

TOUR REFERENCE
LKN5ZASPEC

Temples and Nature (22 Days)

22 days · 21 nights | Private tour with chauffeur guide

About this experience

This 22-day tour covers the full sweep of Sri Lanka in one private, chauffeur-guided journey: the western coast, the ancient cities of the cultural triangle, the hill country around Kandy and Nuwara Eliya, the forests and wildlife parks of the south, and an extended stretch on the beaches of Bentota. It moves at an unhurried pace, with several multi-night stops that allow time to explore each region rather than simply pass through it.



Along the way travellers walk the ruins of Anuradhapura, climb Sigiriya rock fortress, visit the cave temples of Dambulla, see the Temple of the Tooth and Royal Botanical Gardens in Kandy, and spend time in the tea country around Nuwara Eliya, including a visit to Horton Plains. The route continues through Ella's hiking trails, the elephants of Udawalawe National Park, the rainforest of Sinharaja, and the Madu River wetlands near Bentota, before finishing with several days of beach time.

The tour is run in-country by a chauffeur-guide who handles the driving and local arrangements throughout, with transport, chauffeur accommodation, taxes and service charges included. Hotel accommodation, entrance fees, flights and personal expenses are arranged separately. Because the itinerary is private, the schedule can flex around your own group.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Airport → Negombo

The tour begins on the western coast at Negombo, a beach town with a long fishing tradition.



Negombo Beach

Relax on the sandy beaches of Negombo and watch the centuries-old fishing industry at work. Water sports are available, including diving among corals and a 50-year-old shipwreck just off the coast that is now home to many varieties of fish.

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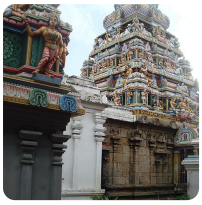
Day 2 Negombo → Anuradhapura

Head inland towards the cultural triangle, stopping en route at an important Hindu temple complex.



Munneswaram Temple

This regional Hindu temple complex near Chilaw has existed since at least 1000 CE and is linked in legend to the Ramayana and its hero-king Rama. It is one of five ancient temples in the region dedicated to Shiva.

Leon Meerson · CC BY-SA 2.0

Day 3 Anuradhapura → Sigiriya

Spend the day exploring the ruins of Anuradhapura, capital of Sri Lanka for over a millennium, before continuing to Sigiriya.



Anuradhapura Ancient City

Walk through the ruined city that served as the island's capital until the 10th century AD, with pagodas, monastic buildings and ponds scattered across a vast area. Key landmarks include Jetavanarama, once one of the tallest buildings in the ancient world, the Sri Maha Bodhi, and the ruins of the Abhayagiri Monastery.

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Day 4 Sigiriya → Minneriya → Sigiriya

A full day combining the Sigiriya rock fortress, a village experience, and a safari in Minneriya National Park.



Sigiriya Rock Fortress

This 5th-century AD rock fortress, built under King Kashyapa, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the Lion Rock for its lion-paw entrance. Climb the steep staircase past well-preserved murals to the terraced gardens and cisterns, an example of ancient Sri Lankan hydraulic engineering.

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Village Experience

Take an oxen cart ride and a catamaran safari across a calm lake, walk through paddy fields, and watch a traditional cooking demonstration. Lunch is cooked over a wood fire and served on lotus leaves, giving a taste of Sri Lankan village life.



Minneriya National Park Safari

A safari through the park's scrublands and forests, known in the dry season between May and October for the Great Elephant Gathering, when over 150 elephants congregate in one place. Other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians can also be seen.

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Day 5 Sigiriya → Dambulla → Kandy

Visit the cave temples of Dambulla and a spice garden in Matale on the way to Kandy, where the day ends with a cultural dance show.



Golden Temple of Dambulla

These cave temples date back to the 1st century BC and hold ancient murals depicting the life of the Buddha, along with hundreds of Buddha and deity figurines across five main caves, including the Cave of the Divine King and the Cave of the Great King. A giant golden Buddha statue stands outside the complex.

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Matale Spice Tour

Visit a spice and herbal garden in Matale, Sri Lanka's spice-growing centre, to learn about coriander, chilli, cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg and other spices grown in the tropical climate, as well as their use in Ayurvedic medicine.

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Kandy Cultural Show

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

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Day 6 Kandy

A day in Kandy taking in its most important religious site and botanical gardens.



