



TOUR REFERENCE
LKBJTSKJ7F

Contemporary Ceylon (17 Days)

15 days · 14 nights

Private tour with chauffeur guide

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About this experience

This 17-day tour traces a full circuit of Sri Lanka, from the beaches of the west coast through the deep south, up into the hill country, and on to the ancient cities of the Cultural Triangle. It combines coastal relaxation, wildlife safaris, colonial-era heritage, tea country and the island's major archaeological sites into one continuous itinerary.

Travellers start at Negombo and Galle on the coast, move inland through Yala and Ella to Nuwara Eliya and Kandy, then settle into Dambulla as a base for day trips to Sigiriya, Anuradhapura, Yapahuwa and Polonnaruwa. Along the way there is time for a Madu River boat trip, stilt fishing at Koggala, a safari in Yala National Park, the Nine Arches Bridge near Ella, Horton Plains and World's End, tea estate visits, the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, the Dambulla cave temples, Sigiriya rock fortress, and the ruined cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa.

The pace allows for a mix of guided sightseeing, nature excursions and some free time, making it suited to travellers who want a broad, unhurried introduction to Sri Lanka's coast, hill country and ancient heartland in a single trip.



Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Airport → Negombo

The tour begins on the west coast at Negombo, known for its beaches and long-standing fishing industry.



Negombo Beach

Spend time on Negombo's sandy beaches and try some water sports, or dive to see the corals and a 50-year-old shipwreck just off the coast.

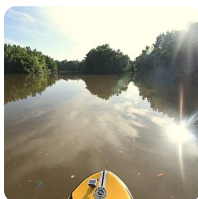
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Fish Market

Watch Negombo's centuries-old fishing industry at work along the shore.

Day 2 Negombo → Kosgoda → Balapitiya → Galle

Travel south along the coast, stopping for a river safari before reaching Galle.



Madu River Boat Ride

Take a boat ride through the Madu River's mangrove channels, spotting basking crocodiles, water monitors and waterbirds, and visit an island where cinnamon is harvested.

SUPindia · CC BY-SA 4.0

Fish Massage

Stop for a fish massage, a popular treatment along this stretch of coast.

Day 3 Galle

Spend the day exploring Galle Fort, one of Asia's best-preserved fortifications.



Galle Fort

Walk the Fort's cobblestoned streets, which still carry Dutch names, and learn about its history.

Rovin Shanila · CC BY-SA 4.0

Maritime Museum, Galle National Museum and Lighthouse

Visit the Maritime Museum, the Galle National Museum and the Fort's lighthouse.

Day 4 Galle → Yala

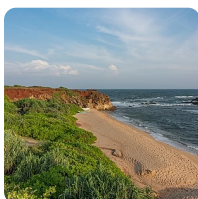
Head east along the coast towards Yala, stopping to see traditional stilt fishing and an unusual coastal landscape.



Stilt Fishermen of Koggala

Watch stilt fishermen at work off the coast of Koggala and hear from practitioners how the craft is passed down through generations.

Bernard Gagnon · CC BY-SA 3.0



Ussangoda

Visit Ussangoda, a bare coastal plateau whose toxic serpentine soil supports only a few specialised plants, and which features in Ramayana legend as a site burned by Hanuman and once used by King Ravana as an airstrip.

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Day 5 Yala

Spend the day on safari in Yala National Park, the island's second largest.



Yala National Park Safari

Take a three-hour safari through Yala in search of Sri Lankan leopards, wild water buffalo, sloth bears and elephants, along with the park's many other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

Ranmith Welikala · CC BY-SA 4.0

Day 6 Yala → Ella

Travel into the hills to Ella, exploring its best-known landmarks on foot.



Little Adam's Peak

Pass through tea fields and rocky terrain for views towards Little Adam's Peak.

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Nine Arches Bridge

Walk over the Nine Arches Bridge and hear the story of how it was built.

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Demodara Railway Station

End the walk at Demodara Railway Station, notable for its loop-over track design.

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Day 7 Ella → Nuwara Eliya

Take the scenic train journey from Ella towards Nuwara Eliya through the highlands.

Ella to Nanu Oya Train Journey

Ride through tea plantations, misty villages, mountains, woodland and waterfalls on one of Sri Lanka's most scenic rail routes.

Day 8 Nuwara Eliya → Horton Plains → Nuwara Eliya

Visit Horton Plains National Park for its grasslands, cloud forest and views from World's End.



Horton Plains National Park

Walk through the montane grasslands and cloud forests of Horton Plains, spotting endemic wildlife and learning about archaeological finds in the area.

