

# Sri Lanka

13 days



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## Overview

- ✓ Discover four UNESCO world heritage sites of the Golden Temple Dambulla, sacred city of Kandy, Sigiriya and the old town Galle Fort.
- ✓ Explore Kandy and see the Temple of the Tooth - said to house Buddha's tooth - plus visit the stunning Royal Botanical Gardens and relax with two days on one of Sri Lanka's idyllic tropical beaches.
- ✓ Visit feeding time at the Elephant Transit Home - where elephant orphans are looked after, before being re-introduced to the wild - and enjoy a 4x4 drive in Yala National Park, famed for its wildlife.
- ✓ Embark on a guided tour of the local tea-growing areas in Nuwara Eliya with a Ceylon tea tasting and visit the 5th-century Royal Palace and Citadel at Sigiriya Rock plus a guided climb of the rock.
- ✓ Experience superb scenery, shimmering paddy fields, rubber and spice plantations, verdant tea estates, swaying coconut groves, and exotic wildlife.

### **The Signature Tour option includes all of the above as well as:**

- ✓ Uncover nature's wonders on a fascinating boat ride along the magnificent Mahaweli River in the company of a knowledgeable naturalist.
- ✓ Indulge yourself with a sumptuous high tea experience in Nuwara Eliya. A choice of fragrant local teas are also included.
- ✓ Watch the sunset as you enjoy a poolside pre-dinner drinks reception at Cinnamon Habarana Village.
- ✓ Enjoy the more exclusive atmosphere of travelling in a small group with an average of 22 guests.

## Sri Lanka



## Day 1 - Departure



## Day 2 - Arrival in Colombo

### Stay at Arie Lagoon Hotel

After your lunchtime arrival we stay for one night at the four-star Arie Lagoon Hotel.



## Day 3 - Dambulla

### Visit the temples of Dambulla

### Stay at Habarana Village by Cinnamon

Today the adventure begins and the sights and the sounds of Sri Lanka gradually unfold. The countryside is stunning - scenic paddy fields studded by water buffalos accompanied by wiry, loin-clothed farmers, extensive coconut groves, pineapple fields, working elephants with attentive mahouts astride their necks and everywhere the dense jungle

interspersed by huge lakes.

We visit the amazing, 1st century cave temples of Dambulla, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a wonderful introduction to the Buddhist religion. Set in an immense granite outcrop and reached by a number of steps, this series of five caves are richly adorned with remarkably preserved frescoes and over 150 Buddhist statues.

In the caves' semi-darkness, surrounded by the serene faces of dozens of beautifully painted statues, it's not difficult to imagine the incredible sense of awe this sacred site held for generations of worshippers.

We stay two nights at the four-star Habarana Village Hotel by Cinnamon.

## Signature experience

Watch the sunset as you enjoy a poolside pre-dinner drinks reception at Cinnamon Habarana Village.



## Day 4 - Sigiriya rock

### Visit Sigiriya Rock

This morning you visit what for many will surely be the most memorable and fascinating monument in Sri Lanka: Sigiriya, or the 'Lion Rock', is a massive 600ft granite tower with sheer cliffs on all sides crowned by the remains of a 1,500-year-old royal palace.

The entire site is encircled by a moat and ramparts enclosing a variety of water gardens, the remains of numerous buildings and caves. As you approach Sigiriya rock, you see some of the finest ancient murals in the country - the 'cloud maidens' are found under a fold of rock and show in exquisite detail a procession of jewelled, beautifully dressed women bearing offerings of lilies and lotus flowers.

Facing us is the imposing final entrance to the palace above: in ancient times the colossal head of a lion (hence 'Lion Rock') was built in brick and plaster, visitors entering through its mouth.

Today, just the two front paws remain, their claws menacingly extended, still guarding the palace. It should be noted that there are numerous steps to the top of Sigiriya rock but should pose no problem for those with normal mobility.

The rest of the afternoon is at leisure to enjoy our hotel's pool and facilities.



## Day 5 - Kandy

### Visit a spice plantation

### Stay at Cinnamon Citadel

This morning we leave Sigiriya for Kandy. Sri Lanka is noted for its magnificent spices so en route we visit a fascinating garden where we see many indigenous plants such as pepper, nutmeg and cinnamon before arriving at Kandy, the country's royal capital.

You stay two nights with dinner at the four-star Cinnamon Citadel Hotel, beautifully located overlooking the scenic Mahaweli River and surrounded by peaceful forested hillsides. The hotel has a pool overlooking the river, with a colonnaded lobby, a charming bar and restaurant.



## Day 6 - Kandy

- ⇒ Visit Kandy
- ⇒ Visit Temple of the Tooth
- ⇒ Visit the Royal Botanical Gardens

Kandy's crowded and bustling streets teem with daily comings and goings: the many, white-uniformed children returning from school and the myriad of shops.

The centre is dominated by a beautiful lake and the fascinating Temple of the Tooth, said to hold Buddha's tooth. This is Buddhism's most sacred shrine on the island and during our visit (today or tomorrow morning), you may be lucky enough to witness one of the many ceremonies.

