

Wild Sri Lanka & Beach for Families

13 days | Starts/Ends: Colombo



FAMILY TOUR TO SRI LANKA

(children 5 years and over): This exciting journey through Sri Lanka's famous cultural triangle offers something for the whole family. Discover the wildlife that waits in the Minneriya and Yala National Parks, walk along the sandy Golden Mile and bathe in the crystal waters of Beruwela beach in this amazing adventure for all ages.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Minneriya National Park Jeep Safari
- Climb to the summit of sacred Adam's Peak
- Dambulla - Rock Temple
- Happutale – Scenic train through tea plantations
- Kandy - city tour including Tuk Tuk ride, Temple of the Tooth and cultural performance
- Giragama Tea Factory - a working tea factory with a long history
- Sigiriya Rock Fortress - UNESCO World Heritage Site and location of the world-famous frescoes known as the "Heavenly Maidens" of Sigiriya

- Colombo - The Fort area, Galle Face Green and Gangaramaya Temple
- Polonnaruwa - the ancient capital city of Ceylon
- Matale - spice gardens

What's Included

- Jeep safaris in Minneriya National Park and Yala National Park
- 12 breakfasts
- 12 nights 3 - 4 star hotels
- Sightseeing of Dambulla, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, Happutale, Ella and Colombo
- Scenic train trip Kandy - Tuk Tuk trips
- Escorted by an English speaking national guide
- Airport arrival and departure transfers on day 1 and day 13
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private air-conditioned vehicles

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$55-\$65pp, paid in local currency. No tip kitty for children
- Entrance Fees: USD\$140-\$150pp, paid in local currency
- International flights and visa
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Colombo

Welcome to Sri Lanka! You will be met upon arrival at the airport and transferred to your hotel in the city of Negombo. Here you will have the rest of the afternoon to settle in and explore the highlights at your own leisure.

Overnight - Negombo

Day 2 : Dambulla

Negombo- Dambulla. After breakfast we bid farewell to Colombo/Negombo and set off for the town of Dambulla, home of the famous Dambulla cave temples and Sigiriya ancient rock fortress. Spend the rest of the afternoon getting better acquainted with this lovely town. Sit back, relax and try some of the local traditional foods including pittu. **Overnight - Dambulla (B)**

Day 3 : Sigiriya Rock & Village



Our first stop this morning is to the ancient Sigiriya rock fortress of the 5th Century King Kasyapa, undoubtedly one of the most iconic

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sights of Sri Lanka. Let the kids' burn off some energy with the climb up to the ruins of the palace and penthouse. Once we reach the ruins we have time to wander through some of the oldest landscape multi-tiered gardens in the world, and revel in the breathtaking landscape of the surrounding jungles.

After descending from the ruins we make our way along the village path to a typical village lake, known as a "Wewa", passing by homes surrounded by green woods and watch huts which the locals use at night to keep a lookout for wild elephants and boar. Here we cross the lake by canoe arriving at a local farm where we meet the owners and spend some time watching them share the secrets of Sri Lankan cuisine before we sit down to enjoy the delicious meal which has been prepared using a traditional hearth. Upon our return to Dambulla we have the evening at leisure to spend however we wish.

Overnight - Dambulla (B)

Day 4 : Polonnaruwa & Minneriya National Park



Polonnaruwa & Minneriya. After breakfast we make our way to the medieval capital of Sri Lanka, Polonnaruwa. Here we take time to wander along the shimmering waters of the man-made lake, the Parakrama Samudra and uncover intricately carved lotus pillars, meditative halls, ceremonial towers, as well as magnificent royal baths and palace ruins before stopping at the famous Gal Vihara Temple.

This afternoon we head to Minneriya National Park where we search for wildlife by Jeep Safari. Despite its relatively small size there is an unusually wide range of habitat types, from dry tropical forest to wetlands and grasslands found here which is home to Elephants, sambar, spotted deer, macaque and purple-

faced langur monkeys, sloth bears and if we are incredibly lucky we may spot a leopard on our game drive. An adventure for all ages!

