TOUR REFERENCE
LKMCKKE4NJ

Culture and Wilderness (8 Days)

8 days · 7 nights | Private tour with chauffeur guide

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About this experience

This eight-day private tour runs from Colombo through the Cultural Triangle, the hill country and the southern coast, combining ancient sites, hill-country scenery and two national park safaris in a single loop. A chauffeur guide drives throughout, so the stops at temples, ruins, tea estates and parks follow one continuous route rather than separate excursions.



The first half of the tour covers the Cultural Triangle: the cave temples of Dambulla, the ruined medieval capital of Polonnaruwa, and the rock fortress of Sigiriya, along with a stop at the Hindu temple complex of Munneswaram and a safari in Minneriya National Park, known for its seasonal elephant gatherings. From there the route climbs into the hills, taking in Kandy's Temple of the Tooth Relic and a Kandyan cultural show, a spice garden near Matale, a tea factory and waterfall near Ramboda, and the cooler town of Nuwara Eliya.

The second half moves south through Ella, with its viewpoints and the Nine Arches Bridge, to Yala National Park for a further safari, then along the coast via Galle Fort and the Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery before finishing in Colombo with a tour of the capital's landmarks.

Travellers get a wide cross-section of Sri Lanka in one trip: Buddhist and Hindu heritage sites, hill-country tea country, two wildlife safaris, and a coastal finish, all arranged as a single continuous drive with a dedicated guide.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Colombo (BIA) → Chilaw → Dambulla

On arrival at Colombo airport, you are met by a Lakpura chauffeur guide and driven to Dambulla, stopping en route at Chilaw. The evening includes a visit to the cave temples at Dambulla.



Munneswaram Kovil

An important regional Hindu temple complex in existence since at least 1000 CE, associated in myth with the Ramayana and its hero-king Rama, and one of five ancient temples dedicated to Shiva in the region.

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Dambulla Cave Temple

The Golden Temple of Dambulla dates back to the 1st century BC and holds ancient murals depicting the life of Lord Gautama Buddha alongside hundreds of Buddha 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.

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Day 2 Dambulla → Polonnaruwa → Minneriya → Dambulla

The day covers the ancient city of Polonnaruwa followed by a safari in Minneriya National Park, before returning to Dambulla.



Polonnaruwa Ancient City

The second major capital of Sri Lanka, flourishing between the 10th and 13th centuries AD. Key monuments include Gal Vihara, the Vatadage, the lotus bath, Lankathilaka Temple and the statue of King Parakramabahu.

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Minneriya National Park Safari

A safari through Minneriya National Park, where elephants congregate in large numbers during the dry season between May and October in what is known as the Great Elephant Gathering, alongside other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

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Day 3 Dambulla → Kandy

The morning is spent at the Sigiriya rock fortress, followed by a stop at a spice garden near Matale on the way to Kandy, where the evening includes crafts and a cultural show.



Sigiriya Rock Fortress

A 5th-century AD rock fortress built by King Kasyapa, entered through an entrance framed by the carved paws of a lion. The climb passes unfading murals, a steep staircase, terraced gardens, still-working cisterns and tunnels leading to the former palace.

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Euphoria Spice and Herbal Garden, Matale

A guided tour of a spice and herbal garden near Matale, the spice capital of Sri Lanka, covering coriander, chilli, cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg and other spices grown in the tropical climate, along with their uses in Ayurveda.

Kandy Arts and Crafts

Visits to see gem crafting, woodcarving and batik work in Kandy.



Kandyan Cultural Show

An hour-long show of traditional Kandyan dance and music, including fire dancers, sword dancers and drumming.

Arian Zwegers · CC BY 2.0

Day 4 Kandy → Nuwara Eliya

The morning covers the Temple of the Tooth Relic in Kandy before the drive to Nuwara Eliya, with stops at Ramboda for a tea factory and waterfall, and a city tour of Nuwara Eliya in the evening.



Temple of the Tooth Relic

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

A.Savin · FAL

Ramboda Tea Factory and Falls

A stop at a tea factory and plantation at Ramboda to see how Ceylon tea is produced, a tradition dating back to James Taylor's commercial tea plantation established at Loolecondera estate in 1852, alongside a visit to Ramboda Falls.



Nuwara Eliya City Tour

A tour of Nuwara Eliya, a hill town built in the style of an English countryside settlement with Georgian and Queen Anne architecture, an Anglican church, a golf course and parks, set at altitude with cool, fresh air.

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Day 5 Nuwara Eliya → Ella

The drive continues to Ella, where the afternoon is spent exploring the area's sights on foot.

Ella Exploration

A walk through Ella's surroundings, passing tea fields and rocky stretches for views of Little Adam's Peak, crossing the Nine Arches Bridge, and ending at Demodara Railway Station with its loop-over track design.

Day 6 Ella → Yala

After checking in near Yala, the evening is given over to a safari in Yala National Park.



Yala National Park Safari

An evening safari in Yala National Park, the island's second largest, located off the southeastern coast. Sightings can include Sri Lankan leopards, wild water buffalo, Sri Lankan sloth bears and elephant herds, along with other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

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Day 7 Yala → Colombo

The route to Colombo passes through Galle and Kosgoda, with stops to explore the fort town and visit a turtle hatchery.



Galle Fort

A former Portuguese and Dutch headquarters, with one of the best-preserved fortifications in Asia, the Maritime Museum, the Galle National Museum, a lighthouse and cobblestoned streets with Dutch-era names.

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Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery

A hatchery on the southwestern coast working to protect five endangered sea turtle species that nest on Sri Lanka's shores, with the chance to see, touch and feed baby turtles and injured adult turtles under care.

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Day 8 Colombo → Colombo (BIA)

The final day is a tour of Colombo before transfer to the airport for departure.



Colombo City Tour

A tour of Sri Lanka's commercial capital, taking in landmarks such as the Old Lighthouse, the Old Parliament, Galle Face Hotel, Galle Face Green, Gangarama Temple and the National Museum, along with shops around Independence Square and the Race Course.

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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.
- Tips & Portages.