breeze while they lie down on the

outdoor hammocks. Mexican dishes are a newly introduced specialty of the guesthouse.

It is located in close proximity to a range of attractions in and around Arugam Bay, such as the Magul Maha Viharaya and the Muhudu Maha Viharaya. For the wildlife enthusiast, the Kumana National Park is just an hour's drive from the guesthouse, while for those who seek some thrill and adventure, there are the sand dunes of Panama and the waves of Arugam Bay to surf on. What's more is that Arugam Bay Surf Resort operates safari and taxi services and will guide you with all the necessary information.

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Raheem believes that in order to grow the business it's vital to maintain cordial relationships with each visitor. With tourists giving tips as to how to cook and what to cook, there's much Raheem and his team look for. Recalling one particular incident he relates how an Italian couple taught them to bake a type of pizza and even started taking orders from guests!

As for the future, Raheem says that they will continue to develop the guesthouse, while building on the already established foundations of trust and care. "When you're at Surf Resort you don't need to wait for somebody to assist you, we just do," says Raheem.

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