



Your Guide To Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort Nature Walk

Resort history

The Story of Goyambokka estate becoming Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort.

Known as Goyambokka Estate, the property on which Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort is situated, originally had been used for paddy cultivated in low-lying areas. History states that the original land included the rocky outcrop - "Goyam gala" which now lies about 350 m away from the Resort property, separated by the sea. The rock was named "Goyam gala" (Paddy rock in English), as the rock surface had been used those days for drying harvested paddy.

The property was then converted to a coconut estate, and on 1 December 2015, saw the birth of the Resort. What was just a coconut estate, a mangrove patch by the small stream that runs through the southern end of the resort and a tract of paddy land in the past, is now a well-managed landscape that blends in with coastal nature.



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Introduction to the Nature Walk

Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort Nature Walk offers a beautiful view of the coastal environment of southern Sri Lanka. This easy, 1 km long scenic route may take one hour if you walk leisurely during day time. There are five contrasting zones on this nature walk: Cliff walk, Garden walk, Mangrove walk, Farm walk and Beach walk. You start from the Cliff walk on the east and proceed along the Garden walk, Mangrove walk, Farm walk and end at the Beach walk.

Tips for an enjoyable nature walk

- Get guidance from the Resort Nature Guru.
- Dress in comfortable informal clothing as appropriate.
- Put on a sun hat and sunglasses, wear suitable footwear and preferably apply sunscreen.
- Keep a bottle of drinking water if you like.
- Walk along designated foot paths without disturbing the surrounding.

Dollars for Deeds programme

Anantara 'Dollars for Deeds' programme, matches each guest's donation dollar for dollar. The fund will be used for conservation activities primarily on turtle conservation.



Cliff walk

Enjoy the panoramic view of the Indian Ocean towards the south! Beyond the horizon, no land is found between you and the South Pole!

Just a few kilometers away in the sea, there is an extremely busy shipping route connecting east and west Asia, Africa and Europe. This is the ancient Silk Route. The overlooking toe of the cliff wall is mostly a sloping and fragmented bare rock eroded by sea, while higher ground is clothed by plants that can tolerate the sea breeze. You can spot groves of Screw Pine on the upper portion of the rocky beach. The light-green multi-branched shrubs on the cliff and its vicinity are called Beach Cabbage.

Among the animals that visit or live in the cliff area, the porcupine is the most interesting creature. You may not see this nocturnal animal during your Nature Walk but do not forget to trace their trails (pug marks and droppings) which run across the cliffs. Terns, kingfishers, gulls and butterflies are also commonly seen in this area.

Garden walk

Walk towards the north along the edge of the cliff until you reach the Resort's Lobby area where you will find a charming arrangement of flowers and neatly trimmed hedges in the shade of a wooded area. This beautifully landscaped tropical garden makes you feel welcome. The bright yellow mass of Golden Trumpet flowers add much to the magical beauty of the place.

Continue westwards along the path shaded by big-leaved trees such as Breadfruit and Fish Poison tree and stroll past the Lobby further west and you are now on a sloping land. The Rain Tree on your left is still not mature despite its large size. Walk down past the shady area and cross over to the great lawn on the sloped area. Note the well preserved existing native plants, Neem, Java Plum and coconut trees blending with exotic landscape elements.

Grey langurs, Palm squirrels, Black-napped hares and Land monitors are also residents of the Anantara Resort. Do not miss the common garden lizards and also garden birds such as Common Mynah, Purple-rump Sunbird and Rose-ringed Parakeet.

Once you leave behind the great lawn, you are in a valley with a trackish water stream flanked by mangroves.

Mangrove walk

Continue south along the path that runs alongside the thick growth of towering 'sea forest' commonly known as mangroves. Peep into the shady inside of this lush stretch and you may feel that you have traversed deep in to a forest. Mangroves are found where sea water intrusion takes place from time to time, and plants are well adapted to salty environment.

