



TOUR REFERENCE
LK5JT2GDQX

Glorious Ceylon (13 Days)

13 days · 12 nights

Private tour with chauffeur guide

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About this experience

This 13-day tour runs the length of Sri Lanka's classic circuit, from the west coast through the ancient cities of the cultural triangle, into the hill country, down to the southeastern wildlife parks and along the south coast before finishing in Colombo. It moves at an easy pace, with most regions held for two or more nights, and combines archaeological sites, temples, tea country, two national park safaris and a run of coastal and river activities.

Travellers get a broad sample of what the island offers rather than a deep dive into any one theme: ruined cities such as Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, the hiking and viewpoints around Ella and Haputale, leopard and elephant safaris at Yala and Minneriya, and a stretch of beach and river time around Bentota before the final night in Colombo. It suits families and anyone who wants the full range of the country's landscapes and history in a single trip.

Private vehicle transport runs throughout, with a chauffeur guide who drives between sites and stays with the group for the length of the tour.



Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Airport → Negombo

The tour begins on the west coast at Negombo, a beach town known for its long-standing fishing industry.



Negombo Beach

Spend time on Negombo's sandy beaches and watch the centuries-old fishing industry at work. Fun water sports are available for an adrenaline boost.

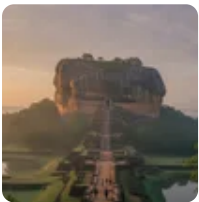
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Diving and shipwreck

Dive among corals and underwater life, including a 50-year-old shipwreck just off the coast that is now home to many varieties of fish.

Day 2 Negombo → Yapahuwa → Anuradhapura

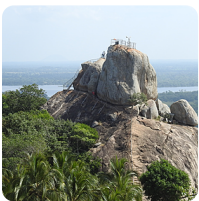
The route heads inland to the cultural triangle, stopping at a 13th-century rock fortress before reaching Anuradhapura, the birthplace of Buddhism in Sri Lanka.



Yapahuwa

This rock fortress served as the seat of government in the 13th century and once housed the Temple of the Tooth Relic. See the ornamental entrance stairway and arch, walk through the ruins at the summit and along the terraces, and look out for the detailed sculptures scattered throughout the site.

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Mihintale

Visit the site where King Devanampiyatissa met Monk Mahinda, the meeting that brought Buddhism to Sri Lanka. See the monastic ruins at the foot of the mountain, the cave where Mahinda resided, and historic stupas including the Ambasthala Dagoba and the Maha Stupa.

Dennis Sylvester Hurd · CC0

Day 3 Anuradhapura

A full day exploring the ruins of Anuradhapura, capital of Sri Lanka for over a thousand years until the 10th century AD.

Anuradhapura ruins

Walk through pagodas, monastic buildings and ponds scattered across the vast ancient city. Key landmarks include the Jetavanarama, once one of the tallest buildings of the ancient world, the Sri Maha Bodhi, and the ruins of the huge Abhayagiri Monastery.

Day 4 Anuradhapura → Polonnaruwa

The second of Sri Lanka's ancient capitals, Polonnaruwa, is followed by a safari in search of elephants.

Polonnaruwa ruins

Walk through the ruins of this city, which flourished between the 10th and 13th centuries AD. Monuments include the Gal Vihara, the Vatadage, the lotus bath, the Lankathilaka Temple and a statue of King Parakramabahu, whose reign is considered Polonnaruwa's golden age.



Minneriya National Park safari

A safari ride through Minneriya National Park, where in the dry season between May and October the Great Elephant Gathering can bring over 150 elephants together in one place. The park also holds other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians across its scrubland and forest.

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Day 5 Polonnaruwa → Dambulla → Matale → Kandy

The day combines a cave temple dating to the 1st century BC with a stop at a spice garden near Matale on the way to Kandy.



Dambulla Cave Temple

Enter the caves of the Golden Temple of Dambulla, dating back to the 1st century BC, to see ancient murals depicting the life of Lord Gautama Buddha and hundreds of figurines of Buddha and other deities 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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Euphoria Spice and Herbal Garden

Near Matale, Sri Lanka's spice capital, this garden grows spices and herbs amid fragrant tropical shade trees in a climate that preserves their original character. A guided spice tour explains the plants and the uses of Ayurveda, with explanations offered in several languages.