Temple of the Tooth Relic

This UNESCO World Heritage Site was built in the 16th century to house and protect the sacred tooth relic of the Buddha. Its passageways and halls are decorated in red, cream and black, with carved pillars and golden statues.

A.Savin · FAL



Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya

Established in the early 19th century, these gardens hold over 4000 species of plants, including orchids, spices and medicinal plants. Highlights include the cannonball tree, a suspension bridge, hedge mazes and large shade trees.

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Day 7 Kandy → Nuwara Eliya

Learn about Ceylon tea en route to Nuwara Eliya, a former British hill station.

Tea Factory and Plantation

See how Ceylon tea is produced at a working factory and plantation. Tea was first planted in Sri Lanka's Royal Botanical Gardens in 1824, and commercial cultivation began when James Taylor settled at the Loolecondera estate in 1852.



Nuwara Eliya Town

This highland town was the main holiday resort for the British in the 19th and early 20th centuries, with cottages, villas and mansions lining its streets. Visit the old red-brick post office and relax at Queen Victoria Park or Lake Gregory.

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Day 8 Nuwara Eliya → Horton Plains → Nuwara Eliya

A day trip to Horton Plains National Park for its grasslands, cloud forest and viewpoints.



Horton Plains National Park

Explore the park's montane grasslands and cloud forests near Ohiya, taking in the view from the World's End precipice and the spray of Baker's Falls. The plains are home to several endemic species and sites of archaeological interest.

Faslan at en.wikipedia · CC BY-SA 3.0

Day 9 Nuwara Eliya

A free day to relax at leisure in Nuwara Eliya.

Day 10 Nuwara Eliya → Ella

Travel to Ella and explore its best-known sights on the way.



Little Adam's Peak

The route passes through tea fields and rocky stretches with views of Little Adam's Peak.

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Nine Arches Bridge

Walk over this historic bridge and hear the story of its construction.

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Demodara Railway Station

The walk ends at this station, notable for its unique loop-over track design.

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Day 11 Ella

A hike to one of the area's highest viewpoints.

Ella Rock

A roughly three-hour hike up Ella Rock passes views of the Namunukula Range and Little Adam's Peak. From the top, the Bandarawela Range, Poonagala Hills, Narangala, the Ella Gap and the Badulla train tracks can be seen.

Day 12 Ella → Udawalawe

Travel from Ella to Udawalawe and check in for the next stop.

Day 13 Udawalawe

A safari day in Udawalawe National Park, known for its elephants.



Udawalawe National Park Safari

A three-hour safari through marshes, forests and grasslands in a park created as a wildlife sanctuary in the 1970s. It is known for its water birds and Sri Lankan elephants, alongside other mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and butterflies.

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Day 14 Udawalawe → Sinharaja

Travel on to Sinharaja for a stay near the rainforest.

Day 15 Sinharaja

A relaxing day with a traditional fish spa treatment.

Fish Spa Therapy

Natural water streams in the Sinharaja area are home to toothless nibble fish, known locally as doctor fish, which nibble away dry skin to leave feet feeling refreshed.

Day 16 Sinharaja

A jungle safari into the Sinharaja Forest Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Sinharaja Forest Reserve

This is Sri Lanka's last significant area of virgin rainforest, with dense evergreen vegetation. Listen for monkeys and look out for colourful forest birds and, with luck, a green pit viper among the foliage.

Dan Lundberg · CC BY-SA 2.0

Day 17 Sinharaja → Bentota

Travel from Sinharaja to the coast at Bentota.

Day 18 Bentota

A boat trip exploring the Madu River's wetland ecosystem.



Madu River Boat Ride

Travel through mangrove channels on the Madu River, spotting basking crocodiles and water monitors, and visit a small island where cinnamon is harvested. The trip also includes a fish massage and the chance to observe water birds.

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Day 19 Bentota (days 19–21)

Three days free to enjoy Bentota's beach.



Bentota Beach

Spend time on one of Sri Lanka's best beaches, with warm sun, soft sand and sea breezes, and watch the sunset over the ocean. Turtles come to nest here, and water sports such as jet-skiing and windsurfing are available alongside the beachfront hotels.

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Day 22 **Bentota → Airport**

Check out after breakfast and transfer to the airport, 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.
- International / Domestic Airfare.
- Any expenses of personal nature.
- Entrance fees to the respective sites.