Cinnamon that named an island

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A few centuries ago, one of the closely guarded secrets of the spice traders who engaged in trade between the East and the West was the source of a certain spice that was worth more than gold. When the Portuguese finally found out the source of this valued spice, they built ships, gathered armies and even fought wars to claim over a country in the Indian Ocean where it grew, because they knew that control over this land would also mean monopoly of the precious spice and immense profits in its trade. Cinnamomum zeylanicum hints at where it originated; Ceylon, the country that was changed for producing this sweet scented exotic condiment. In present day Ceylon, we came across an island that is dedicated to cinnamon.

Words Thilini Kahandawaarachchi Photographs Prabhath Chathuranga

It is said that in ancient Egypt, cinnamon had been considered more precious than gold, and legend has it that Nero burnt a year’s worth of cinnamon in the funeral pyre of his wife. What an extravagant gesture to signify his loss! Those were the days when cinnamon was a rare spice used both as a preservative and a medicine. True Cinnamon or Ceylon Cinnamon as it is known all over the world, is as the name suggests, the authentic cinnamon that is grown in Sri Lanka. Though it is grown in many regions of Sri Lanka, the best area for cinnamon cultivation is the southwestern coastal belt.

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