

Sri Lanka Family Safari Tour

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SRI LANKA FAMILY SAFARI TOUR

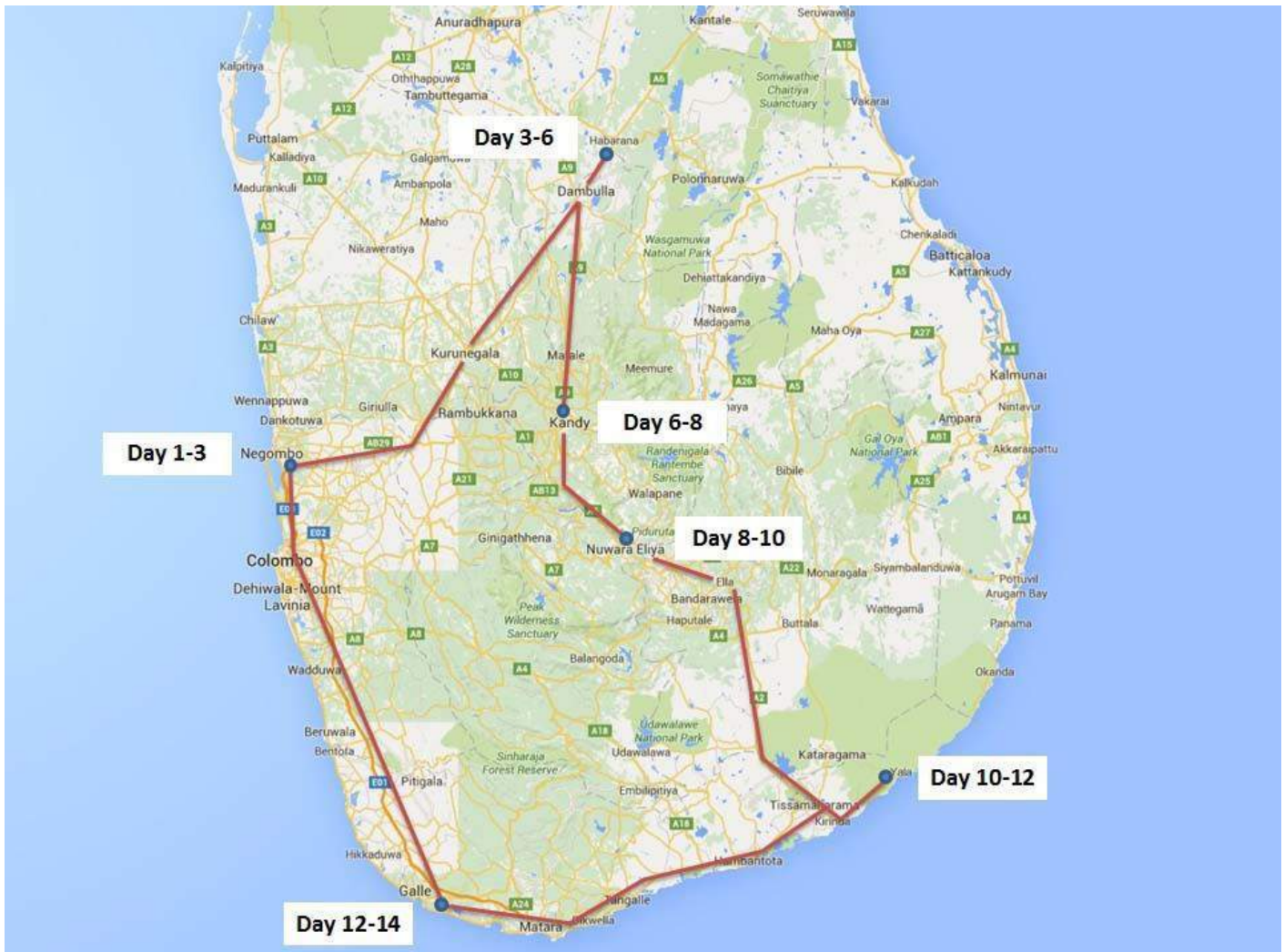
Sri Lanka is an island nation in the Indian Ocean separated from India by the Palk Strait but the two countries are virtually linked by a mostly--underwater atoll called Adam's Bridge. It is a very lush, tropical island sitting just north of the equator. For over 2,000 years the island was ruled by a monarchy which ceased only in 1972 with the appointment of a president. Sri Lanka's population of around 21 million – similar to our own – is multiethnic with four main groups: Singhalese (mostly Buddhist) is the largest, followed by the Tamils (mostly Hindu), Moors (of Arab origin) and Burghers (a mixed group of Portuguese and Dutch origin who are mainly Christian).