You also visit the stunning Royal Botanical Gardens. Planted over 150 years and covering a huge 150 acres, the gardens hold thousands of plant species and some superb examples of mature tropical trees. Strolling through lawns, shady avenues and immaculately kept flower beds, we see exotic birds and the commemorative trees planted by Edward VII, George VI, Princess Anne and the Queen.

Other highlights are the Avenue of Royal Palms and 'Bat' Drive where you can spot the large fruit-eating 'Flying Foxes' hanging upside down! The gardens also house Lord Mountbatten's imposing HQ from World War II.

Kandy is famous for its traditional dancing and so this evening we experience a colourful and hugely skilful display of this ancient art.

### Signature experience

Step aboard for a journey through nature's wonders along the magnificent Mahaweli River, as a passionate naturalist introduces you to the diverse creatures that reside along this magnificent waterway.

As you drift along on a private boat look out for brightly coloured kingfishers, probably the largest in Sri Lanka and keep your eyes peeled for the water monitor lizards that slither along the riverbanks. This is also a natural habitat for porcupines and tortoises, and you are also sure to spot grazing water buffalo and maybe even wild boar at the water's edge.



## Day 7 - Journey To Nuwara Eliya

- Visit a tea estate
- Stay at Golden Ridge Hotel

Today you leave Kandy and journey to Nuwara Eliya. We journey through increasingly mountainous scenery including some spectacular views of Sri Lanka's premier tea growing areas.

Lush tropical jungle gives way to tall pine forests and then box-like tea bushes, few at first and then seemingly covering every fold of the landscape like a huge green carpet right to the landscape horizon. We'll stop en-route to visit one of the best tea estates in Sri Lanka where we'll enjoy a guided tour followed by with free time to explore the grounds or visit the shop before continuing our journey.

By early afternoon, we arrive in Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka's charming hill station, perched at nearly 7,000 feet above sea level. Fondly known as 'Little England,' this highland retreat boasts a cool, spring-like climate, picturesque parks, and even a well-manicured golf course—echoes of its colonial past. For our overnight stay, we check into either the elegant Golden Ridge Hotel or the stately Grand Hotel, both offering a perfect blend of comfort and old-world charm.

### Signature experience

Escape to the grandeur of another era and spoil yourself with high tea experience in Nuwara Eliya. Each afternoon the elegant Tea Lounge and fountain lawn is bedecked with an array of traditional bite-size savouries, sandwiches, and cakes.

Choose from a selection of fragrant local teas, then sit back and savour the teatime delights in the charming ambience of this historic institution.



## Day 8 - Elephant Transit Home

- Visit the Elephant Transit home
- Stay at Chaarya Resort and Spa

We say goodbye to Sri Lanka's hill country and journey south arriving to the Elephant Transit Home, supported by the UK's Born Free Foundation, located at Udawalawe National Park, where you'll be able to watch young elephant orphans being

given one of their daily feeds.

You stay two nights at the three-star superior Chaayra Resort and Spa Hotel, located near the towns of Tissamaharama and Kataragama.



## Day 9 - Yala National Park

- ➡ Guided tour of Yala National Park

An early start this morning, accompanied by the unique sound of a tropical 'dawn chorus'.

As the morning mist disappears with the rising sun you explore the jungle and its incredible range of wildlife in 4x4 vehicles. The normally elusive leopard offers the Park's most exciting game viewing and Yala has a high concentration of these big

cats.

They are the island's top predator so are far less shy than elsewhere in the world. Yala is also known for its elephants, saltwater crocodiles, wild boar, sloth bears, monitor lizards and a huge variety of birdlife.

After a late breakfast you can relax by the hotel's pool before an optional second, early evening park drive (book and pay local).



## Day 10 - Kalutara

- ➡ Guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Galle
- ➡ Stay at Anantara Kalutara Resort

After breakfast you return to the west coast via a guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Galle, with its imposing 16th century Dutch Fort.

In late afternoon you arrive to the five-star Anantara Kalutara Resort, a contemporary style hotel featuring local traditions. Uniquely located on the southwest Sri Lankan coast where the Kalu Ganga River estuary lagoon meets the Indian Ocean set on a narrow peninsular with 360-degree ocean and lagoon views.

## Personalise your holiday

### Upgrade your stay 5-star Anantara Kalutara Resort

Upgrade your room during your 3-night stay to a Deluxe Ocean View room with private balcony.

From £159pp for double/twin occupancy

From £319 for single occupancy

For hotel information please see the accommodation section or [contact us](#) for more information and to add the above upgrade to your booking.



## Day 11 - Free day

☞ Free time

You have the day free - perhaps relax in your hotel, rejuvenate at the spa or simply enjoy the pool.



## Day 12 - Another free day

☞ Free time

You have the day free - perhaps relax in your hotel, rejuvenate at the spa or simply enjoy the pool.

## Day 13 - Return home

### Next steps

To book your holiday, or to enquire further, please call Riviera Travel on **01283 742300**

Or email us at **info@rivieratravel.co.uk**

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