



Essence of Sri Lanka

A lush tropical island, lapped by the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka is a natural paradise with a landscape of verdant mountains, rainforests, paddy fields, tumbling waterfalls and sweeping gorges. This fabulous tour allows a mix of culture and sheer bliss. From ancient cities, to rich religious festivals, to colonial memories, to rolling tea plantations, to the best beaches, to an astonishing variety of bird and animal wildlife, and to a bustling and chaotic way of life, Sri Lanka intoxicates its visitors with its potpourri of cultures, religions, races, customs, its sheer natural beauty and its way of life.

Trip Highlights:

- Explore Historic towns to experience the colonial architecture.
- Climb to the top of the rock fortress at Sigiriya.
- Discover Kandy's famous Temple of the Tooth
- Visit the Royal Botanical Gardens
- See fragrant tea plantations in Nuwara Eliya
- Explore the treasures of UNESCO Galle Fort
- Bask on Beruwela Beach on the glorious coast

DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 01: ARRIVE COLOMBO

BY: INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

- **Arrival transfer at Colombo International airport**
- **Overnight stay in Colombo**

The adventure starts out when you touch down at Bandaranaike International Airport where you will be met and transported to your hotel in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka.

Colombo- the trade and commercial capital has long been the traditional gateway to the Orient. Sri Lanka's largest city, it is located on the west coast and draws together all the cultures, religions and influences of foreign lands into a pot-pourri of sounds, smells and a kaleidoscope of colour. The original traders and settlers - the Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch and the British have left in their wake churches and monuments, names and religions, costumes and food and smatterings of their languages which have been absorbed into the speech of the Sri Lankan.

Today, Colombo is a fascinating city - a happy blend of east & west, past & present, with a charm of its own. A less known but amazingly true fact is that Colombo has a superb range of high quality restaurants serving food from all over the world and some of the best shopping opportunities in Asia. The main seaport of Sri Lanka is in Colombo & adjoining it, is Pettah, a local bazaar & trading area.

DAY 02: IN COLOMBO

- **Breakfast at hotel**
- **Explore Colombo city**
- **Overnight stay in Colombo**

Today explore the city by wandering through the sprawling collection of ancient artifacts and colonial-era relics at the must-see National Museum, beautiful Buddhist & Hindu temples, the historic Wolfendhal church, Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, the New Parliament in Sri Jayewardenepura, the Folk Art Centre, Art Galleries, Parks, Independence Square, the Ceramic Corporation famous for its well-known brand "Noritake" and ODEL, the renowned shopping centre.

**DAY 03: COLOMBO – PINNAWALA- DAMBULLA BY SURFACE (220 KM/
5hrs)**

- **Breakfast at hotel**
- **Drive to Dambulla**
- **Enroute visit Pinnawala elephant orphanage**
- **Overnight stay in Dambulla**

Today depart after breakfast for the drive through lush green countryside, a mix of coconut palms, paddy fields and banana plantations to Dambulla.

Enroute visit Pinnewala Elephant Orphanage.

Established in 1975, this orphanage is now home to about 60 elephants, many of whom are baby elephants that were found orphaned in the wild. They are cared for, fed and trained by wildlife authorities.

The best time to visit is during the feeding times, when you can see baby elephants being bottle-fed. Then accompany the elephants as they venture to a nearby river for their daily baths. This is a delightful sight, and provides insight into the close bond between humans and elephants in Sri Lanka.

Continue drive to Dambulla. Here visit the magnificent Cave Temple, the most impressive sight in Sri Lanka.

Dambulla, located in the north central province which dates back to the 01st century BC, is Sri Lanka's greatest Cave Temple complex; the walls are alive with frescoes of religious and secular scenes and beautiful geometric designs in warm oranges and golds. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is a perfect location to view evolution of ancient Sri Lankan art and is an important historical site due to the amalgamation of the material from many eras.

**DAY 04: DAMBULLA – SIGIRIYA - KANDY BY SURFACE (120 KM/ 3
hrs)**

- **Breakfast at hotel**
- **Visit Cave temple and Sigiria (a UNESCO World Heritage Site)**
- **Drive to Kandy with en-route visit to spice garden**
- **Afternoon visit Temple of the Tooth**
- **Overnight stay in Kandy**

Morning, drive on to The Rock Fortress of Sigiriya.

Sigiriya, the impressive 5th century UNESCO World Heritage Site, rises 600 feet from the plains overlooking the surrounding countryside giving far-reaching views. Used as a safe haven from invaders,

the route to the top is up a series of steep steps and gangways. From the base, where a moat surrounds impressive water gardens, we ascend 200m, passing an overhanging rock under which superb portraits of native maidens holding flowers and temple offerings still adorn the rock wall. Crowning the flat-topped summit of the rock are remains of the King's Summer Palace from where there are breath-taking views of the surrounding countryside. The descent is much easier and you can cool off in the hotel pool at dusk.

