A Night In Unawatuna

Posted on
Blazing lanterns

A great way to spend a Saturday night; explore the treasures the enchanting coastal area has to offer

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Thrilled to be in Unawatuna, we made our way towards the sound of the crashing waves.

The beach at first glance was a vista of vivid colours and bright lights. I took off my shoes and trudged ahead barefoot, wallowing in the sensation of cold sand between my toes. Hotels, guest houses, restaurants and bars line the beach side by side, offering an endless choice of wining and dining options.

Flickering candle lights sat atop numerous tables at the alfresco venues, while fairy lights adorned palm trees and lamp posts. The restaurants had eye-catching neon signs akin to their canopied tents.

The vibes seem to change as you stroll down the beach. Some spots were dimly lit

with jazz music playing in the background, creating a more intimate setting for couples enjoying the cool ocean breeze over cocktails and dinner, while others were brighter and more upbeat—suitable for a more zesty clique. The tempting aromas of various dishes wafted through, inviting us in and soon we came across an interesting trio playing soothing classic music.

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Fringing the beach were tall swaying palm trees. Speedboats and canoes popped up every once in a while and blazing torches lit up the beach and perfected the vision of pure bliss. Beach chairs and sun loungers paired with giant umbrellas contributed to the sprightly ambiance of the beach.

Bursts of colour lit up the night sky. It was firecrackers from the furthest end of the stretch of blinking lights, signalling the ongoing festivities of the still-young night.

Drifting away from the serene beaches, you'll see that the streets of Unawatuna, unlike the busy rush in the cities, are not crowded. It is a pleasant walk down the lively strip with enchanting cafés and many, many shops. Soft plush cushions and couches behind miniature wooden fences invite you in for a cup of chai tea, while a myriad of contrasting patterns and shapes adorn the wide windows of the street shops.

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Along the way, you'll see plenty of elephant and buddha statues as well as beachwear, post cards and leather products in various stores. The souvenir shops exhibiting handicrafts reflect Sri Lankan heritage and the art shops depict the island and its natural beauty. You'll find a diverse collection from paintings and woven baskets to hand loom, batik products and wood carvings—much favoured by tourists and guests who appreciate fine handicraft.

Bedazzling the streets, a number of jewellery stores stood out. There was a small cart on the side of the lively street, showcasing colourful necklaces and bracelets all

handmade with stone, wood and bone.

Families were making their way in and out of the shops, excited over their purchases and chattering groups of friends occupied the cosy-looking coffee shops. Some tourists were strolling along the streets with a thambili (king coconut) drink in hand, which was unusual for such a cool and breezy night.

Unawatuna, being one of the most popular coastal destinations among tourists, boasts numerous diving schools and shops selling swimwear and snorkelling gear throughout the town. Tour guides could be seen briefing groups on nearby attractions and the friendly locals were giving directions to a couple who seemed to be lost.

While some restaurants opened up to the beach, others invited their customers in via the street. Deciding to dine in one such venue, we went in and settled down, our heads nodding along to the music. We all decided on various seafood dishes as the town was known for its seafood cuisine.

As the minutes ticked by, a more upbeat rhythm seemed to catch on. A couple from the table over made their way to the centre, swaying to the music and soon, more couples followed suit. The music got louder and the dynamic crowds grew in number. The atmosphere of the restaurant changed from laid-back to energetic as we all cheered and clapped along. The strobe lights paired with the music and the dancing crowd, created an animated and lively atmosphere.

An exciting destination just over an hour’s drive away from Colombo, Unawatuna is the epitome spot for an unforgettable night, whether you wish to have a chilled out dinner by the beach or have a fun-filled night with your friends.

When in Unawatuna, be sure to be part of the quirky and the happening; sample the exquisite seafood dishes, enjoy some cocktails to the rhythm of the waves, shop for some Sri Lankan mementos and dance your night away!

Done with our exquisite seafood dinner, we got up to leave, walking through the vibrant streets and serene beaches, and out of the charming little town of Unawatuna.