



TOUR REFERENCE
LKSEQXBWSP

Ceylon Endearment (26 Days)

22 days · 21 nights

Private tour with chauffeur guide

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About this experience

This 26-day tour works its way around the whole island, starting on the south-west coast and finishing back near Colombo, taking in beaches, wildlife parks, hill country, the ancient cities of the Cultural Triangle, and the Jaffna peninsula in the north. Travel is by private chauffeur-guided car, with the route moving at a relaxed pace that allows two or three nights in most places rather than rushing between sights.

Along the way there is time on the beaches of Hikkaduwa and Mirissa, a safari in Yala National Park, hiking and a scenic train ride around Ella and Nuwara Eliya, the cultural sights of Kandy, the ancient cities of Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa, Dambulla and Anuradhapura, the coast and temples around Trincomalee, and the Hindu temples and island shrines of Jaffna, before returning south via Colombo and Negombo. Travellers get a broad mix of colonial history, Buddhist and Hindu heritage, highland scenery, national parks and coastline in one continuous trip.

The tour is run in-country with a dedicated chauffeur guide throughout, who handles airport transfers, driving and day-to-day logistics between stops.



Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Hikkaduwa & Galle (days 1–3)

On arrival at the airport you are met by your chauffeur guide and driven to Hikkaduwa, a beach resort town in Galle's Southern province, where you check in and have time on its coral-fringed beaches before exploring the colonial city of Galle and surrounding coast.

Hikkaduwa Beach

A beach resort town known for its coral-fringed waters, where you check in and have an evening of leisure after arrival.



Old Colonial City of Galle

Explore the Galle Fort, one of the best-preserved fortifications in Asia, built up by the Portuguese and later the Dutch. See the fort's museums and lighthouse, and walk the cobblestoned streets with their Dutch names.

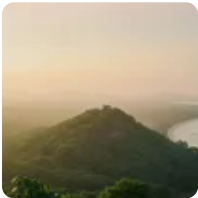
Rovin Shanila · CC BY-SA 4.0



Handunugoda Tea Factory

Also known as the Virgin White Tea Factory, this is where the famous Virgin White Tea is plucked and processed without being touched by hand. Learn the history of the tea, join a tasting session with tea and chocolate cake, and buy tea leaves as a souvenir.

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Rumassala

A hill three kilometres east of Galle, topped by a white Buddhist dagoba and known as a landmark of Unuwatuna beach. It is one of five Sri Lankan sites said to have fallen from Hanuman's flight carrying the Dronagiri hill, and is also linked in legend to Sita's stay on the island.

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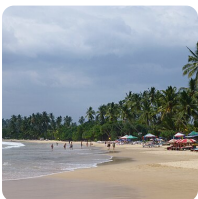
Stilt Fishermen

Watch fishermen perched on stilts in the waters along the coast of Koggala, a craft practised here for generations, and hear from the fishermen themselves how it developed and how it is done.

Bernard Gagnon · CC BY-SA 3.0

Day 4 Mirissa (days 4–5)

Two days are spent at leisure on Mirissa's beach, at the eastern end of Weligama Bay, with time to relax by the sand or visit nearby spots such as Parrot Rock and Coconut Tree Hill.



Mirissa Beach

A crescent-shaped beach at the eastern end of Weligama Bay, where the curve of the sand gives the sense of being on a secluded, palm-covered island. Spend both days here at a leisurely pace.

Ji-Elle · CC BY-SA 3.0

Day 6 Yala (days 6–7)

The drive to Yala takes in a turtle hatchery and the unusual bare landscape of Ussangoda, before a full day on safari in Yala National Park.

Turtle Hatchery

Learn about the five kinds of endangered sea turtles that visit Sri Lanka's shores and the conservation work carried out at the Rekawa Turtle Hatchery, including a daytime turtle watch and a chance to volunteer.



Ussangoda

A coastal area notably bare of trees due to its serpentine rock, which contains toxic heavy metals that only certain small plants can tolerate. Local legend also links its bareness to Hanuman's burning tail and to King Ravana's use of the plateau as an airfield for his chariot.

