

Waterfall viewed from roadside en route Nuwara Eliya.

degrees. Hills enveloped in neatly pruned tea bushes boasted placards declaring 'Mackwoods Labookellie'. Winding roads continued running parallel with tea gardens and eventually our guide pulled over at the Glenloch Tea Factory. We let ourselves be escorted by the tea guide who explained in detail the tea processing exercise. The sheer variety of tea produced by the nation left us gaping. The tea bud itself is processed to produce three different types of tea, the golden tips being the most premium! We helped ourselves to brownies and complimentary tea while strolling through the tea store with a flock of European, Middle Eastern and North Asian tourists.

Coined as Serendib by Arab traders who settled in the island between 8th and 15th centuries, Sri Lanka's popularity as a tourist destination amongst Middle-easterners even today is quite obvious. Add to that the Sri Lankan government's recent push to increase Saudi tourist visits from 19,500 to 40,000 in the next three years[1]. Currently, over a million tourists arrive at this island every year.

Satiated after seeing a tea factory at one of the world's best tea producing nations, we resumed our journey. If you want an uninterrupted view of mist-enshrouded mountains through ceiling-to-floor windows at every waking moment, you must check in at the Midky Hotel, which is where we arrived. The



Mist-enshrouded town, Nuwara Eliya.

window overlooked a neat little lawn with a coffee table. Right below this lush patch of greenery was a winding road leading all the way to the city center and beyond. Beyond the tarmac stood mysterious dark mountains sporadically enveloped by the unpredictable misty white clouds. The view was surreal.

To be continued...

Source: [1] http://www.arabnews.com/news/464245