

**LIVING LIFE with**  
Tina Edward Gunawardhana

# KAVINDYA THENNAKON



Current Hi! cover girl Kavindya is a force to be reckoned with. Winner of the Harvard Global Trailblazer Award and the Queen's Young Leader Award, Kavindya is a youth activist (she is the co-founder of Without Borders) and a humanitarian.

A student at the prestigious Wellesley College in Massachusetts, Kavindya likes tea and window seats while her hobby is listening to people and re-telling their stories. Here she lists her travel experiences. (Read about her inspirational story in the latest edition of the Hi! Magazine)

**CHECKING OUT**



**WHY DO YOU LOVE TRAVEL**

I think for me it's about meeting incredible people who have unbelievable life stories. I am always fascinated by the notion of "place"



and how you're never the same person when you leave a place.

**YOUR FAVOURITE TRAVEL DESTINATION AND WHY**

Bali. The soothing beaches, the street markets and the fact that I biked across the island with a female biker in the dead of the night. It was super empowering.

**WHAT DO YOU NEED FOR A PERFECT HOLIDAY**

A book, zero deadlines to meet and a map.

**IN WHICH COUNTRY HAVE YOU FELT MOST AT HOME**

London

**MOST UNUSUAL SOUVENIR YOU HAVE BROUGHT HOME**

When I came back from Finland I brought home around 5 empty bottles of Sahti (a traditional Finnish beer). I have no idea what made me bring them all the way back to Sri Lanka. I thought they would be cool souvenirs, but ended up throwing them away two days later.

**WORST HOLIDAY OR TRAVEL EXPERIENCE**

The first country I travelled to alone was Pakistan and I was only 15.



**Q & A**

It's a beautiful country with an amazing culture and history. I met so many wonderful people there, but I was there during the Muharram season and was cursed and spat at while trying to avoid one of the religious parades, it was pretty scary.

**BEST PIECE OF TRAVEL ADVICE**

Try not to have a packed schedule or a precise time table, let the country and the people lead you - it's always the best guide.

**YOUR TOP FIVE TRAVEL DESTINATIONS**

- > **Talin (Estonia)**
- > **Finland**
- > **New York**
- > **Trincomeale**
- > **Turkey (Never been there except on transit - but this tops my bucket list)**

**WHAT HAS TRAVEL TAUGHT YOU**

Travel made me realise how

insignificant me and my problems were compared to the world beyond and secondly it taught me that I didn't need a school and a pile of books to learn some of the most important lessons in life.

**WHICH COUNTRY DID YOU TASTE THE BEST EVER CUISINE**

Seafood in Baltimore! But nothing beats a good Sri Lankan Chicken curry!

**NEXT TRAVEL DESTINATION**

I would probably be going to India and a few places around with my mum this summer. It's a shame to have not visited your neighbour all this time :P



## MEDAWACHCHIYA RESTHOUSE

Convenience and comfort combined

Serving the public silently without much fanfare is the Medawachchiya Resthouse. Located on the once infamous A9 highway about 225 kilometres away from Colombo, this resthouse serves the needs of travellers visiting the North Central Province.



Conveniently located in the heart of the town, the building is full of character and bears some resemblance to the colonial resthouses of yore. The resthouse has double rooms (on request an extra bed can be added) which are very clean, spacious and are equipped with airconditioning and a fan. The rooms are fully carpeted and are furnished with a dressing table, TV and outside verandah.

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The ensuite bathroom are spacious, clean and provide complimentary toiletries.

stringhoppers, rotti and kiribath along with the usual accompaniments. There is also an onsite bar which serves a variety of beverages.

Medawachchiya is derived from 'meda' (meaning centre) and 'wachchiya' (meaning villa) and aptly the Rest House sits comfortably in the middle of four popular tourists spots: Anuradhapura, Mihintale, Vavuniya and Madhu. The famous Shrine of Our Lady of Madu is only 57kms away from the Medawachchiya Resthouse and this makes the resthouse a convenient stopover for travellers to Madu. Medawachchiya also hosts several ancient temples. Isinbessagala being the most noteworthy.