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Yala National Park

A full-day safari in the island's second-largest national park, on the south-eastern coast, with the chance to see Sri Lankan leopards, wild water buffalo, sloth bears and elephant herds, alongside many other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

Ranmith Welikala · CC BY-SA 4.0

Day 8 Ella & Nuwara Eliya (days 8–10)

Inland to the highland town of Ella for temple visits and hiking, followed by a scenic train ride up to Nuwara Eliya, the former British hill station, for a walk through its colonial-era streets.



Buduruwagala Temple

An ancient Buddhist temple complex of seven statues from the 10th century, belonging to the Mahayana school. The largest Buddha figure still shows traces of its original stuccoed robe and painted colour, and one of the flanking figures is thought to represent the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.

Vishvax (talk) (Uploads) · CC BY-SA 3.0



Ella

Walk through tea fields and rocky terrain for views of Little Adam's Peak, cross the Nine Arches Bridge, and finish at Demodara Railway Station with its distinctive loop-over track.

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Ella Rock

A roughly three-hour hike up to one of the area's highest viewpoints, passing views of the Namunukula Range and Little Adam's Peak, with the Bandarawela Range, Poonagala Hills, Narangala and the Ella Gap visible from the top.



Scenic Train Ride

A train journey from Haputale to Nuwara Eliya through tea country, past waterfalls, misty villages and forest, with dramatic drops close to the track along the way.

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Nuwara Eliya

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

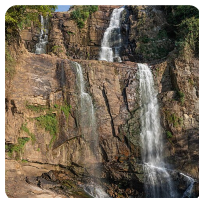
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Day 11 Kandy (days 11–12)

On the way to the hill capital of Kandy, stop at a tea factory and a viewpoint over Ramboda Falls, before visiting the city's temples, gardens and a cultural show.

Tea Factory Visit

Visit a working tea factory and plantation to see how Ceylon Tea is made, a tradition going back to 1824 when a tea plant was first brought from China to the Royal Botanical Gardens, and later developed commercially by James Taylor from 1852 at the Loolecondera estate near Kandy.



Ramboda Falls

The country's 11th-tallest waterfall, seen alongside a guided visit to the Mackwoods Tea Estate to learn about tea varieties and processing, and a walk through the Hakgala Botanical Gardens and along Lake Gregory.

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Kandyan Cultural Show

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

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Temple of Tooth Relic

A UNESCO World Heritage Site built in the 16th century to house and protect the sacred tooth relic of the Buddha. Walk through its painted halls in red, cream and black, past carved pillars and golden statues.

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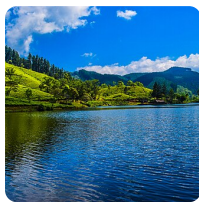
Royal Botanical Garden

The Royal Botanical Gardens of Peradeniya, laid out in the early 19th century and home to over 4,000 plant species, including orchids, spices and medicinal plants, a cannonball tree, a suspension bridge and hedge mazes.

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Day 13 Dambulla (days 13–15)

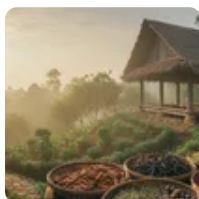
Based in Dambulla, at the centre of the Cultural Triangle, the days here cover a natural lake, a spice garden, the Sigiriya rock fortress and a village tour, the ancient city of Polonnaruwa, a safari in Minneriya National Park, and the Dambulla cave temple.



Sembuwatta Lake

A lake near Elkaduwa formed from natural spring water, believed locally to be 30 to 40 feet deep, with a natural spring-fed swimming pool alongside it.

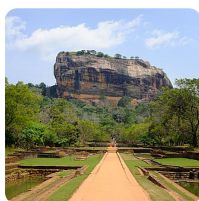
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Spice Garden

A guided tour of a spice and herbal garden covering coriander, chilli, cinnamon, cardamom and nutmeg and their uses, with a traditional cooking demonstration showing how to make roti or curry powder from scratch.

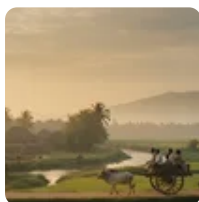
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Sigiriya Rock Fortress

The 5th-century rock fortress of King Kasyapa, entered through an opening framed by giant lion's paws. Climb past the famous frescoes to terraced gardens, still-working cisterns and the palace ruins at the summit.

