



TOUR REFERENCE
LKYNYYJCNX

Relief and Relaxation (15 Days)

15 days · 14 nights

Private tour with chauffeur guide

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About this experience

This 15-day tour runs the length of Sri Lanka in a private, chauffeured vehicle, from the west coast at Negombo through the ancient kingdoms of the Cultural Triangle, into the hill country, down to the southern safari parks and beaches, and back to Colombo. It takes in Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya and Dambulla, the hill towns of Kandy and Nuwara Eliya, Horton Plains and Ella, safaris at Minneriya and Yala, and a stretch of beach time at Unawatuna with a day trip to Galle.

Travellers get a broad cross-section of the island: ruined cities and rock fortresses, tea country and highland scenery, wildlife-watching on two separate safaris, a river boat trip through mangroves, and several days to unwind on the south coast before flying out. The pace mixes sightseeing days with rest days built in at Unawatuna.

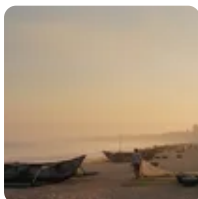
The tour is run throughout in a private vehicle with an English-speaking chauffeur guide, who handles the driving and logistics between sights so the focus stays on what there is to see.



Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Airport > Negombo

The tour begins on the west coast at Negombo, known for its beaches and long-standing fishing industry.



Negombo Beach

Spend time on Negombo's sandy beaches and watch the centuries-old fishing industry at work.

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Water Sports and Diving

Try water sports or dive on the corals and marine life offshore, including a 50-year-old shipwreck that is now home to many fish species.

Day 2 Negombo > Panduwasnuwara > Anuradhapura

Travel inland to visit a lesser-known former capital before reaching Anuradhapura, the island's ancient capital for over a thousand years.



Panduwasnuwara

Explore the ruins of this 12th-century capital, including its pagodas, image houses, meeting halls and citadel. The restored former Temple of the Tooth Relic stands just outside the citadel walls, and the palace ruins come with their share of legends.

L Manju · CC BY-SA 4.0



Anuradhapura

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

Thisaru Tharuka · CC BY-SA 4.0

Day 3 Anuradhapura > Dambulla

The day covers the birthplace of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, a monumental standing Buddha statue, and the cave temples of Dambulla.



Mihintale

Visit the site where King Devanampiyatissa met the monk Mahinda, marking the arrival of Buddhism on the island. See the monastic ruins at the foot of the mountain, the cave where Mahinda resided, and historic stupas including the Ambasthala Dagoba.

Dennis Sylvester Hurd · CC0



Avukana Buddha Statue

See this 40-foot standing Buddha statue, carved from a single rock and standing unsupported except for one thin attachment at the back. The carving shows delicately worked robe folds and a cleanly sculpted body, and the partially collapsed structures around it suggest it once stood within an image house.

Carlos Delgado · CC BY-SA 4.0



Golden Temple of Dambulla

Enter the cave temples dating back to the 1st century BC, with ancient murals depicting the life of the Buddha and 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 a short distance outside the cave complex.

Lankapic · CC BY 2.5

Day 4**Dambulla > Polonnaruwa > Minneriya > Dambulla**

Visit Sri Lanka's second ancient capital before an afternoon safari in Minneriya National Park.

**Polonnaruwa**

Walk through the ruins of this city, which flourished as Sri Lanka's second major capital between the 10th and 13th centuries AD. Highlights include Gal Vihara, the Vatadage, the lotus bath, the Lankathilaka Temple and the statue linked to King Parakramabahu, whose reign is regarded as Polonnaruwa's golden age.

Bernard Gagnon · CC BY-SA 3.0

**Minneriya National Park Safari**

Take a safari through the park's scrubland and forest, home to elephants as well as other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. Between May and October the park can see over 150 elephants gather at once in the Great Elephant Gathering.

Stuart Pinkney · CC BY 2.0

Day 5**Dambulla > Sigiriya > Matale > Kandy**

Climb the Sigiriya rock fortress on the way to Kandy, where the day ends with a traditional cultural show.

**Sigiriya Rock Fortress**

Climb this 5th-century AD rock fortress built for King Kasyapa, entering through steps framed by giant lion's paws. See the famous unfading frescoes, the terraced gardens and still-working cisterns, and walk through the tunnels leading to the former palace at the summit.

Wrobell · CC BY-SA 3.0

**Kandy Cultural Show**

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

Arian Zwegers · CC BY 2.0

Day 6 Kandy

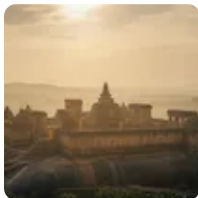
A day exploring Kandy's temples, from wood-carved shrines in the surrounding hills to the city's most sacred site.



