

SRI LANKA FARM STAY

“Make Yourselves at Home”



For all the pomp of the temples, and grandeur of the ancient ruins, there's something unforgettable about being able to spend just an ordinary day with an ordinary family -- with a culture and background very different than one's own. Bruno, our guide, arranged for us to stay with a local farmer family - actually, it was an extended family, with several brothers living in adjacent houses and working adjacent fields. Despite the fact that each family had only a couple acres to grow vegetables on, the families were solidly middle class, Sri Lankan style - they had sturdy concrete houses with four or five rooms, electricity, running water, furniture, and a TV. To western eyes, it would look akin to a simple cabin in the woods, with a few utilities, minimal furnishings, and a toilet out back. To most Sri Lankans, it's something to aspire to. We forget how spoiled we are.

We started out with a tour of the farm - they grow various vegetables and flowers, about 6 acres worth between the various brothers. We even helped out with the weeding. We then had a fabulous rice curry, homemade by the women and served to us out in a resting hut in the field. An older auntie (picture at right) told stories about her devotion to the art of meditation - she has traveled all over Sri Lanka to study. She sang a meditational chant for us (you can hear it on the website); when I started recording it as a movie on my camera, she insisted on singing the entire chant - which lasted about ten minutes. We spent the late afternoon and evening playing Sri Lankan versions of familiar games - draw the eye on the elephant (akin to pin the tail on the donkey); egg-in-the-spoon race; a piñata-like game involving hitting pots with colored water strung up between trees; and musical chair. We westerners taught them the hokey-pokey. In the fun and games, it was clear that though the culture and background are very different, families are very much the same. We hated to say goodbye, and they were sad to see us go. I'm sure we'd be welcome back anytime.



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The 1.5 acres farmed by our host family. We had a delicious rice curry in the hut in the field.

Grandpa, still working in the field

Kathy enjoying her rice curry



Cooking in the kitchen. They primarily used wood for cooking, but also had a gas burner.



Uncle with his two cute boys



Kathy leading the group in a rousing rendition of Hokey Pokey. Here we are putting our "whole selves in".



Uncle showing us around his fields



Scott & adorable child



Scott trying to find the elephant so he can draw the eye in