

mini break: sri lanka - teardrop isle

# go guide

don't leave home without it



## tour spotlight

### what you see

- Colombo - The Fort, Gamgarama Temple
- Polonnaruwa - 11th century city
- Sigiriya - 5th century fortress ruins
- Dambulla - Rock Temple
- Matale - spice gardens
- Kandy - Temple of the Tooth, Botanical Gardens
- Pinnewala - Elephant Orphanage

### what you get

- 4 breakfasts
- 4 nights - 3 - 4★ hotels
- Visit to Elephant Orphanage - Pinnewala
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on days 1 & 5
- Touring and excursions as per itinerary
- Local English speaking specialist guide at local sights
- Entrance fees to all relevant sights
- All relevant transfers and transportation



## on location

Your guide to on the ground...

### visa requirements

Nationals of the UK, the EEC, Australia, NZ, Canada and USA currently can get a free of charge visa upon arrival if stay is less than 30 days. RSA - obtain before arrival. Please ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of return from Sri Lanka. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change. Visa procurement is also the responsibility of the traveller and not of on the go.

### climate

Sri Lanka has a pleasant tropical climate and despite 2 short monsoon seasons (south-west - May - Jul affecting south/west/central areas & north-east from Sept - April affecting north/east areas) has no 'off-season' as such. Average temps in the lowlands are around 25-30 C, with higher temps in April. The hill country offers gentle, cool respite with a night time chill. During monsoon season, rain is intermittent, but the sun does shine, unlike winter in Europe!

### time

Sri Lanka is 6 hours ahead of GMT.

### money

GBP £1.00 = LKR167 USD \$1.00 = LKR114 (subject to fluctuation). The Sri Lankan Rupee is exchangeable only in Sri Lanka. Exchange facilities are available at various bureau de changes and banks. A few ATM machines exist in major towns and cities.

### health requirements

It is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus, Polio, Typhoid and Hepatitis A & B. You are also advised to take anti-Malarial medication. Advice can change frequently so please check with your local healthcare provider.

## how much?

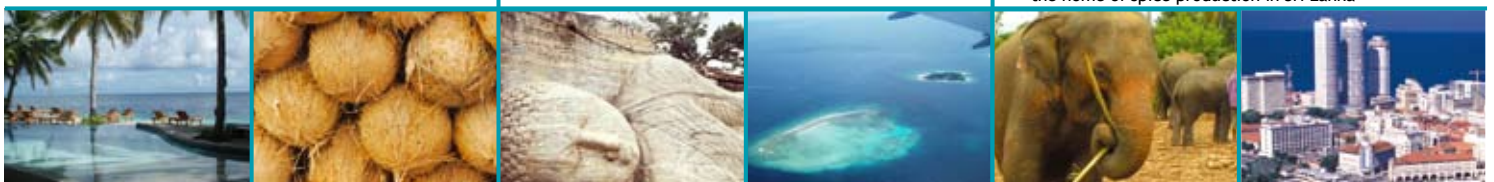
- **ENTRANCE FEES**  
Entrance fees for sights listed in this go guide are included in your holiday cost
- **TIPPING**  
Tipping in Sri Lanka makes up a significant part of many people's wages. A rule of thumb is to tip 10% of the total amount due. Housekeeping staff, doormen and bellboys all expect a little tip. A tip between 100 - 200 rupees for each service is considered sufficient.
- **TIPPING YOUR GUIDE/DRIVER**  
We recommend that you tip a minimum of LKR500 (USD\$4.50) per day. This is our suggested amount, however tipping is an entirely personal gesture.

## things to bring

- Insect repellent to guard against pesky mosquitos
- Spare camera batteries/film so you can go snap happy.
- If you fancy a tippie, take advantage of Duty Free buys.
- Buy some Sri Lankan Rupees at the airport on arrival.
- Buy a phrasebook and practice your holiday Sinhalese .
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs.
- Keep a supply of small notes for local transactions.
- Keep a photocopy of your passport data pages.