Recognising its potential and great location the management are set to embark on an ambitious refurbishment programme which will see the transformation of this characterful resthouse to a more sleek and modern hotel which will further benefit travellers.

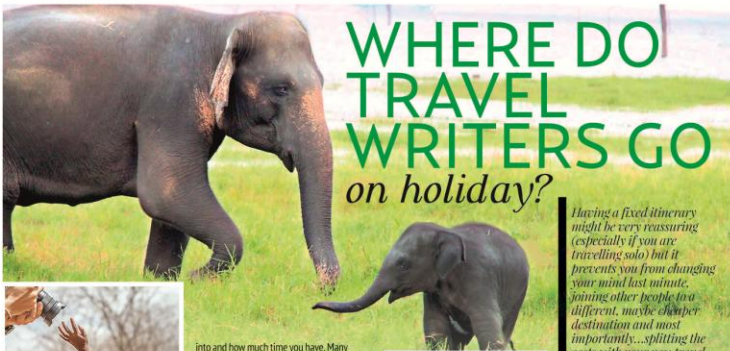


The restaurant at the resthouse serves up traditional Sri Lankan fare along with a few western dishes. Lake fish is a popular feature on the menu teamed with Sri Lankan favourites such as



PHOTOS BY Alice Luker

## WHERE DO TRAVEL WRITERS GO on holiday?



Having a fixed itinerary might be very reassuring (especially if you are travelling solo) but it prevents you from changing your mind last minute, joining other people to a different, maybe cheaper destination and most importantly...splitting the costs with your new travel friends. A win-win situation!



Travel writing is often seen as a glamorous job with visions of writers travelling in first class quaffing bubbles and staying in uber luxurious hotels. But off duty, where do travel writers go to enjoy their hard earned vacation? Do they travel in search of luxury or are they happy to slop it out. Dave Levart a US based travel writer who has been a travel writer for over 19 years updating his site Dave's Travel Corner and Clelia Mattara of Keep Calm and Travel, who is a photographer and writer for four years, define their dream holiday destinations and offer advice on selecting a great holiday destination.

into and how much time you have. Many people are convinced that you need a lot of money to travel but it is not necessarily true if you carefully plan your destination and activities in advance. Choose a place that is cheap like Asia. Try to stay for as long as you can in one destination, or at least don't travel too fast, as you can cut great deals with hotels, hostels and even renting an apartment if you are willing to stay for at least a couple of weeks, better one month. Be flexible! Having a fixed itinerary might be very reassuring (especially if you are travelling solo) but it prevents you from changing your mind last minute, joining other people to a different, maybe cheaper destination and most importantly...splitting the costs with your new travel friends. A win-win situation!



weather destination some long underwear and a very compressible down jacket. Also some antibiotics in case I get sick."

Filled with wanderlust and never staying in one place for long are habits of travel writers. So where next for Dave? "After South East Asia where I am currently, I am heading to Antarctica on an Oceanwide Expedition cruise ship - with some mountaineering, kayaking, hiking and photography as part of our activities." For Clelia a road trip to Iceland is on the cards. "I'm seriously considering settling down somewhere for a while. I'm deciding between Mexico, Europe or Asia. Let's see, I don't like to plan too much in advance as I believe that anything can happen, and that's exactly why I love traveling so much!" she adds.

