

TOUR REFERENCE
LK2CK7W5JD

# Culture and Heritage (9 Days)

9 days · 8 nights | Private tour with chauffeur guide

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## About this experience

This nine-day tour links Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle, the central highlands and the south-west coast, travelling by private chauffeur-guided vehicle throughout. It opens in Dambulla for the cave temples, Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya, moves on to Kandy and Nuwara Eliya in the hill country, then finishes with time on the coast at Bentota before returning to Colombo for departure.

Travellers get a close look at the island's ancient capitals and monuments alongside wildlife and village experiences: the murals and Buddha statues of Dambulla's cave temple, the ruins of Polonnaruwa, the rock fortress of Sigiriya, a jeep safari in Minneriya National Park and a village visit near Sigiriya with an ox-cart ride and a catamaran trip. In the highlands the tour takes in the Temple of the Tooth Relic, a Kandyan dance show, a spice garden near Matale, a tea factory near Nuwara Eliya and a walk through the old British hill town.

The final days shift pace to the coast, with a turtle hatchery visit at Kosgoda, a boat trip on the Madu River, a walk through the old fort town of Galle and an evening tour of Colombo, before transfer to the airport. Throughout, the tour is run with a designated chauffeur-guide and private air-conditioned transport.




## Day-by-day itinerary

## Day 1 Airport → Dambulla

On arrival at Colombo airport a Lakpura chauffeur guide meets you for the drive to Dambulla, with a visit to the cave temple once you have checked in.



### Dambulla Cave Temple

The Golden Temple of Dambulla dates back to the 1st century BC, with murals depicting the life of the Buddha and hundreds of Buddha and deity figurines across five main caves, including the Cave of the Divine King and the Cave of the Great King. A giant golden Buddha statue stands a short distance outside the cave complex.

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### Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage

This orphanage in Sabaragamuwa province cares for young elephants displaced or lost from the wild, and is now home to one of the largest captive groups of elephants in the world.

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## Day 2 Dambulla → Polonnaruwa → Minneriya → Dambulla

The day is spent exploring the ancient city of Polonnaruwa before an afternoon safari in Minneriya National Park, returning to Dambulla in the evening.



### Polonnaruwa

Sri Lanka's second major ancient capital flourished between the 10th and 13th centuries AD. Highlights among the ruins include Gal Vihara, the Vatadage, the lotus bath, Lankathilaka Temple and a statue associated with King Parakramabahu.

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### Minneriya National Park

A jeep safari through the park offers a chance to see elephants, along with other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians across its scrubland and forest. Between May and October large herds gather here in what is known as the Great Elephant Gathering.

Stuart Pinkney · CC BY 2.0

## Day 3 Dambulla → Sigiriya → Dambulla

The day is given over to the rock fortress of Sigiriya and a visit to a nearby village for a taste of rural Sri Lankan life.



### Sigiriya

This 5th-century AD rock fortress was built by King Kasyapa, entered through an approach framed by giant lion's paws. Visitors climb past the famous unfading murals, terraced gardens and still-working cisterns, and through tunnels leading to the former palace.

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### Sigiriya village experience

A visit to a local village includes an ox-cart ride, a catamaran trip across a calm lake, a walk through paddy fields, a traditional cooking demonstration and a home-cooked lunch served on lotus leaves.

## Day 4 Sigiriya → Matale → Kandy

En route to Kandy the tour stops at a spice garden near Matale, and the evening in Kandy includes craft demonstrations and a cultural dance show.



### Spice Garden, Matale

A guided tour of a spice and herbal garden near Matale, known as the spice capital of Sri Lanka, introduces spices such as coriander, chilli, cinnamon, cardamom and nutmeg and their uses, along with the basics of Ayurveda.

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### Gem, woodcarving and batik demonstrations

In Kandy there is a chance to see technical demonstrations of local crafts including gem crafting, woodcarving and batik work.



### Kandyan Cultural Show

This hour-long evening show features traditional Kandyan dancing, fire and sword dancers, and drumming.

Arian Zwegers · CC BY 2.0

## Day 5 Kandy → Nuwara Eliya

The morning is spent at Kandy's Temple of the Tooth Relic before travelling into the hills to Nuwara Eliya, with stops at a waterfall and tea estate along the way.



### Temple of the Tooth Relic

This UNESCO World Heritage Site was built in the 16th century to house and protect the Buddha's sacred tooth relic, with painted halls, carved pillars and gilded statues.

A.Savin · FAL



### Ramboda Falls

A stop is made at Ramboda Falls, the 11th tallest waterfall in the country.

A.Savin · FAL

### Tea Estate and Factory

A guided tour of a tea estate and factory explains how Ceylon tea is grown and processed, tracing the industry back to its introduction by James Taylor at the Loolecondera estate in the 1850s.



### Nuwara Eliya town

An evening walk through this former British hill resort takes in its cottages, villas and mansions, the old red-brick post office, Queen Victoria Park and the shores of Lake Gregory.

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## Day 6 Nuwara Eliya → Bentota

The day is largely spent travelling from the hill country down to the coast at Bentota, with a stop at a turtle hatchery on arrival.



### Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery

This hatchery on the south-western coast works to protect the nests of five endangered sea turtle species, and visitors can see, touch and sometimes feed baby turtles and injured adults in its care.

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## Day 7 Bentota

A free morning at the beach is followed by a boat trip on the Madu River and a visit to the old fort town of Galle.



### Madu River boat safari

A boat ride through the mangrove-lined Madu River near Balapitiya passes basking crocodiles and water monitors, a small island where cinnamon is harvested, and a fish massage experience, with waterbirds visible along the way.

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### Galle Fort

The old colonial city of Galle, once a Portuguese and Dutch stronghold, is one of the best-preserved fortifications in Asia, with museums, a lighthouse and cobblestone streets with Dutch names.

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## Day 8 Bentota → Colombo

After checking into Colombo, the evening is free to explore the capital's streets and landmarks.



### Colombo city tour

An evening in Colombo takes in landmarks such as the Old Lighthouse, the Old Parliament, Galle Face Hotel, Galle Face Green, Gangarama Temple and the National Museum, as well as shops around Independence Square and the Race Course.

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## Day 9 Colombo → BIA

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your departure flight.

# What's included

### INCLUDED

- Transport in a Private Vehicle, Fuel, Parking & Highway tolls.
- Service of English-Speaking Chauffeur Guide.
- All prevailing taxes and service charges.

### NOT INCLUDED

- Hotel Accommodation and Meals.
- Entrance fees to the respective sites.
- Chauffeur Guide's Accommodation.
- Expenses of personal nature.
- Visa and Related Expenses.