

## TRAVELOGUE

# In the land of the lion with the sword

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While on the way to the city, we stopped over at an Elephant Orphanage, a sanctuary for pachyderms. We got there at bath time so to speak, and saw a number of elephants of various sizes being bathed in a beautiful hilly stream. Various shopkeepers lined the sides of the road to the stream, selling various kinds of masks, bead jewellery, souvenirs, and even 'poo paper'—made out of elephant excreta!

The elephants went back to their living area at noon, where they were fed with much care. Then it was time for them to relax. We grabbed lunch on our way out of the sanctuary, somewhat out of greed. Some people were sitting around what looked like a makeshift hotel, eating. A bit of

ad bamboo and fruit stalls. We took a break at a coffee shop for a while.

Kandy basically developed around a lake, and in the centre of the city, on top of the mountain, sits none other than Gautam Buddha, spreading peace over it, in the Bahiravokanda Buddhist temple. The Buddha here is beautiful, and serene. It is visible from all parts of the city below, and most of the way is accessible by car. To reach the statue itself, you will have to walk a bit. Kandy also houses the Temple of the Tooth Relic, another sacred pilgrimage site of the Buddhists, where a tooth of the Buddha is stored. There is also the Lankatilaka Temple for the adherents of Buddhism and Hinduism. Kandy also has a tea museum,



potato 'bhorta', red chilli 'bhorta', coconut 'bhorta', fish fry, dry lentil curry, and small fish curry as well, with a plate of rice. It looked delicious to us, and it was! We ate to our heart's content.

Then we started off again. The road ahead kept getting higher, and we climbed the hill in our car, watching the train going beside the road as well. Sometimes the train was higher than us in the car, and other times we would look down to see it slither by. The road was lined by tea gardens, and we also saw some shops selling earthenware

the Udawattakele jungle, and the Kandy lake. The last king of Kandy had this lake dug in 1807.

We felt great the minute we got off at the hotel on the mountain top, and all our fatigue vanished. It was green everywhere, the blue sky, and proud mountains standing tall. But the most interesting was the warning on the hotel door, written in bright red, "Keep the doors closed or monkeys will take your things." We did see them the first thing after waking up in the morning—moving about with mischief in their eyes.

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## OFF TO GALLE: THE CITY MENTIONED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

From Kandy, we headed off to Galle surrounded by the sea. We were amazed by the expressway that was taking us to Galle. We drove at speeds of 140/150 kilometres per hour, but there were no bumps or jerking at all! The tea we had in our cups was not spilling out either!

We dreamt of making four or five such expressways in our Bangladesh too. Not just the expressway, but all the roads here were smooth and clean.

Before entering Galle we saw the Indian Ocean, and the main road of the city is a marine drive, right by the shore. But where was the city? All we could see were the waves of the ocean hitting Galle shores.

You can find many Portuguese and Dutch buildings left over from yesteryears, which is why Galle is designated as a World Heritage site. Experts think that Galle is in fact the city of Tarshish, where King Solomon sent his ship full of goods for trade.

The most beautiful part of Galle is the Old Dutch quarter, and the old lighthouse. Visiting it will momentarily transport you to the 15/16th century. There are quite a few shops of antiques and masks here. From October to December, the ocean off Galle is a good place for whale watching. There is also a rain forest, a sea turtle hatchery, and a Dutch museum - if you have some time to spare.

We all loved Sri Lanka so much that we want to go again, soon.

By Ranjana Huda  
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Photo: Ranjana Huda

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