Awesome Arugambay

Posted on

The sound of the waves is mesmerizing, surfers carrying surf boards walk towards the turquoise blue ocean early in the morning. The sun is slowly emerging from the clouds promising a wonderful day. They rhythmically paddle towards the waves, and with great skill they stand on the board and ride the waves with confidence. Listed at number eight in Lonely Planet's Best of Asia in 2018 and the number one destination on the island in 2019, Arugambay is an unique destination offering wildlife, history, lifestyle, great music and food, sun, sand and surf with wonderful experiences all-year-round.

Situated in the southeast coast of the island, Arugambay is vibrant and colorful with a chill-out vibe and relaxing atmosphere. In the early days, Arugambay used to be a sleepy township that was only functioning during the 'tourist season' with small guest houses. However, since the recent past, this beautiful destination has transformed into a paradise with unique hotels offering a multitude of experiences. While surfing continues to be a strong draw to Arugambay, where the waves are superb from April to October, there are many other interesting things to do, thus making Arugambay a place to enjoy throughout the year. Over the years visitors seeking experiences have been drawn to this unique paradise include young families, couples and groups of friends seeking a wonderful time. Many journey to Arugambay directly from the airport staying for more than a week or so and at times leading up to two months, where they stay their entire holiday in Arugambay.

The people of Arugambay are friendly and welcoming. Many are multi-lingual and they enhance the experience of this beautiful beachside destination. When on holiday you become part of the Arugambay way of life, and enjoy a novel experience while just being yourself.

The ocean is mesmerizing and inviting. Being one of the best surfing destinations in the world, Arugambay has numerous surfing points that are ideal for surfing according to your level of experience. Beginners can learn the ropes at Whisky Point or Arugambay Baby Point, each having their own distinctive types of waves. Surf training is available so that during a holiday one could learn to surf and thereafter progress towards the various other surfing points. Arugambay Main Point, Lighthouse/Green Beach, Crocodile Rock/Elephant Point, Pottuvil Point, Okanda, Panagala and Panama are more suitable for experienced surfers. It is indeed wonderful to watch the surfers riding the perfect waves until they reach the shore to yet again paddle and maneuver the surf again. Imagine the glorious sun shining and the golden beaches with beautiful turquoise waves – picture perfect!

Discovering the wilderness of the surroundings in Arugambay is a novel experience. Where-ever you go, you will see elephants roaming around. It is a beautiful example of the harmonious co-existence between humans and elephants. It is for this reason that tuk-tuks charge an elephant tax while traveling. Elephants can be seen on the road, in paddy fields, in the lagoon, and also within villages. While traveling, stop for a moment to allow these giants to pass through while you enjoy the breath- taking moment.

Head out on a safari to Kumana National Park. The drive itself is a novel experience where you will travel through the village of Panama. Navi- gating along the sandy roads you will reach the Okanda Temple, which is dedicated to Lord Murugan and is an important stop along the Pada Yaatra route from the North to the South. The temple is of vibrant hues with a shrine room visible on the rock outcrop. Further along, one would reach the Kudumbigala Monastery that was be- lieved to have been established during the reign of King Devanampiyatissa. Here too, a small stupa is visible from far. While navigating through the shrub jungle you are bound to see a multitude of birds and animals. Kumana is home to the 'Big Three'; the elephant, leopard and bear. While you will see elephants, deer, peacocks, wild boar, crocodiles, various types of birds and much more. To see the elusive leopard walking along the sandy path, or relaxing on the side of the road or on a rock outcrop is indeed a novel treat. Further within the jungle you will reach Bambaragasthalawa, a cave temple with a reclining Buddha statue and also an abandoned village, which is said to have been those who fled after the Uva-Wellassa uprising against the British found their new homes in the East, where some fami- lies stayed in the Kumana Village while others selected Panama.

