

TOUR REFERENCE
LK4KGHMTB9

Jewels of Sri Lanka (16 Days)

15 days · 14 nights | Private tour with chauffeur guide

AI-generated image · not an actual photograph

About this experience

This 16-day private tour runs from the west coast beaches of Negombo through the southern wildlife parks, up into the hill country around Ella and Nuwara Eliya, on to the cultural heartland of Kandy and the ancient cities of Dambulla and Sigiriya, and finally east to Trincomalee for a multi-day beach stay before returning to Colombo. It is a long, varied route that pairs Sri Lanka's best-known cultural sites with national parks, tea country and coastal time.



Travellers get safari drives in Yala in search of leopard, elephant and sloth bear, a hike past Nine Arches Bridge near Ella, the scenic Ella to Nanu Oya train ride, Horton Plains and World's End, tea estate visits around Nuwara Eliya, the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic and Royal Botanical Gardens in Kandy, the cave temples of Dambulla, the Sigiriya rock fortress, and a run of days on and around Trincomalee's beaches including Pigeon Island and whale watching. The pace is unhurried, with several fixed stays allowing time to settle into each region rather than rushing between sights.

The tour is run throughout in a private vehicle with an English-speaking chauffeur guide, whose accommodation is included along with taxes and service charges. Entrance fees, visa costs and personal expenses are arranged separately, and the minimum age for travellers is 11. As a fully private itinerary, there are no shared groups and the schedule can flex around you.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Airport → Negombo

The tour begins on the west coast at Negombo, known for its long sandy beaches and old fishing traditions.



Negombo Beach

Enjoy the sandy beaches of Negombo and watch its centuries-old fishing industry at work. Water sports and diving are available, including trips to see a 50-year-old shipwreck just off the coast where many varieties of fish now live.

AI-generated image · not an actual photograph

Day 2 Negombo → Yala

After breakfast, travel south to Yala and check in for a relaxed afternoon ahead of the safari.

Day 3 Yala

A day combining a wildlife safari in the south with a half-day exploring the sights around Ella.



Yala National Park

A three-hour safari in Yala, the island's second-largest national park on the southeastern coast, offers a chance to see Sri Lankan leopards, wild water buffalo, sloth bears and large herds of elephants, along with many other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

Ranmith Welikala · CC BY-SA 4.0



Ella

Explore Ella, passing bright green tea fields and rocky terrain for views of Little Adam's Peak. Walk over the Nine Arches Bridge and hear the story of its construction, then finish the hike at Demodara Railway Station, notable for its loop-over track design.

Dan arndt · CC BY-SA 4.0

Day 4 Ella → Nuwara Eliya

Travel into the hill country to Nuwara Eliya, a former British hill station, taking in a scenic train ride along the way.



Nuwara Eliya town

Walk through streets lined with cottages, quaint villas and old mansions from the town's days as the British Empire's premier hill station of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Visit the old red-brick post office and relax at Queen Victoria Park or the shores of Lake Gregory.

Abdul malik77 · CC BY-SA 4.0

Ella to Nanu Oya train ride

The train journey from Ella to Nanu Oya passes through some of the finest highland scenery in Sri Lanka, with carpets of tea plantations, misty mountain villages, deep woodland and waterfalls visible from the windows.

Day 5 Nuwara Eliya → Horton Plains → Nuwara Eliya

A day trip to Horton Plains National Park, returning to Nuwara Eliya afterwards.



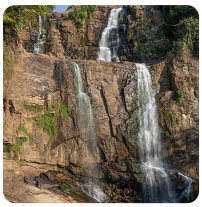
Horton Plains National Park

Explore the montane grasslands and cloud forests of Horton Plains in Ohiya. See the sweeping views from World's End and the spray of Baker's Falls, spot endemic fauna, and learn about archaeological finds made in the area.

Faslan at en.wikipedia · CC BY-SA 3.0

Day 6 Nuwara Eliya → Kandy

Travel towards Kandy, stopping at waterfalls, a tea estate and botanical gardens before visiting the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic and an elephant welfare project.



Ramboda Falls

Visit Ramboda Falls, the 11th tallest waterfall in the country.

A.Savin · FAL

Mackwoods Tea Estate

Take a guided tour of Mackwoods Tea Estate to learn about tea varieties, processing methods and quality grades. Tea was first brought to Ceylon from China in 1824 and planted at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Peradeniya, with James Taylor establishing commercial tea planting at the Loolecondera estate near Kandy after his arrival in 1852.



Hakgala Botanical Gardens

Walk through the shaded avenues and colourful planting of Hakgala Botanical Gardens.

Own work of Buddhika Mawella · CC BY-SA 3.0



Lake Gregory

Take a relaxed walk along the shores of Lake Gregory.

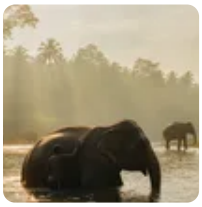
Rehman Abubakr · CC BY-SA 4.0



Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic

This UNESCO World Heritage Site was built in the 16th century to house and protect the sacred tooth relic of the Buddha. Walk through its ornately painted halls in red, cream and black, past carved pillars and gilded statues.

