



tour spotlight

what you see

- Colombo: The Fort, Gamgarama Temple, National Museum
 - Kelaniya Buddhist Temple • Dehiwela - Zoological gardens
 - Dambadineya • Anuradhapura - Sri Lanka's birthplace of Buddhism
 - Giritale and 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
 - Nuwara Eliya - Hakgala Gardens
 - Horton Plains • Buduruwagala • Yala & Bundala NP
 - Galle - colonial town & fort • Kalutara beach
- NOTE: there is an optional visit to a gem mine/lapidary - Ratnapura

what you get

- 14 breakfasts
- Welcome Dinner
- 14 nights - 3-4★ & heritage hotels
- Elephant Orphanage - Pinnewala
- Tea plantation & tasting - Nuwara Eliya
- Jeep visit - Horton Plains, Yala & Bundala NPs
- Airport and departure transfer on day 1
- Touring & excursions as per itinerary
- Services of an English speaking chauffeur guide
- Local English speaking specialist guide at selected sights
- Entrance fees to all relevant sights
- All relevant transfers & 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 tipples, 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
- Enjoy a cup of prime Ceylon tea in picturesque Nuwara Eliya - home of Sri Lanka's tea crop
- Go wild in Yala and Bundala National Park
- Check out the amazing ruins of King Kaspaya's 5th century Sigiriya. The Lion's Paws are huge!
- Relax and soak up the sun on Sri Lanka's stunning tropical coast at Bentota Beach





sri lanka unplugged: itinerary

day 1 - colombo

Welcome to Sri Lanka and the start of your holiday! Arrival at Colombo Bandaranaike International Airport (approx 32km from the city centre), 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. Tonight enjoy a welcome dinner. Dinner and overnight - Colombo.

days 2 & 3 - sightseeing

Colombo - breakfast (2). The morning of day 2 is spent at leisure. In the afternoon enjoy a sightseeing tour of Colombo. 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 posh Cinnamon Gardens district of the city.

Highlights of our sightseeing tour includes the Fort, Galle Face Green, the Pettah, Gamgarama Temple, Cinnamon Gardens, the National Museum (closed Fri.) and Independence Square. Tonight, you enjoy a Welcome Dinner at a restaurant specialising in Sri Lankan cuisine. On day 3, you visit the Raja Maha Vihara Temple at Kelaniya and also the zoological gardens at Dehiwela. Overnight (2) - Colombo.

day 4 - dambadeniya

Colombo - Dambadeniya - Anuradhapura - breakfast. En route to Anuradhapura on day 4, you visit the 13th century Dambadeniya - once a royal capital. Its principal surviving ruins are the Dalada Maligawa temple and the Dagoba - locally revered thanks to some corporeal relics of Buddha it is said to contain. You also visit Panduvas Nuwara which features a well-preserved walled citadel, Padeniya, Arankele and the rock fortress of Yapahuwa. Overnight - Anuradhapura.

day 5 - anuradhapura

Anuradhapura - breakfast. Today you tour

Anuradhapura, a fascinating ancient city of the Sinhala kings, the first capital and undoubtedly the grandest city of ancient Sri Lanka. Sightseeing includes: Sri Maha Bodhi (Sacred Bo-Tree) - brought to Sri Lanka as a sapling from the tree under which Buddha is said to have become enlightened, at over 2,200 years old it is the oldest historically documented tree in the world. The 1600 stone columns of Brazen Palace (2nd century B.C), which are all that is left of a magnificent multi-storied residence for monks. Thuparama Dagoba (3rd century B.C) - the oldest Dagoba in the island and Ruwanweliseya (2nd century B.C) - the most famous of all the Dagobas. You'll also visit 'Samadhi' Buddha statue (4th century AD) and Isurumuniya rock temple (3rd century B.C) - well known for its rock carvings of 'The Lovers'. Overnight - Anuradhapura.

day 6 - dambulla & polonnaruwa

Anuradhapura - Giritale (via Dambulla) - breakfast. En route to Giritale, climb up to Dambulla Rock Temple, a World Heritage site and 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. Please note that photographs are not allowed in Dambulla's caves.

From Giritale, you visit 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. There are also palace ruins, great bas-reliefs and friezes. You spend some time exploring the site, before later returning to Giritale. Overnight - Giritale.

day 7 - sigiriya

Giritale - Kandy - breakfast. Leaving Giritale, drive to Sigiriya, the elevated and mysterious 5th century fortress ruins built by King Kaspaya. 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. 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.

