TOUR REFERENCE
LKWZK3SV7C

Trail Around the Paradise (7 Days)

7 days · 6 nights | Private tour with chauffeur guide

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About this experience

This seven-day tour links Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle with the hill capital of Kandy and the southwestern coast, travelling by private vehicle with a chauffeur guide throughout. It takes in the cave temples of Dambulla, the ancient capitals of Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya, a wildlife safari at Minneriya, Kandyan temples and gardens, and finishes with turtle conservation, a river safari and the old fort town of Galle before beach time at Bentota.

Travellers get a working introduction to Sri Lanka's archaeology and religious history alongside its wildlife and coastal life, with stops arranged so that long sightseeing days in the interior are followed by a more relaxed coastal stretch. Along the way there are spice gardens, craft workshops, a cultural dance performance, and chances to see elephants, turtles and river wildlife at close range.

The route runs from Colombo airport through the Cultural Triangle to Kandy and down to Bentota, ending back at the airport, with a chauffeur guide managing the driving between sights throughout.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Airport → Dambulla

On arrival at Colombo airport you are met by a chauffeur guide and driven to Dambulla, where the afternoon is spent at the cave temple complex.

Dambulla Cave Temple

This cave temple complex dates back to the 1st century BC and spreads across five main caves, including the Golden Cave Temple, the Cave of the Divine King, the Cave of the Great King and the Great New Monastery. Inside are ancient murals depicting the life of the Buddha alongside hundreds of Buddha figurines and other deities. 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 combines the ruins of Sri Lanka's medieval capital with a jeep safari in search of wild elephants, before returning to Dambulla.

Polonnaruwa

Sri Lanka's second major ancient capital flourished between the 10th and 13th centuries AD. Walking through the ruined city takes in monuments such as the Gal Vihara, the Vatadage, the lotus bath, the Lankathilaka Temple and the statue of King Parakramabahu, whose reign is remembered as the city's golden age.

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Minneriya National Park Jeep Safari

A three-hour jeep safari through Minneriya National Park offers a chance to see elephants, along with a range of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians across its scrub, forest and grassland habitats. Between May and October the park is known for the Great Elephant Gathering, when over 150 elephants congregate in one place.

Day 3 Dambulla → Sigiriya → Matale → Kandy

The morning is spent climbing the Sigiriya rock fortress, followed by a spice garden stop at Matale en route to Kandy, where the evening includes crafts and a cultural dance performance.

Sigiriya Rock Fortress

This 5th-century AD rock fortress, once ruled by King Kashyapa, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the Lion Rock for the lion's-paw entrance at its base. The climb passes unfading ancient murals and leads to terraced gardens and still-functioning cisterns that demonstrate early Sri Lankan hydraulic engineering.

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Matale Spice Garden

The Matale Spice Tour is a hands-on visit to a spice and herbal garden in Matale, Sri Lanka's spice-growing centre. Visitors learn about crops such as coriander, chilli, cinnamon, cardamom and nutmeg, their uses, and Ayurvedic medicine, in gardens shaded by fragrant tropical trees.

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Kandy Arts and Crafts

In Kandy, technical tours cover local crafts including gem crafting, woodcarving and batik work.

Kandyan Cultural Show

This hour-long show presents traditional Kandyan dance and music, including fire dancers and sword dancers, with Kandyan dancers performing to the beat of traditional drums.

Arian Zwegers · CC BY 2.0

Day 4 Kandy → Peradeniya → Kandy

A day of temple visits around Kandy is followed by the Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya and a walk around Kandy Lake and town.

Embekke Temple

The temple is known for its detailed wood carving.

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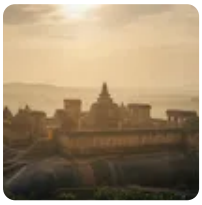

Gadaladeniya Temple

This historic temple features notable paintings and sculptures.

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Lankatilaka Temple

The temple was architecturally advanced for its period.

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Degaldoruwa Cave Temple

The cave temple's interior walls are covered in painstakingly restored paintings.

A.Savin · FAL

Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya

Established in the early 19th century, the gardens contain over 4,000 species of plants, including orchids, spices and medicinal plants. Highlights include the cannonball tree, a suspension bridge, hedge mazes and large shade trees along the garden avenues.

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Kandy Lake and Town

The day ends with a walk around Kandy Lake and a chance to explore the surrounding town.

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Day 5 Kandy → Kosgoda → Bentota

The drive to the coast stops at Kosgoda for a turtle hatchery visit, before checking in at Bentota for beach time.

Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery

The hatchery, on Sri Lanka's southwestern coast, cares for five endangered sea turtle species that nest on local shores. Its turtle care programme protects nests until hatching to improve survival rates, and visitors can see, touch and feed baby turtles as well as injured adults in care.

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Bentota Beach

One of Sri Lanka's best-known beaches, Bentota offers sun, soft sand and sea breezes, with turtles sometimes seen nesting from the shore at sunset. Water sports such as jet-skiing and windsurfing are available along the beach.

Vincent van Zeijst · CC BY-SA 3.0

Day 6 Bentota → Balapitiya → Galle → Bentota

The day combines a river safari on the Madu River with a visit to the old fort town of Galle before returning to Bentota.

Madu River Boat Safari

A two-hour boat ride through the Madu River's mangrove ecosystem passes basking crocodiles and water monitors, a small island with cinnamon-harvesting residents, and waterbirds in their natural habitat. The trip includes a stop for a fish massage.

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Galle Fort

Galle was once a Portuguese and Dutch headquarters, and its fort is one of the best-preserved fortifications in Asia. The visit takes in the fort's museums and lighthouse, and a walk through cobblestoned streets with their Dutch-era names.

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Day 7 Bentota → Airport

After breakfast, you check out and are driven to the airport for your departure flight.

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.