

TOUR REFERENCE
LKBAJ392ZK

Culture and Culinary Expedition (7 Days)

7 days · 6 nights | Private tour with chauffeur guide

AI-generated image · not an actual photograph

About this experience

This seven-day private tour pairs Sri Lanka's cultural heartland with a running thread of food, from cave temples and ancient capitals to spice gardens, village cooking and street food. It travels from the west coast at Negombo inland to Dambulla, Sigiriya and Polonnaruwa, on to Kandy, and finishes in Colombo before the return to the airport, covering the main sites of the Cultural Triangle alongside hands-on food experiences.

Travellers see the Dambulla Cave Temple, the ruins of Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya Rock Fortress and the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy, together with the Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya and a Kandyan cultural show. Food experiences are built into several days: a farmer's cooking demonstration and lunch near Polonnaruwa, a Minneriya safari, a village experience with an oxen cart ride and lakeside catamaran, a spice garden tour at Matale, and a cooking class and street food outing in Colombo.

The tour runs with a chauffeur guide and private vehicle throughout, so the pace and timing of each day follow the travelling party rather than a fixed group schedule.



Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Airport → Negombo

On arrival at Colombo International Airport you are met by a chauffeur guide and driven to Negombo to check in to your hotel.



Negombo

After the airport formalities you are driven to Negombo for your first night, with time to settle in and relax.

AI-generated image · not an actual photograph

Day 2 Negombo → Dambulla → Sigiriya

After checking out of Negombo you travel to Dambulla to visit the cave temple, then continue to Sigiriya for the night.



Dambulla Cave Temple

The caves of the Golden Temple of Dambulla date back to the 1st century BC, with murals of the life of Lord Gautama Buddha and hundreds of Buddha and deity figurines across five main caves, including the Cave of the Divine King, the 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 3 Sigiriya → Polonnaruwa → Minneriya → Sigiriya

This day combines the ruins of Polonnaruwa with a farm cooking experience and a safari in Minneriya National Park, returning to Sigiriya in the evening.



Polonnaruwa

Polonnaruwa was the second major capital of Sri Lanka, flourishing between the 10th and 13th centuries AD. Walking through the ruins takes in the Gal Vihara, the Vatadage, the lotus bath, the Lankathilaka Temple and the statue of King Parakramabahu, whose reign is considered the city's golden age.

Bernard Gagnon · CC BY-SA 3.0

Priyamali Gedara Cooking Demonstration

At Priyamali Gedara a local farming family demonstrates Sri Lankan cooking and serves a farm lunch of rice, lentils, fresh vegetable curries, fried fish and poppadum, cooked over wood fires and served on lotus leaves. Kotthu can be requested separately from the farmer's wife.



Minneriya National Park Safari

A three-hour jeep safari through Minneriya National Park offers the chance to see elephants, including during the Great Elephant Gathering between May and October when over 150 can congregate in one place, as well as other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

Stuart Pinkney · CC BY 2.0

Day 4 Sigiriya → Matale → Kandy

The day starts with the climb up Sigiriya Rock Fortress, followed by a village experience and a spice garden visit at Matale before continuing to Kandy.



Sigiriya Rock Fortress

This 5th-century AD rock fortress was the seat of King Kasyapa, entered through an approach framed by a lion's paws. The climb passes the fortress's well-known murals and a steep staircase leading to terraced gardens and still-working cisterns, with tunnels leading on to the palace.

Wrobell · CC BY-SA 3.0

Village Experience

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



Spice Garden, Matale

A guided tour of a spice and herbal garden near Matale covers spices such as coriander, chilli, cinnamon, cardamom and nutmeg, their cultivation in the tropical climate, and their traditional uses, including in Ayurveda.

AI-generated image · not an actual photograph

Day 5 Kandy

A full day in Kandy covers a run of historic temples, the Royal Botanical Gardens and an evening of traditional arts and dance.

Temple Run Tour

This tour takes in the wood-carved Embekke Temple, the historic Gadaladeniya Temple with its paintings and sculptures, the architecturally advanced Lankatilaka Temple, and the Degaldoruwa Cave Temple, known for its restored interior paintings.



Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya

Formed in the early 19th century, the Peradeniya gardens hold over 4,000 species of plants, including orchids, spices and medicinal plants, with avenues of large trees, a cannonball tree and a suspension bridge.

Bernard Gagnon · CC BY-SA 3.0

Technical Tours and Kandyan Cultural Show

Evening visits cover crafts such as gem cutting, woodcarving and batik, followed by the Kandyan Cultural Show, an hour of traditional dance and music including fire dancers, sword dancers and Kandyan drumming.

Day 6 Kandy → Colombo

After visiting the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic you travel to Colombo, with a cooking class and street food outing in the evening.



Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic

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

A.Savin · FAL

Cooking Class and Street Food Expedition

In the evening in Colombo you take part in a cooking class and a street food expedition before returning to the hotel.

Day 7 Colombo → Airport

A relaxed final morning includes a city and shopping tour of Colombo before the transfer to the airport.



Colombo City and Shopping Tour

The tour takes in historic monuments such as the Old Lighthouse, the Old Parliament, the Galle Face Hotel, Galle Face Green and the National Museum, along with the malls of Independence Square or the Race Course and boutique and designer shops.

Gihanud2001 · CC0

What's included

INCLUDED

- Private Transport with airport transfers in an Air-Conditioned Vehicle throughout the tour.
- Service of an English-Speaking Chauffeur Guide throughout the tour.

NOT INCLUDED

- Hotel Accommodation and Meals.
- Entrance Fees.
- Chauffeur Guide's Accommodation.
- Expenses of personal nature.
- Visa and Related Expenses.
- Tips & Portages.