

Jetwing Surf & Safari

Posted on

Named Among Sri Lanka's Top Safari Hotels by Condé Nast Traveller and Lonely Planet



Sunlit mornings, thatched roofs, endless calm at Jetwing Surf & Safari.

Along the sun-washed shores of Sri Lanka's eastern seaboard— where the Indian Ocean rolls in unhurried rhythms and nature still holds the upper hand—lies a destination that quietly redefines the idea of a safari retreat. Jetwing Surf & Safari, an eco-luxury hideaway in Pottuvil near the legendary Arugambay, has recently been named among Sri Lanka's top safari hotels by Condé Nast Traveller and Lonely Planet. Yet these accolades tell only part of the story. What truly sets this coastal sanctuary apart is how seamlessly it weaves together wilderness, culture, sustainability, and a deep sense of place.

At first glance, Jetwing Surf & Safari feels like a barefoot dream. Twenty seashell-inspired beachfront cabanas sit lightly on the land, their architecture blending organic forms with thoughtful design. Constructed with sustainability at its core, the resort embraces a rustic-luxury aesthetic—one that privileges open spaces, natural materials, and an immersive connection to the elements. Here, mornings begin with the sound of waves and evenings dissolve into golden sunsets, unbroken by excess or artifice.

While its proximity to some of the world's most celebrated surf breaks— Arugambay and Pottuvil Point—has long drawn wave riders from across the globe, Jetwing Surf & Safari invites travelers to look beyond the surfboard. The East Coast, often stereotyped as a seasonal playground for surfers, reveals itself here as a year-round destination rich in biodiversity, history, and cultural depth.

Just an hour's drive inland lies one of Sri Lanka's most compelling yet underexplored wilderness areas: Kumana National Park. Forming the eastern sector of the famed Yala ecosystem, Kumana offers a safari experience that is quieter,

more contemplative, and arguably more rewarding. Spanning over 35,000 hectares, the park unfolds in a mosaic of dry-zone scrublands, monsoon forests, mangroves, lagoons, rocky outcrops, and villus—natural water basins that serve as lifelines for wildlife.



Kumana is home to one of the world's highest leopard densities.

At the heart of this landscape is Kumana Villu, a vast wetland that transforms into a haven for birdlife throughout the year.



A quiet moment with a 'Lesser Adjutant' in its natural wetland home.

Thousands of migratory and resident birds gather here in a mesmerizing display of color and movement. Black-necked Storks wade gracefully through shallow waters, while Lesser Adjutants, Eurasian Spoonbills, pelicans, painted storks, herons, and Great Thick-knees create a living tapestry against the stillness of the wetlands. For bird enthusiasts, Kumana is nothing short of sublime.

Beyond traditional game drives, the resort curates experiences that feel intimate, authentic, and rooted in the local landscape. One such adventure is the tuk-tuk safari—a charmingly unconventional journey that begins right at the resort.

Yet it is not only avian life that has placed Kumana firmly on the global wildlife map. In recent years, the park has emerged as one of the world's most promising leopard strongholds. Scientific studies suggest that Kumana boasts one of the highest leopard population densities globally—a remarkable distinction for a park that remains blissfully uncrowded. Its varied terrain and abundant prey base, from

spotted deer to wild buffalo, create ideal conditions for these elusive big cats. Alongside leopards, visitors may encounter elephants roaming freely, jackals skulking through scrub, mugger crocodiles basking near waterholes, and a fascinating array of reptiles and small mammals. What elevates Kumana even further is its unexpected cultural dimension. Nestled just outside the park boundaries lies the ancient Kudumbigala Monastery, a site that adds a profound historical and spiritual layer to the region. Scattered ruins, drip-ledged caves, and timeworn inscriptions speak of centuries of monastic life, meditation, and devotion. The juxtaposition of archaeological remnants against untamed wilderness is both humbling and deeply evocative—a reminder that Sri Lanka’s wild heart has always been intertwined with human history.

Jetwing Surf & Safari takes this sense of discovery a step further by reimagining what a safari can be. Beyond traditional game drives, the resort curates experiences that feel intimate, authentic, and rooted in the local landscape. One such adventure is the tuk-tuk safari—a charmingly unconventional journey that begins right at the resort. Guests wind through dusty village roads and pastoral scenes en route to the Rottaikulam Tank on the fringes of Lahugala National Park. Here, wildlife often wanders beyond official park boundaries, allowing for rare, crowd-free encounters with elephants and other species in their natural rhythm, unhurried by convoys of safari jeeps.



Tuk-tuk trails into the wild.



Gliding across Pottuvil Lagoon with local fishermen, as mangroves stand guard over mirrored waters.

For a gentler immersion into the region’s ecosystems, the Lagoon Safari offers a poetic counterpoint. Guided by local fishermen, guests glide across the still waters of Pottuvil Lagoon, where mangroves rise like guardians from mirrored reflections. The quiet is punctuated only by birdsong and the occasional ripple of movement—an experience that reveals the subtle beauty of life that thrives between land and sea. These thoughtfully curated encounters reflect a broader philosophy that Jetwing Hotels, a family-owned brand, has embraced for over half a

century, shaping Sri Lanka's tourism landscape. Guided by values of passion, humility, tenacity, and a deep sense of family, Jetwing has long championed sustainability and responsible tourism. From community empowerment initiatives to environmental stewardship and resource efficiency, the brand's commitment to purpose-driven growth is woven into every guest experience.



Where the pool meets the horizon.

Hashan Cooray, Director of Marketing and Development at Jetwing Hotels, captures this ethos succinctly: "These recognitions are not just wins for Jetwing Surf & Safari, but for the entire eastern belt of Sri Lanka. It helps debunk the myth that this region is only about surfing, while in reality, this part of the island offers so much more. From incredible wildlife to history and archaeology, it truly is a year-round destination that deserves much more attention."

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Indeed, Sri Lanka's East Coast is a place of revelation. It is where surf breaks coexist with leopard trails, where ancient monasteries overlook wild lagoons, and where luxury is defined not by excess but by authenticity and connection. Jetwing Surf & Safari stands as both a gateway and a guide to this lesser-known world, offering travelers the rare chance to experience Sri Lanka in its most elemental form. With more than 35 properties across the island—spanning Luxury Reserves, Premium Hotels, Select Hotels, and Essentials—Jetwing continues to craft journeys that celebrate the country's extraordinary diversity. Yet here, on the edge of land and ocean, something special unfolds. For those seeking more than sun and surf, more than a conventional safari, the East Coast delivers an unforgettable blend of adventure, heritage, and wonder. And there is no better place to begin than Jetwing Surf & Safari—where the wild still whispers, and the journey feels profoundly real.

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