



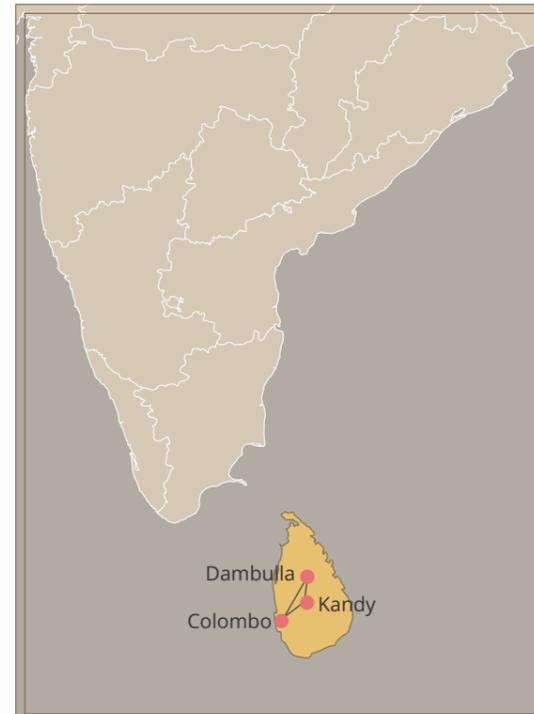
SRL01 > 7 DAY TOUR

ESSENTIAL SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka is a magical island off the southern tip of India. Miles of uncluttered sandy beaches, caressed gently by ocean breeze, that gleam pearl-like in the brilliant sunshine. Inland, frothing waterfalls tumble from mist-shrouded peaks. Nature blooms, lush and verdant, covering all with her mantle of green. Amidst this bounty flourishes a rich ancient culture embellished by the more recent influences of Western colonisers, and Eastern traders, a mercurial mix of races and religions that results in a dynamic, vibrant people.

This itinerary introduces you to the country via the bustling metropolis of Colombo, the capital city that is also the main port of entry. Almost immediately the amazing diversity of the land reveals itself. Chrome and glass citadels of the modern day rub shoulders with antiquities of a priceless heritage over 2,500 years old. Travel on to Kandy, the last refuge of Sri Lankan Kings, home of the 'Dalada Maligawa' – Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha, today a major pilgrimage centre, as well as a prominent centre for Buddhist arts, crafts and culture. Nuwara Eliya, in the salubrious up-country, is set amidst picturesque tea gardens and dazzling waterfalls. It is not just tourist sites to be visited; there are wayside markets, handicraft shops and batik factories to be explored.

Watch craftsmen at work, gems being mined, tea leaves being plucked; venture out to watch elephants frolic and play as they are bathed in rivers or fishermen on stilts haul in the day's catch – we give you every opportunity to look into the heart of the country, immerse in the culture and be touched by the warmth of her people.



Insider Tips:

- Sri Lanka is a year-round holiday destination. For the hilly region and Kandy, the best time to visit is March and April when the mountain views are brilliant. Keep in mind that it can rain here in the evenings and at night.
- Add one more night at Dambulla and visit the Minneriya National Park. Best months are August till October to watch elephants taking a bath in the river.
- Colourful painted trucks bring vegetables and fruits from the northern part of the island to Dambulla market every day. During your stay in Dambulla, don't miss the auction that takes place at the market!
- The Kandy Esala Perahera (the Esala procession of Kandy) is held for 10 days in July and August every year. Dancers, drummers and lavishly decorated elephants light up the streets of Kandy. This Buddhist Festival is dedicated to the sacred tooth relic of Lord Buddha. In February, around Pooya Day (full moon), Colombo celebrates the Nawa Perahera Festival for two days.
- Don't forget to taste the King Coconut, indigenous to the tropical island. Sweeter than regular coconut, we recommend it especially after your climb up the Sigiriya Lions Rock.
- Pluck your own tea leaves at one of the tea plantations in Nuwara Eliya and enjoy a cup of the famous Orange Pekoe tea of Sri Lanka.



TOUR ITINERARY | SRL 01

DAY 01 ARRIVAL COLOMBO – HABARANA/DAMBULLA

Warm welcome at the airport by our representative and transfer to Habarana/Dambulla. En route spend time at the Dambulla Rock Temple to admire its exquisite Buddhist paintings.

DAY 02 IN HABARANA/DAMBULLA

Visit Hiriwaduna for a unique village experience. Travel through lush green paddy fields to enjoy an authentic Sri Lankan lunch. Continue to Polonnaruwa to admire the fine carvings and Hindu sculptures.

DAY 03 IN HABARANA/DAMBULLA

Stroll through the sacred trails of Anuradhapura, the venerated city, to admire the legacy that interweaves the holy Buddhist sites of Ruwanweliseya, Sri Maha Bodhi and Isurumuniya Rock Temple. Continue to Mihintale to enjoy breath-taking views of Anuradhapura and hear stories about the first Buddhist sermon here.

DAY 04 IN HABARANA/DAMBULLA

Discover the World Heritage Site of Sigiriya today. Sigiriya is a fortress

that floats above all. This mythological 'City of Gods' is a colossal masterpiece which remains a wonder of Asia. Continue the journey to the spice gardens of Matale. Learn about the therapeutic values of spices and the various processes involved over a refreshing cup of herbal tea.

DAY 05 HABARANA/DAMBULLA – KANDY

Arrive in Kandy today. Visit the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens. This 147 acres of bliss is magnificently landscaped, with well-tended lawns, pavilions and an octagonal conservatory. Later, enjoy a *tuk tuk* ride back to visit the Temple of the Tooth Relic. Witness a cultural show in the evening featuring traditional Sri Lankan dances.