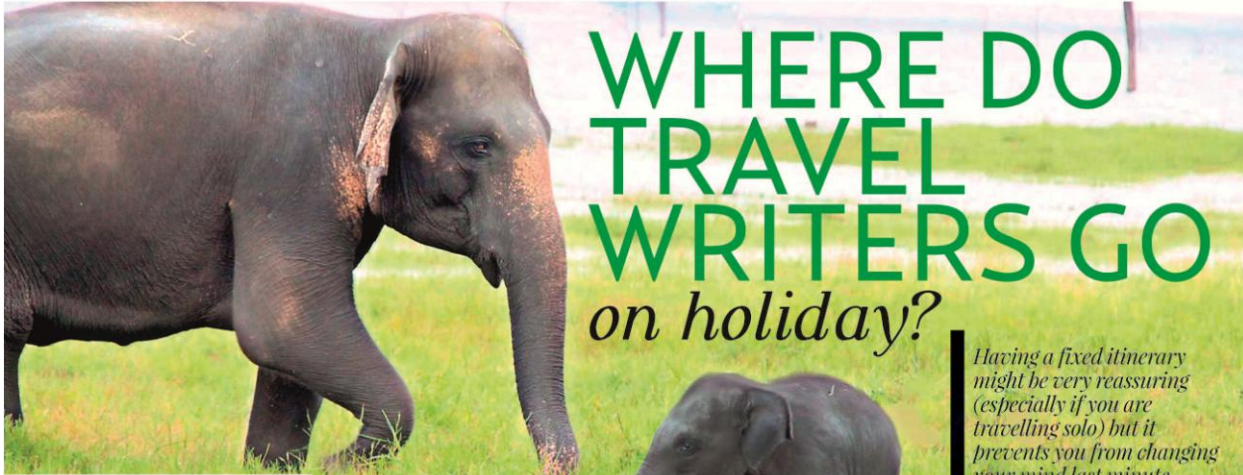


DAVE



CLELIA



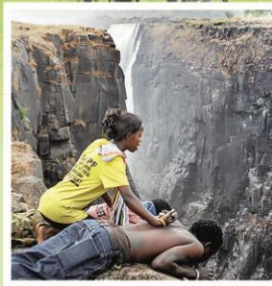


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A secret favourite destination for Dave is the Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. Also north of Lake Tahoe in California - Plumas and Sierra Counties. These are great places to get away from it all, adds Dave. For ocean lover Clelia, El Nido in Palawan in the Philippines is her favourite destination. "The underwater life is incredible and the beaches are spectacular which is perfect for snorkelling and diving. It is paradise on earth indeed" she says.

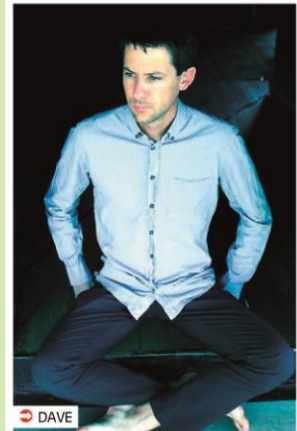
Offering advice for those who are adventurous but don't have bundles of cash, Dave says "Get outdoors - go trekking or backpacking. Find activities that involve nature including visits to waterfalls, rivers, lakes, rock climbing etc. Or find a job in tourism that involves adventure - then you can be a part of it on a daily basis and meet other adventure enthusiasts". Alternatively Clelia suggests "It all depends on what you are really

If money is not a problem when selecting a destination to holiday then Dave suggests Rwanda or Uganda to see the gorillas. "It is not cheap to get to either destination but from most places in the world - and I've read that Kigali is one of the world's most expensive places to live, and I assume visit. When posed with the same questions Clelia responds "Can I say the moon? I know it sounds crazy but that would be something I really would love to try! Aside from going to the Moon, I think I would first go for a one year road trip across Australia and then fly to French Polynesia, and stay there for at least 1 or 2 months snorkelling and scuba diving in a remote island!"

Being the seasoned travellers they are, do they travel light or do they pack everything including the kitchen sink? For Dave, hand luggage is de rigueur. "Most of my trips I only pack hand luggage. Camera, laptop, basic computer and a small electrical adaptor that will work in nearly ever country by changing the configuration as needed, two shorts, two shirts, one lightweight pants and if a cold

weather destination some long underwear and a very compressible down jacket. Also some antibiotics in case I get sick."

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