There are many reasons to visit this country with so much to see and do. Even though it is relatively small in size, each region is quite different. The indigenous and colonial history is fascinating, the food is fabulous, scenery spectacular and climate wonderfully tropical. Hotels are resort style and of a very good quality and the abundance of wildlife – one of the drawcards for travelers – will take you by surprise. Visiting the national parks and refuges, you can spot Sri Lankan elephants, leopards, monkeys, sambar deer, sloth bears, crocodiles, water buffalo and hundreds of bird species.

The food is a special drawcard — Sri Lanka is famous for its fragrant Silk Road spices while the fruit and vegetables are sparklingly fresh. All the hotels at which we stay offer a huge selection of western and Sri Lankan cuisine at both breakfast and dinner. Many options (pasta ... eggs etc) are cooked to order in front of you. Don't think eating in the hotel is a compromise — it's a daily degustation that will please the fussiest eater!

It's no wonder that in 2013 *Lonely Planet* rated this wonderful country as the *hottest travel destination on the planet* – and they didn't mean the weather! Sri Lanka is an ideal destination for families – think Fiji but more culture, adventure, history and wildlife. It's a place where wonderful experiences are to be enjoyed and family memories made.

TRAVEL INFORMATION — SRI LANKA



TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

The most popular route from Australia to Colombo is via Singapore or Kuala Lumpur. The first leg out of Sydney or Melbourne takes about 7.5--8 hours and then just under 4 hours to Colombo. There are daily flights with a stopover of 1.5 hours going over and as little as an hour on the way back.

Flights are not included in our tour cost as we find many travellers have their personal preferences across airlines, day or night flights, class of travel etc. We offer a full travel service and can plan and book your flights subject to your preferences or you can book your own flights or use frequent flyer points. We are unable to book frequent flyer flights on your behalf.

While specific accommodation has been nominated throughout the itinerary, if any is unavailable, a suitable and equivalent hotel and / or room type will be substituted.

CLIMATE

Sri Lanka's climate is quite complicated for a small country because it is affected by two separate monsoon seasons — in the northeast from December to March and in the southwest from June to October. On the upside, this means there is usually good weather to be enjoyed somewhere on the island!

Generally speaking, the Sri Lankan climate is tropical with year-round warm weather. In practical terms, this means the ideal time to visit the west and south coasts and the central highlands is December to March. The upland areas usually offer a cooler and more temperate climate with a yearly average of around 16-20°C so you'll need extra layers when visiting. The coastal areas are warmer with average temperatures of around 27°C. Humidity is typically rather high in Sri Lanka averaging out at about 80% all year. A short, sharp rainstorm can come through at any time so lightweight rain wear is a good idea.

Day 01 Saturday

AUSTRALIA to COLOMBO

Depart Sydney to arrive at Colombo International Airport. After clearing customs and immigration, you'll be greeted by your guide and transferred to your hotel near Negombo, about 25 minutes' drive from the airport and 45 minutes north of the capital.

Overnight: Jetwing Blu, Negombo

Meals: in flight

Day 02 Sunday

NEGOMBO

Given the usual late night arrival, have an easy day to settle in and enjoy the hotel's facilities and warm beach sands. In the afternoon, your guide will take you into the bustling local town of Negombo for a look around and the chance to visit the supermarket to stock up on supplies.



