

Sri Lanka – Buddha's Isle

Tour Code SL

Sri Lanka is rich in cultural, archaeological and natural treasures with an impressive tally of 7 UNESCO listed heritage sites. This detailed tour affords a comprehensive insight into these treasures, taking in all the ancient sites of the cultural triangle, the tropical interior and hill station of Kandy and the picturesque 'tea country' around Nuwara Eliya. Our hotels have been carefully chosen for their relaxed atmosphere and quality of national food dishes plus their wonderful locations. Combined with the varied itinerary one will gain a full flavour of the rich diversity of this enchanting island. We also spend a few days visiting the Yala National Park and relax at the delightful old walled historic town of Galle



Buddhist Monks, Sigiriya
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ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Colombo

Flight options direct with Sri Lankan Airlines or via Dubai with Emirates

Day 2 Arrive Colombo

We arrive in Colombo and transfer to the Galle Face hotel, perfectly located overlooking the Indian Ocean and close to the city's main attractions. The architecture and character of the hotel has been preserved over 138 years and creates an old world of charm and a colonial feel. Dinner in the hotel (D)

Day 3 In Colombo

We have a tour of Colombo this morning concentrating on the architectural and historical highlights from its colonial past and the excellent National Museum. Later we visit the Cinnamon Gardens and the colourful Pettah market. Dinner at a traditional city restaurant (B,D)

Day 4 Visit Pinnewala. Drive to Habarana

Our first visit of the day is to the Elephant Orphanage at Pinnawela, to witness the success of a unique conservation project on the island. We continue to Habarana, our base for the next three days, perfectly located to visit the various fascinating ancient sites within the Cultural Triangle. We stay at a beautiful lodge resort that lies amidst 25 acres of lush gardens and greenery for three nights with dinner (B,D)

Day 5 Visit Anuradhapura and Mihintale

This morning we start our discovery of the 'Cultural Triangle', a set of stunning historic sites that record the great dynasty of the Sinhalese kings who reigned for over 2000 years. Our first visit is to the Buddhist site of Anuradhapura that dates back to the Sixth century BC. We see the Sacred Bo-Tree reputed to be over 2,200 years old and the great *Dagoba* or shrine that stands over 90 metres high. In the afternoon we journey to the rock shrine of Mihintale, cradle of Buddhism, and set at the top of 1,840 granite steps (B,D)

Day 6 Visit Sigiriya and Polonnaruwa

We drive to the imposing 5th century fortress of Sigiriya, a vast flat-topped granite rock, where a royal palace was built on its summit. Ascent is entirely optional though you will be rewarded with magnificent views and a glimpse of famous frescoes of colourful dancing Apsaras. In the afternoon we visit the 10th century Chola capital of Polonnaruwa and its staggering array of Brahmanic monuments including an awesome 14m long reclining Buddha (B,D)

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Day 7 Visit Aukana and Dambulla. Drive to Kandy

We pause to see the magnificent Standing Buddha of Aukana, that stands 12 m high before driving to Dambulla. Here a great series of caves have been turned into temples that date from the first century BC, and house a large number of Buddha images and Hindu God sculptures. Our destination is the spiritual centre of Kandy, set in the mountains in the centre of the island. Two nights at the Suisse hotel, overlooking Kandy lake. Dinner at a traditional restaurant (B,D)

Day 8 In Kandy

This morning we visit the Temple of the Tooth, that draws hundreds of local pilgrims every year to see the holy tooth of the Buddha. We will also be able to walk in the lush grounds of the Peradeniya Gardens, with its extensive botanical collection. The afternoon is left free to further explore Kandy perhaps shopping at one of the Kandyan Art Association's workshops or enjoying a walk around the city's lakeside. Dinner in the hotel (B,D)

Day 9 Drive to Nuwara Eliya

An early start this morning takes us on a scenic drive through magnificent mountains and hill country to visit a tea plantation. Our final destination is the hill station Nuwara Eliya, located in the heart of Sri Lanka's tea growing region. It was founded during the 19th century, as a retreat for the colonial British amidst the cooling slopes of the central highlands. Overnight stay at the Grand hotel with dinner (B,D)

Day 10 Drive to Yala

This morning we drive from Nuwara Eliya to Yala through the 'Ella Gap' with some of the finest views in the country. We visit the Rawana Ella Falls before continuing to Yala and spend two nights with dinner at Yala Village hotel (B,D)

Day 11 In Yala

The Yala National Park encompasses a diversity of jungle habitats that support elephant, leopard, sloth bear, spotted deer, sambar, jackal, crocodile and a great variety of bird life. Today we will be able to enjoy a morning and afternoon safari in the Park (B,D)

Day 12 Visit Galle

We spend the day visiting the World Heritage town of Galle including the 17th century Dutch Fort and the delightful boutique lined streets of old Galle. Overnight at the Lighthouse hotel with dinner (B,D)

Day 13 Drive to Colombo. In Colombo

We head back to the capital and enjoy a leisurely afternoon to enjoy some shopping time or relax at the Galle Face hotel. Dinner at the hotel (B,D)

Day 14 In Colombo

A day at leisure. Farewell dinner at a smart restaurant (B,D)

Day 15 Fly to London

Cost £1795.00 per person in twin room (excludes international flight) Single supplement charge £500.00



Price includes –

- ▶ Tour accompanied from London by Patrick Syder
- ▶ Specialist Sri Lankan guide for the duration of the tour
- ▶ All transportation - private a/c minibus
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Quality five star colonial hotels and resorts on half board basis
- ▶ All departure taxes
- ▶ All airport transfers
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities

PLEASE NOTE – personal travel insurance, visa fees, alcoholic drinks, guide and driver gratuities, international flights are not included in the land tour cost (from £600.00 through Flight Centre UK) (Included meals denoted by B Breakfast, L Lunch, D Dinner)