In and Around Colombo

Posted on



Seema Malakaya of the Gangaramaya Temple on the tranquil Beira Lake evokes spirituality.

There is much to see and do in Colombo and its suburbs. From glittering restaurants, colonial buildings, interesting hangouts, walking paths to beaches, Colombo reflects the culture and heritage of the warm and friendly people of the resplendent isle.

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Photographs BT Images.

Amidst the busy hive of the commercial centre of Colombo, the Gangaramaya Temple is a space of tranquility and spiritual reflection.

On the banks of the Beira Lake, Gangaramaya is a temple with a legacy that began in the late 19th Century. Under the guidance of Ven Galboda Gnanissara Thero, the temple continues to preserve the millennia-long Buddhist heritage of the island, revered and visited by devotees of all faiths.

Gangaramaya temple is ideal to witness the multi-facets of Buddhist architecture from all over the world. Ata Visi Hall, bearing the signs of Indian architecture, is a tribute to the 28 Buddhas. The Bo tree and the stupa are located in the center of the premises. The pristine white jade Samadhi Buddha Statue, which is sculpted in Myanmar tradition exudes peace and elegance. Those who visit, revel in the spiritual aura amidst the serenity of the temple.

Borobudur Replica pays homage to the world's largest temple in Indonesia. The Relic Chamber houses sacred relics of the Buddha and his disciples, and the Museum is home to rare artefacts such as intricate wood and ivory carvings, ola leaf writings and inscriptions.

The Seema Malakaya on the Beira Lake was designed by renowned architect Geoffrey Bawa. Beautiful reflections are created on the waters and the site exudes a spirituality. The Seema Malakaya is magically decorated during the Navam Maha Perahera and the Vesak Festival.

Independence Square is the nation's salutation to victory as Sri Lanka gained Independence from colonialism in 1948. Next to that monumental landmark is the Arcade Independence Square. A restored colonial building, this features a combination of shops and restaurants.

Colombo Racecourse, once a pavilion where spectators watched horse racing, is now a space for relaxation. The surrounding pathways and sprawling green lawns are favorite among fitness enthusiasts. Chatham Street charms visitors with its colonial allure. Along the street, Colombo Fort Clock Tower that has also been a lighthouse, remains the world's only dual-purpose tower to date. Opposite the clock tower is a beautiful building with Corinthian columns and a sandstone façade, the former National Mutual headquarters, which was opened in 1914 houses the Economic History Museum in the present day. The former Marketing Department building, which was reintroduced as the Dutch Hospital Square, is an iconic location

on Chatham Street. The vibrant exterior of Spa Ceylon within this building creates a beautiful ambience and adds colour to the surrounding.



Independence Square is an iconic monument in the city.

The quaint cobbled Hospital street is a haven filled with weekly entertainment activities. Performances by live bands, cultural displays and art exhibitions are held along the street creating a vibrant atmosphere. Offering an array of restaurants and pubs, Hospital Street welcomes everyone to relax after a long day in the capital. Visitors can relish mouthwatering dishes served outdoors or indoors while enjoying the blend of colonial and contemporary charm.

The Dutch Hospital, is a beautifully revamped building from the Dutch era. With its lively and energetic atmosphere, it is an ideal hotspot for friends to relax with great food and drinks. The electric vibe of chattering voices, clinking glasses, and

aromatic food is complemented by the groovy music played in the background.

Similarly, as the evening sets in, strings of light illuminate Park Street Mews. The cozy and magical ambience and choices of delicious cuisines from fusion to French, Italian, Japanese, Middle Eastern and South East Asian dishes draw in crowds that enjoy themselves with good music and food. In the evenings, visitors can step out into the gentle breeze of the Galle Face Greens. Street food stalls entice visitors with freshly roasted, baked and cooked delicacies as they watch the magical sunset. The crowd favorites are the mouth-watering isso vadai, and naan. When the weather is favorable, hundreds of kites soar over the Galle Face Green. To the south of the capital is Mount Lavinia beach, offering the thrill of a golden sandy beach on the verge of the city. A dip into the cool waters is refreshing, and so is a game of beach volleyball.

The beach comes alive with lights. Street food stalls and restaurants are in plenty to indulge in. Turn away from the drone of traffic in the central Colombo and head towards the administrative capital, Kotte. A boat ride along the waters of the Diyawanna Oya would let you explore the wetland wildlife. The Parliament complex that dominates the lake, encompassing the 50,000sqm islet of Duwa, is a mesmerizing sight.

Diyatha Uyana, built along side the banks of the Diyawanna Oya is ideal for a stroll with its quaint walkways. Also frequented by fitness-enthusiasts, it is complete with an aquarium, flower shops, food stalls and restaurants.

There is much to experience in and around Colombo, immerse yourself in the diversity of the city.








