

# Good and gorgeous

The stunning Barberyn Ayurveda Resorts in Sri Lanka practise the age-old science of Ayurveda in its purest form

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**BARBERYN REEF RESORT AT BERUWALA**  
NEAREST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
Bandaranaike International Airport, 85 km  
NEAREST TRAIN STATION  
Beruwala Railway Station, 20 km

**BARBERYN BEACH RESORT AT WELIGAMA**  
NEAREST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
Bandaranaike International Airport, 170 km  
NEAREST TRAIN STATION  
Matara Railway Station, 15 km

find your way

**LEFT** The Barberyn Beach Resort at Weligama is spread over 15 acres, and its architecture and view are breathtaking

The clean blue beaches, huge green lush fields, beautiful houses near the coastline and the authentic Sri Lankan cuisine are some of the reasons why tourists from around the globe come to Sri Lanka year after year. Another one is its famous Ayurveda treatment centres.

Pioneering Ayurveda tourism is Barberyn Ayurveda Resorts. Barberyn has two Ayurveda resorts along the southern coastline of Sri Lanka. One, Barberyn Reef Resort is at Beruwala, approximately 85 km from the Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo; the other, Barberyn Beach Resort is located at Weligama, the southernmost tip of Sri Lanka, a five-hour drive from the airport.

**BARBERYN REEF RESORT**

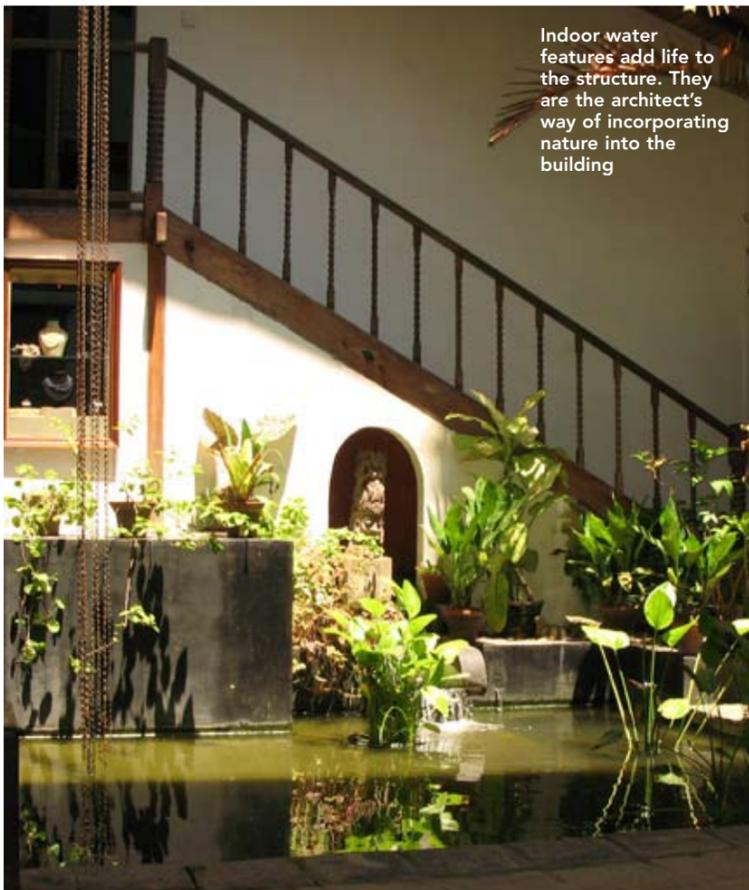
Our flight was short and comfortable—and remarkably affordable! The resort car—complimentary airport pick-up and drops for all guests—was waiting for us and whisked us to Barberyn Reef Resort in Beruwala. The resort is celebrating its 40th anniversary: it's the oldest Ayurvedic resort in Sri Lanka and one of the oldest in the world. A huge wooden door—which keeps the guests protected from the prying eyes of the outsiders—leads you to the resort. From the first moment of our smiles-and-garland welcome, it's pure calm and tranquillity all the way. We crossed traditionally designed beach cottages and thriving water-bodies, and under foliage-rich archways to get to our rooms. Both our rooms are gorgeous—with views to kill for! The décor is simple and earthy to give a soothing and calming effect, with open-plan architecture that ensures that all the spaces get enough natural light.

