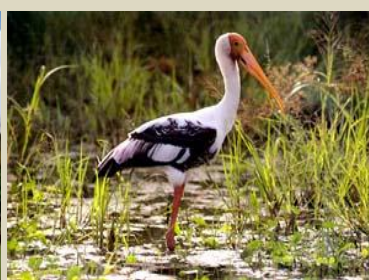


Sri Lanka

12 Days / 11 Nights



DAY 01

AIRPORT / NEGOMBO

- OVERNIGHT IN NEGOMBO

Arrive in International Airport Colombo. Transfer to hotel in Negombo. Rest of the day at leisure in the beautiful beaches of Negombo.

Overnight in Negombo.

DAY 02

NEGOMBO

- OVERNIGHT IN NEGOMBO

Breakfast at hotel. Rest of the day at leisure.

Negombo; A characteristic fishing town north of Colombo, it is a mere 6km from the Katunayaka International Airport, and popular for both tourism and fishing. Set amid lush groves of coconut palms, it breathes the spirit of the sea.

It is a gourmet's paradise with sea food in plenty. Old world fishing craft like the outrigger canoe and the catamaran bring seer, skipjack, herring and mullet, pomfret and amber jack, while lobsters and prawns are caught in the lagoon.

There is no need to venture far from the Airport to satisfy the average sun seeker, since there are expansive beaches within minutes, with hotels providing every comfort and fishing villages providing local colour. You can see the admirable sunsets at the Negombo beach. Also you can see fishermen pulling fishing nets to the shore, and catamarans returning in the evenings after fishing during the day.

The majority of the population is Catholic and Negombo is known as "*Little Rome*". There are many interesting remnants of Portuguese and Dutch visitors who ousted Moors and took possession of the Negombo coast.

Arthur C. Clarke, one of Sri Lanka's most celebrated residents, described it thus;

"...and always it is the same; the slender palm trees leaning over the white sand, the warm sun sparkling on the waves as they break on the inshore reef, the outrigger fishing boats drawn up high on the beach. This is alone real; the rest is but a dream from which I shall presently awake...."

Overnight in Negombo.

DAY 03

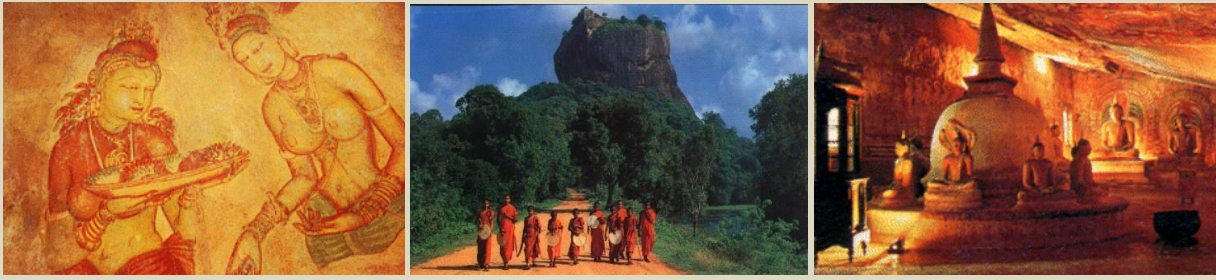
NEGOMBO / ELEPHANT ORPHANAGE @ PINNAWELA / SIGIRIYA

- OVERNIGHT IN SIGIRIYA

After breakfast proceed to Sigiriya via Elephant Orphanage at Pinnawela. Elephants young and old are given sanctuary in a natural habitat at the government run Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage. Abandoned or injured baby elephants are reared here and are trained to eventually become working animals. Bottle feeding of the baby elephants, and bathing time in the river provide the best opportunities to admire the animals' close-up.

Lunch at Pinnawela. (Optional). On conclusion continue to Sigiriya. Check-in at hotel. Rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight in Sigiriya.