## top experiences

- Visit Sri Lanka's ancient Buddhist ruins and temples including Polonnaruwa and Kandy Tooth Temple.
- Get up close and personal with the elephants at Pinnewala Elephant Orphanage
- Try frikkadels, a meatball dish inspired by the Dutch colonialists. Often served baked in banana leaves
- Shop for bargains at the Pettah Bazaar in Colombo
- Explore the amazing ruins of King Kaspaya's 5th century Sigiriya. The Lion's Paws are huge!
- Experience the heady aroma of fresh spices at Matale - the home of spice production in Sri Lanka





# sri lanka - teardrop isle: itinerary

## day 1 - colombo

Colombo. Welcome to Sri Lanka! Arrival at Bandaranayake International airport, where after you have attended to customs and immigration formalities, you will be met by a representative from on the go. The prominent sign depicting our company logo easily identifies our representative. You will then be transferred to your hotel in Colombo.

For a small island, Sri Lanka has many nicknames: Serendib, Ceylon, Teardrop of India, the Resplendent Isle, Pearl of the Orient. This colourful collection of monickers reveals the richness and beauty of Sri Lanka, a country brimming with lush jungles, abundant wildlife, Buddhist ruins, cool mountains and glorious palm-fringed beaches.

Frenetic capital of Sri Lanka, Colombo is a city filled with good hotels, restaurants, shopping and every form of transport imaginable! Just off the north end of Galle Road, the main north-south artery of the city is the area known as the Fort, once a colonial stronghold but now the site of many government buildings and interesting shops. Just south of the Fort is Galle Face Green, a seaside expanse where informal cricket games are played out amongst city folk enjoying a pleasant stroll. At the south end of the green is the Galle Face Hotel, a beautiful colonial-era hotel. Just east of the Fort is the Pettah, the traditional bazaar district - a colourful retail experience. Just beyond the centre is the upper class Cinnamon Gardens district of the city. This afternoon enjoy a guided tour of the city. Overnight - Colombo.

## day 2 - polonnaruwa

Colombo - Giritale - breakfast. Departing Colombo, drive to Giritale and check into hotel before an afternoon visit to Polonnaruwa - an 11th century city of compact size. Polonnaruwa features 12th-century stone sculptures, an old irrigation system with huge tanks, and the Gal Vihara - comprising three enormous Buddha figures - one reclining (it's 44 ft/13 m long), one standing and one sitting. The statues, located in a cluster along a dirt road, are revered as being amongst the most sacred monuments in Sri Lanka. There are also palace ruins, great bas-reliefs and friezes. Spend some time exploring the site, before later returning to Giritale. Overnight - Giritale.

## day 3 - sigiriya & dambulla

Giritale - Sigiriya - Dambulla - Kandy - breakfast. Leaving Giritale, drive to Sigiriya, the elevated and mysterious 5th century fortress ruins built by King Kaspaya. Frequently labelled the Eighth Wonder of the World, the unique ruins of Sigiriya were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982. When it was built, the fort sat astride and around the 1.5 hectare rock and a city nestled at its base. The rock was the innermost stronghold of the fortified town. A moat, ramparts and extensive gardens including the renowned water gardens, ring the base of the rock. The water gardens including the moat have been immaculately restored. Further exploration of the site requires ascension by a combi stone and iron staircase (which is steep at some points so hold on). Your reward is the awesome Fresco Gallery, which depicts 1500-year old painted frescoes depicting portraits of well-endowed 'apsaras' (celestial nymphs) and attendants above clouds. Located beneath an overhang, the 20 or so frescoes that remain are remarkably preserved. On from this point is the Mirror Wall and Lion Terrace. The Lion Terrace

comprises a gigantic set of lion paws, all that remains of what was once a gargantuan statue of a lion. Above here on the final staircase ascent are the ruins of the Summer Palace. The views from this point are great.

Next visit the impressive Dambulla Rock Temple. Dambulla is a UNESCO World Heritage site and is the most impressive of Sri Lanka's cave temples. The complex of five caves with over 2000 sq. metres of painted walls and the ceiling is the largest area of paintings found in the world. The caves contain over 150 images, depicting some of Buddha's epic struggles against evil. The largest image of Buddha is a behemoth rock carving spanning a whopping 14 metres.

**NOTE:** Photographs are not allowed in Dambulla's caves.

Leaving Dambulla, visit Matale en route to Kandy. Sri Lanka is renowned for its spices and spice gardens are located all over the country. However, the biggest concentration of them can be found around Matale. With a guide, you'll see first hand how cinnamon, cardamom, curry leaves, peppercorns, saffron and other exotic spices are grown in the wild and then processed for consumption. Overnight - Kandy.