DAY 06 KANDY – COLOMBO

Drive to Colombo at leisure. Later in afternoon, explore the old part of the capital, the Dutch Hospital and the Pettah District on foot. Don't miss the Floating Market.

DAY 07 DEPART COLOMBO

Transfer to the international airport for the international flight.

EXTENSIONS

NUWARA ELIYA

Hop onto a rattling train, smoking and hissing its way through green valleys of the hill country pierced by endless waterfalls and dotted by tea pluckers draped in bright-coloured saris. Nuwara Eliya is still studded with colonial bungalows, hedgerows and one of the finest 18-hole golf courses in the world. One additional night is recommended after Kandy before returning to Colombo.

BALLOONING IN SIGIRIYA/HABARANA

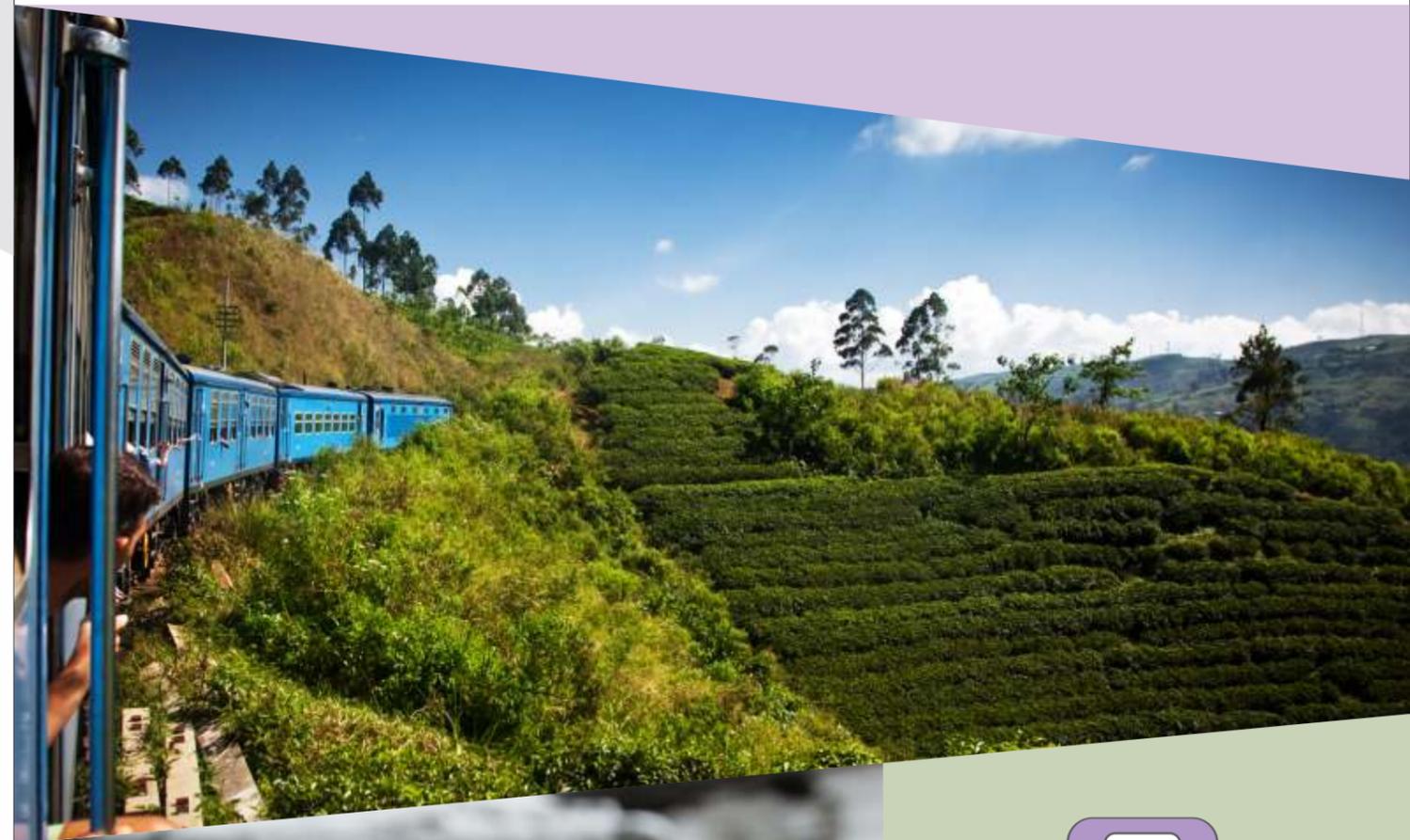
Greet the rising sun and the spectacular scenery whilst you take a hot air balloon ride. The wind will decide the direction of the journey! The balloon ride lasts for about four hours and the day starts at 5 am. The balloon ride is only possible from November till April.

POLONNARUWA BY CYCLES

Explore the atmospheric ruins of the medieval city of Polonnaruwa strewn across a vast terrain, on bicycles, during your stay at Habarana/Dambulla.

THE BLUE WATER LILY

Found growing in abundance in all parts of the island, the Blue Water Lily, the national flower of Sri Lanka, has petals arranged like a star and bright green, flat, waterproof leaves. As a symbol of purity and truth, the flower is a popular offering at Buddhist temples and Vishnu shrines. The plant is said to have medicinal properties, and when placed under a pillow, it is believed, you get happy dreams.



*There is no particular word for 'hello' in Sinhalese and people often greet each other with a smile. The phrase *āyubāvan*, which means "may you live long", accompanied by a small bow and the hands clasped together is used for greetings and partings.*



Sri Lanka's climate is tropical and consists of distinct wet and dry seasons.