Destinations to watch in 2012

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SRI LANKA The coasts less travelled Until recently, the north and east parts of Sri Lanka were off-limits to tourists, and under the occupation of the Tamil Tigers. Going anywhere vaguely remote, other than the most popular spots, was ill-advised and meant tedious journeys bogged down by military checks. But now the country is Tiger-free, and for the first time in a long time travellers are being encouraged to return. As a consequence, the north and east coasts are undeveloped, their natural beauty unspoiled. You can find yourself the only tourist in the traditional villages, and the only person on some of the country's most beautiful beaches. Indeed, those beaches on the east coast have fine sand and calm, clear waters, unlike the surf destinations on the west.
This does, of course, mean top-class accommodation is still limited - but for many, finding charming guesthouses or rustic beach huts is all part of the adventure; and being first to discover a place never loses its thrill. STAY There are a few options, mainly around Trincomalee (pictured), which was once a popular tourist destination and is now being re-established. And on Pigeon Island, a nature reserve, a new resort has smart rooms and a pool right on the beach.For more hotel recommendations read our article from the magazine here. Related stories:Our guide to Sri Lanka Sri Lankan beach villa Pictured: the beach at Trincomalee, on Sri Lanka's east coast Source: cntraveller