Overnight - Dambulla (B)

Day 5 : Dambulla Cave Temple to Kandy



Dambulla - Kandy. This morning we discover the Golden Cave Temple in Dambulla, the most impressive of Sri Lanka's cave temples. Boasting over 2000 sq meters of painted walls and ceilings and a 14 meter Buddha made from rock.

Our next stop of the day is to a spice garden in Matale to get a better understanding of the process of growing the various different spices Sri Lanka is famous for before finishing our day in Kandy, the city of colonial architecture.

Overnight - Kandy (B)

Day 6 : Kandy Sightseeing

Today we explore the last capital of Sri Lankan kings by tuk tuk. We start our tour driving around and taking a dip in the lake built by the last Sinhala King in 1798 before going back into the town and exploring the Bazaar, the gem museum and a local lapidary.

After freshening up at our hotel we end our day with a visit to the Temple of the Tooth Relic, where it is said that whoever holds the relic holds control of the country, for an evening of traditional entertainment and dancing.

Overnight - Kandy (B)

Day 7 : Haputale

Kandy - Haputale. Today we board the scenic train passing through tea plantations and amazing waterfalls until we reach the town of Haputale. After checking in and

freshening up at our hotel we have the rest of the day to go in search of the birds' eye views we have on our doorstep. Go hiking in the Thangamale woodland or visit the Lipton's Seat lookout where Master Lipton planted the first seeds for what is now Sri Lanka's most popular tea – Lipton Tea. For those looking to relax, the hotel pool offers amazing views of the surrounding landscape. **Overnight - Haputale (B)**

Day 8 : Yala National Park



This morning we venture through the clouds to the village of Ella where we meet our local guide before making our way to our first stop - Ravena Ella Falls, one of the wildest falls in the country with a 30 foot drop. It is said the king who kidnapped princess Sita from India hid her behind the falls.

After relaxing back at the hotel we embark on a jeep safari through Yala National Park where we search through the thorny scrubs and dense forests in hopes to see the resident elephants, leopards and bear. If we're lucky we also get the chance to see the feathered King Fisher and migrant birds being protected from Predator Eagles.

Overnight - Chaarya Resort (B)

Day 9 : Hambantota village & Beruwela

Tissamaharama-Beruwela. This morning we travel just outside of Tissamaharama to a local village called Hambantota. Here we wander through the farm and taste some home grown tea in a fresh coconut shell and play some traditional Sri Lankan games with the villagers. After an afternoon of fun we return to our bus in tractors used on the farm and set off to our last point of call for the day, Beruwela where we have the evening at leisure to spend on the beach.

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Overnight - Bentota and Beruwala (B)

Days 10-11 : Beruwela beach



The next two days are at our own leisure to explore Beruwela. Take a stroll along the beach also known as the "Golden Mile", go for a walkthrough the lively fish market to meet the local fishermen and try some of the catch of the day, or for those looking for something different we recommend the water sports centre or sea turtle hatchery where you learn all about the turtles that come to lay their eggs here. You even get to meet some of the baby turtles! **Overnight - Bentota and Beruwala (B:2)**

Day 12 : Colombo

Beruwela - Colombo. After breakfast we make our way to Colombo, originally known as "the garden city of the East" where we meet our guide for sightseeing tour stopping at some of the highlights including the old clock tower and the impressive Gangaramaya Temple. Our tour ends with a spot of souvenir shopping in Paradise Road and Lakmedura where we then have the rest of the evening to continue exploring Colombo's streets or sit back, relax and watch the world go by.

Overnight - Colombo (B)

Day 13 : Colombo

Our tour comes to an end today with a transfer to the airport. We hope you enjoyed your holiday!(B)

HOTELS

The hotels listed below are ones which we frequently use on this tour. We reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard when necessary.

Arie Lagoon

Conveniently located close to Colombo International Airport, the Aire Lagoon boasts a spectacular location on the waterfront between the Indian Ocean and a serene lagoon. Each air-conditioned room is equipped with a flat screen TV and cable channels, free slippers and toiletries. Guests can unwind in one of the two swimming pools at the hotel, with a relaxing massage in the wellness spa or dine in one of the three speciality restaurants on site with an exclusive wine bar.



