



Itinerary

16 Day India Holi Festival & Sri Lanka Adventure With Flights 2027

***IMPORTANT NOTE:** Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.

DAY 1: Depart Australia ~ Arrive Delhi

Begin your journey on a full service flight from Australia to Delhi - On arrival you will be greeted with an airport pick up at Delhi International Airport by a tour representative. Be prepared for a culture shock of sights, sounds and smells as you are transferred through this bustling city to your hotel. After check in (generally 12-2pm), the rest of the day is free at leisure.

MEALS: In Flight

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Florence Hotel, Delhi

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Udman Boutique Hotel, Delhi

DAY 2: Old Delhi and New Delhi

Today you can explore Old Delhi and New Delhi. Visit the historic Red Fort (Closed on Mondays) – Shah Jahan's elegant citadel in red sandstone, which was built as an octagon measuring 900m by 550m and surrounded by a 9-meter deep moat, which was at its inception fed by the waters of the Yamuna River. Very near the Fort is the Jama Masjid (Friday Mosque), India's largest mosque, also built by Shah Jahan. Also, if you wish you can take cycle rickshaw ride (direct payment) to explore the Chandni Chowk area. Then visit to Raj Ghat- memorial of Mahatma Gandhi. Later proceed to visit the Qutub Minar, a Tower of Victory which was built in the 12th century by Qutbuddin Aibak. The Tomb Of Humayun – the magnificent structure in red sandstone and white marble is one of the finest examples of the garden tomb, and a precursor to the Taj Mahal. Its proportionate spaces, double dome and refined elegance are characteristic of Mughal architecture. Also, visit India Gate, the memorial of the First World War and the road that leads from there to Rashtrapathi Bhawan – the residence of the President of India, which is flanked by the houses of Parliament and the Government Secretariat buildings.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Florence Hotel, Delhi

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Udman Boutique Hotel, Delhi

DAY 3: Delhi ~ Agra ~ Taj Mahal

Today you will visit the Agra Fort, Baby Taj and Taj Mahal! Start your drive to Agra at 8AM to avoid traffic. Agra was the capital of Mughal Empire for nearly hundred years from 1564 and is the home for one of the

Seven Wonders of the World, Taj Mahal. On arrival check in your hotel and later visit Agra Fort which was built by three Mughal Emperors starting from Akbar the Great. There are a number of buildings within the fort such as Moti Masjid, Jahangir's Palace, Khas Mahal, Sheesh Mahal and the Musamman Burj, where Emperor Shahjahan died as a prisoner. Itimad ud Daulah is the tomb built by Empress Noorjahan in memory of her father Ghias Ud Din Beg and is considered as a pioneer of the Taj Mahal. Visit Taj Mahal during Sunset. It was built over a period of 22 years by the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal (Taj Mahal is closed on Fridays).

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Agra Retreat

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Royal Regent / Howard Plaza, Agra

