
Take the Noor & Mohannad trail to exotic Sri Lanka

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International filmmakers choose Sri Lanka's virgin locales for films. When Middle East television's most loved couple Mohannad and Noor recently indulged in a romantic holiday in Sri Lanka, little did they realise that they would fall in love with the country and be bewitched by its enigmatic charm. So would you, when you visit this country, delicately suspended like a tear drop at the southernmost tip of India and poetically called the "Garden of Eden" since time immemorial. Television viewers who caught the "Sri Lanka" episodes (Nos 130 to 132) of Noor and Mohannad, would certainly have caught the scenes where the couple visit a clothes boutique - Noor dressing up and looking exquisitely oriental in a traditional sari (six yards of fabric draped around the body with pleats in front and ending in a fall over the shoulder) and Mohannad looking absolutely smashing in his kurtha (tunic collared shirt) and sarong.

The couple was also seen taking a romantic boat ride through mangroves admiring local aquatic flora and fauna and even (bravely) draping a friendly Python around their shoulders, much like a shaw!!! Sri Lanka has been a paradise location for the world's film and television crews for more than half a century and more. The island nation's multi-faceted variety and close proximity of diversely contrasting locations have been one of the key indicators with sizzling golden beaches, dry arid landscapes and salubrious cold mountain terrain being a mere four hours away from each other. The first ever (officially recorded) foreign film shot on location in Ceylon (as Sri Lanka was then known) was Carol Reed's "Outcast of the Islands" (1951). Six years later, Sir David Lean chose Sri Lanka to shoot his 1957 Oscar winning movie "The Bridge on the River Kwai" with Sir Alec Guinness in the lead. More films and tele-series down the line - John Derek shot "Tarzan the Ape Man" (1981) in Sri Lanka with his wife Bo Derek in the lead. The second film in the Indiana Jones quadrilogy, "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom," (1984) was also largely shot on location in Sri Lanka with celebrated movie icon Harrison Ford in his legendary role of the daredevil archaeologist and swash-bucking adventurer Dr. Jones. There was also "Jungle Book 2" (1996) and the Indian film "Sooriyawansham" (2001) with Amitabh Bachchan. In fact Harrison Ford counts Sri Lanka as his favourite of the many locations he's worked in. He says: "That was the most extraordinary place. I loved the culture. We were in a small town and I had the opportunity to eat the local food, ride an elephant and do the weird little stuff one would normally never have the chance to do", he enthuses. More recently was Indian movie director Deepa Mehta's controversial film "Water" (2005) shot almost entirely on location in Sri Lanka after shooting was literally banned in India due to its volatile storyline. There was also the British film "Mother Theresa - In the Name of God's Poor" (1999) with Geraldine Chaplin in the lead.

Sri Lanka has always been a movie makers' dream with its natural film set locations from salubrious tea country and ancient, centuries' old ruined cities to its lush tropical jungles. The country offers immense possibilities of romance, adventure and détente, just as Noor and Mohannad did and was recorded on celluloid for posterity. You too can do it - but this time for real. SriLankan Airline flies 167 times a week into Colombo from 41 cities around the world. Its leisure arm SriLankan Holidays invites you to savour and experience the magic of its film set locations through its rich and multi-faceted diversity. It offers you specially crafted and conceived packages and tours - just like the Noor and Mohannad Trail - which can also be customised to suit your particular tastes. Unbeatable travel deals have become the trademark of SriLankan Holidays which works with a global network of hotels and tour operators to offer holidaymakers excellent value-for-money travel packages in the airline's destinations. These range from leisure travel for individuals, couples and families, to business travel, adventure travel, sports tourism, cultural tours, and MICE tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions). © 2008 Al Bawaba (www.albawaba.com)(Courtesy : Albawaba)