The Paradise Resort & Spa

Enveloped by lush vegetation within the ancient city of Dambulla, the Paradise Resort and Spa offers 67 luxurious eco-villas to suit all budgets. Tastefully designed with modern amenities, the rooms feature teak furniture and free WiFi. Guests can dine at the pizzeria, home to a traditional stone oven, or the Salt & Pepper restaurant that offers an A La Carte menu. The property also offers a Thai spa as well as an Ayurveda centre alongside an outdoor pool.



Hotel Topaz

Hotel Topaz is a charming hotel with a stunning roof top view. The elegant rooms are spacious and accentuated with splashes of vibrant colour with private balconies and good facilities. The large outdoor pool is a lovely spot to unwind with far-reaching views of the surrounding hills. Buffet meals can be enjoyed at the hotel's restaurant with theme nights that include Chinese and Mexican cuisine. Guests can also relax in the spa or the TV lounge which stocks a large collection of DVDs.



Melheim Resort

Boasting breathtaking views of the surrounding forests, this boutique resort is set on the slopes of Blackwood Mountain in the Beregala Hills. Each guestroom features an ensuite, tea and coffee making facilities and a minibar, with a private deck opening out to the stunning mountain vistas. Other amenities include free bicycle rental, a fitness centre and an outdoor pool with a Jacuzzi. The onsite restaurant offers both Eastern and Western cuisine, which you can enjoy seated inside or out on the terrace with uninterrupted views of the surrounding scenery.



Chaarya Resort

Surrounded by lush greenery, this charming resort offers a wonderfully peaceful escape from the bustle of Sri Lanka's cities. Its cosy and elegantly designed guestrooms have an inviting ambiance, featuring a private balcony, tea and coffee making facilities and WiFi access. The landscaped garden is often visited by migratory birds and overlooked by an outdoor pool, Jacuzzi and inviting bar. The restaurant also serves a delightful range of traditional Sri Lankan, Oriental and Western cuisine. And after your adventurous safari in Yala National Park, you can take time to rejuvenate at the Ayurveda spa.



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Earl's Reef

Set on the beautiful bay of Beruwala, Earl's Reef offers you a luxury stay just footsteps from the beach. Each guestroom is fully equipped with modern amenities and provides breathtaking views over the Indian Ocean. And with a spa, volleyball court and stunning outdoor pool, you have plenty of activities to choose from. The on-site restaurant faces the sea and serves a mix of exotic Sri Lankan cuisine and international favourites across buffet and a la carte menus.



Fairway Colombo

Situated at the heart of Colombo, the Fairway Hotel is ideally located, close to the iconic World Trade Center and the popular Dutch Hospital complex. With 181 comfortable guest rooms, this modern hotel blends the latest technology with great design. Free high speed Wi-Fi access, motion sensor driven room temperature control, room access through your mobile phone are just a few of the technological conveniences offered. The hotel offers four restaurants, a nightclub, fitness centre and a fantastic rooftop terrace where guests can sip tasty cocktails and enjoy the superb city views.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Visas

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that

your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Sri Lanka.

All nationalities require a visa to enter Sri Lanka. Your visa application must be submitted to the Ministry of Emigration and Immigration via the online ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation) prior to departure.

To apply for your ETA visit www.eta.gov.lk

This is a very simple process and requires no additional documents. You must fill in the required information and once the visa is approved, you will be notified with an ETA approval notice promptly. All passenger travelling to Sri Lanka will be required to make a payment of USD \$50 per person following the same ETA process.

The Visa issued will be a Double-Entry Tourists Visa applicable for 30 days from the date of arrival to Sri Lanka.

The Maldives

Nationals of the United Kingdom, the EEC, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and USA (if resident in the UK) currently do not require a visa in advance of entry to the Maldives if stay is less than 30 days. Holders of RSA passports must obtain a visa for the Maldives prior to departure.

Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Sri Lanka from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide Tetanus, Polio, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Typhoid are strongly recommended. You are also advised to take anti-Malarial medication.

Water

As tap water is not safe to drink in Sri Lanka, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants. You should also avoid salads which may be washed in unhygienic water.

Currency

The currency of Sri Lanka is the Sri Lankan Rupee.