DAY 04

SIGIRIYA / ROCK FORTRESS @ SIGIRIYA / POLONNARUWA SIGHTSEEING / SIGIRIYA

- OVERNIGHT IN SIGIRIYA

After breakfast climb the **5th century A.D Rock Fortress** at Sigiriya.

Sigiriya, a massive monolith of red stone rises 600 feet from the scrub jungle to accentuate the lucid blue of the sky. Sigiriya was no gloomy and forbidding fortification, as any other citadels are. At the brief height of its glory, a flowering of only 18 years in the late 5th century, it is one of the loveliest royal cities that ever graced the earth. And today, it is perhaps the single most remarkable memory for visitors to Sri Lanka.

The rock was transformed into an immense recumbent lion by the addition of a brick-built head and foreparts of which only the artfully sculptured paws remain. The impact of the Lion Rock, as it is called, must have been awesome, since it prompts one to marvel at the creative vision that was behind this eighth wonder.....

This city was constructed and was ruled under the direction of the brave, murderous genius called Kasyapa (477 - 495 AD)] who conceived and perfected this masterpiece under a shadow of paranoiac fear for his younger brother Moggallana, who fled to India after his father was killed in the hands of Kasyapa by walling alive within his tomb.

Incised in tiny pearl like script into the so called Mirror Wall, beneath the frescoes pocket, are prose and poems more than 1,000 years old. The graffiti speaks of 500 Damsels, there are but 18 today protected from the sun, wind and rain erosion in this sheltered grotto.

Thereafter proceed to Polonnaruwa. Lunch (Optional). After lunch sightseeing.

Polonnaruwa was the medieval capital of Sri Lanka and the second capital of the Island in the 11th and 12th centuries AD. In AD 993, the “Cholas” looted and burnt Anuradhapura and used Polonnaruwa as their military base for 77 years, resulting in an interesting blend of South Indian Hindu Culture and Sinhalese Buddhist art and architecture. Taking inspiration from their Hindu conquerors, the resurgent Sinhalese kings moved to this city, triggering an amazing artistic renaissance.

Also in Polonnaruwa see the remains of the 7-storied palace, the Vatadage, Kirivehera, Lankathilaka Temple, Galpotha and many other ruins of interest. Around 1923, Polonnaruwa returned to the jungles after the capital city migrated southwards.

Later visit a “Wood Carving Factory” at Polonnaruwa.

Overnight in Sigiriya.



DAY 05

SIGIRIYA / ROCK CAVE TEMPLES @ DAMBULLA / SPICE GARDEN & BATIK FACTORY @ MATALE / KANDYAN DANCE PERFORMANCE / KANDY

- OVERNIGHT IN KANDY

After breakfast visit the famous Rock Cave Temples at Dambulla, the most visited monastery. It is the most impressive cave temple in Sri Lanka, with five caves under a vast overhanging rock, carved with a drip line to keep the interiors dry. There are images of the Buddha, and Gods and Goddesses.

There are innumerable painted sculptures, including a life size effigy of the last Kandyan king and much older statues of Hindu gods.

Continue to Kandy. En route visit a Batik Factory and a Spice Garden at Matale. Here you would be shown the different varieties of spices grown and demonstration of their use.

Kandy; Nestled in the foothills of the hill country at 1,600 feet elevation, on the banks of a lovely tree lined lake, The City of Kandy is the center of traditional Sri Lankan culture. Perhaps more than anywhere else in the island, this comfortably cool home to nearly 100,000 people represents the living past. A journey through spectacular scenery to this famous city of Sinhalese history, culture, religion and pageantry reaches the heart and soul of the country.....

The sacred tooth of the Lord Buddha, symbolic sovereignty over the island, is preserved here in its own temple "Dalada Maligawa", which is one of the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the island.

Traditions of Sinhalese Music & Dance, Arts & Crafts flourishes in this hill city. The Kandyan kingdom, to many Sri Lankans known as "Maha Nuwara - The Great City", the last independent state in Sri Lanka, withstood the onslaught of three invading European nations for over two decades, from the year 1590 until the British once and for all subdued the Kandyans in 1815.

