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As sunset approaches, the waves soften into a soothing whisper.

Hikkaduwa exudes its leisurely tropical vibe as the south begins to welcome visitors from around the world.

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Photographs Menaka Aravinda

As the late afternoon sun began its transition turning day into evening, the golden sands of Hikkaduwa were welcoming and bright. The beautiful blue ocean in the south lapped against the shoreline as waves rolled in one after the other.

Numerous boats docked nearby bobbed up and down to the rhythm of the waves. Further down along the coast, families, couples and children were enjoying the beach, sunbathing and simply relaxing in each other's company. The water was pleasant and it provided

respite in the heat, therefore many were having a sea bath, screaming in delight as the waves splashed on them.

King coconuts (thambili) and green coconuts (kurumba) were on sale to quench the thirst from the seaside sun. The entire beach was a place to gather and relax in the evening. Hikkaduwa is known for turtles swimming along the coral reef, and at times they do come on to the land. However, though we were able to discern their shadows underwater, these turtles did not come out to play. Snorkelling is another activity to discover the beauty underwater and on this particular day, a lone snorkeller was wading through the waves to see beneath.

Coconut trees swayed in the evening breeze, a characteristic feature of the south. We headed towards Narigama in Hikkaduwa, where the beach was wider and the many restaurants and small-scale hotels were preparing for the season. Visitors from around the world were already present, enjoying the laid-back vibe that Hikkaduwa offers.

There were families with children playing, sand and sun making a good combination to keep the little ones occupied. Others were simply walking along the beach or seated on the sand enjoying the surrounding beauty and tranquility. The ocean was a resplendent blue, and the sky reflected the various hues of the setting sun. The sounds of music flowed towards us, adding charm to the overall atmosphere. There were groups of young people playing volleyball, cheering as they scored.



Enjoy your evenings with a game of volleyball in Narigama.

Hikkaduwa is the ideal place for surfing during the months of November to April. Waves can reach up to a height of three to ten feet. Surfboards were arranged at various points, as if indicating that Hikkaduwa was a place to surf. Beginners were practicing on land, balancing themselves on rope, a skill they would need when using a surfboard. Generally, surfers who ride the waves in the east coast during May to October, move towards the south from November to April. Though light was fading, there were surfers waiting for the perfect wave. Balancing on their boards they patiently watched and as soon as a wave rose, they would paddle and instantaneously stand to surf the waves with great skill, balancing and moving to the rhythm.



Unwind amidst the laidback atmosphere of the tropics

The evening light was turning to dusk as the sun set in the southern sky. As if being called by the whispers of the ocean, those on the beach walked almost in unison towards their respective abodes. Lights twinkled on, creating a lovely atmosphere. From Hikkaduwa, passing through the town we proceeded along the Galle Road towards Bentota. The view from the bridge, across the lagoon, of the glittering illuminations was mesmerizing in the night sky.

The southern breeze blowing from the ocean was in perfect synchrony with the lulling waters. The lively and bright atmosphere in the south of the island exudes an electric vibe that is ideal for a wonderful holiday.



Hikkaduwa is ideal for snorkelling and to discover the beautiful sea life.



Visitors can embark on a thrilling boat ride over the turquoise waters.



Families and young ones enjoy themselves on the Narigama beach.



From November to April, Hikkaduwa attracts surfers to ride the waves.



Twinkling lights create a lively and electric atmosphere in Bentota.