The rooms here are in different categories—Standard, Deluxe, Beach View, Garden View and Duplex. You have the option of selecting your rooms based on facilities and, of course, your budget. However, rest assured that, whichever room you choose, you'll have no reason to complain.



Herbs used in the ayurvedic treatment are grown under expert supervision of the resident doctors

Indoor water features add life to the structure. They are the architect's way of incorporating nature into the building



"When we saw the design we were a little sceptical, considering this is a coastal area and the climate is a bit unpredictable. But our architect Turner Wickramasinghe, who has assisted the famous Geoffrey Bawa, was keen on open-plan architecture. And it has worked well for us," informs Manick Rodrigo, the owner. The idea was to get as much nature in as possible. So there are trees and ponds all over the place—in the central courtyard, in the herbal garden, outside the reception area, everywhere. And just outside is the beautiful Beruwala Beach, a small section of which serves as a private pool for the guests.

But the sun, sand, sea, beauty of the resort and leisure apart, Barberyn is world-renowned for its Ayurvedic centre, which has won a string of awards for its authenticity and level of expertise. Ayurveda focuses on physical and mental wellbeing, and, to achieve this, treatments, medicines and diets are prescribed to balance an individual's doshas—the combination of the five elements of creation, space, water, earth, air and fire. Guests who come here seeking expert medical advice must start out by meeting the resident doctor and getting a detailed health report after answering questions on their medical history, diet, sleep cycle and daily routine.

The medicines are made from herbs that are grown in the herbal gardens under expert supervision. One of these herbal gardens is located within the resort and the other is on an island 40 km away, spread over 27

acres. We were told it's a must visit; and we found out why. The journey to the island is an event in itself. You can either take a boat from the Bentota River, a 45-minute ride; or go by road, though there's still a 15-minute boat ride through a swampy tributary of the Bentrai River that you can't avoid. The silence is deafening, the trees menacing, and there are apparently crocodiles as well! But it's certainly a great experience. We walked around exploring the island. All the plants here are organically grown—guaranteeing treatment in its purest form.

At the resort's huge dining hall that faces the beach, wooden blocks painted with rooms numbers are placed on each table. These blocks also hold the guests' menu prescribed by the doctors. A representative from the medical staff is always present to monitor your meals making sure you follow the prescribed diet. The food, like the treatment, is a different experience in itself. Add to this early morning yoga and evening Tai Chi sessions, and the results and satisfaction levels speak for themselves! It's no surprise then that you find people coming back to this resort year after year. We met Marlene Tee, from Germany: "I have been at Beruwala resort 14 times in the last 14 years: I've been coming here since 1994! It has offered me the best Ayurvedic treatment. Each year I get either one of my relatives or friends to this place. I have been afflicted with the Barberyn virus. It's incurable!"



**ABOVE** The waiting room outside the health centre displays notices charting the daily activities at the resort



**LEFT** The dining hall at the resort has an informal lounge area where guests meet for tea. Antique furniture and artefacts lend the place an old-world charm

