

In the Shadow of Sigiriya

Posted on

A journey out of Colombo is always full of unexpected moments, and a weekend in Sigiriya was no exception.

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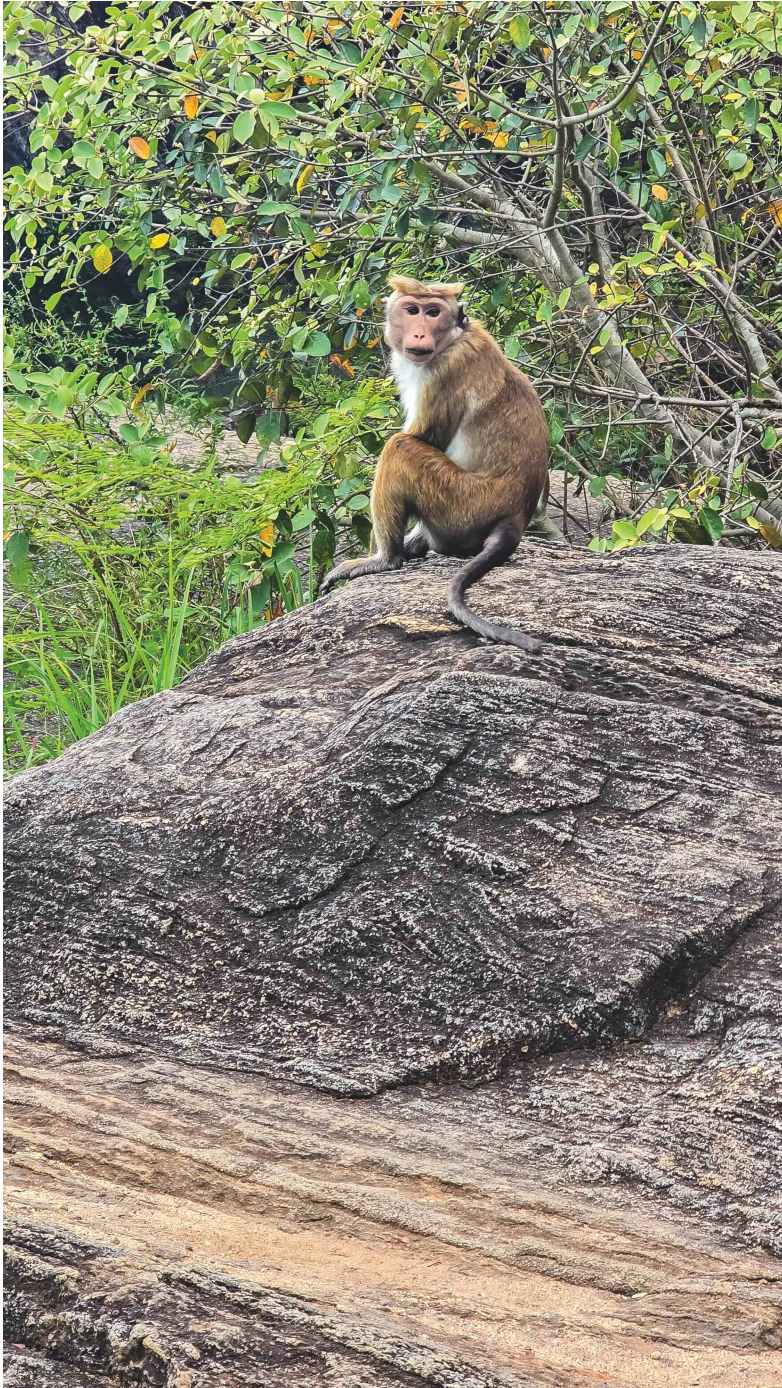


A breathtaking panorama unfolds from the resort, with the iconic landmarks of Pidurangala and Sigiriya Rock Fortress gracing the horizon.

Sigiriya is a destination defined by history, wildlife, and scenic hikes. It offers a unique blend of adventure and natural beauty, from serene lakes and the majestic

Sigiriya Rock Fortress to captivating cave paintings and breathtaking sunset views from Pidurangala Rock.

Yet nothing compares to the view of the twin rock formations from a distance. Standing at the reception of our weekend retreat at Aliya Resort and Spa, we looked out over the Lake, which lay in quiet stillness, its surface marked only by gentle ripples like a long sapphire ribbon. In the background rose a scene that set the tone for a memorable escape—the historic Pidurangala Rock to the left and the iconic Sigiriya Rock Fortress to the right. The view was truly magnificent, opening the curtain on a weekend of exploration through Sri Lanka’s rich history and Buddhist heritage. While most visitors set their sights on scaling the Sigiriya Rock, we chose Pidurangala—an equally rewarding adventure. Our mission was simple: reach the summit in time to catch the sunset.



A curious resident of Pidurangala watches visitors climb the ancient rock.

The climb itself was part of the experience. The excitement lies in discovering that

the route to the top is neither uniform nor effortless. What begins as a straightforward ascent along stone steps soon transforms into a scramble over large rocks and boulders, requiring climbers to steady themselves with both hands and feet at times. Every twist in the path presents a new challenge, making the journey as memorable as the destination.



Few sights rival the magic of the sunset from Pidurangala.

No one is truly alone on the trail. Friendly dogs and curious monkeys—seemingly unfazed by the rugged terrain— accompanied us along the way. For creatures for whom this ascent must be second nature, they appeared to watch our labored progress with a mixture of amusement and indifference.



