

## The Top Five Beaches You Need To See In 2017

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From Asia to Europe, my passport stamps from 2016 numbered in the dozens (forcing me to upgrade to the thicker 52-page book). I hit a slew of new countries including Panama, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar, but no matter where I alighted, if there was a beach, I found it. While some people's thrills involve swishing down a cold snowy mountain through sentinels of pine, my *raison d'être* (forgive the touch of hyperbole) when traveling is to locate the most perfect stretch of wild coast hugging the bluest jewel-toned waters. Once on the beach, I sit-listening to the wind-driven surf, smelling the saline spritz, observing patterns in the undulating waves. I palm the sand, studying the texture of its ancient weathered granules, and imagine how it would feel to swim in a liquid sapphire. Then I dive in. As an unabashed ocean lover, here are my top five beach trips you need to book this year.

*[Excerpt]*

### Tangalle Beach, Sri Lanka



Tangalle Anantara Hotel and Beach. (Image by Lauren Mowery)

Another destination difficult to reach from the United States, visiting Sri Lanka consumes nearly two days with flying. Using miles on Air India, I departed JFK for Colombo, breaking up the journey with an overnight in Delhi. After a five-hour drive south from the capital, first on smooth, fast highway followed by a tedious two-lane road jammed with tuk-tuk taxis, emboldened dogs, and errant cattle, I arrived at Tangalle. Given the exhausting trek, my heart jumped with relief to discover a

ravishing beach at the foot of the Anantara Peace Haven Hotel. While all of Sri Lanka's sand is public, the Anantara dominates a secluded stretch enclosed by rocky outcroppings affording relatively private sunbathing. The hotel provides guests a slew of loungers, serviced by the pool bar and restaurant, that come with complimentary baskets of sunscreen, water, and other necessities. Glassy waves crash with moderate force, so for longer stress-free swims, walk five-minutes to neighboring Goyambokka Beach. Framing the calm cerulean bay are rustic seafood restaurants filled with youthful travelers drinking Lion beer, and an uninterrupted line of swaying palms.

**Hotel:** Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle. A former coconut plantation turned breezy tropical resort. Walk from the ground floor ocean facing room to the beach in under 30 seconds. Don't miss the transporting spa, one of the best--if not the best--in Sri Lanka.