Leaving Sigiriya, you drive to Matale. 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, cardamon and other exotic spices are grown in the wild and then processed for consumption. Drive onward to Kandy. Overnight - Kandy

day 8 - 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. The elephants are being cared, fed and trained by the wild life authorities. The best time to visit is during the feeding times, when one will have the opportunity of seeing the baby elephants being bottle-fed. Also could accompany the elephants to a river close-by and see them having their daily bath.

Sightseeing also includes the ruined temples of Embekke, Gadaladeniya and Lankatilleke and the scenic Peradeniya Botanical Gardens before returning to Kandy to explore the town. 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

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68 north end road, west kensington, london, W14 9EP • 020 7371 1113 • info@onthegotours.com
3/690 brunswick street, new farm, brisbane, QLD, australia 4005 • 1300 855 684 • aus-info@onthegotours.com



sri lanka unplugged: itinerary

elaborate Buddha images and details about the legend of 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 9 - nuwara eliya

Kandy - Nuwara Eliya - breakfast. Leaving Kandy on day 9, drive to Sri Lanka's cool hill country, which offers a welcome antidote to the heat of the coast and low-lying plains. Situated amongst verdant tea plantations and at an elevation of 1,990m, Nuwara Eliya is one of the highest and most attractive towns in Sri Lanka's hill region. Built by English tea growers, it remained their favourite hill station during colonial times. Nuwara Eliya boasts the best golf course in Sri Lanka and is home to the impressive Hakgala Botanical Gardens. On the evening of day 9 tour Nuwara Eliya, including a visit to Hakgala Gardens and a drive through 'Little England'. Overnight - Nuwara Eliya

day 10 - horton plains

Nuwara Eliya - breakfast. This morning take a jeep up to Horton Plains. Located on a high windswept saddle at 2134m, Horton Plains offers the walker stunning views. You'll hike to Bakers Fall, passing various scenic points en route including Gem Pit Pool, the Chimney Pool and the Leg of Mutton Pool. Returning to Nuwara Eliya, where you enjoy a well-earned rest. Overnight - Nuwara Eliya.

day 11 - yala national park

Nuwara Eliya - Yala NP & region (via Buduuvagala) - breakfast. Continuing to Yala NP, en route you visit Mahayana Buddhist rock sculptures at Buduruvagala. Yala is the largest national park in Sri Lanka, home to elephant, wild boar, buffalo, leopard, bear, deer, crocodiles and a myriad of birdlife. This evening, enjoy a jeep safari. Overnight - Yala NP.

day 12 - bundala np & galle

Yala NP - Kalutara (via Bundalla and Galle) - breakfast. This morning, visit Bundala NP bird sanctuary, in a private jeep. before exploring Galle, a 16th century town founded by Portuguese colonialists and famed for its 17th century fort. Within the fort are narrow streets filled with churches and colonial buildings. Continue on to Kalutara which is perfect for a tropical beach break. Overnight - Kalutara

days 13 & 14 - kalutara

Kalutara - breakfast (2). Enjoy two lazy days at leisure in the beautiful beach resort of Kalutara. Soak up the sun, relax and enjoy the scenery!

On day 13 there is an optional visit Ratnapura, (book/pay locally) where you'll learn all about all that glistens! Sri Lanka is a formidable bearer of precious gemstones including the much sought after sapphire. Washed from the ancient rocks of the highlands, the gems are found in alluvial gravel usually a metre or two below the surface. In addition to sapphires, a number of other gemstones are found nearby including ruby, amethyst, garnet, topaz and cat's eye. Known as the City of Gems,

Ratnapura is home of Sri Lanka's famous gem trade. There are around 200 gem pits in Ratnapura and many lapidaries where the mined stones are dressed, cut and polished. Whilst there are other gem pits and lapidaries scattered across the island, it is Ratnapura that seems to have the biggest alluvial deposits. The Gem Museum on the Pothgulvihara Mawatha, Getangama offers a good display of gems as well as information on mining and polishing. You'll tour some pits, a lapidary and the museum. Overnight (2) - Kalutara.

day 15 - colombo

Bentota - Colombo - breakfast. Transfer to Colombo airport for your onward journey home.

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.

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