Looking Glass Trees are the tallest members here and easily recognized by shiny grayish white under surface of its leaves. Also look out for trees with a yellowish brown bark and bright yellow flowers when you come to the bridge across the stream. They are called White Mangroves. Try to spot the over growing large woody climber, Jewel vine.

You will never miss the school of Grey Mulletts in the stream. Blue Eyes and Dwarf Panchax are two tiny fishes that also live in the stream but you will need sharp eyes to observe them from land. Endemic Flapshell Turtles and Black Turtle are common resident reptiles of the Anantara mangroves.

Many aquatic birds live in the mangrove habitat including White-breasted Water Hen, Little Cormorant and Striated Heron. The nocturnal animals like, Otters and Fishing cats live discreetly in the mangrove habitat, hence are hardly seen.

Farm walk

Passing the bridge when you turn towards the north you will notice a slightly higher ground where a plot of land has been set apart for cultivation of paddy. Rice is the staple diet of Sri Lankan society and historical records tell us that paddy was cultivated in the country for more than 2,600 years.

Many kinds of vegetable, food, spices and medicinal crops are grown in this farm.

Pay attention as you walk along the path to see the simply erected wooden farm hut, tree top hut and traditional wattle and daub hut where herbal drinks are served.

Cattle Egrets are a common sight at the farm. The Pond Heron is another frequent visitor, but less obvious than the previous. Farmers generally dislike grain and fruit eaters such as peacocks and parakeets. On the other hand, dragonflies, bee-eaters and swallows who remove insects from farmlands are welcome, as they assist in pest management.

Beach walk

Heading southward, passing through lush garden foliage and lawns, you enter picturesque views of the white sandy beach that makes for a perfect seaside escape. The 418 m long beach stretch comprises of two rocky shores, several tide pools and a sandy shore of 281 m extent.

ROCKY SHORES

Growing on rock surfaces which are frequently in contact with waves are seaweeds (algae) (e.g. Sea Lettuce, Sargassum). They provide safe refuge to marine fauna, a ready supply of food source to grazers and play a major role as primary producers in coastal areas. On rocks, you cannot miss Grapulus crabs (Mottled Sally Lightfoot Crab) either lazily sun bathing on a flat rock surface or busily grazing on seaweeds. Limpets, marine snails, sea urchins, acorn barnacles and oysters are also seen attached to rocks all year round, but in different intensities.

TIDE POOLS

If you fancy getting your feet wet, venture towards one of the many tide pools and feel the warmth of water in a tropical tide pool. Stand still and let the water settle, you will be amazed to see a variety of fish (mostly juveniles) swimming or pecking on algae. The most abundant and present throughout the year are Blackspot Sergeant and several species of gobies.

SANDY SHORES

Thick bushes of Screw pine and Beach Cabbage line the landward side of the beach. The amazing screw pine creates shady stop-over places for you to escape the dazzling sun. Goat's foot creeper and the associated grass Spinifex form a carpet on the sandy shore.

Towards the landward edge of the sandy beach under the shade of coastal vegetation, you will notice one or two nests of sea turtles with a display board indicating nest details. If you are lucky you may witness a turtle laying eggs on the sandy beach at night or hatchlings emerging from a nest and hurriedly moving towards the sea at dawn or dusk to start a new chapter in their lives. Take a leisure stroll down the sandy shore and you will see lots of hermit crabs and ghost crabs.

Cinnamon

The inner bark of the tree is used to make cinnamon which is mostly used in cooking and baking. Cinnamon is a famous spice which attracted the Europeans from ancient times and was a popular item for trade through the silk route. Sri Lanka produces about 90% of the world's commercial Ceylon Cinnamon and is the pride among world's spices.

Mangrove root types

Mangroves have unique root types adapted for anaerobic and unstable soil conditions. White Mangrove have numerous pencil like "breathing roots" growing upwards. The Looking Glass trees have plank like roots providing stability.

