

Top 5 Eco Resorts from Sri Lanka Bespoke

Sri Lanka as a whole has shied away from large hotel chains and what has emerged is a beautiful selection of unique and luxurious boutique hotels that boast a stunning location, striking design and/or a sense of history

Sri Lanka Bespoke carefully handpick hotels and only recommend those that they love – they have no commitment to any one hotel which allows them to truly tailor stays according to taste and needs. Here we showcase a handful of hotels, resorts and lodges across Sri Lanka that are working hard to limit their physical and environmental impact, support local communities, safeguard animal welfare and protect nature, all whilst offering a truly memorable and luxurious stay. 🌿

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Santani Resort & Spa

Few resorts in the world can match Santani's serene view – blessed setting, on an undulating hillside to the north east of Kandy. Channelling the concept of intelligent luxury where nature is king and service is everything, you can truly escape the world here.

Eco & Sustainability Credentials:

Santani has been designed in such a way so that neither air condition nor heating is required reducing energy consumption by about 70% compared to standard hotels. Most of the buildings are constructed on stilts that allows for natural thermal flows to cool the rooms and this structure also ensures there is minimal contact with the earth below. The whole Spa is built underground which provides natural cooling too – almost 80% for the wood used for both structural elements and furniture is recycled.

Ulagalla

This hotel features a 150-year-old mansion at its centre with 20 private ecologically built villas spread across 58 acres of lush greenery. A lush environment, stunning landscapes with two sparkling reservoirs, paddy fields and lily ponds surround the ancestral estate that was once of Anuradhapura nobility. Ulagalla is part of Uga Escapes which have been awarded with the highly sought after Travelife Gold certification for its pioneering efforts to promote sustainability in tourism. Long known for its commitment to sustainability, Uga Escapes has been pioneering several initiatives to minimise environmental impact, improve economic conditions of people living in and around the boutiques, protect human rights and fair labour practices and safeguard animal welfare and bio-diversity for future generations.

Eco & Sustainability Credentials:

ENERGY EFFICIENT - Sri Lanka receives significant amount of solar radiation across all geographical regions with the intensity of solar radiation in lowland areas being high compared to mountainous regions. Located in lowlands, Ulagalla Solar Energy Grid produces 20% of the total needs of the hotel.

HOME GROWN - Local fruits and vegetables come fresh from Ulagalla's own fields and all their dishes are made using locally grown produce ensuring food is nutritious, tastes great and it also helps to protect the local small-scale farmers.



Leopard Trails

This bespoke luxury tented safari operates within the buffer zones of both Wilpattu and Yala national parks with the aim of minimising their impact on the environment. Their existence is to show-case a true wilderness experience but prioritise above all else, the protection of nature.

Eco & Sustainability Credentials:

COMMUNITY

Leopard Trails work hand in hand with the local community with campsite staff and drivers having been handpicked from the local community, fruit, vegetables, meat, seafood and other provisions are sourced from local suppliers.

RANGERS & GUESTS

Rangers are highly knowledgeable in all things related to jungles, wildlife, flora and fauna and by their very nature and passion, their natural drive is to protect the environment and this goal is shared with guests. Many rangers are either qualified in Eco matters or having been responsible for implementing award-winning Ecotourism and Sustainability initiatives. Their wish is for each guest to leave with a newfound or rekindled appreciation to conserve the remaining wilderness regions on our planet for future generations to come.

Gal Oya Lodge

A unique eco lodge nestled in 20 acres of private jungle located adjacent to Gal Oya National Park. An immersive wilderness experience in one of Sri Lanka's most remote areas, the design concept follows nature and has been created in harmony with its surroundings and natural features. From conception to completion, the owners are hugely passionate and concerned for the wildlife of the remote part of Sri Lanka in which it sits. There is an integrated effort to minimise impact on the natural environment, support the local community and to pro-actively engage in wildlife research and protection.

Eco & Sustainability Credentials:

WATER & WASTE - All sourced from a deep bore well on the lodge's land so minimising impact on the island's strained water resource. Gal Oya have a zero plastic policy, meaning everything recycled that can be and organic waste used for compost of distributed to local pig and fish farms.

ARCHITECTURE - Gal Oya Lodge was built using iluk (thatch), teak and granite – all local materials. Only one tree was cut down in construction – remaining supply came from naturally fallen teak sourced from around the island.

FOREST REGENERATION - Guests are invited to sponsor and take part in re-planting of native species on land previously cleared for farming.

WILDLIFE - The Jim Edwards Wildlife Research Centre is at the core of research efforts for both in-house naturalists as well as guest scientists. There is an ongoing programme of wildlife monitoring with populations and behaviour of various species monitored. They also work alongside The Wilderness & Wildlife Conservation Trust and Fishing Cat Conservancy and Gal Oya has also developed an apiary to support a healthy wild bee population which allows them to harvest a sustainable amount of natural honey.



Kalundewa Retreat

An eco-retreat tucked away in a lush 100 acres in Dambulla drawing its beauty from the mystic Kalundewa Mountain range. The isolated farming community contribute to the hotel resulting in a handful of dwellings cradled in the arms of lush vegetation. Large selection of organic fruits and vegetables and bees honey featured on the menus.

Eco & Sustainability Credentials:

Only home to eco-friendly dwellings to minimise human impact on the intricate ecosystems that flourish in the forest, lakes and waterways. The retreat blends both agriculture and tourism and is an active contributor to the welfare of its neighbouring rural farming community. Kalundewa is committed to environmental welfare and harnessing renewable energy sources. Currently 100% of the electricity consumed is generated by solar panels.