Arrive in Kandy. Check-in at hotel. Lunch (Optional). Leisure.

Evening view a "Kandyan Dance" performance. (Cultural Show).

Overnight in Kandy.



DAY 06

KANDY CITY TOUR / ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS @ PERADENIYA / KANDY - OVERNIGHT IN KANDY

After breakfast tour the City of Kandy including visits to the Art and Crafts Centre, Gem Museum and Lapidary and the world famous "Temple of The Sacred Tooth Relic Of Lord Buddha".

Later visit the century old Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya. The 60-hectare [147-acre] garden is the largest in Sri Lanka. Here you find a Spice Garden, a Herb Garden, an Orchid House, a Cactus House and a glass house of Anthuriums, Begonias, African Violets and other species. Enjoy the great variety of flowers, plants and mature trees, and make sure that you don't miss the giant Javan fig tree which covers an impressive 1,600 sq meters.

The gardens were the setting for the South East Asia Command Headquarters during World War II, when Lord Mountbatten was in charge of operations.

Lunch at Peradeniya (Optional). Later return to hotel. Rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight in Kandy.

DAY 07

KANDY / HILL COUNTRY SIGHTSEEING & WATER FALLS / HATTON / ADAM'S PEAK; CLIMB TO THE PEAK (COMMENCE @ 02H00)

- BEFORE & AFTER CLIMB REST AT A LODGE / GUEST HOUSE

Breakfast at hotel. Morning at leisure. After lunch proceed to Adam's Peak, through the beautiful misty hill country of Sri Lanka. The journey will take you through some of Sri Lanka's beautiful scenic locations. Enjoy the drive through green carpeted areas of tea plantations. The hill country of Sri Lanka is set against beautiful backdrops of mountains, valleys, waterfalls and tea plantations, offers beauty unlimited.

En route visit a Tea Plantation and Factory to witness how the famous "Ceylon Tea" is brewed. Taste a fresh cup of Ceylon Tea.

Arrive in "Nallathanni", the town where you start the climb to the peak. Check in at a Guest House / Lodge. Dinner at the Guest House / Lodge. (Optional).

After a brief sleep, wee hours in the morning (around 02H00) start the climb. Climb to the peak will be assisted by a special guide on sight (On request).

The normal season for pilgrims is during the calm bright months from December to April, when the incredible sunrise produces the famous spectacle known as the "Shadow of the Peak", which leaves all who have seen it spellbound.

"When Adam was expelled an Angel took him by the arm and set him down here"; wrote the Papal Legate "Marignolli". over 500 years ago when he descended from the most famous of Lanka's mountains.



DAY 08

ADAMS PEAK / NUWARA ELIYA

- OVERNIGHT IN NUWARA ELIYA

Morning descend from Adam's Peak. Breakfast at the Guest House / Lodge. After a brief rest and a change proceed to Nuwara Eliya.

This beautiful town in the hills nestling below Pidurutalagala, Sri Lanka's highest mountain, offers beauty unlimited. It is easy to see why the early British settlers fell for it. "After the heat and dust of Colombo, the salubrious climate and the breathtaking landscape are a soothing balm", as Sir Edward Barnes discovered when he was governing the island in 1828 and used it as his up-country retreat.

A little later the British explorer Samuel Baker, famous for discovering the source of Nile, spent time convalescing here and determined; "to make it a regular settlement..... a little English village". This misty mountain settlement is well known as "Little England in the hills".

Check-in at hotel. Leisure. Lunch at hotel (Optional). Late afternoon sightseeing in Nuwara Eliya.

Overnight in Nuwara Eliya.

DAY 09

NUWARA ELIYA / "RAVANA ELLA" WATERFALLS / TISSAMAHARAMA / YALA NATIONAL PARK / YALA

- OVERNIGHT IN YALA

After breakfast proceed to Yala via Tissamaharama.