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Village Tour in Sigiriya

A look at traditional village life near Sigiriya, with an oxen cart ride, a catamaran safari on a village lake, a walk through paddy fields, a cooking demonstration and a home-cooked lunch served on lotus leaves.

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Minneriya National Park

A three-hour safari in Minneriya, known for the Great Elephant Gathering between May and October when over 150 elephants congregate in one place, alongside other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

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Ancient City of Polonnaruwa

The ruins of Sri Lanka's second major capital, which flourished from the 10th to 13th centuries. See the Gal Vihara, the Vatadage, the lotus bath, the Lankathilaka Temple and the statue linked to King Parakramabahu.

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Dambulla Cave Temple

The Golden Temple of Dambulla, dating to the 1st century BC, with murals depicting the life of the Buddha and hundreds of Buddha and deity figures across its five main caves, plus a large golden Buddha statue outside.

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On the east coast at Trincomalee, visit the city's temple and fort, spend time on Nilaveli Beach, head out on a whale watching safari, and take in Pigeon Island and the historic village of Thiriyaya.



Koneswaram Temple

An ancient temple praised by Indian poet-saints, with a cave shrine dating back to 1580 BC and a main temple developed later, around 400 AD, its murals telling the site's history.

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Fort Frederick

Originally built by the Portuguese in 1624, using stones taken from the Koneswaram Temple which they had destroyed, and later dismantled and rebuilt by the Dutch.

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Nilaveli Beach

A beach of golden sand, palms and clear water, considered among Sri Lanka's best, with a 10th-century Tamil inscription nearby recording that the land was granted to the Koneswaram Temple.

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Whale watching safari in Trincomalee

A five-hour trip with a chance to see blue whales, sperm whales and fin whales, with a qualified naturalist on hand to help identify species.

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Pigeon Island National Park

A pair of islands with a surrounding coral reef, home to breeding rock pigeons and a range of coral types and marine life.

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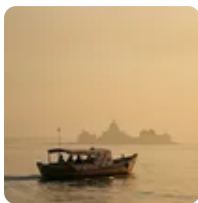
Thiriyaya Watadage

A village, now called Thiriyai, once a centre of Tamil Buddhism, home to the Girihadu Seya Stupa said to mark where the Buddha gave hair relics to two traders, and the ruins of a fortress of one of the last Vanniyar chiefs.

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Day 19 Jaffna (days 19–20)

In the northern peninsula around Jaffna, once at the centre of the civil war, visit the city itself and the island shrines of Nagadeepa and Nainativu.



Jaffna

The city and peninsula at the island's northern tip, with ancient Hindu temples such as Nallur, Nainativu and Mavittapuram, the Dutch Fort, war memorials, the Saraswathy Mahal Library, the Nagadeepa Vihara and the palace site of Jaffna's last king, Cankili I.

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Nagadeepa Island

Known to the Sinhalese as Nagadeepa and in ancient times as Manipallavam, this island north of Jaffna is linked to the Naga people and their snake worship, reflected in the Nainativu Nagapooshani Amman Temple and the Nagadeepa Purana Vihara.

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Nainativu Nagapooshani Amman Temple

A Hindu temple with a history of at least two millennia, recorded by Ptolemy, built in Dravidian style with four Gopurams, several mandapams and temple chariots, and counted among only 64 Shakthi Peedams worldwide.

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Day 21 Anuradhapura

Heading south again, spend the day among the ruins of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka's first major capital.



Anuradhapura Ruin City

The capital of Sri Lanka for over a millennium until the 10th century AD, with pagodas, monastic buildings and ponds spread across a vast archaeological site. Visit the 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 22 Colombo & Negombo (days 22–24)

The tour finishes with city sightseeing in Colombo and beach time at Negombo near the airport, before transfer for departure.



Colombo City Tour

A tour of the capital's landmarks, including the Old Lighthouse, the Old Parliament, the Galle Face Hotel and Galle Face Green, the Gangarama Temple and the National Museum, along with its malls, boutique shops and designer stores.

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Colombo Day Life

Time to experience Colombo's lively side, with beachside parties, cocktails, casinos and boutique restaurants staying open late.

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Negombo

A beach town on the western coast with a long-standing fishing industry, golden sand, water sports, diving among coral and marine life, and a 50-year-old shipwreck just offshore.

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

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