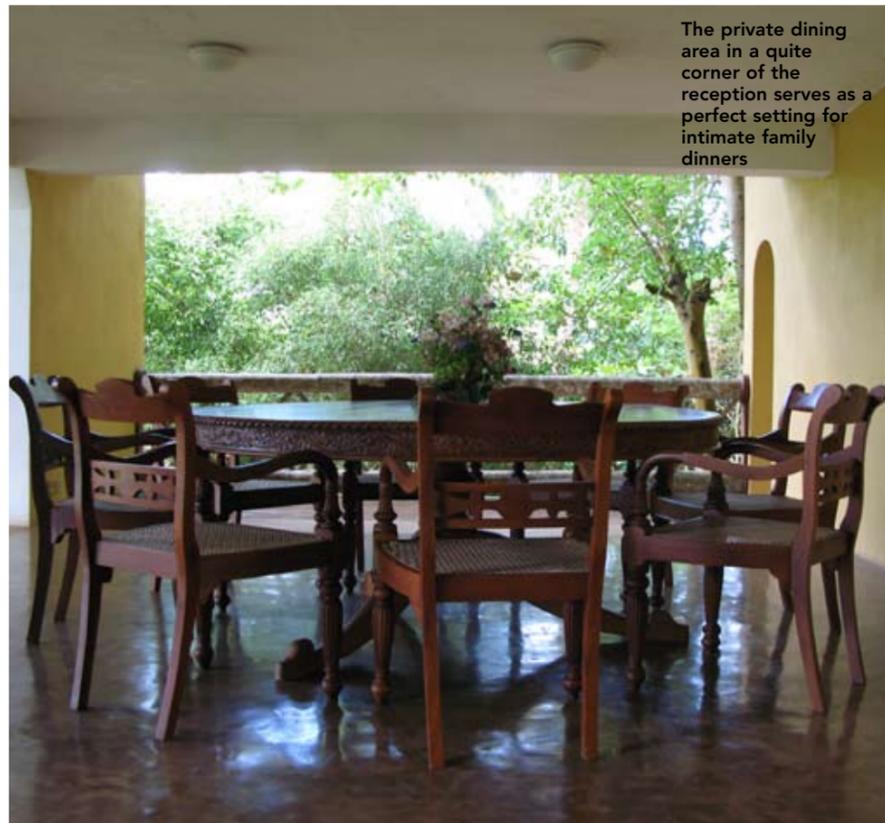


Every room at the Barbaryn Beach Resort opens out to this view—the dense wilderness, a coconut grove and the Indian Ocean

### BARBERYN BEACH RESORT

After spending a couple of days Barbaryn Reef Resort, we moved on to the Barbaryn Beach Resort in Weligama, a couple of hours down the stunning coastline. The resort is spread over 15 acres, and its architecture and view are breathtaking. Both of us noticed how there's a design continuity maintained through the resorts, despite Weligama being much larger; while, at the same time, both have very distinct identities. Barbaryn Reef has old-world charm; Barbaryn Beach is enormous and structurally breathtaking. The resort traces the course of nature, mimicking the ups and downs of the landscape. Kamini Rodrigo, one of the owners explains, "When the architect showed us the floor plans, it was a bit confusing. But he assured us that it would resemble a bird perched on the tree. And it actually does." The huge green trees on three sides and the beach on one side beautifully camouflage the resort.

We chose to explore the resort before we settled into our rooms. The resort is designed to make guests walk as much as possible. And none of the recreation zones—the library, dining hall or lounge—is air conditioned. "The idea is to make you sweat as much as possible. It's the simplest way to detoxify your body," informs Dr Pushpa, the resident doctor. And honestly, it's so beautiful here that one doesn't feel the walk. On the



The private dining area in a quiet corner of the reception serves as a perfect setting for intimate family dinners



*"The resort traces the course of nature, mimicking the ups and downs of the landscape."*

Nature Trail, you see over 50 varieties of rare medicinal plants and we spotted some stunning birds—there are over 35 species that call it home. The Nature Trail connects to the swimming pool and the beach. Though we had walked quite a bit, we couldn't wait to see more. From the swimming pool, we moved on to the yoga pavilion, which also overlooks the beach. It's calm, soothing—perfect for meditating, practising yoga or just lounging around. No matter where you go here, you can hear the waves—at times serene, at times thunderous.

