

go sri lanka!

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
- Nuwara Eliya - tea plantation, Hakgala Gardens
- Udawalawe National Park
- Ratnapura - gem capital of Sri Lanka

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.

what you get

- 8 breakfasts and 1 welcome dinner
- 8 nights - 3-4 ★ & heritage hotels
- Elephant Orphanage - Pinnewala
- Tea plantation & tasting - Nuwara Eliya
- Jeep visit - Udawalawe NP
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 & 9
- Touring & excursions as per itinerary
- Services of an English speaking chauffeur guide
- Local English speaking specialist guides at selected sites
- Entrance fees to all relevant sights
- All relevant transfers & transportation in an air conditioned vehicle



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
- Enjoy a cup of prime Ceylon tea in picturesque Nuwara Eliya - home of Sri Lanka's tea crop
- 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





go sri lanka!: itinerary

day 1 - colombo

Welcome to Sri Lanka and the start of your holiday! Arrival at Colombo Bandaranaike International Airport (which lies 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. Spend the remains of the day at leisure and tonight enjoy a welcome dinner at the hotel. Dinner & overnight - Colombo.

day 2 - colombo sights

Colombo - breakfast. 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.

This afternoon, your guide will take you on a sightseeing, tour of Colombo, the colourful and frenetic capital of Sri Lanka. 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. East of the Fort is the Pettah, the traditional bazaar district - a colourful retail experience. Just beyond the centre is the affluent Cinnamon Gardens district of the city. As you drive around the city, highlights include the Fort, Galle Face Green, the Pettah, Gangarama Temple and Independence Square. Overnight - Colombo.

day 3 - dambulla & polonnaruwa

Colombo - Giritala - breakfast. Departing Colombo, you drive to Giritala. En route, you will 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.

This afternoon drive to Polonnaruwa - an 11th century city and World Heritage Site. 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. You spend some time exploring the site, before later returning to Giritala. Overnight - Giritala.

day 4 - sigiriya & matala

Giritala - Kandy - breakfast. Leaving Giritala, you 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 Mirrow 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.

Leaving Sigiriya, drive to Matala. 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 Matala. With a guide, you'll see first hand how cinnamon, cardamon, curry leaves, peppercorns, saffron and other exotic spices are grown in the wild and then processed for consumption. Overnight - Kandy.

day 5 - 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. Sightseeing includes Dalada Maligawa, Kandy lake, bazaar and other points of interest. Tonight enjoy a traditional Sri Lankan dance show. Overnight - Kandy.

day 6 - nuwara eliya

Kandy - Nuwara Eliya - breakfast. Leaving Kandy, 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 1,990 m, 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, which you visit later today. After the dismal failure of Sri Lanka's coffee crop in the mid 19th century, an Englishman called James Taylor in 1849 planted the first tea bushes in Kandy. Unlike the diseased and doomed coffee crops, the tea crops took hold and today, Sri Lanka is the world's third largest producer of tea. With a 20% share of global demand, Sri Lanka is also the world's largest exporter of tea. Tea bushes grow from sea level to elevated slopes, but it is the tea grown above 1000m that offer the greatest character, aroma and flavour. Tea pickers can be spotted all over the lush green slopes around Nuwara Eliya and Kandy throughout the year. You visit a tea plantation and tea factory to see first-hand the production methods employed from tea bush to teacup. This evening take a sightseeing tour of Nuwara Eliya, including the Hakgala Gardens. Overnight - Nuwara Eliya.

day 7 - udawalawe national park

Nuwara Eliya - Embilipitiya - breakfast. Today, continue on to Udawalawe NP, where you enjoy exploration by jeep. One of Sri Lanka's most popular national parks, the 208 sq. km Udawalawe comprises mainly open parkland crisscrossed by streams. Well-known for its elephant population, where during the dry season, large herds can be viewed, Udawalawe is also famous for its birdlife. In excess of 180 types of birds have been spotted by keen ornithologists. There are also healthy populations of langur, jackal and macaque. There is a small, if elusive leopard population and there are increasing numbers of wild boar, buffalo, spotted and also barking deer. Overnight - Embilipitiya.

day 8 - ratnapura

Embilipitiya - Colombo (via Ratnapura) - breakfast. Continuing to Colombo, stop en route in Ratnapura, where you'll learn all about all that glitters! 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 gem mines and the museum. Overnight - Colombo.

day 9 - colombo

Colombo - breakfast. Hotel check out and transfer to airport.

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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