



Tamarind Gardens Homestay Responds to National Shift Toward Visitor Spending Over Arrival Numbers

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Sri Lanka launched two World Bank supported consultancy assignments on 31 August 2026 to redesign its tourism sector around visitor spending rather than visitor numbers. The National Tourism Strategic Planning Consultancy for 2026 to 2031 and a Global Promotional Campaign Roadmap Consultancy are backed by a grant of one million United States dollars from the World Bank Grant Facility for Project Preparation. Community based operators, including Tamarind Gardens Homestay, have identified the change as directly relevant to rural districts that capture a smaller share of tourism earnings.

The strategic planning assignment has been awarded to a joint venture between Aninver Development Partners of Spain and EML Consultants PLC of Sri Lanka. The resulting framework will cover tourism demand and supply, investment requirements, regulatory and institutional reform, skills development, marketing and implementation. The launch was presided over by Professor Ruwan Ranasinghe, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism.

Malraj Kiriella, local team leader for the strategic planning consultancy, stated that the country received approximately 2.36 million visitors in 2025, exceeding the level achieved in 2018, but that earnings of around

3.2 billion United States dollars left average earnings per tourist significantly below the 2018 figure. He said the roadmap will concentrate on increasing visitor spending, encouraging longer stays and spreading economic benefit across all nine provinces.

Arrivals data published by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority shows 1,535,122 visitors between January and August 2026, including 191,704 in August. India remained the largest source market with 385,483 arrivals over the eight month period, followed by the United Kingdom with 149,989 and China with 100,828.

Ayesha Perera, co-founder of Tamarind Gardens Homestay, stated that the shift towards value rather than volume reflects what smaller rural operators have observed for several years. She added that a guest who stays four nights on a working farm, eats what is grown there and joins village activities leaves considerably more money in the local economy than a guest passing through for a single night, and that the difference rarely appears in national arrival counts.

Community based accommodation sits at the centre of the distribution question the strategy sets out to address, since inland districts capture a smaller share of tourism earnings than established coastal resorts. Operators outside the main tourist corridors typically employ locally, purchase produce locally and retain a higher proportion of guest spending within the surrounding area. As a Digana homestay, Tamarind Gardens sources produce and dairy from its own land and neighbouring villages.

The 24 week assignment will hold stakeholder workshops in October and validation sessions in January before a costed national roadmap is finalised in February. Monthly arrival figures during 2026 have been uneven, with growth in January and February, contractions in March and April, a return to growth in May and further declines in June and July.

Tamarind Gardens is a ten acre working farm and guesthouse in Digana, Kandy District, offering chalet accommodation alongside a dairy operation, fruit and vegetable gardens and village experiences. The property supplies dairy products to hotels and restaurants in the area and provides hospitality training and employment in a district where dolomite mining has been a principal source of work.

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For more information about Tamarind Gardens Homestay, contact the company here: Tamarind Gardens Homestay Ayesha Perera +94779071777 Ayesha55555@gmail.com Tamarind Gardens Homestay Tamarind Gardens Aluthgangapitiya, Aluthwatte Digana 20180 Sri Lanka

Tamarind Gardens Homestay

Authentic Sri Lankan farm-stay in Digana with Victoria Reservoir views. Cultural immersion experiences, farm-to-table dining, dairy farming, traditional crafts. Cozy chalets, village hospitality.

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