



# 'SRI LANKA'S OTHER HALF'

## BY JULIET COOMBE AND DAISY PERRY

Classic cars, cigars, blue pigeons, singing fish, war planes, delicious palmyrah jam and bejewelled Bollywood saris. BBC Lonely Planet photographer and journalist Juliet Coombe was determined to be the first writer back into northern Sri Lanka after 26 years of war, despite having just had a baby, by the usual means of transportation. She finally found herself in a tiny jump seat in a huge military plane, still holding her baby aka her chief negotiating card on her way to Jaffna with a bunch of generals.

In contrast to the north, going east led her to lost lagoons, unspoilt beaches and magnificent forts that sit atop rugged cliffs. On her journey, Juliet, got to know the ferrymen who until recently had only Tamil Tigers as passengers

and took up their suggestion to try the hot water wells with magical healing powers near Trinco. From here she headed inland to central Sri Lanka - much more than just historical sites. Here wildlife is still prolific - leopards abound as well as an elephant corridor. Artists gather in large numbers, especially around the amazing Sigiriya rock.



In addition the book covers the seven islands, Sri Lanka's crown jewels, and their myriad of ancient traditions, which range from carrying baby dolls across the waters to guarantee fertility to musical pujas. So hang up your corporate shoes and get those walking boots on!

Daisy Perry her co-writer added: "If you enjoy off the beaten track travel then this book is a must read! Travel around Sri Lanka's Other Half and you'll be able to wow your friends and family with tales from a part of Sri Lanka that has been totally cut off from the rest of country for the last three decades and therefore preserved from unregulated tourism. We hope our book will lead to a revival of the north and east as desirable holiday destinations."

### Juliet Coombe

BBC Lonely Planet travel photographer, Juliet has a real passion for Sri Lanka and relates strongly to its people. She has married into an eighth generation Galle Fort family and already has two children, so with no plans to up sticks, Juliet has co-founded Sri Serendipity International Publishing House in Galle Fort producing everything from travel guides to novels. She strongly believes with such ancient history and a creative outlook, that some of the most exciting and innovative publishing can be achieved here.

### Daisy Perry

Writer and girl about Galle, a few years ago Daisy bought a cup of tea for a few rupees and turned it into a lifelong career in publishing. She can sniff out an opportunity in the most unlikely places from producing the first recipe book of homemade family curries to recognising the potential of the north and east as a new tourist destination.