Faslan at en.wikipedia · CC BY-SA 3.0

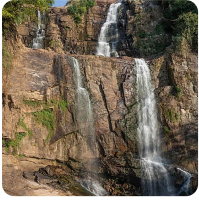
World's End and Baker's Falls

Take in the views from the escarpment at World's End and feel the spray from Baker's Falls.

Day 9

Nuwara Eliya → Kandy

Travel towards Kandy, taking in waterfalls, tea estates, gardens and the city's most important temple.



Ramboda Falls

Stop at Ramboda Falls, the 11th tallest waterfall in the country.

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Mackwoods Tea Estate

Take a guided tour of Mackwoods Tea Estate, learning about tea varieties and processing, part of a tradition begun by James Taylor at Loolecondera estate in 1852.



Hakgala Botanical Gardens

Walk through the shaded avenues and colourful plantings 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

Visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, a UNESCO World Heritage Site built in the 16th century, with its painted halls, carved pillars and golden statues.

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Day 10

Kandy → Pinnawala → Kandy

A day built around Kandy's cultural performance.



Kandy Cultural Show

Watch an hour-long performance of traditional Sri Lankan dance and music, including fire dancers, sword dancers and Kandyan drummers.

Arian Zwegers · CC BY 2.0

Day 11 Kandy → Peradeniya → Matale → Dambulla

Travel from Kandy to Dambulla, stopping at Peradeniya's botanical gardens and the cave temples of Dambulla.



Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya

Explore the 19th-century Royal Botanical Gardens, home to over 4,000 plant species, including orchids, spice and medicinal plants, a cannonball tree and a suspension bridge.

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Golden Temple of Dambulla

Enter the cave temples of Dambulla, dating to the 1st century BC, to see ancient murals and hundreds of Buddha figures across five main caves, including the Cave of the Divine King and the Cave of the Great King, before viewing the giant golden Buddha statue outside the complex.

Lankapic · CC BY 2.5

Day 12 Dambulla → Sigiriya → Dambulla

Climb Sigiriya rock fortress and spend the afternoon experiencing village life nearby.



Sigiriya Rock Fortress

Climb the 5th-century rock fortress of Sigiriya, entering past the lion's paws at its base to see the famous frescoes, terraced gardens, cisterns and the ruins of King Kasyapa's palace.

Wrobell · CC BY-SA 3.0

Village Experience

Visit a nearby village, take a catamaran ride across a lake, walk through paddy fields and eat a home-cooked lunch served on lotus leaves.

Day 13 Dambulla → Anuradhapura → Dambulla

Visit the ancient city of Anuradhapura and a notable Buddha statue nearby.



Anuradhapura

Walk through the ruined city of Anuradhapura, capital of Sri Lanka for over a thousand years until the 10th century AD, taking in the Jetavanarama stupa, the Sri Maha Bodhi and the Abhayagiri Monastery.

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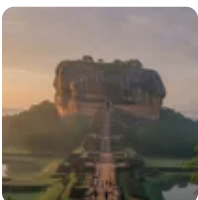
Avukana Buddha Statue

See the 40-foot standing Buddha statue at Avukana, carved from a single rock and supported only by a thin attachment at the back, among the partially collapsed remains of what was once an image house.

Carlos Delgado · CC BY-SA 4.0

Day 14 Dambulla → Yapahuwa → Dambulla

Visit the rock fortress of Yapahuwa, once the island's seat of government.



Yapahuwa Rock Fortress

Explore Yapahuwa, seat of government in the 13th century and once home to the Temple of the Tooth Relic, taking in its ornamental stairway, entrance arch, temple ruins and detailed sculptures.

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Day 15

Dambulla → Polonnaruwa → Minneriya → Dambulla

Visit the medieval capital of Polonnaruwa before an afternoon safari in Minneriya National Park.



Polonnaruwa

Explore the ruins of Polonnaruwa, which served as the island's capital and a thriving commercial and religious centre some 800 years ago, with temples and other archaeological remains from that era.

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Minneriya National Park Safari

Take a three-hour safari through Minneriya National Park, with a chance to see elephants gathering in large herds during the dry season, alongside other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

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What's included

INCLUDED

- Transport in a Private Vehicle, inclusive of, cost of fuel, parking & highway tolls.
- Service of an English-Speaking Chauffeur Guide throughout the tour.
- All prevailing taxes and service charges (Except for Credit Card 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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hello@lakpura.com · +94 11 574 7474