



## Itinerary

### 12 Day Splendours of Sri Lanka With Flights

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE: This is the default version of the tour itinerary. Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this version. If you have booked extras, Please contact [info@myholiday2.com.au](mailto:info@myholiday2.com.au) for a personalised version of your itinerary\***

#### Day 1: DEPART AUSTRALIA ~ ARRIVE COLOMBO

Today you will take your flight to the wonderful island of Sri Lanka! Fly from either SYD/MEL/\*BNE and upon arrival you will be met at the airport by our chauffeur and transferred to your hotel. Most arrivals from Australia are late at night (10:30pm onwards). Once at the hotel you will check in and head to bed.

MEALS: In-Flight

OVERNIGHT: Mirage 3\* or Radisson 4\*

#### Day 2: COLOMBO PANORAMIC CITY TOUR

After breakfast enjoy a panoramic city tour of Colombo, the largest city and commercial capital of Sri Lanka. Located on the west coast, it is a busy and vibrant city with a mixture of modern and colonial impressions. See the wildly varying architecture that spans centuries and depicts various styles with many colonial buildings influenced by the Portuguese, Dutch and British. These are built alongside structures of Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Indian, and Contemporary architectural styles so the contrasts are significant and will delight those with a keen eye for architecture! No other place is this more evident in the heart of the city than the Fort area. Colombo also boasts many shopping malls and department stores that offer brand name clothing at highly discounted prices. Therefore, it has also become an important shopping destination among tourists. During the day we will visit the Galle Face Green, the Viharamahadevi Park, Twin World Trade Center towers, Old Parliament Building, Fort district, Independence Hall at Independence Square.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Mirage 3\* or Radisson 4\*

#### Day 3: COLOMBO ~ DAMBULLA

After breakfast say goodbye to Colombo and make the drive to Dambulla (total driving time today is approx 5 hours), where you'll spend the next two nights. On the way there is an opportunity to visit to The Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage, please note this is optional and payment required on the day. View the orphaned elephants as they wander the grounds, feeding and take their daily bath in the river. Visit Dambulla Cave Temple. Here you'll discover five caves filled with around 150 beautiful statues and paintings of Buddha - some as many as 2000 years old. Explore the magical cave complex as your leader

explains why this World Heritage listed site has been a place of worship for thousands of years. Check in to the hotel and take the remainder of the afternoon at your leisure. After dinner at the hotel, spend the evening exploring the wholesale market and see the trucks and people piled high with every type of produce imaginable. Boasting an incredible array of fresh food, much of which is subsequently transported to Colombo for sale, this is the perfect place to get a sense of Sri Lanka's agricultural diversity.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Lario Resort 3\* or Sigiriana Resort by Thilanka 4\*

OPTIONAL: Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage \$38

#### Day 4: DAMBULLA ~ ANURADHAPURA

After breakfast we head off to explore the world heritage site at Anuradhapura (total driving time today is approx 4 hours). The city of Anuradhapura is one of the country's most historically significant places and its first ancient capital. Take a step back in time as your tour guide shows you through the giant stupas of Ruwanweliseya and Jetawanaramaya, and ponder the rise and fall of ancient civilisations as you explore crumbling temples and ruins. Pay a visit to the Sri Maha Bodhi Tree Temple – home to a sacred bodhi tree planted in 236, believed to be the oldest human-planted tree in the world. Stop by the ancient temple of Isurumuniya and see its beautiful carvings that tell stories that are thousands of years old. Return to the hotel in the afternoon.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Lario Resort 3\* or Sigiriana Resort by Thilanka 4\*

OPTIONAL: Village Tour \$35 | Minneriya Elephant Safari (pay on arrival)

**Minneriya National Park** has one of the largest populations of elephants in Sri Lanka. Every year around august they gather all together in Minneriya National Park. The rest of the year they actually wander around into neighbouring parks unaware about the manmade borders. They are wild elephants, but quite used to visitors in their habitat. Due to conservation efforts the elephants are well protected and are not scared of people. With the jeeps you can get pretty close to them and the elephants will simply continue with whatever they are doing.

#### Day 5: DAMBULLA ~ SIGIRIYA ~ KANDY

Venture out this morning to climb the many steps up "Sigiriya", which is known as the 'Lion Rock' and is a UNESCO world heritage site. The feats of artistry, architecture and engineering at Sigiriya continue to impress visitors with their utter magnificence, even thousands of years on. Intricately landscaped pleasure gardens sprawl out below the rock, giant lion paws hewn in stone mark the entrance to the fortress at its foot and a highly polished mirror wall still carries the scrawled writings of ancient poets. Please Note: The visit to Lion Rock takes around 3.5 hours in total. From the Lion's Paw there is a steep, 30-minute climb over often narrow walkways and steps to reach all of the points of interest at the site. Those who do not want to climb can wait at the Lion's Paw until the rest of the group return. You must climb in order to access sites like the water garden, boulder garden, frescoes and the mirror wall.