Embekke Temple

See this temple, noted for its wood carving.

Cherubino · CC BY-SA 3.0



Gadaladeniya Temple

Wander through this historic temple and view its paintings and sculptures.

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Lankatilaka Temple

Visit this temple, architecturally advanced for its time.

BluesyPete · CC BY-SA 3.0



Degaldoruwa Cave Temple

See the cave temple's interior walls, covered in painstakingly restored paintings.

A.Savin · FAL



Temple of the Tooth Relic

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

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Day 7 Kandy > Nuwara Eliya

Travel into the hill country via botanical gardens and a tea estate before reaching the former British hill station of Nuwara Eliya.



Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya

Walk through gardens established in the early 19th century, home to over 4000 plant species including orchids, spices and medicinal plants. Highlights include the cannonball tree, a suspension bridge, hedge mazes and large, climbable trees.

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Tea Factory and Plantation

Visit a tea factory and plantation to see how Ceylon Tea is made. Tea was first planted in the Royal Botanical Gardens in 1824, and commercial planting began when James Taylor arrived in 1852 and settled at the Loolecondera estate near Kandy.



Nuwara Eliya

Explore this former premium holiday town for the British in the 19th and early 20th centuries, with its cottages, villas and mansions. Visit the old red-brick post office and relax at Queen Victoria Park or on the shores of Lake Gregory.

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Day 8 Nuwara Eliya > Horton Plains > Nuwara Eliya

A day trip to the montane grasslands and cloud forest of Horton Plains National Park.



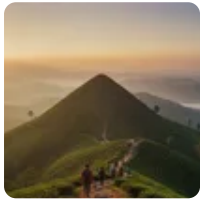
Horton Plains National Park

Visit the park in Ohiya for its montane grasslands and cloud forests. See the views from World's End precipice and the spray of Baker's Falls, with chances to spot endemic fauna and learn about archaeological finds made in the area.

Faslan at en.wikipedia · CC BY-SA 3.0

Day 9 Nuwara Eliya > Ella > Yala

Continue on to Ella for a walk through its best-known sights before heading south towards Yala.



Little Adam's Peak

Pass through tea fields and rocky terrain for views over the surrounding countryside.

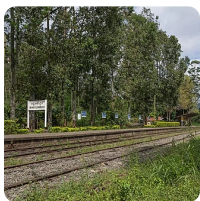
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Nine Arches Bridge

Walk over this bridge and hear the story behind its construction.

Deitel55 · CC BY-SA 3.0



Demodara Railway Station

End the hike at this station, known for its unique loop-over track design.

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Day 10 Yala > Unawatuna

A safari in Yala National Park on the way to the south coast.



Yala National Park Safari

Go on safari in Sri Lanka's second-largest national park, located on the southeastern coast, with chances to see leopards, wild water buffalo, sloth bears and elephant herds, alongside many other mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates.

Ranmith Welikala · CC BY-SA 4.0

Day 11 Unawatuna

A free day on one of Sri Lanka's well-known beaches.



Unawatuna Beach

Spend the day on the beach, with sun, soft sand and sea breeze by day and views over the ocean at sunset. Watch for nesting turtles or try water sports such as jet-skiing and windsurfing.

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Day 12 Unawatuna

A day trip to the nearby city of Galle, a former Portuguese and Dutch headquarters on the coast.



Galle Fort

Visit one of the best-preserved fortifications in Asia, with its Maritime Museum, Galle National Museum and lighthouse. Walk the cobblestoned streets, still carrying their Dutch names, that reflect the city's colonial history.

Rovin Shanila · CC BY-SA 4.0

Day 13 Unawatuna

A further free day to relax on the beach at Unawatuna.



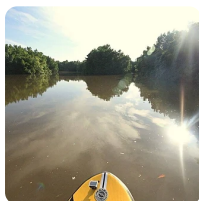
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Day 14 Unawatuna > Balapitiya > Colombo

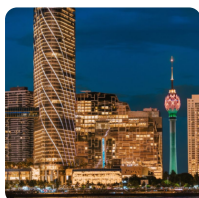
Travel back towards Colombo via a boat trip on the Madu River, arriving in the capital for an evening of sightseeing.



Madu River Boat Ride

Take a boat ride through the river's mangrove channels, spotting basking crocodiles and water monitors, visiting a small island where cinnamon is harvested, watching water birds, and trying the fish massage.

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Colombo City Tour

See the capital's historic sites, including the Old Lighthouse, the Old Parliament, Galle Face Hotel, Galle Face Green, Gangarama Temple and the National Museum, with time to browse Independence Square's shops and boutiques.

Gihanud2001 · CC0

Day 15 Colombo > Airport

After breakfast, check out and transfer to the airport for departure.

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.