TOUR REFERENCE
LKYVQBCHVP

Culture,Wilderness and Nature (8 Days)

8 days · 7 nights | Private tour with chauffeur guide

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About this experience

This eight-day tour links Sri Lanka's cultural heartland with its hill country and lowland rivers, travelling by private vehicle with a chauffeur guide throughout. It opens in the Cultural Triangle, taking in the cave temples of Dambulla, the ancient cities of Anuradhapura and Mihintale, and the Sigiriya Rock Fortress, with an evening safari in Minneriya National Park and a village experience near Sigiriya along the way.

From there the route moves to Kandy, with a stop at a spice garden in Matale, a visit to the Temple of the Tooth Relic and an evening of traditional Kandyan dance. The tour then climbs into the hill country, pausing at Ramboda Falls and a tea factory en route to Nuwara Eliya, a former British hill station, before a day's trekking in Horton Plains National Park.

The final stretch brings white-water rafting on the Kelani River at Kithulgala before the drive down to Colombo for departure. Together the days combine ancient sites, national parks and highland scenery with a stretch of outdoor adventure, giving a broad first look at the island's culture, wildlife and landscapes.



Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 Airport → Dambulla

On arrival at Colombo airport you are met by your chauffeur guide and driven to Dambulla, with a visit to the cave temple that evening.



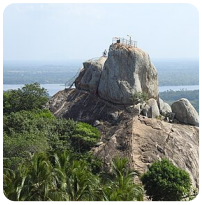
Dambulla Cave Temple

The Golden Temple of Dambulla dates back to the 1st century BC and houses ancient murals depicting the life of the Buddha. The five main caves, including the Cave of the Divine King and the Cave of the Great King, hold hundreds of Buddha and deity figurines, and a giant golden Buddha statue stands a short distance outside the complex.

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Day 2 Dambulla → Mihintale → Anuradhapura → Dambulla

A day exploring the places where Buddhism first took root in Sri Lanka, from the sacred rock of Mihintale to the ruined city of Anuradhapura.



Mihintale Rock

This is where Buddhism began in Sri Lanka, marked by the meeting of King Devanampiyatissa and Monk Mahinda. Monastic ruins lie at the foot of the mountain, and the site includes the cave where Mahinda resided along with the Ambasthala Dagoba and the Maha Stupa.

Dennis Sylvester Hurd · CC0



Anuradhapura

This ancient ruined city served as the capital for over a millennium until the 10th century AD, with pagodas, monastic buildings and ponds spread across a vast area. Landmarks include the Jetavanarama stupa, 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 3 Dambulla → Sigiriya → Minneriya → Dambulla

The day takes in the Sigiriya Rock Fortress, a taste of village life nearby, and an evening safari in Minneriya National Park.



Sigiriya Rock Fortress

This 5th century AD rock fortress was the seat of King Kasyapa, entered through an entrance framed by giant lion's paws. Visitors climb past unfading murals and a steep staircase to reach terraced gardens, working cisterns and tunnels leading to the palace ruins.

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Sigiriya Village Tour

A visit to a local village offers an authentic taste of Sri Lankan rural life, with an oxen cart ride, a catamaran safari on a calm lake and walks through paddy fields. A traditional cooking demonstration is followed by a home-cooked lunch served on lotus leaves.

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Minneriya National Park

A three-hour evening safari through the park offers the chance to see elephants, which gather here in large numbers during the dry season between May and October, along with other mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

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Day 4 Dambulla → Kandy

The drive to Kandy includes a stop at a spice garden in Matale, followed by an evening of Kandyan arts and dance after checking in.



Spice Garden, Matale

A guided tour of a spice and herbal garden near Matale, the spice capital of Sri Lanka, introduces coriander, chilli, cinnamon, cardamom and nutmeg along with their uses and the benefits of Ayurveda.

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Kandyan Cultural Show

An evening visit takes in demonstrations of gem crafting, woodcarving and batik work, followed by the hour-long Kandy Cultural Show, featuring fire dancers, sword dancers and traditional Kandyan dancing to drumming.

Arian Zwegers · CC BY 2.0

Day 5 Kandy → Nuwara Eliya

After visiting the Temple of the Tooth Relic, the route climbs towards Nuwara Eliya via a waterfall and a tea factory, ending with a tour of the town.



Temple of the Tooth Relic

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

A.Savin · FAL



Ramboda Falls

Ramboda Falls is the 11th highest waterfall in Sri Lanka, near Pussellawa, and is made up of three sections. A path beside the bridge allows a climb up to see the upper section, while the middle section is visible from the A5 highway.

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Tea Factory and Estate

A guided tour through a tea estate explains how Ceylon Tea is processed, tracing the industry back to the tea plants first brought from China in 1824 and the commercial plantations started by James Taylor in the 1850s.

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Nuwara Eliya City Tour

Nuwara Eliya was the main hill station for the British in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and its streets still hold cottages, villas and an old red-brick post office. The tour includes time at Queen Victoria Park or on the shores of Lake Gregory.

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Day 6 Nuwara Eliya → Horton Plains → Nuwara Eliya

A day trip with a packed breakfast to walk the montane grasslands of Horton Plains National Park.



Horton Plains National Park

The park's grasslands and cloud forests in Ohiya lead to views from the precipice of World's End and the cooling spray of Baker's Falls, with a chance to spot endemic wildlife along the trek.

Faslan at en.wikipedia · CC BY-SA 3.0

Day 7 Nuwara Eliya → Kithulgala → Colombo

The journey descends to Kithulgala for a rafting trip before continuing on to Colombo for the night.



White Water Rafting, Kithulgala

A rafting trip covers a 5km stretch of the Kelani River, taking in its rapids with proper safety measures in place.

Jimfbleak at English Wikipedia · CC BY-SA 3.0

Day 8 Colombo → BIA

After breakfast, transfer from the hotel to the airport for departure.

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 and Meals.
- Entrance fees to the respective sites.
- Chauffeur Guide's Accommodation.
- Expenses of personal nature.
- Visa and Related Expenses.