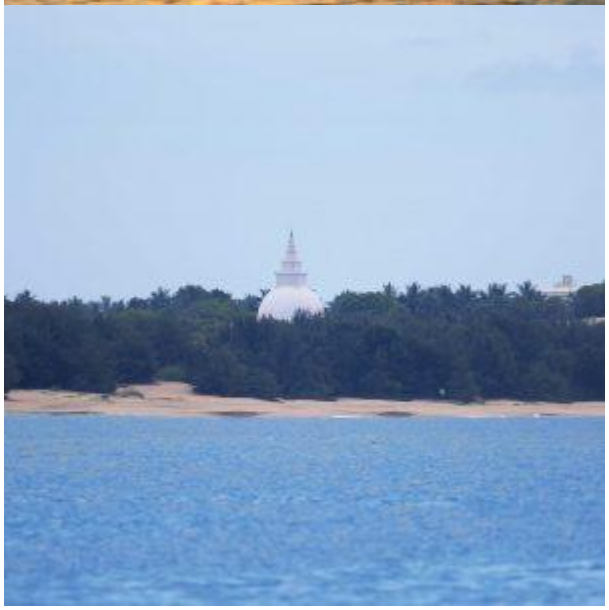
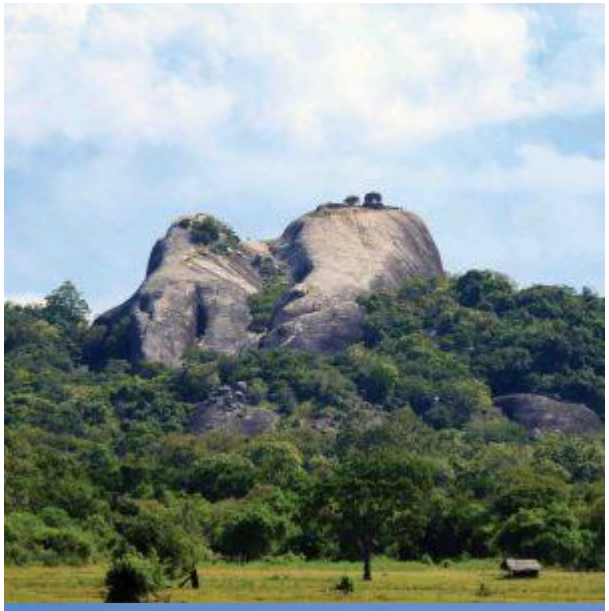
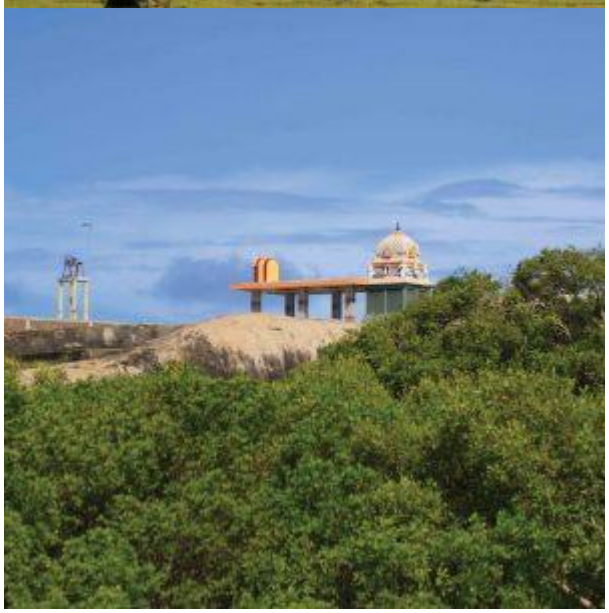
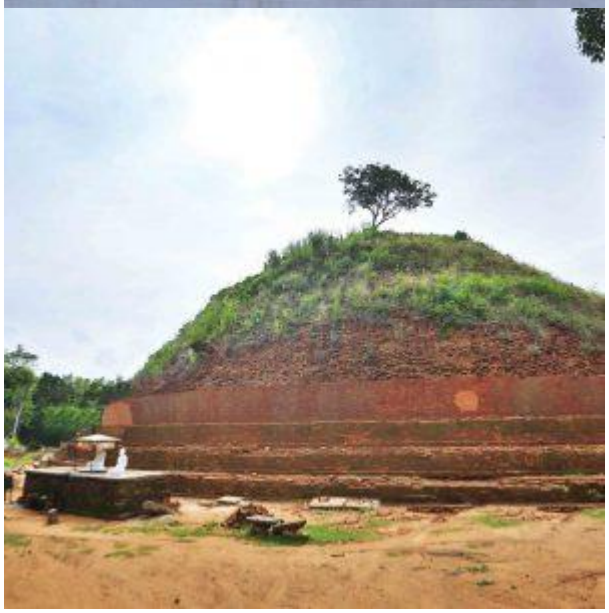
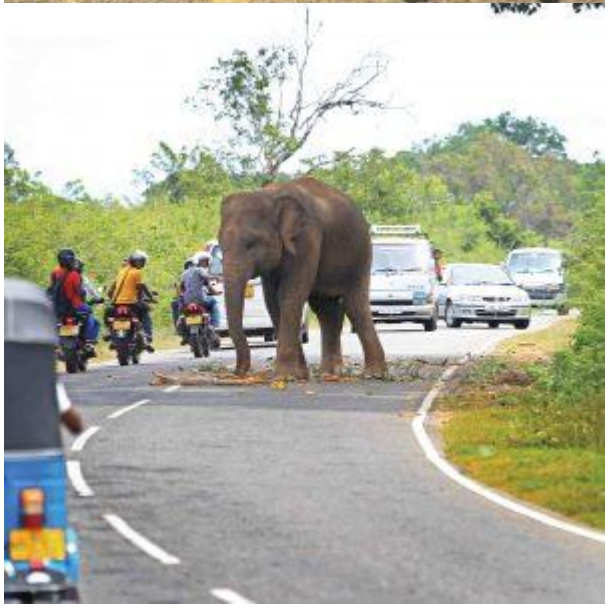
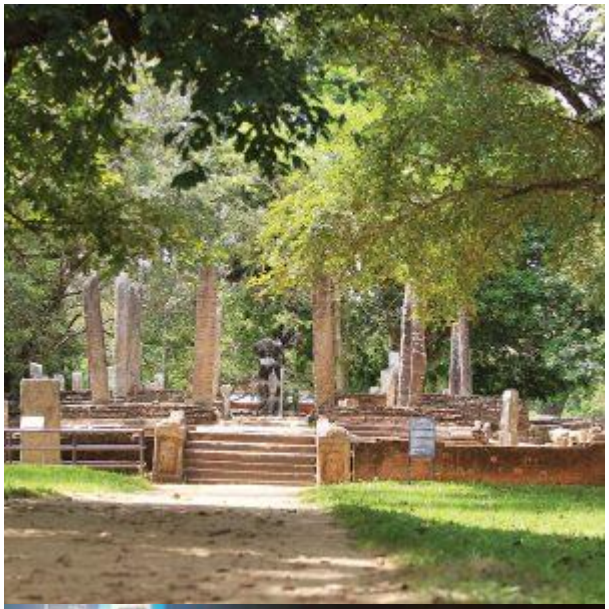
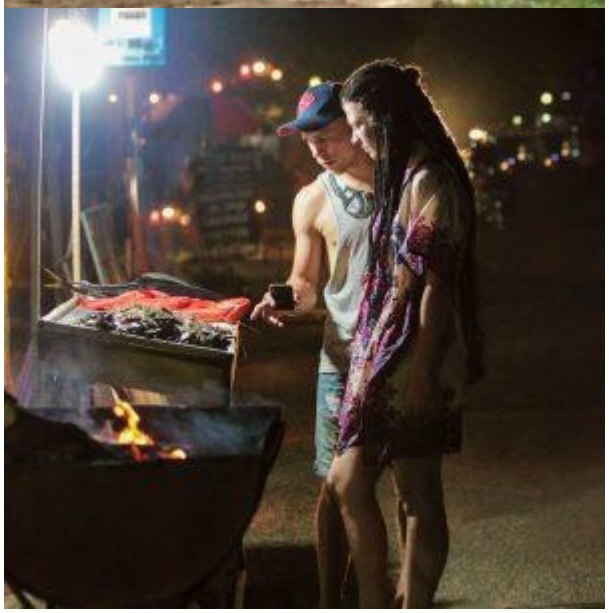
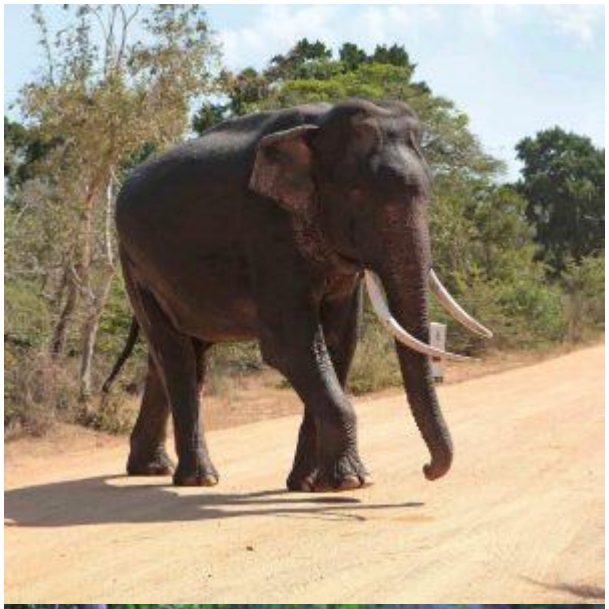
Lahugala provides another wilder- ness experience and is also home to a variety of wildlife, especially elephants. Thus when traveling, you are bound to see these giants feeding on the banks of the reservoir or on the road's side. The tranquil Magul Maha Viharaya (temple of the wedding), is said to the be the site of the marriage of Princess Devi (Viharamahadevi) and King Kavantissa. The resplendent temple is shaded in lush greenery and is within the Lahugala sanctuary.

