

Karunakarala: A Relaxing Getaway Enriched by Ayurveda



Karunakarala Ayurveda Spa and Resort nestled amidst lush greenery

Nestled amidst a grove of greenery and serenaded by the serenity of the Ma Oya, Karunakarala is an Ayurveda Spa and Resort offering a personalised and peaceful getaway, with wellness at its heart.

Words Keshini de Silva

Photographs Menaka Aravinda and Vishwathan Tharmakulasingham



Heritage ayurvedic 'Panchakarma' treatments are performed at the Veda Gedara

Beyond the busy streets of Negombo lined with the island's colonial past, a turn to Old Road at Thoppuwa in Waikkal leads to a sanctuary of ayurvedic wellness. Walking in through the fortified façade of the resort, the green heritage of the island is at the centre of attention. In fact, it is nature that welcomes the guest.

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The resort has been designed to suit nature's palette with earthen tones dominating the exterior. Most structures are made of exposed brick and timber allowing nature to shine. Sandy paths, curve through the grass, guarded by trees with intrinsic herbal value, such as neem, Ceylon olive, mango, frangipani as well as coconut palms. Absolute privacy and quietude is ensured in and around the chalets. Built from neem timber, known for its cooling properties, comfortable accommodation is ensured with the chalets designed with rest, wellbeing and convenience in mind. Room categories include Standard Cottage, Superior Cottage and Family Cottage, equipped with Japanese standard washlet systems. The concept is based on the vision of Saman Priyankara, Proprietor of Karunakarala Ayurveda Spa and Resort.

Veda Gedara, the Ayurveda treatment centre, is at the heart of the resort's experience. After all the name of the resort 'Karunakarala', which means please in Sinhalese, translates to 'hospitality' in Japanese. Guests who seek healing or detoxification will first receive a consultation from the specialist Ayurveda doctors. Based on the diagnosis and their 'Three Dosha' - Vatha, Pitha and Kapha, either 'Panchakarma' or other detox treatments are prescribed. The entire experience, from the daily routine to treatments and cuisine, will then be tailored according to the consultation. The Veda Gedara, including its 'Osu Hala' (Pharmacy) and Dosha Treatment Rooms, has been designed to echo the island's ancient practices of healing with walls made of archaeological brick, the use of herb-rich timber and ceilings lined with pan paduru (reed mats) to enable a cooling atmosphere. At the Osu Hala, guests themselves join in the mixing of herbs and oils to prepare their prescribed ayurvedic pouches and potions.

Meanwhile, the Ayurveda Spa located separately, offers special massages, body scrubs as well as reflexology for both in-house guests as well as guests from other hotels. Yoga is also inherently part of the stay at Karunakarala, which has a specially crafted Yoga Studio overlooking the Bo Madura and Ma Oya on either side.

Relaxation and holistic wellbeing encircles the entire resort. By the river is a therapeutic stone walkway and throughout the land are places to sit and experience the serenity of nature. Children will be delighted by the birds and rabbits roaming through the garden. The restaurant, overlooks the Ma Oya and poolside, while the upper floor terrace is fanned by the breeze that flows over the river waters. Cuisine at the restaurant is prepared according to traditional Sri Lankan recipes using the freshest ingredients and with nutrition being the focus, while guests receiving ayurvedic treatment are served meals customised to ensure they attain a balance in their Three Dosha. International cuisine is available on request and can be ordered à la carte. High Tea in the evening is a charming event, where a platter of traditional Sri Lankan sweetmeats such as aasmi, kavum and kokis is served with the tea.

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Guests can also request to dine outdoors in the shade of greenery, or enjoy an especially romantic meal by the dock.

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Cookery demonstrations are also conducted at a unique model traditional Sri Lankan kitchen, where guests themselves can try their hand at making customary island fare. The resort also organises excursions to discover the beauty and history of the western coast, soul-soothing boat rides along the Ma Oya and shuttle services to the beach.



The chalets made of neem wood, ensure absolute privacy and comfort

Cocooned within the island's distinctive nature, Karunakarala Ayurveda Spa and Resort curates a tranquil and unique getaway, where guests can enrich their lives with wellness and nutrition based on the time tested practices of Ayurveda.

Karunakarala Ayurveda Spa and Resort

Jesu Nasarenu Mawatha

Thoppu Thota,

Waikkal, Sri Lanka

T: (+94 31) 227 2750

F: (+94 31) 227 2751

sales@karunakarala.com

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karunakarala.com

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