

Trincomalee: most popular tourist destination in Sri Lanka

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Trincomalee is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Sri Lanka, which is frequented by a significant number of local and foreign visitors.

There are a number of important places in and around Trincomalee that can be visited by tourists, but it is somewhat questionable whether visitors are really aware of such places.

Therefore, this article is about some of the must-see places to visit if someone is on a tour to Trincomalee, as well as some of the most exciting experiences available there.

Port of Trincomalee

The Port of Trincomalee is in the Koddiyar Bay and has been a major source of foreigners' efforts to conquer it in ancient times. It is the only port in the Indian Ocean that can accommodate all types of seafaring under any kind of weather conditions and is currently considered to be the second best natural harbour in the world.

The Trincomalee Port consists of two sections, the Outer Harbour and the Inner



Harbour and covers an area of 5, 261 hectares. The port is open 24 hours each day of the year except on May Day. Visitors to the port must obtain a permit and a boat service is also operated by the Sri Lanka Navy.

Frederick Fort or Trincomalee Fort

The Trincomalee Fort was built in 1623 AD, on the premises of the Koneswaram Temple, which was destroyed by the Portuguese with the consent of King Philip III of Portugal.

It was captured by the forces of Dutch Admiral Westerwold in 1639, and rebuilt in 1665 by the Dutch and renamed Fort Frederick. It was later taken over by the French and then acquired by the English in 1795.

Fort Frederick, which housed naval artillery during World War II, is currently under the control of the Gajaba Regiment of the Sri Lanka Army.

Open to the public, it is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Trincomalee and the rebuilt Koneswaram Devalaya is also located inside it.

Koneswaram Devalaya

The Koneswaram Devalaya or Thirukoneswaram is on the top of the 'Swami's Rock' inside Fort Frederick. It is also known as the 'Temple of the Thousand Towers' and was built for Konasar, one of

the images of Lord Shiva.

Considered to be one of the oldest Shiva Devalayas in Sri Lanka, it was first built around the 3rd century BC. In the 17th century, the Portuguese demolished the original Temple and built the Frederick Fortress on its ruins, while the Temple's statues and valuables were taken to the Lisbon Museum.

Some other statues were hidden by the devotees under the ground and the Koneswaram Devalaya was rebuilt in 1963 using such artefacts found during the archaeological excavations of 1944-1950.

Ravana's Cleft (Lovers' Leap)

Lover's Leap, a few metres away from the Koneswaram Devalaya, is a must-see place for a beautiful and adventurous view of the Indian Ocean.

Surrounded by a 350-metre-high boulder with a steep slope, there are several heart-wrenching legends associated with it. Almost all of them are similar, and the most famous of these is the story of Francina van Reed.

Francina, the daughter of an upper-class civil servant, was engaged to a young Dutch officer. He abruptly broke the marriage and sailed to Holland.

Francina, who was watching the ship carrying him out of the Trincomalee harbour from the top of 'Swami Rock', plunged to her death from the Ravana's Cleft.

Several lovers had suffered due to their broken love affairs had jumped to their death from this place, and therefore it was



FRANCINA, WHO WAS WATCHING THE SHIP CARRYING HIM OUT OF THE TRINCOMALEE HARBOUR FROM THE TOP OF 'SWAMI ROCK', PLUNGED TO HER DEATH FROM THE RAVANA'S CLEFT

'Lover's Leap'.

At present a three-foot high fence has been erected around the rock for the protection of visitors.

British War Cemetery and the Marble Beach

Built to commemorate the soldiers who fought for Britain during World War II, it is about kilometres kilometres (km) north of Trincomalee on the Nilaveli Coast Road.

It contains the remains of 364 soldiers and was opened in April 1948. Although it is owned by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, it is maintained by the Ministry of Defense.

Located about 18 km south of Trincomalee on the Trincomalee-Kinniya road, the 'Marble Beach' is considered to be one of the most beautiful beaches in Sri Lanka. Facing Koddiyar Bay, it gets its name from the fact that during the day the sun shines on it like a marble surface.

Kanniya Hot Springs

There are seven popular hot springs that in Trincomalee that attracts visitors. The bottom of each well which is about three to four feet deep is easily visible.

It is common for the well to dry out after 10-15 buckets of water are taken out. These hot springs, which are said to have existed even during the reign of King Ravana, are even mentioned in the Ramayana.

The Kinniya hot springs are popular among visitors who believe that bathing in the hot springs can cure arthritis, rheumatic pains and other skin ailments.