

Khiri Travel Announces Trips to Undiscovered Jaffna in Northern Sri Lanka



The time is right for tour operators to add Jaffna to their Sri Lanka itineraries, says Khiri Travel

Khiri Travel has launched pioneering 4-day/3-night trips to Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka. The groundbreaking travel experiences are now available in an area still healing its wounds after a civil war that lasted until 2009.

With the area now peaceful and returning to normal, Khiri Travel says the time is right to start sharing the historical, cultural and culinary attractions of the area with guests who will travel by train, bicycle, jeep and catamaran.

Visitors can now easily combine Jaffna peninsula with existing mainstream tourism sites in Sri Lanka, as the Queen of Jaffna train departs from Anuradhapura in the country's 'Cultural Triangle,' which is well known to tourists.

"Our aim is to share the wonderful seafood, curry, architecture, beaches and friendliness of the Jaffna people with guests who share a passion for discovery," says Khiri Travel Sri Lanka General Manager Gonzalo Gil Lavedra, who inspected the area and created the trip.

"We are providing an itinerary that is not only groundbreaking in terms of the destination and experience, but has been designed with the people of Jaffna in mind," he says.

On the first day, guests travel three hours by train from Anuradhapura to Jaffna, passing the dry landscape of the Vavuniya dotted with the occasional village. Much of the conflict took place here. In Jaffna town centre, guests stay in a new four-star hotel. After a delicious Tamil lunch, visitors ride bicycles to see a fort, churches, parks, temples, statue of the last king of Jaffna, the last king's minister's house, and more.

On the 2nd day guests wear a shalve or veddi to enter the Nallur Hindu temple where they receive a cultural history orientation and can try some Hatha Yoga moves. The guide will elaborate on Jaffna's culture, the scars of war, similarities and differences with South Indian culture, and the considerable effects of migration and exile on the Jaffna region. After a lavish prawn curry lunch served on a banana leaf, guests visit temples and local attractions, with plenty of time to relax on Casuarina Beach.

The 3rd day includes a 24-hour round trip by catamaran to Delft Island, an hour offshore from Jaffna. The island features exquisite beaches, wild horses, a huge baobab tree, a Dutch fort, pigeon cage, coral structures and more. A special seafood lunch will be prepared by a local family. Guests overnight in a private cabin on the catamaran.

"If there is a place in Sri Lanka that has remained hidden, it is Delft island," says Gil Lavedra. "With its unique people, coral walls, fort, feral horses, food, temples and lovely beaches, I could go on and on. But the best way is for the clients to see it for themselves."

On day 4, guests enjoy breakfast on board the catamaran and take a last dip in the sea at Delft

before sailing back to Jaffna. Guests arrive in Jaffna around midday for lunch. In the afternoon they continue their onward Sri Lankan itinerary, which can include, for example, the newly accessible attractions of Trincomalee in northeast Sri Lanka, famed for its beaches and surf.

No special visas or permissions are needed to visit the Jaffna peninsula. "The area is perfectly safe," says Gil Lavedra. "The time is right for tour operators to add Jaffna to their Sri Lanka itineraries."

For further information on Khiri Travel's itineraries in the Jaffna area email sales.srilanka@khiri.com.

Foodie Moments in Jaffna with Khiri Travel

Day 1: Lunch in a Jaffna family's home: For an appetiser, special kool (traditional soup) will be served. Ingredients are palmyrah root flour, water, crabs, prawns, cuttlefish, fish, dry fish, long bean, ash plant, eggplant, gram, dry chilli, saffron, pepper, garlic, tamarind, coconut scraps, drumstick leaves and salt. Sounds delicious? Wait till you try it. For the main course pittu bread (made out of rice flour and coconut meat) is presented with crab curry, fried prawns, cuttlefish, mashed omelet mixed with dry fish, dhal curry with fish and plain gravy. This is the real deal, a true Jaffna feast. Mangoes and jack fruit are available in season. At other times, sweet Jaffna papaya and bananas fill the gap.

Day 2: Lunch at a village house: Fried cuttlefish, Jaffna prawn curry, toasted crab, fish masala, mashed brinjal, drumstick curry, and fish gravy. The ripaste is served on banana leaf as per local custom.

Day 3: Seafood lunch on Delft Island: A special lunch will be arranged at a local home on Delft Island to sample the diversity of seafood and get the real flavour of isolated island life surrounded by the sea. Jaffna rice, fish curry, fried fish, gravy, two or three vegetable curries with poppadoms, and fried neem tree flower are served. Fruits such as mangoes, papaya and banana will be offered depending on season. Palmyrah toddy is available. Don't go crazy on it. It's alcoholic. It is lighter than arrack but will sure give you a buzz.

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Editors can download high resolution images of Khiri management and travel destinations at <http://www.scottasia.net/clients/YAANA/media.htm>.

About Khiri Travel

Since 1993, Khiri Travel has won awards and earned a reputation as a destination management company dedicated to working with select tour operators to provide quality leisure travel experiences across Asia. With 16 offices in Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Khiri Travel's entrepreneurial associates craft innovative itineraries that reflect their passion for authentic, local and sustainable experiences. Visit khiri.com.

About YAANA Ventures

Yaana Ventures is an owner, partner and operator of entrepreneurial travel and hospitality ventures in Asia. We distinguish ourselves by sharing real experiences that are grounded in the cultural richness of Asia. We are champions of the triple bottom-line: we empower our ventures with the values to nurture the people with whom we work, to sustain the planet we all share, and to pursue profits to expand our mission.

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