We'd been loafing around all morning, unaware of the time or how much we'd walked. Suddenly, exhaustion dawned on both of us and we decided to move to our respective rooms. And that too was a journey, and what a journey it was! Across the pathway, through landscaped gardens,

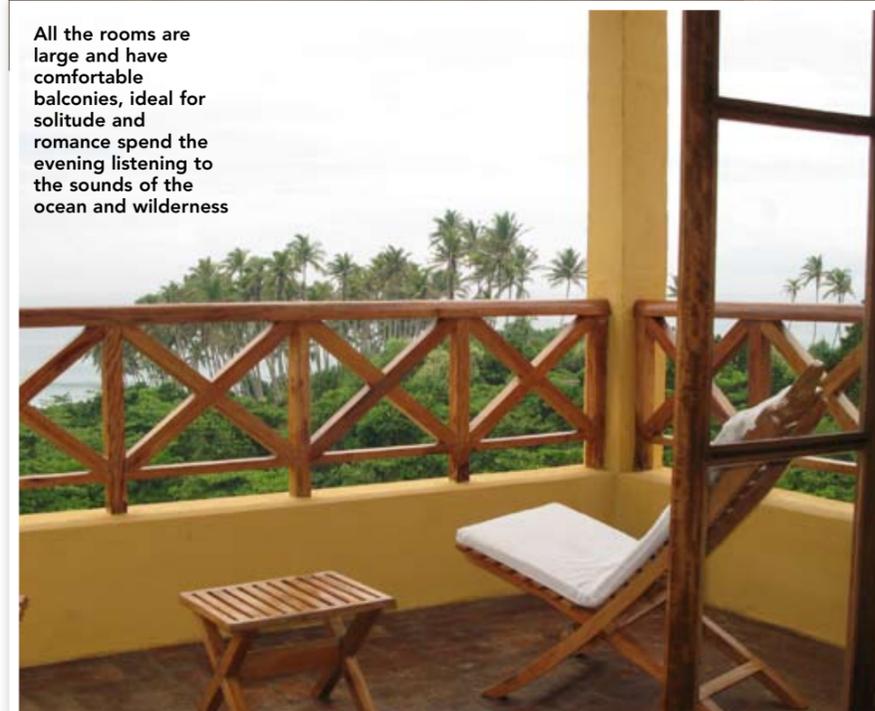
**ABOVE** The yoga pavilion is also a perfect place to meditate or spend some time with yourself

**RIGHT** The resort also offers regular yoga and Tai Chi sessions for the guests





All the rooms are large and have comfortable balconies, ideal for solitude and romance spend the evening listening to the sounds of the ocean and wilderness



down a flight of stairs and up again! Phew! But once we reached our rooms, the fatigue vanished. Four-poster beds again, beautifully carved wooden furniture and floor-to-ceiling windows, with balconies that overlooked the dense vegetation, a coconut grove and then the ocean! Breathtaking.

We spent a couple of days at Barbery Beach, getting used to the slow pace and early evenings. And to being pampered: the incredible and energetic staff takes care of each and every need of visitors. "The staff is so proactive and warm! This attitude towards their customers speaks volumes about the service offered by the resort," says a yoga instructor from Germany who has been a regular visitor at the Weligama resort for six years. Dinner starts at six, after which you can spend time reading in the library or catching up on news and watching movies in the media room. Unanimous advice? Sit in the balcony and let the sound of the waves lull you to sleep. Nothing at all can beat the experience.

Barbery Beach Resort offers the same Ayurvedic medical treatment and services as Barbery Reef does. These resorts are considered two of the best Ayurveda centres in the world. Despite so much else that Sri Lanka has to offer, we realised that many people we met had come only to experience the wellness and rejuvenation that are synonymous with the Barbery Resorts and their unadulterated Ayurveda.

And we can see why. 



**BELOW** The tables have a small wooden plaque with the room numbers and the prescribed diet

**RIGHT** The meals are prepared according to the doctors' prescription



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