Day 6 Kandy → Nuwara Eliya

Kandy's sacred Buddhist shrine and a tea estate precede the climb into the hill station of Nuwara Eliya.



Temple of the Tooth Relic

This UNESCO World Heritage Site was built in the 16th century to house and protect Lord Buddha's sacred tooth. Walk through painted passageways and halls in red, cream and black, among carved pillars and golden statues.

A.Savin · FAL

Tea factory and plantation

See how Ceylon Tea is made at a working tea factory and plantation. Tea was first brought to Ceylon from China in 1824 and planted in the Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya; commercial cultivation followed when James Taylor, a British settler, established it at the Loolecondera estate near Kandy from 1852.



Nuwara Eliya town

Once the premium hill-country holiday resort of the British in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Nuwara Eliya retains cottages, quaint villas and mansions along its streets. See the old red-brick post office, and relax at Queen Victoria Park or by the shores of Lake Gregory.

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Day 7 Nuwara Eliya

A day in Horton Plains National Park, the montane grassland reserve near Nuwara Eliya.



Horton Plains National Park

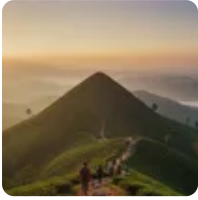
Walk through montane grasslands and cloud forest to the precipice of World's End and the spray of Baker's Falls. The plains hold many endemic species and have yielded archaeological finds.

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Day 8

Nuwara Eliya → Ella → Haputale → Yala

The hill country's scenery continues through Ella and Haputale before the day ends near Yala.



Little Adam's Peak

A walk through bright green tea fields and rocky terrain near Ella, with views toward Little Adam's Peak.

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Nine Arches Bridge

Walk over this bridge, hearing the story of its construction, before continuing to the Demodara Railway station with its unusual loop-over track design.

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Lipton's Seat

One of Sri Lanka's most famed observation points near Haputale, giving views across the Uva, Sabaragamuwa, Central and Eastern Provinces.

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Adisham Bungalow

A Tudor mansion built in the early 1900s, open for visitors to walk its grounds.

St Andrews Church

A neo-gothic church in Haputale with a graveyard that is the resting place of many British tea planters.

Day 9

Yala

A safari day at Yala National Park on the southeastern coast.



Yala National Park safari

Yala is the island's second-largest national park, known for Sri Lankan leopards, wild water buffalo, Sri Lankan sloth bear and large elephant herds, alongside many other mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates.

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Day 10

Yala → Galle → Bentota

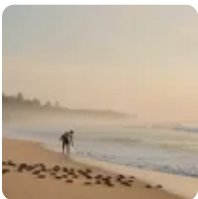
The route moves to the south coast, taking in the old fortified town of Galle and a turtle conservation project en route to Bentota.



Galle Fort

Explore the headquarters once held by the Portuguese and Dutch, centred on Galle Fort, one of Asia's best-preserved fortifications. See the Maritime Museum, the Galle National Museum and the lighthouse, and walk the cobblestoned streets with their Dutch names.

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Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery

Learn about the five endangered sea turtle species that nest on Sri Lanka's shores and how the Kosgoda Turtle Care Program protects nests to improve hatchling survival. Visitors can see, touch and feed baby turtles, and meet injured adult turtles in care.

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Day 11 Bentota → Balapitiya → Bentota

A boat excursion on the Madu River fills the day, with a stop for the well-known fish massage.

**Madu River boat ride**

Travel through the river's mangrove passages, spotting basking crocodiles and water monitors along with water birds. The route includes a stop at a small island where residents harvest cinnamon.

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Fish massage

Enjoy the restorative qualities of a fish massage during the river excursion.

Day 12 Bentota → Colombo

The tour ends its coastal leg with a day in the capital, Colombo, taking in its historic and commercial sides.

**Colombo city sights**

Visit historic monuments including the Old Lighthouse, the Old Parliament, Galle Face Hotel, Galle Face Green, Gangarama Temple and the National Museum. There is time for the shops of Independence Square, the Race Course, and various boutiques and designer stores.

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Day 13 Colombo → Airport

After breakfast, check out and transfer to the airport for departure, marking the end of the tour.

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

- Hotel Accommodation.
 - Entry Visa Fees
 - International / Domestic Airfare.
 - Any expenses of personal nature.
 - Entrance fees to the respective sites.
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