Pound Sterling, US Dollars or other major currencies can be exchanged only in Sri Lanka, as the Rupee is presently exchangeable only in destination. The Rupee is non-exportable, so spend it all before you leave! There are plenty of money changers

in Colombo, at the airport, in the street and at hotels. A growing number of ATMs in Colombo and Kandy accept foreign-issued cards. Credit cards are widely accepted for purchases. Visa and Mastercard withdrawals can be performed at banks.

Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

Entrance Fees & Tip Kitty

Entrance fees are not included within the cost of our Group Tours and need to be paid locally in Sri Lankan Rupees (LKR). They will be collected on day 2 of your tour.

If travelling to India on our Delhi to Colombo tour, entrance fees for the India section of your tour will be collected in INR, then for the Sri Lankan section of your holiday in LKR.

Note: Entrance fees are included on our Safari in Sri Lanka tour.

TIPPING

Tipping is not a natural part of many Western cultures and many of us feel uncomfortable, or unsure about when or how much to tip. However in Sri Lanka tipping makes up a significant part of many people's wages so it's important that we get it right. For this reason we've developed a very simple system on our Group Tours to take all the hassle out of tipping.

With our 'tipping made easy' policy, a nominal pre-determined amount is collected from all group tour participants to cover tips en route. This then saves you the hassle of when and how much to tip bellhops, luggage handlers, local guides and other support staff through the tour. The tipping kitty amount is noted under 'Exclusions' on the first page of these Trip Notes.

PLEASE NOTE: The tipping kitty is to be paid in LKR and it will be collected on day 2 of your tour. If travelling to India on our Delhi to Colombo tour, tipping kitty for that section of your tour will be collected by your guide in India and payable in India Rupees (INR).

Our 'tipping made easy' doesn't include a tip for your group tour guide, where we suggest an amount of approx USD\$3 - 7 per day multiplied by the duration of your tour. Naturally though, the amount is up to you. The tip for your guide is an entirely personal gesture.

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Note: We do not collect a tipping kitty on our Safari in Sri Lanka tour or on our Private Tours, where you can tip at your own discretion.

Climate

Situated in the Indian Ocean, at the base of the Indian Sub-Continent and around 880km north of the equator, the island nation of Sri Lanka has a pleasant tropical climate and despite its two short monsoon seasons has no 'off-season' as such. The average temperature of the low lands ranges between 25 – 30 degrees C, with higher temperatures in April. The hill country is particularly popular at this time of the year where temperatures can be 5 to 8 degrees cooler during the day, yet rather chilly at night. The two monsoons are the southwest from May to July, affecting south/west/central areas and the northeast from September to November, affecting north/east areas. Despite intermittent rain, the sun does shine and the days are warm, unlike the partnering of rain and cold weather in Europe.

Time and Voltage

Sri Lanka is 5 hours and 30 minutes ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Sri Lanka does not observe daylight saving. 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.

What to Pack

- Suitcase or frameless backpack/rucksack if preferred
- Small day bag for your camera, water, sunglasses, i-Pod etc.
- Please see the heading 'Etiquette' for recommendations on what/what not to wear
- Personal first aid kit
- Sunglasses, hat, umbrella, money belt
- DEET - based industrial strength mosquito/ insect repellent
- High factor sunscreen and bathers/swim costume
- Anti-bacterial hand gel/wet wipes and flat pack toilet paper/tissues
- Universal adapter for your hairdryer, i-Pod or digicam

- Two spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport in case of loss or theft
- Although film is available at similar prices to the UK or Australia, it is advisable to carry all you anticipate using from the UK, particularly if your camera uses the APS 'drop-load' film
- Spare camera batteries, especially if you possess a digital camera, which requires specialist high-power batteries
- Pack as light as possible to leave room for the souvenirs!

Food and Drink

Sri Lanka offers a diversity of cuisine. The national dish is rice and curry (even for breakfast!). A typical Sri Lankan meal consists of a 'main' curry that could be fish or meat with several side dishes including vegetables, chutneys and 'sambol'. Made of ground coconut, onion, chilli, dried fish and lime, sambol is fiendishly hot.

Excellent seafood can be found along the coast, including local crab, prawns and tuna. Local specialities include appa or hoppers which are small rice-batter pancakes eaten with palm treacle and yoghurt.

