



## The lowdown

Highly sought-after [London](#)-based osteopath Sam Kankanamge has brought the success of his practice home to [Sri Lanka](#). The result is a one-of-a-kind Ayurvedic immersion on the south coast of the island. Guests come here, to the mangrove forest of the Rekawa Reserve sandwiched between a pristine beach and lagoon, to disconnect, take stock of their lives and embrace the healing power of nature. Weight loss, depression, skin disorders, insomnia, stuck in a rut? Nothing is too much or too little for Dr Harshi Anuradha, who diagnoses your dosha after you've given her the lowdown on your life.



Then it's on to the prescribed timetable of acupuncture, full-body massages, osteopathy, shirodhara (oil poured onto the forehead to calm the mind) plus more hardcore elements, including all-out cleansing and fasting. Personalised Ayurvedic medicine is freshly whipped up daily in front of your eyes. Time here drifts by in a haze of treatments, topped and tailed by kundalini yoga on the beach or in the shala overlooked by monkeys. Gong baths, sound therapy and meditation sessions relax you further. Then there's the cacao ceremony, a ritual of drinking pure chocolate and dancing your flip-flops off to help release deep emotions.

If you're craving downtime, find some headspace in the frangipani-filled garden, seek out one of the daybeds or go for a stroll along the palm-tree-lined sand. There's the chance to explore local sites, too – nearby Yala National Park has some of the best leopard-spotting on the planet. Meals are help-yourself and eaten together as guests bond over the delicately spiced curries. And while some people arrive looking to address specific issues, others just need a break. It's a mixed bunch: burnt-out creatives, over-stressed execs, mothers and daughters, and soul-searching millennials. There's no alcohol or caffeine; instead, it's king-coconut water and herbal tea on tap.



When it comes to (early) bedtime, pick your way along the candle-lit wooden walkway to one of the eight simple thatched cabanas. Modelled on the shape of a conch shell to draw up energy from the earth, they have no lavish trappings but that doesn't matter when there's this much peace. Lasting change is the aim. To set you on your path, Dr Anuradha gives you a take-home strategy. Then, as the final flourish, there's a cleansing ceremonial flower bath, in which you soak in a tub of water blessed by a Buddhist monk with essential

oils and herbs. This is a unique retreat of supreme holistic care. You leave in substantially better shape than you arrived, sparkling with energy and coaxed back to life.

**INSIDER TIP**

Don't miss the giant green turtles that come ashore and nest on the sanctuary's beach.

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