



A VISIT TO THE PLAINS OF FRESHNESS

During late February 2020, a few weeks before the threatening invasion of Corona virus in the island, we made a timely itinerary of our last trip to date. I feel we have truly been very lucky to have made that decision. I feel so, as even after more than a year we had to be confined to our households, under the raging roar of Covid 19. It was after many discussions, rows and arguments we all agreed upon Horton Plains. I should say that was a decision none of us regretted. We decided to go on one-day trip to this national park which was filled with purity, freshness, chilly wind and fog. Even thinking about this nature park gives me a feeling of freshness and purity.

Our journey to the "Hortain plains" began early in the morning with wonderful fresh breeze in our lungs. The strongest feeling that wandered in my mind was excitement and happiness because of upcoming beautiful sceneries and freshness. we started the journey around 6 a.m. in a van. Before we started the journey we checked and made sure all the things that we wanted are there. After a few hours of joy and happiness with chats and snacks we reached to "Nuwaraeliya" district. We decided it was the perfect time for the breakfast. Therefore, we had to find a spot to make our breakfast. We planned and prepared to make "cheese koththu". So we had to find a place where we could make a fire and cook our delicious meal. Most places were reserved areas in this beautiful site of Hortain plains. But fortunately, before we entered the park we spotted a pine forest with shade. Therefore we decided it was the most suitable place for our first stop and to have our breakfast.



We made a fire using dried pine needles and cooked our delicious meal with it. It was the most delicious breakfast I have ever had. Cheese, sausage chunks, chicken

pieces, carrot and spring onions were in harmony with a great taste. Even now my mouth is watering when I think of that meal.



We also made a virgin mojito with fresh mint leaves that we plucked near by a little stream on the way to Nuwaraeliya. To make our meal more interesting, we decided to roast some corn cobs in our fire pit. I never forget the mixed fragrance of

butter on the corn cobs and the fragrance of burning pine needles. That fragrance is absorbed to my mind just like the hot corn cob absorbed the butter.

After we had our wonderful breakfast, we entered the Horton Plains national park. This national park is exactly situated in the central province highlands, near "Ohiya" town. This was designated in 1988 and has 3160 hectares in area. The national park is full of biodiversity and most importantly there are many species that are endemic to Sri Lanka. In 2010, Horton plains was named as a world heritage site and now it is being maintained and protected by the wildlife conservation department of Sri Lanka.

The air was very fresh and cold. It is a paradise of Beautiful humming birds, mongooses and wild sambars. I was very excited to feed and touch a sambar. But according to the rules of the national park we could not. We walked across the park with excitement that filled our hearts. It was so satisfying to breathe the cold thin air and to see the beautiful sights. Actually it was the most beautiful natural place I have ever been to. There were little springs everywhere with crystal clear water. The water was very cold and



refreshing. Nothing can be compared with the feeling that was given by a handful of water taken from a spring, sprinkled on my face.

Capturing photos with animals was not easy. But there were many things to capture. It is a great spot for a photographer. Fog and the picturesque endless land is a mind calming meditation.

In the evening we started to return to our home. On the way back, we were able to see "Ambewela dairy Farm" and we bought some delicious dairy products from the farm. We enjoyed them in the reddish sunset while remembering about the joyful time we had.

At the end of the day, we reached our home sweet home. It was really sad to leave a place like Hortain Plains. All of us learned something from this journey. We saw how beautiful our country is. Because Hortain Plains is a reserved area it still exists without any harm. So as a nature lover I request all of you, please protect this paradise on the earth.