DRIVE TIME: Approximately 4 hours

DAY 4: Agra ~ Fatehpur Sikri ~ Abhaneri Step Wells ~ Jaipur

After an early breakfast begin your drive towards Jaipur. Enroute visit Fatehpur Sikri. This town was built by Emperor Akbar with Red Sand Stone. This town was built in the 17th century and abandoned immediately after 15 years of occupancy due to water shortage and political issues. Some of the important buildings here are Diwane I A (a vast courtyard where the emperor gave daily public audience), Diwane I Khas (a large quadrangle where all the major functions of the Palace were held), Pachisi Court (The emperor's private living quarter), Jodha Bai's Palace, Hawa Mahal, Panch Mahal and Birbal's Palace. Then drive to Abhaneri which is famous for the Step wells, also known as the Chand Baori Step Well – it spans a height of about 13 stories and has 3500 steps that lead approximately 100 feet down. It is one of the largest stepwells in the world and also one of the most beautiful ones. Today, the construction is not used as a well anymore but its exquisite geometry attracts local and international visitors alike.. Even though Abhaneri is now in ruins, the place has a distinct reminiscence about itself. Continue your drive to Jaipur. Jaipur is the capital of Rajasthan. It is also known as Pink City. It is a busy town and famous for Palaces and bazaars of textiles, jewellery and folk based arts & handicrafts. Jaipur is the paradise for the shoppers. You can find many different kinds of handicrafts, jewelry, fabrics and even carpet here. Jaipur represents the rich and vibrant lifestyle and tradition of Rajasthan. It offers the best traditional Rajasthani artwork and textiles from this city are world famous. They have different types of products like tie-dye and bandhej sarees, kurtas and dress materials. These products are most popular for their patterns and designs. Please note, during the 'Holi period', the monuments in Jaipur are closed (some of them may open in the only in the morning and some of them open in the afternoon, but it will be subject to change at the last minute, so you have to check with your Driver about the opening of the monuments and visit them accordingly or just enjoy the colourful festival by skipping some of the sightseeing).

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Regenta Inn, Jaipur

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Royal Orchid Central, Jaipur

DRIVE TIME: Approximately 6 hours

DAY 5: Jaipur City tour OR Holi Celebration

If city tour: Today you can explore Jaipur.

Sightseeing of Jaipur includes Jal Mahal (from outside only), Amber Fort, City Palace, Jantar Mantar and the Hawa Mahal. Jal Mahal is the Water Palace. This low-rise symmetrical palace, that once was a shooting lodge for the Maharajah, appears to float in the centre of Sagar Lake. This is just a quick stop on the way to the Amber Fort. The palace is in the middle of the lake and looks like it is flooded. The palace is not open to the public. So you can spend some time to take photographs from outside. At the Amber Fort, you have the option to climb up the rampart by jeep (direct payment) to reach the top of the palace (Vans/ Buses are not allowed to go up). Inside the palace visit the Jag Mandir (The Hall of Victory), Sheesh Mahal – a room with four walls and the ceiling completely embedded with glittering mirrors, imported from Belgium. The City Palace is the royal residence. Now part of this residence is converted into museum and a part of the portion is still now occupied by the royal family of Jaipur. An impressive array of pistols, blunderbusses, swords, rifles and daggers are found in the Armory museum. Jantar Mantar is the large observatory in the world having 17 instruments, most of them are still in working condition. It is built of stones and marbles. Hawa Mahal is otherwise known as the Palace of winds. This is the ideal spot of photography.

If Holi is celebrated today:

You can participate and enjoy the Holi Celebration. Overnight stay in Jaipur.

MEALS:Breakfast

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Regenta Inn, Jaipur

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Royal Orchid Central, Jaipur

NOTE: The exact date of the Holi festival is not finalised until closer to the date. It will be on either 21st or 22nd March

NOTE: During the Holi period, most of the monuments in Jaipur will be closed. Some may open only in the morning, while others may open in the afternoon, but this is subject to last-minute changes. Therefore, you should check with your driver regarding the opening status of the monuments and plan your visits accordingly.

DAY 6: Jaipur City tour OR Holi Celebration

If Holi is celebrated today:

Guests will be taken from the hotel to the famous Govind Dev Ji Temple, where a large part of the Jaipur community gathers to begin the Holi celebrations. This offers a wonderful opportunity to witness the festive spirit and local traditions in a lively atmosphere. Later, guests will be taken to a private local family home, where they can enjoy traditional snacks, music, dance, and festive celebrations with the family members. This programme offers a unique opportunity to experience the life and traditions of a local Hindu family during Holi. Guests can interact with the family, learn about Holi customs and rituals, taste festive sweets, visit nearby homes, and enjoy traditional dance and music performances. You will also witness the lively street bands, colourful attire of the locals, and the vibrant festive atmosphere throughout the city. On the night of Holi, a group dinner will be served at the hotel.