In the quiet embrace of Pidurangala, the graceful reclining Buddha.

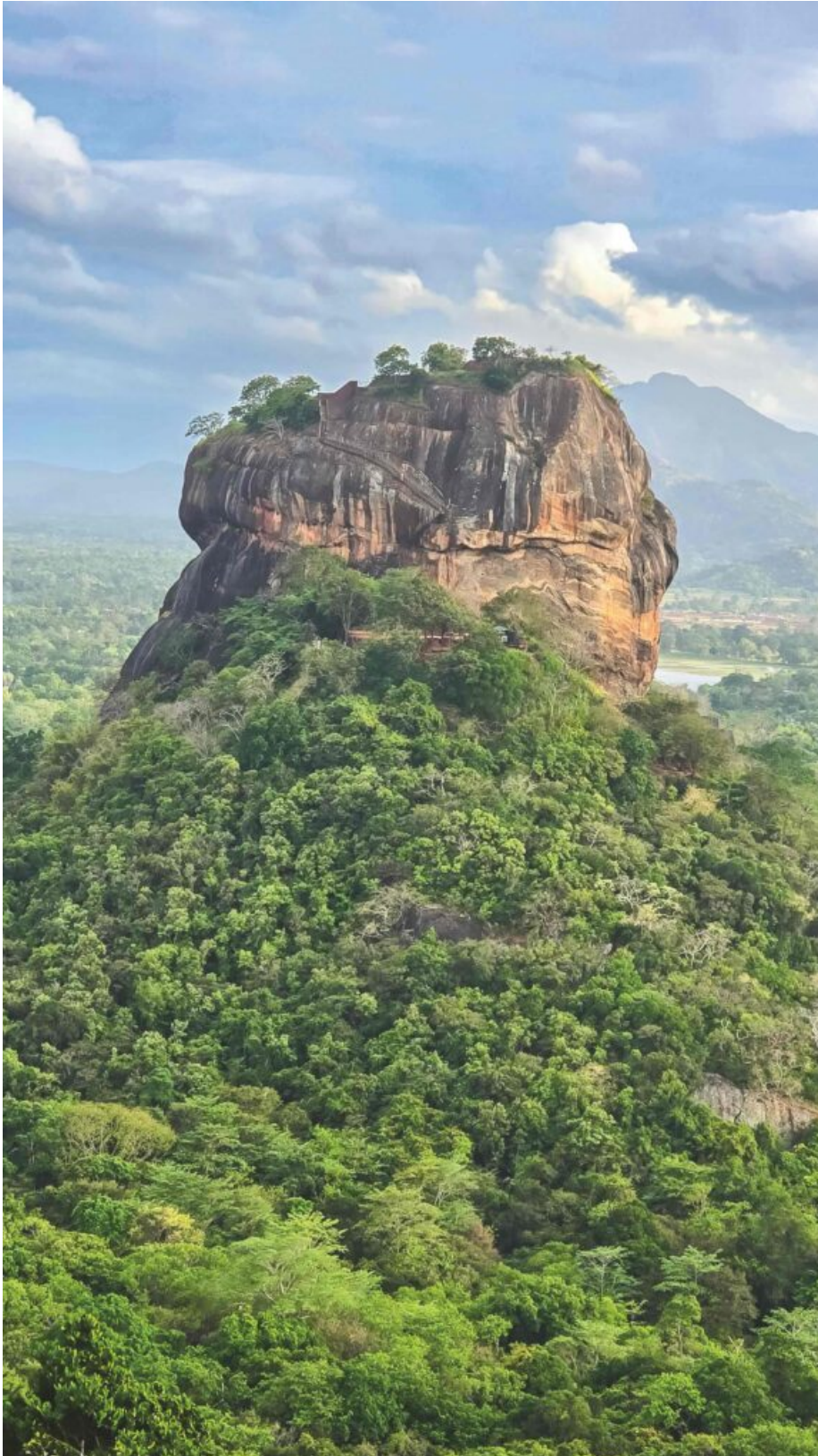
For history and archaeology enthusiasts, the climb offers more than physical adventure. The ancient reclining Buddha statue and the meditation “kuti” along the route lend a sense of serenity and spirituality, reminding visitors of the site’s rich religious heritage.

The panoramic view was breathtaking, with the surrounding landscape unfolding endlessly in every direction as the setting sun bathed the horizon...



A tribute to local craftsmanship, the pottery shop showcases Sri Lanka's rich artisan heritage.

When we finally reached the summit, the panoramic view was breathtaking, with the surrounding landscape unfolding endlessly in every direction as the setting sun bathed the horizon in shades of gold, amber, and crimson. Across the landscape, the Sigiriya Rock Fortress stood in all its grandeur, commanding attention with its rugged majesty. It was a powerful reminder that this was not merely an imposing rock but a remarkable fortress that once protected royalty and stood at the heart of an extraordinary chapter in Sri Lanka's history.



From the summit of Pidurangala, the silhouette of Sigiriya Rock Fortress commands the horizon.

The resort itself offers a range of engaging activities, from pottery-making workshops and visits to its paper recycling center to cycling and various outdoor sports. After days filled with exploration and adventure, we found the perfect way to unwind at the resort's expansive swimming pool. There could hardly be a better way to end an exhilarating day than with a refreshing dip, surrounded by the tranquility and natural beauty of the landscape.