Start your journey to Kandy. Along the way, stop off in the city of Matale where you will visit a local spice garden and learn about the spices that have played such an important role in Sri Lanka's cultural heritage. Continue on to Kandy where you'll have a free evening to explore. Though it is the second largest city in the country, Kandy maintains a laidback atmosphere. Perhaps take a peaceful stroll around the city's center piece lake.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Suisse Hotel 3\* or Thilanka Hotel 4\*

## Day 6: KANDY CITY TOUR

Encircled by verdant hill country and home to a picturesque lake, bustling market, old shops and some great restaurants, Kandy is one of Sri Lanka's most pleasant cities. It was at one time also home to Sri Lanka's last king, who managing to resist European control long after the coastal areas had surrendered. This morning you'll visit Dalada Maligawa (the Temple of the Tooth), which houses the country's most sacred relic: a tooth said to be the Buddha's. Pilgrims have been coming to pay homage at this site since the 16th century. Visit the magnificent Peradeniya Botanical Gardens with its immense fig tree and impressive orchid collection. Considered among the finest botanical gardens in all of Asia, this is a great spot for the kids to run around in. Next up, witness the cultural show.

When visiting the Temples you have to take your hats and shoes off, do not leave your shoes at the side of the road or the monkeys will run off with them. Store them with the 'shoe keepers' for a small charge or put them in your rucksack.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Suisse Hotel 3\* or Thilanka Hotel 4\*

OPTIONAL: Cooking class in local home \$50 (prior booking required)

## Day 7: SCENIC TRAIN TO NUWARA ELIYA

Depart Kandy aboard the morning train bound for Nuwara Eliya. Nestled even deeper into tea plantation country, Nuwara Eliya sits at an elevation of 1800 metres, making it one of the coolest regions in Sri Lanka. Favoured by the Scots and English during the colonial-era, remnants of the past can be seen in sculpted gardens and manor homes decorating the city today.

Today's train journey is approximately 3.5 hours and is classed as one of the world's most spectacular train journeys. Hang out the doors and windows for your instagram shots as you travel through rolling hillsides! Train tickets from Kandy to Nanu Oya are in very high demand, especially over high season (December - April, and August). While we always try our best to secure tickets, on the rare occasion that we cannot you will be provided with a private vehicle.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Mirage Kings Cottage 3\* or Jetwing St Andrews 4\*

## Day 8: NWAUARA ELIYA ~ ELLA ~ YALA NATIONAL PARK

Spend the morning visiting a Tea Estate. You'll have a new appreciation for your humble morning brew after learning about the production process and discovering how the finest tea leaves are transformed into Ceylon black tea. If touring the factory inspires a thirst, you'll have the chance to sample some of the final product yourself.

Thereafter proceed to Ella. Ella is a gorgeous little mountainous town with a hip culture offering some jaw-dropping views. Drive to the Nine-Arches Bridge which is a very picturesque spot and an architectural marvel from the colonial era spanning 91 meters at a height of 24 meters. A favourite spot for drone photography, the regular views depend on your approach path. The easiest approach is to retek from the Ella train station along the rail track until you reach the bridge. However the more beautiful views from a distance or from the base of the bridge require medium level hiking. Your guide will provide more information and help you choose your approach. Afterwards we proceed to Katharagama, check into hotel and relax

Today's total driving time is approximately 4.30 hours.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Mandara Rosen Kataragama 3\* or 4\* Hotel

OPTIONAL: Extra Yala Jeep Safari \$195 (prior booking required)

### Day 9: YALA JEEP SAFARI ~ HIKKADUWA

This morning we head out to Yala National Park, Sri Lanka's premier wildlife reserve. Here you'll board a 4x4 and embark on a safari through open grasslands, lush forest and tranquil lagoons. Your guide will carefully listen out for the rustling of concealed animals that would go unnoticed by those not in the know. There's a good chance of spotting crocodiles, elephants, monkeys and buffaloes and if you are lucky, you may even spot a leopard – the park is considered one of the best places in the world to see these ever-elusive beauties.

Who will try buffalo curd, one of Sri Lanka's favourite ingredients served in bright terracotta pots with thick, golden treacle, often eaten as a snack, as an accompaniment to meals or as a dessert.

We will then proceed to visit the Dutch Fort of Galle - The Galle Fort was initially established by the Portuguese in 1588, but was later fortified into the solid structure seen today by the Dutch during the 17th century. Also known as the Galle Ramparts, the Galle Fort is a historically and archaeological rich site which was recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1988. The Galle Lighthouse is the oldest lighthouse station in the country. Located within the walls of the historical Galle Fort, the Galle Lighthouse is strategically positioned at the Southern end of the promontory giving it the best possible view of any ships entering the Galle Harbor.

Today's total driving time is approximately 4.30 hours.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Coral Rock by Bansei 3\* or 4\* Hotel

### Day 10: HIKKADUWA FREE DAY

Spend the whole day at your leisure, relaxing and exploring the beach town of Hikkaduwa. NOTE: The tour vehicle is not at your disposal.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Coral Rock by Bansei 3\* or 4\* Hotel

### **Day 11: DEPARTURE DAY**

After breakfast take your transfer to the International Airport (approx 2.5 hours) We hope you enjoyed your time in Sri Lanka! NOTE: You may depart in the very early hours of DAY 12 depending on airline schedules.

MEALS: Breakfast, In-Flight

OVERNIGHT: In-Flight

### **DAY 12: ARRIVE AUSTRALIA**

Arrive home today