View “Ravana Ella” Waterfalls at Ella. The falls have been named after the legendary Hindu character Ravana, which is connected to the famous Indian epic, the Ramayana. According to legend, it is said that Ravana (who was the king of Sri Lanka at the time) had kidnapped princess Sita, and had hidden her in the caves behind this waterfall, now simply known as the “*Ravana Ella Cave*”.

Arrive in Yala. Check-in at hotel. Lunch. (Optional).

After lunch visit “Yala National Park”, host to herds of wild Elephant in a 4 wheel drive guided by an experienced and a professional tracker to watch the magnificent lords of the jungle in their natural habitats. This sanctuary covers an area of 1300 square kilometers, and is the largest national park in the country.

The park’s dry-zone landscape is strikingly beautiful and the park’s wildlife has its own distinctive charm, with huddles of colorful painted storks perched on the incongruously conjoined sight of elephants marching sedately through the bush, while rabbits scamper through the undergrowth.

Though the Leopards, Sloth Bears and Elephants being the main attraction to this wild life haven; Wild boars, Jackals, Somber, Deer, Peacocks, sleepy crocodiles and the many variety of birds contribute largely to the huge draw to this sanctuary.

Overnight in Yala.



DAY 10

YALA / SALT PANS @ HAMBANTOTA / STILT FISHERMEN @ WELIGAMA / SOUTHERN FORTRESS CITY; GALLE - OVERNIGHT IN GALLE

After breakfast proceed to Galle via Hambantota, which is famous for its buffalo curd, claims to be the best in the country. Hambantota’s other big industry is the ancient method of salt making, and you will see many evaporating salt pans by the roads in and out of town.

View “*Stilt Fishermen*” at Weligama.

Arrive in Southern Fortress City; Galle. Check-in at hotel. Lunch (Optional). Leisure. Later sightseeing in Galle.

Galle, is the most important town in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. It has an old world charm. Its natural harbor was a famous fort in days gone by. In 1505 a Portuguese fleet set sail to intercept Moorish vessel carrying cargoes of spice, but it was driven off course and landed at what was to become the gateway to the south.

An evening stroll around the fort walls and bastions in time for the sunset is something of a tradition, even among the locals. You can walk along the top of the walls, which are partly built of fossilized coral, nearly all the way around. Starting at the modern lighthouse at the bottom of Church Street, work your way around so that you are on one of the western bastions when the sun goes down.

Overnight in Galle.



DAY 11

GALLE / RIVER SAFARI @ MADHU RIVER / COLOMBO CITY TOUR & SHOPPING

- OVERNIGHT IN COLOMBO

After breakfast proceed to Colombo.

River Safari at “*Madhu Ganga*” (Madhu River), Balapitiya. In the outset Madu Ganga is considered as Sri Lanka's second largest wetland consisting of 28 islands including two main islands providing shelter to local families.

The main treasure of “*Madu Ganga*” is its mangroves that act as a bio-lock to the area in giving protection to the variety of aquatic plants and animal life. They provide a home for different kinds of aquatic plants, crabs, shrimps, fish, various invertebrates and other animal life including crocodiles.

Later proceed to Colombo, “*The Capital*” of Sri Lanka.

Colombo the spirited maritime capital, spread along the Indian Ocean for some nine miles, is where business and commerce begin and end in Sri Lanka. Most of the colonial remnants found in Colombo today are the legacy of the British. They drove the Dutch out in 1796, and held the upper hand here until Ceylon was granted its Independence in 1948.

Lunch in Colombo. (Optional).

Later time at your disposal for shopping etc. Visit some of the famous shopping arcades like “The Majestic City”, “Liberty Plaza”, “House of Fashions” or “Odel” at Lipton Circus.

Overnight in Colombo.



DAY 12

COLOMBO / AIRPORT

- DEPARTURE

Breakfast at hotel. Later transfer to the Airport for the departure.