Fishing cat & Otter

Both species are nocturnal and live secretly among the resort mangroves. Otters are good swimmers who are adapted to catching fish and other aquatic animals while swimming. The Fishing cat is a nocturnal hunter which feeds on fish, frogs and insects etc.

Grey mullet

Grey coloured and torpedo shaped, the Grey Mullet is a common sight in coastal habitats and they live in small groups. This species is harvested everywhere else, but the resort population is preserved for your viewing pleasure.

Parakeet & Bee-eater

Parakeets are frequent in resort gardens. You may hear their loud notes in the morning and evening. They lay eggs in tree holes and sleep attached to coconut leaves during night.

Bee-eaters are insectivorous birds which mainly feed on flying insects. They are experts on catching flying insects while on flight. Two types of bee-eaters visit the resort, Blue-tailed Bee-eater and Little Green Bee-eater.

Dragonflies

Dragonflies are not related to dragons by any means. They are innocent insects only second to butterflies by external beauty. Look carefully, you may easily detect more than 17 different species along marshy areas.

Yala National Park

16 km eastward from the Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort

Sri Lanka

ANANTARA PEACE HAVEN - TANGALLE RESORT

Palm squirrel

As you approach the Lobby, you will notice Palm Squirrels are also there in the garden, nodding their tiny heads, eagerly waiting to welcome you!

Breadfruit

Introduced to Sri Lanka from East Asia during the colonial period. It is cooked as a curry with coconut milk and spices as a side dish for steamed rice or boiled in salted water as a main meal.

Black-napped hare & Grey langur

These two mammal species live in the resort garden but are active at different times of the day. The Black-napped Hare is nocturnal and the Grey Langur is diurnal. The shy Black-napped Hare is more likely to come out at night when you are in deep sleep.

Cliff walk area

Kingfishers come closer to the cliff to catch their prey while Terns and Gulls are seen busily flying along the coastline. The pink butterfly - Small Salmon Arabs can be encountered during most of the dry months of the year.

Rocky shores

Attached firmly to rock surfaces are limpets (with a shell that is broadly conical in shape and a strong, muscular foot) - Rayed limpets and Striated limpets which graze on seaweeds.

Three species of marine snails can be seen; Conical Periwinkle, Intermediate Periwinkle, and Chamaeselon Nerite; the former being the most abundant.

South pole

The South Pole is 9,340 km from the Resort. There is no land between here and the freezing continent, Antarctica.

Tide pools

Gobies are the most abundant and you will see several species. Due to their swift movements, identification is somewhat difficult. Blackspot sergeant is common in all tide pools. It is a pleasure to watch the graceful movements of juvenile Conifer Surgefish with vertical stripes, Barred Flagtail with a unique tall mark, One-spot Demoiselle with a luminous blue spot and the beautiful Target Fish with elliptical bands.

Sandy shores

Note the bushy top of Screw pine with leaf scars forming a circular pattern, and bizarre stilt-like prop roots keeping the plant upright. Goat's foot creeper and the associated grass Spinifex which grow on the sandy shore function as sand binders.

Unlike regular crabs, hermit crabs do not have a protective shell covering their bodies. Therefore, they use discarded snail shells for protection, thus this name. Ghost crabs are seen popping out of their burrows in the sand to collect food. They appear and disappear in no time, hence this name.

Whale habitat

Can you believe that the world largest animal the Blue Whale is roaming from few kilometers from the resort beach? Blue Whales are generally migratory, but the pod of Blue Whales in the southern coast are reported as non-migratory.

Silk route

The ancient Silk Route (207 BCE-220 CE) is the route through which the Roman and Chinese ships sailed. Godawaya, nearly 25 km eastward from the Resort, had been a busy harbour during that period.

Turtles

Of the five species of sea turtles that nest in the shores of Sri Lanka, Green and Olive Ridley sea turtles are the commonest that visit Anantara beach to lay eggs. Our Nature Guru has several untold stories about sea turtles of the resort.