## day 4 - pinnewala elephants

Kandy - breakfast. Today, visit Pinnewala Elephant Orphanage. One of the most popular attractions in Sri Lanka, Pinnewala is situated in the hill country and was set up to care for and protect abandoned or orphaned young wild elephants including babies. Controlled by their mahouts (keepers), around 60 elephants are fed, bathed and cared for at this sanctuary of sorts. Such is the success of the orphanage; some elephants have happily and successfully bred youngsters. Perhaps the star attraction is viewing the elephants enjoying their daily river soak. Return to Kandy visiting the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens en route.

This afternoon enjoy a city tour of Kandy. Set around an attractive man-made lake in scenic hill country, Kandy was the last seat of the Sinhala kings. Today it is the site of Sri Lanka's greatest annual spectacle: the Esala Perahera, a 10-day event held usually in late July or early August - celebrating the sacred tooth allegedly snatched from Buddha's funeral pyre, which now rests in Kandy's Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Tooth). Whether the tooth exists or not is unverifiable, as no-one living has seen it. Tooth or no tooth, Esala Perahera is an awesome show. The Dalada Maligawa is located in the centre, alongside the town's lake. Here, elephants paraded during Esala Perahera can be seen in the courtyards of the temple, along with small shrines dedicated to Buddha. Local women sell lotus flowers to worshippers and monkeys scamper around the buildings. The main temple contains the well-guarded tooth casket, as well as a series of elaborate Buddha images and a detailed legend on how the tooth arrived in Kandy. You'll visit the temple and lake, the bazaar, a couple of other points of interest and later enjoy a cultural dance show. Overnight - Kandy.

## day 5 - colombo

Kandy - Colombo - breakfast. Transfer to Colombo airport for your onward flight.

**PLEASE NOTE:** This holiday is arranged and operated exclusively for you on a departure date of your individual choosing, you will not be travelling as part of a group.

## at a glance geographical area

65, 525 square kilometres. Located in Southern Asia in the Indian Ocean and south of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, the island of Sri Lanka comprises mostly low, flat to rolling plains with mountains in the south-central interior. The highest point, Pidurutalagala rises to 8,261 ft (2518m). Numerous small rivers drain the land, and small coral islands dot some of the 1,340 kilometres of coastline, especially in the country's north.

## capital

Colombo (the commercial capital - approx. 650,000 inhabitants). Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte, the legislative capital is only 10km from Colombo, where the estimated population here is around 120,000.

## population

Approximately 19.2 million people.

## people

Sinhalese 74%, Tamil 18%, Moor 7%, Burgher, Malay & Vedda 1%

## language

Sinhala (official and national language) 74%, Tamil (national language) 18%, other 8%. English is commonly used in government and is spoken competently by about 10% of the population.

## religion

Buddhist 70%, Hindu 15%, Christian 8%, Muslim 7%

## system of government

Democratic Socialist Republic since 1978. In Sri Lanka, the president is considered both the chief of state and head of government, in contrast to the more common practice of dividing the roles between the president and the prime minister when both offices exist.

## currency

Sri Lanka rupee (LKR). LKR1 consists of 100 cents.

## trading hours

0930 - 1300hrs and 1400 - 1900hrs or later. Shops are closed on Sunday. In tourist areas, shops are open from 1000 - 2200hrs, including Sunday. Markets are open 0800 - 1830hrs Monday - Saturday (limited sections on Sun). Banks are open 0830 - 1230hrs and 1330 - 1700hrs Monday - Friday. Note: Hours may change during Ramadan.

## voltage

Standard voltage is 230 - 240V; 50Hz AC. Sockets are of the 3 round-pin variety, similar though not identical to European sockets. Use a power adaptor with a hairdryer or other appliances.

The go guide & information contained herein has been compiled with care and in good faith. It is as accurate an illustration as can be given with regard to the proposed itinerary. Circumstances beyond our control such as inclement weather or local conditions could force us to amend the proposed itinerary. This document does not form part of a contract between the client and on the go and their affiliates. Any costs shown may be subject to change but are an accurate reflection of costs at the time of writing this go guide. Please also be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and remain the responsibility of the traveller and not that of on the go.



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