Thereafter head into the hills to the picturesque town of Kandy. On the way we stop at a spice garden near Matale where you can see various spices and herbs growing and there is a chance to stock up on massage oils, spices and Ayurvedic medicines.

Kandy was the last royal capital and it is one of the most charming towns in Sri Lanka, famous for its gorgeous setting beside a lake, cradled by hills and surrounded by the sinuous lines of tea plantations. It is home to the gold-roofed Temple of the Tooth, with its guardian elephants, a deeply significant Buddhist site that contains a tooth of Buddha collected from his funeral pyre and draws thousands of pilgrims from across the world. Nearby are in Peradeniya, beside the Mahaweli Ganga, are the Perdeniya Botanical Gardens where the British pioneered the growing of exotic plants such as coffee, tea, nutmeg, rubber and cinchona (quinine). The gardens stretch over 60 hectares and feature an arboretum, orchid house and huge colonies of flying foxes.

After your arrival in Kandy, visit the Temple of the Tooth, which houses Sri Lanka's most important Buddhist relic. The Tooth of Buddha was taken from the funeral pyre in 543 BC and only found its way to Sri Lanka in the 4th century AD.

Thereafter enjoy the Kandyan Cultural show at the Kandyan Arts & Cultural Centre. The show features the graceful and rhythmic dancers and drummers culminating in an impressive fire walking display.

DAY 05: KANDY – NUWARA ELIYA BY SURFACE (120 KM/ 3 hrs)

- **Breakfast at hotel**
- **Morning visit Royal Botanical Gardens in Peradeniya**
- **Drive to Nuwara Eliya**
- **En-route visit tea factory**
- **Overnight stay in Nuwara Eliya**

Morning, visit the famous Royal Botanical Gardens in Peradeniya and view a rare collection of tropical exotic and indigenous flora including the famous Orchid House.

Here exotic crops such as coffee, tea, nutmeg, rubber and cinchona (quinine) – all of which later became important to Sri Lanka's economy – were tested. Sights include a palm avenue planted by the British in

1905. Another British import was the enormous spreading Java fig, which sprawls across the lawn, grown from a sapling brought from East Indies.

There after leave for Nuwaraeliya via Kitulgala, visiting a tea factory en route to witness the process of producing tea here you will get to taste a fine cup of Sri Lankan Tea.

Located at an altitude of 1,868 m (6,128 ft) in the heart of the Tea Country, Nuwara Eliya is a picturesque town which boasts a temperate climate all year round. It was known as 'Little England' as the colonials used to retreat here for their quintessentially British pastimes such as hunting, polo, golf and cricket. Many landmark building still retain touches of this era, including their colonial style architecture and furniture, as well as immaculately kept lawns and hedges.

Continue your drive to Nuwara Eliya and check-in to your hotel

DAY 06: NUWARA ELIYA – BERUWALA BY SURFACE (220 KM/ 5 hrs)

- **Breakfast at hotel**
- **Drive to Beruwala**
- **Overnight stay in Beruwala**

Morning, your will be driven to Beruwala, home to one of the longest beaches in Sri Lanka.

Today is free for you to spend at leisure.

Beruwela has maintained its small fishing village charm while its busy main streets host an array of shops and stalls. Perhaps enjoy a stroll before taking a dip in the ocean and lazing on the golden sands and admiring your stunning location.

DAY 07: EXCURSION TO GALLE BY SURFACE (75 KM/ 1½ hrs per way)

- **Breakfast at hotel**
- **Excursion to Galle**
- **Overnight stay in Beruwala**

Morning, we set off today and drive along the southern shores of Sri Lanka to Galle to visit 17 century Dutch Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Turtle Hatchery.

Galle city on the southern coast is a must-see for colonial architecture buffs. Its main attraction is a 17th-century Dutch fort, one of the most extensive monuments left by European colonialists. Although many of the structures that made up the fort are in serious decay, the outer walls are completely intact. If you walk along the top of the walls at dusk, you'll see dozens of cricket games, an old lighthouse, beautiful views of the town's harbor and hundreds of Sri Lankans out socializing. Within the fort, visit any of several old churches (including a Dutch church dating from the mid-18th century) or simply stroll the narrow streets to get a good look at the old buildings.

DAY 08:	BERUWELA – COLOMBO	BY SURFACE (70 KM/ 2 hrs)
	COLOMBO – DEPARTURE	BY: INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

- **Breakfast at the hotel**
- **Transfer to Colombo international airport for flight to onward destination**

Post breakfast at the hotel, you will be transferred to airport to board your flight for onward journey.

End of the services