Neelagiri Maha Seya, which was built by King Kavantissa is another archeological site that can be visited within Lahugala.

Experience the beautiful village life in Urani, Ulla and Panama, where you will enjoy the wonderful insights into the daily life. You can walk along the village roads and quench your thirst with a nice 'Kurumba' (young coconut), freshly plucked from the tree. Engage in a Urani Lagoon safari to enjoy the aquatic life and the surrounding environment. As evening approaches, elephants gather around the lagoon, where it is peaceful and magical.

Day excursions can also be made to the Buttala-Sella Kataragama Road. If you leave early in the morning, you could visit two National Parks in a day, namely

Lunugamvehara and Yala.

As dusk turns to night, and you have returned from your day of surfing, and sight seeing, Arugambay takes on a completely different persona. Glittering lights are on and toe-tapping music can be heard amidst the noise. The ambience is eclectic with various types of restaurants come alive with great food. Street-side BBQs are lit up, with fresh seafood laid out. Mouthwatering cuisines from pizzas to Italian, Chinese, Indian, fusion and local favorites are prepared to enjoy. Soon parties begin with great beats and dancing music getting you grooving. Fireworks light up the night sky making Arugambay one big party!

Early next morning, experience the beautiful Eastern sunrise as you relax along the beach and enjoy a refreshing sea bath, and rejuvenate with yoga to begin your day and continue with your wonderful holiday in Awesome Arugambay!