Roti stuffed with fresh chilli, onions and cooked eggs, griddled meats or fish are also popular. Kotu roti is chopped roti with onions, vegetables and meat.

Colonialism left an indelible stamp on the local cuisine. A popular Dutch-Portuguese dish is Lamprais (rice steeped in stock with a special curry), accompanied by frikkadels (meatballs), baked and served in banana leaves.

Sri Lanka grows some of the finest tea in the world for export. Your best chance for a good cuppa is in the hill country, where tea plantations and hotels serve the pick of the locally harvested crop.

Trading Hours

- Generally 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

Shopping

Sri Lanka is excellent for gemstones especially sapphires, moon-stones and cats-eye. Other items to look out for include spices, wood carvings and other handicrafts, clothing of types, batik and hand-woven textiles, brassware, handmade lace from Galle and of course tea. Tea varies in quality, so if you're buying in bulk, ask for a tasting! If seeking modern local chic, Colombo offers a selection of department stores and stylish boutiques. Refrain from buying souvenirs made of coral (creation of this sort of tourist that contributes greatly to the destruction of Sri Lanka's reefs), ivory or the hides of endangered animals.

IMPORTANT: Set your budget and don't be swayed, remember the caveat – 'Let the buyer beware'. Any purchases made whilst on holiday with us, irrespective of whether the store is recommended by us or other, are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with the product you are purchasing and the delivery arrangements (we would recommend you take away with you any purchases rather than rely on shipping services). On The Go cannot be held responsible or accountable for items bought in country or shipping arrangements. We will not become involved later in your holiday or once you return home should your purchase not live up to your expectations. Proceed with caution.

Etiquette

Despite the inevitable ups and downs of travelling abroad, you will generally be shown great hospitality in Sri Lanka. In return, please demonstrate sensitivity and respect for the local customs. Sri Lanka is a conservative country; so care should be taken to dress respectfully in large cities and towns, for example when at markets or public places.

- Don't try to sneak into temples and mosques that forbid non-Hindus or non-Muslims
- Never touch a carving or statue of a deity within a temple
- Do not touch locals on the head or point the soles of your feet at a person, religious shrine or image of a deity. This is very disrespectful

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- Take care to dress conservatively and ensure that limbs are covered when entering any place of religion. Please also ensure footwear and headwear is removed if entering any Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim place of worship
- Both ladies and gentlemen will need to dress conservatively and cover all shoulders and knees when visiting any sacred site in Sri Lanka including Dambulla, Kandy Temple of the Tooth, Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura. Men and Women are not permitted to wear headgear or footwear at sacred sites in Sri Lanka - these must be removed prior to entry
- Ladies should avoid wearing 'clingy, tight or suggestive attire, and stick to cool, flowing cottons in busy city areas and markets. T-shirts are fine!
- Beach attire is fine on beaches, in a resort or by a hotel pool and at tourist sites but ladies, avoid wearing bikini tops anywhere but on the beach or at the pool
- Nudity and topless bathing are prohibited. Heavy fines can be imposed
- Displays of intimacy are not considered suitable in public
- Ex-military style clothing should not be worn
- It is polite to ask permission before taking photos of people
- Use your right hand for giving, taking, eating or shaking hands as the left is considered to be unclean
- Don't be surprised if you are frequently the centre of attention when travelling around the country. Staring unabashedly is not a social taboo
- Do carry toilet paper with you (or adjust to the Sri Lankan habit of using water instead), but don't throw it down the toilet without first checking to see if there's a basket to put it in (narrow pipes clog easily)
- Don't be surprised to see men defecating or urinating in public when restrooms are not readily available. Women, in the same circumstance, tend to use cover of darkness and huddle in groups
- Mosques are open to non-Muslims but cannot be visited during prayer time, particularly noon on Friday
- Photography is prohibited in certain sections of sacred sites. Do not attempt to be photographed with Buddhist bhikkus (monks) or to pose for photos with statues of Buddha or other deities or paintings
- Do be open and friendly in conversations with locals. Sri Lankans can be quite talkative, asking strangers questions (about marital status, salary, etc.) that might be interpreted as overly personal in other cultures

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