MEALS:Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Regenta Inn, Jaipur

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Royal Orchid Central, Jaipur

NOTE: The exact date of the Holi festival is not finalised until closer to the date. It will be on either 21st or 22nd March

DAY 7: Jaipur ~ Delhi

After breakfast at the hotel we will return to Delhi. On arrival in Delhi, check in at your hotel and relax. If you wish, you can explore the bazaars in Delhi like Dilli Haat - This huge Delhi market has been deliberately made to feel like a traditional weekly village market, called a Haat. Small thatched roof cottages with a village atmosphere give it great ambiance. The market offers an exciting blend of handicrafts from all over India, food, and cultural and music performances. Or you can visit Janpath & Tibetan Market - This very popular and lively Delhi market, which was recently given a makeover, has something for everyone. You'll find goods from everywhere in India and Tibet here, and it's a great place to shop for things to take back home. If you are not interested in visiting the bazaars, then you can visit Akshardham temple (closed on Mondays) which holds the Guinness World Record of being the World's largest comprehensive Hindu Temple. This temple is dedicated to Lord Swami Narayan and is symbolic of the Indian Culture, architecture and spirituality. This is a pretty huge complex and it contains 234 ornate pillars, 9 domes and 20000 statues and sculptures. The walls of the main monument are covered top to bottom with carvings of dancers, deities, flora and fauna. You will be able to see a blend of various architectural styles used across India.

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Florence Hotel, Delhi

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Udman Boutique Hotel, Delhi

DRIVE TIME: Approximately 6 hours

DAY 8: Departure from Delhi ~ Sri Lanka

It is time to say goodbye to India and hello to Sri Lanka! Today you will be met at the hotel and transferred to Delhi airport to catch your flight to Colombo, Sri Lanka. Upon arrival into Colombo airport you will be met by a tour representative and transferred to your hotel. The remainder of the day is at your own leisure.

MEALS: None

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Terrace Green Hotel & Spa or similar

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Pledge Scape or similar

DAY 9: Negombo ~ Sigiriya ~ Dambulla

Rise early this morning for a visit to the Negombo fish market. Morning is the best time to visit the market – your leader will help you navigate the organised frenzy of vendors displaying delicacies like crab, lobsters, and squid.

Say goodbye to Negombo and make the drive to Dambulla, where you'll spend the next two nights. Settle into your hotel then in the late afternoon, head out for one of the highlights of any visit to Sri Lanka, a visit

to the magnificent palace of Sigiriya (Lion Rock). This dramatic rocky outcrop, rising from the surrounding plains is topped by a ruined palace. It's a good workout to get to the top – your leader will share stories of the ancient civilization who once lived atop the rock as you climb, and the sight at the top makes it well worth it. In the evening, return to Dambulla.

Special Information:

Today's total driving time is approximately 5 hours.

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 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 to access sites like the water garden, boulder garden, frescoes, and the mirror wall.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Lario Resort

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Fresco Water Villa

OPTIONAL TOURS:

Sigiriya Lions Rock

DAY 10: Polonnaruwa ~ Minneriya Elephant Safari

Morning optional activity to Polonnaruwa, the capital of the Indian Chola Dynasty after Anuradhapura was conquered in the late 10th century. These ruins are close together and generally in much better repair than those you have just seen. Cycling amid the remains of 1000-year-old Polonnaruwa is once again the best way to get around. Once the heat of the day has eased, you'll visit more palaces, temples, and stupas. A likely highlight will be the massive stone Buddhas: 14-metre-high granite carvings of the iconic reclining Buddha which represent the zenith of Sinhalese rock carving. You'll also visit the well laid-out museum, which has scale models of many of the buildings to show how they would have existed in their time.

