

Gallivanting Across Cultures

Posted on

A Sri Lankan Writer's Journey Through Six Nations



Gallivating by Ciara Mendis.



Ciara Mandulee Mendis.

For Sri Lankan author Ciara Mandulee Mendis, travel is more than a pastime—it's a path to rediscovery.

Her latest book, *Gallivanting: Chasing Sunset Stories and Suspicious Amounts of Tea*, takes readers across six countries—Singapore, Nepal, South Korea, Egypt, China, and India—capturing two years of exploration filled with adventure, culture, and reflection.

Ciara, an award-winning writer and Sri Lankan Administrative Service officer, began shaping her travelogue during a demanding career at the Presidential Secretariat. Seeking balance, she turned to travel as both escape and inspiration. What started as snippets scribbled during trips evolved into a collection of vibrant stories celebrating the beauty of cultural exchange and the courage of solo travel. Ciara attributes her travel writing about *Gallivanting* to her former boss, Saman Ekanayake, who encouraged her to share stories from her journeys, inspiring her to document her experiences.

Each chapter of *Gallivanting* highlights the sights and sounds of a destination and the little discoveries that transform a journey into a memory. From perfecting masala chai in Nepal to watching the sun dip behind Egypt's timeless pyramids, Mendis shows how simple experiences—often accompanied by a comforting cup of

tea—become lasting treasures. Tea, in fact, runs like a golden thread through her travels: Singapore's frothy Teh Tarik, India's spiced brews, China's delicate green teas, and Egypt's aromatic blends all find a place in her narrative.

Beyond landscapes and flavors, the book offers the perspective of a female Sri Lankan traveler navigating spaces often dominated by male voices. Ciara writes honestly about the joys and challenges of being a woman on the road—whether mastering new transport systems, blending into local markets, or ensuring safety while traveling alone. Her reflections extend beyond her personal growth to reveal the historical and cultural connections between Sri Lanka and the places she visited. Along the way, readers are reminded that travel need not be extravagant; with careful planning, curiosity, and resilience, the dream of exploring the world is within reach.

Gallivanting is not just a travelogue—it is an invitation. For tourists and wanderers alike, Ciara's journeys remind us that every trip is both an outward exploration and an inward journey of self-discovery, one sunset and one cup of tea at a time.

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