

TOUR REFERENCE
LKQ5NGAH98

Geoffrey Bawa Impressions (12 Days)

12 days · 11 nights | Private tour with chauffeur guide

About this experience

This twelve-day private tour follows the work and life of Geoffrey Bawa, the architect whose buildings and gardens shaped the modern image of Sri Lanka. The route runs from the west coast at Negombo through the cultural triangle around Dambulla and Polonnaruwa, on to Kandy in the hill country, then down to the south coast at Galle and Bentota before finishing in Colombo. Alongside the Bawa-designed hotels and houses, the itinerary takes in the island's ancient cities, ruins and wildlife parks, so the trip balances architecture with history and nature.

Travellers see Bawa's buildings in use rather than as museum pieces: hotels such as Heritance Kandalama, Heritance Ahungalla and Jetwing Lighthouse, and his private properties, Lunuganga Estate and the house on 33rd Lane in Colombo. These are set against Sigiriya rock fortress, the ruined city of Polonnaruwa, an elephant safari at Minneriya, the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy and the old fort town of Galle, giving a rounded picture of the country Bawa drew on for his work.

The tour runs in a private vehicle with an English-speaking chauffeur guide throughout, covering fuel, parking and highway tolls. Hotel stays, flights, entrance fees and personal expenses are arranged separately.



Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Airport → Negombo

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



Negombo Beach

Negombo's sandy beaches sit alongside a centuries-old fishing industry still visible along the shore. Visitors can try water sports or diving among corals and reef fish, and divers can see a 50-year-old shipwreck just off the coast that has become home to many species of fish.

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Day 2 Negombo

A free day at leisure in Negombo.

Leisure Day

Time at the hotel to relax before the tour heads inland.

Day 3 Negombo → Dambulla

The drive inland to Dambulla takes in the first of the tour's Bawa-designed hotels.

Heritance Kandalama

Designed by Geoffrey Bawa, this five-star hotel is built into the surrounding landscape, with the architecture incorporating the rock, water and vegetation of the site in a deliberate, understated way.

Day 4 Dambulla

A full day exploring Sigiriya, the fifth-century rock fortress near Dambulla.



Sigiriya Rock Fortress

Built in the fifth century AD as the stronghold of King Kasyapa, Sigiriya is entered through an approach framed by giant lion's paws, which gives the site its name, Lion Rock. The climb passes the well-known frescoes, terraced gardens and cisterns that still hold water, and tunnels leading up to the ruined palace on the summit.

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Day 5 Dambulla → Polonnaruwa → Minneriya → Dambulla

A day combining the ruined city of Polonnaruwa with an afternoon safari at Minneriya National Park.



Polonnaruwa

Sri Lanka's second major ancient capital, Polonnaruwa flourished between the tenth and thirteenth centuries AD. Among its ruins are the Gal Vihara, the Vatadage, the lotus bath, the Lankathilaka Temple and a statue linked to King Parakramabahu, whose reign is regarded as the city's golden age.

Bernard Gagnon · CC BY-SA 3.0



Minneriya National Park

A three-hour safari through Minneriya National Park, where the dry season between May and October brings the Great Elephant Gathering, with over 150 elephants congregating in one place. The park is also home to other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians across its scrubland and forest.

Stuart Pinkney · CC BY 2.0

Day 6 Dambulla → Kandy

The journey continues to Kandy, with a stop at a temple noted for its wooden architecture.

Wooden Temple

Built almost entirely of wood, the temple's open-sided halls are supported by carved pillars with octagonal bases and tops shaped like stacked four-leaf forms, each carved with figures. Carvings also cover the beams, rafters and doorframes throughout.

Day 7 Kandy

A day in Kandy centred on its most significant religious site.



Temple of the Tooth Relic

A UNESCO World Heritage Site built in the sixteenth century to house and protect the sacred tooth relic of the Buddha. Inside are richly painted halls in red, cream and black, carved pillars and gilded statues.

A.Savin · FAL

Day 8 Kandy → Galle

The route crosses to the south coast at Galle, passing two further Bawa-designed hotels before exploring the old fort town.

Heritance Ahungalla

A five-star beach hotel at the fishing village of Ahungalla, near Galle, designed by Geoffrey Bawa. Its open-plan lobby looks out over an infinity pool that appears to merge with the sea, and the building is arranged to make the most of natural light, with wooded gardens shading the grounds from the sun.

Jetwing Lighthouse

A five-star hotel on the outskirts of the old Dutch colonial town of Galle, another of Bawa's works, combining elegance with old-world charm.



Galle Fort

One of the best-preserved fortifications in Asia, built during the Portuguese and Dutch periods when Galle served as their headquarters. The fort area includes the Maritime Museum, the Galle National Museum and the lighthouse, with cobblestoned streets still carrying their Dutch names.

Rovin Shanila · CC BY-SA 4.0

Day 9 Galle → Bentota

Travelling on to Bentota, the day includes Bawa's own country estate.



Lunuganga Estate

The country home of Geoffrey Bawa, started in 1947. Bawa trained as a lawyer, called to the Bar at the Inner Temple in 1940, but the garden he created here led him to become an architect instead, and it remained his first experimental ground for ideas throughout his career.

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AVANI Bentota Resort & Spa

A designer hotel by Geoffrey Bawa on one of Sri Lanka's beaches, with just 75 rooms and suites. It pairs Indian Ocean views and traditional hospitality with an upscale, intimate feel.

Day 10 Bentota

A free day at leisure in Bentota.

Leisure Day

Time to relax at the hotel or on the beach.

Day 11 Bentota → Colombo

The tour reaches Colombo, taking in one of Bawa's own homes and two of the city's principal temples.

Number 33rd Lane

Bawa bought the third of four small houses on this cul-de-sac in 1958 and converted it into a pied-a-terre with a living room, bedroom, small kitchen and servant's room. When the fourth house later became vacant, he added it as a dining room and second living room, creating a house built up piece by piece over time.

Kelaniya Temple

A temple where the Buddha is believed to have stepped foot, known for its large, finely sculpted Reclining Buddha statue.



Gangarama Temple

A quiet temple set within the busy centre of Colombo.

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Day 12 Colombo → BIA

After breakfast, check out and transfer to the airport for the return flight home.

What's included

INCLUDED

- Transport in a Private Vehicle, inclusive of, cost of fuel, parking & highway tolls.
- Service of an English-Speaking Chauffer Guide throughout the tour.
- All prevailing taxes and service charges (Except for Credit Card Charges).

NOT INCLUDED

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