A.Savin · FAL



Millennium Elephant Foundation

The Millennium Elephant Foundation is a family-run NGO working to improve the welfare of domestic elephants across Sri Lanka, funding veterinary care, food and mahout salaries and running a mobile veterinary unit. Its Elephant Walk Experience offers visitors a close, ethical alternative to elephant riding.

AI-generated image · not an actual photograph

Day 7 Kandy

A day in Kandy taking in the botanical gardens and an evening of traditional dance.



Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya

Formed in the early 19th century, the Royal Botanical Gardens hold over 4000 species of plants across a large landscaped area, including orchids, spices and medicinal plants, a cannonball tree, a suspension bridge and avenues of large, rare trees.

Bernard Gagnon · CC BY-SA 3.0



Kandy Cultural Show

An hour-long show of traditional Sri Lankan performing arts, including fire dancers, sword dancers and Kandyan dancers performing to drumming.

Arian Zwegers · CC BY 2.0

Day 8 Kandy → Matale → Dambulla → Sigiriya

Travel north via Matale and Dambulla, with a spice garden visit and the cave temples of Dambulla, before arriving in Sigiriya.



Spice Garden

Take part in a traditional cooking demonstration in a spice garden, learning to make roti or create curry powder from scratch.

AI-generated image · not an actual photograph



Golden Temple of Dambulla

Enter the historic cave temples of Dambulla, dating back to the 1st century BC, to see ancient murals depicting the life of the Buddha and hundreds of statues of Buddha and other deities across the five main caves, including the Cave of the Divine King, Cave of the Great King and the Great New Monastery. A giant golden Buddha statue stands a short distance outside the cave complex.

Lankapic · CC BY 2.5

Day 9 Sigiriya

Climb the Sigiriya rock fortress in the morning, then spend the afternoon experiencing village life nearby.



Sigiriya Rock Fortress

Climb the 5th-century rock fortress built by King Kasyapa, entering through the paws of the lion that gives the site its name, 'The Lion Rock'. See the well-known frescoes, climb the steep staircase to the terraced gardens and still-functioning water cisterns, and walk through the tunnels leading to the former palace.

Wrobell · CC BY-SA 3.0

Village experience

After descending, visit a nearby village for a catamaran safari across a calm lake, a walk through paddy fields, and a home-cooked lunch made over a wood fire and served on lotus leaves.

Day 10 Sigiriya → Trincomalee

Travel east to Trincomalee, stopping at an ancient temple, the town's fort and beaches, and a nearby ancient Buddhist site, with whale watching also on offer.



Koneswaram Temple

Visit this ancient temple, praised by Indian poet-saints and known worldwide, with murals telling its history. A small cave shrine here dates to 1580 BC, while the main temple developed from around 400 BC, and a giant statue commemorates King Ravana, said by legend to have worshipped here.

Shamli071 · CC BY-SA 3.0



Fort of Trincomalee

Visit the fort originally built by the Portuguese in 1624, including stones from the original Koneswaram temple destroyed by the Portuguese and the remains of Fort Frederick, later dismantled and rebuilt by the Dutch.

Kondephy · CC BY-SA 4.0



Nilaveli Beach

Relax on Nilaveli Beach, with its golden sand, swaying palms and clear blue sea, and see a 10th-century Tamil inscription recording the beach as part of a land grant to the Koneswaram Temple.

Anton 17 · CC BY-SA 4.0



Thiriyaya

Explore Thiriyaya, a village where Tamil Buddhism was practised in ancient times. Visit the Girihadu Seya Stupa, built on the legendary spot where the Buddha gave hair relics to two traders, and see the old fortress of one of the last Vanniyar chiefs.

AI-generated image · not an actual photograph



Whale Watching

Look for blue whales, sperm whales and fin whales in the waters off Sri Lanka, with a qualified naturalist on hand to help identify species as part of a responsible, low-impact whale watching trip.

Ji-Elle · CC BY-SA 3.0

Day 11 Trincomalee

A day exploring Pigeon Island National Park by the coast.



Pigeon Island National Park

Explore Pigeon Island National Park, made up of a smaller and larger pigeon island surrounded by coral reef. See the rock pigeons that breed here along with a variety of coral types and marine life.

AntanO · CC BY-SA 4.0

Day 12 Trincomalee (days 12–14)

Three days at leisure on Trincomalee's beaches.



Trincomalee Beaches

Spend these days relaxing on the golden sand beaches of Trincomalee, with their swaying palms and clear blue sea.

Kondephy · CC BY-SA 4.0

Day 15 Trincomalee → Colombo

Travel to Colombo for a tour of the capital's landmarks and shopping areas.



Colombo City Tour

See historic landmarks including the Old Lighthouse, the Old Parliament, Galle Face Hotel, Galle Face Green, Gangarama Temple and the National Museum, and take in Independence Square, the Race Course and the city's boutique shops and designer stores.

Gihanud2001 · CC0

What's included

INCLUDED

- Transport in a Private Vehicle, inclusive of all chauffeur accommodation.
- Service of an English-Speaking Chauffeur Guide throughout the tour.
- All prevailing taxes and service charges.

NOT INCLUDED

- Entry Visa Fees.
- International / Domestic Airfare.
- Any expenses of personal nature.
- Entrance fees.