In the evening enjoy a game drive in the Minneriya National Park (Approximate 40 Mins) Minneriya National Park is a haven for flora and fauna. Being part of the elephant corridor, which joins up with Kaudulla National Park and Wasgomuwa National Park, you have guaranteed sightings of elephants throughout the year. Every year during August to October, one of the most awesome wildlife spectacles "The Gathering" takes place. Over 300 elephants are seen making their way to Minneriya tank as the ancient tank slowly dries up giving way to fresh grass and shoots which is a feast in abundance. Apart from elephants, there is a huge species of birds, mammals, reptiles, fishes, butterflies, etc. The highlight of the park is the Minneriya reservoir with its historical importance, built in 3rd century AD by the famous monarch King Mahasen. It covers an area of 4,670 acres. Return to your hotel and spend the rest of the day at leisure.

Special Information:

Depending on the period of the year / weather we will provide the safari at different national parks with prior notice, Kaudulla National Park or Eco Park which are located within the same region.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Lario Resort

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Fresco Water Villa

OPTIONAL TOURS:

Polonnaruwa

Cycle Hire

Picnic Lunch

DAY 11: Dambulla Cave Temple ~ Kandy

This morning you will take a short drive to the incredible 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. In the afternoon, 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 to Kandy where you'll have a free evening to explore. Though it's the second-largest city in the country, Kandy maintains a laidback atmosphere. Perhaps take a peaceful stroll around the city's centre piece lake.

Special Information:

Today's total driving time is approximately 2.5 hours.

Please note that there are many steps to the caves and a dress code which requires you to remove your shoes and cover up your shoulders and legs.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Oak Ray Regency

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Royal Kandyan

DAY 12: Kandy ~ Cultural Show

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 optional activity - you'll can 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. In the early evening, join a Local family to spoil your sweet tooth with a Kandyan sweet-filled Sri Lankan dinner and cooking class.

Special Information:

When visiting the Temples, you must 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, Dinner

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Oak Ray Regency

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Royal Kandyan

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OPTIONAL TOURS:

Temple of The Tooth

DAY 13: Scenic Train from Kandy to Nanu Oya ~ Nuwara Eliya

Depart Kandy and board a 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. In the evening head to the sky-scraping Single Tree temple and embark on a short 40- minute hike, taking in spectacular views of the surrounding hills and tea fields.

Special Information:

Today's train journey is approximately 3.5 hours.

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, Dinner

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Oak-Ray Summer Hill Breeze (Deluxe Room)

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Mirage Kings Cottage (Deluxe Room)

DAY 14: Tea Factory Tour ~ Colombo

Make a morning visit to the Pedro Tea Estate. Built in 1885, this fascinating factory still features some original pieces of machinery. 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, make your way to the Colombo.

As the capital city of Sri Lanka, Colombo holds the lifeblood of our island amidst a bustling array of cultural, shopping, and dining experiences. At the heart of the city is the picturesque Beira Lake, which hosts the Seema Malaka and adjacent Gangaramaya Temples against the backdrop of Colombo's rising futuristic skyline. A step back in time, however, is best taken at the National Museum – a refurbished mansion of a colonial governor, which sits close to the lush Viharamahadevi Park as well as the historic Independence Square.

Special Information:

Today's total driving time is approximately 5.30 hours.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT 3 STAR: Mirage Colombo (Standard Room)

OVERNIGHT 4 STAR: Morven Hotel Colombo (Deluxe Room)

DAY 15: Colombo ~ Departure

Today you will have your final breakfast in the hotel and you will be transferred back to the airport in time for your return flight home. As most flights are leaving Colombo late in the evening, you may have time for an optional city tour. Please see your tour guide if you would like to book this. Alternatively, extend your time in Sri Lanka with our Flight Extension for an independent stay, or book our 3 night Hikkaduwa Beach Extension. Contact your MyHoliday2 consultant to book.

MEALS: Breakfast, In-Flight

OVERNIGHT: In-Flight

DAY 16: Arrive Australia

Today you will arrive home, most likely in the afternoon depending on your airline and flight schedule.