Overnight: Jetwing Blu, Negombo

Meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 03 Monday

HABARANA

An early start today at around 8.00am for a visit to Negombo's fascinating fish markets where buying and selling is done in the rhythmic fashion unique to Sri Lanka. Then hit the road to Habarana in the island's central--north, stopping for lunch at Pinnawala, home to an elephant orphanage. Watch the elephants walk through the village to bathe in the river and roam. Have lunch (own cost) at one of the riverfront cafés and explore the market stalls before continuing the drive.



Habarana is a part of Sri Lanka's Dry Zone but thanks to the genius of the ancient kings dating as far back as the 5th AD, the area features a myriad of lakes and reservoirs, connected by an elaborate network of canals. The region has breathtakingly beautiful scenery. Arrive at your hotel at about 4.00pm to relax by the stunning pool, wander through the impressive gardens (watching out for the very cheeky monkeys!) Or have a drink at the bar before eating dinner when you feel like it.

Overnight: Cinnamon Lodge Hotel, Habarana

Meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 04 Tuesday

HABARANA and SIGIRIYA

If you're up for it, take an optional excursion this morning, not forgetting you can do as little or as much as you like. Depart after breakfast at



about 8.00am to climb Sigiriya, a Sri Lankan icon a little like our own Uluru. A mighty 200-metre tall rock fortress of a 5th century king, Sigiriya is famous for its beautiful rock frescoes. The old stairway is carved into the rock, leading through the mouth of a huge crouching lion but today, only the paws remain. Ruins of the handsome royal citadel are on the very top and if the climb doesn't leave you breathless, the view certainly will! The ascent is medium to hard and not for everyone. Those not climbing can visit the beautiful gardens, museum and surrounds. Your guide will explain where to meet as the climbers do not come back the same way. Return to the hotel for lunch with time to relax and enjoy the facilities.

At about 2.30pm, depart on a wildlife safari to Minneriya Wildlife Park where you are likely to spot elephants & other animals. Be back at about 6.00pm for dinner at the hotel.



Overnight: Cinnamon Lodge Hotel, Habarana

Meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 05 Wednesday

HABARANA & POLONNARUWA

There are two optional excursions today if you choose:

Morning: Transfer at around 8.00am after breakfast to the local village of Hiriwaduna for a 2--3 hour visit. Ride a bullock cart ride and take a flat, easy walk through this typical Sri Lankan farm region.

The amazing birdlife, butterflies and possible sightings of animals add to the charm of seeing the villagers go about their morning tasks. Cross the back waters on a small boat & return to the hotel for lunch.



Afternoon: Leave at 2.30pm for an hour's drive to the ruined palace & temples of Polonnaruwa. It is

one of Sri Lanka's main sights where the well-- preserved relics pay testament to the glory of Sri Lanka's past. It is a great cultural experience for kids and adults alike, and you'll be back at the hotel for dinner. Entry to temples requires shoulders & knees be covered.

Overnight: Cinnamon Lodge Hotel, Habarana

Meals: Breakfast and dinner



Day 06 Thursday

HABARANA to KANDY

After breakfast, check out of the hotel and depart for Kandy, stopping in Dambulla along the way to see The Rock Temple. It's a bit of a steep climb but this UNESCO--listed temple is a must--see. Dress regulations apply so if you need, buy a shawl from the vendors on the way up. After a short visit, the continue on to arrive at Kandy mid--afternoon with a lunch stop along the way (at own cost). Check in to the hotel where you will have dinner before taking in an optional hour--long cultural show of song, dance and fire walking. A little touristy for some but still a good opportunity to see some artistic culture.

Overnight: Kandy Cinnamon Citadel

Meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 07 Friday

KANDY



There's an optional city tour this morning which takes in the beautiful lakeside Buddhist Temple of the Tooth Relic, one of Sri Lanka's most sacred sites and definitely worth the visit. Your guide will also take you through the Central Markets (fruit and veg downstairs, clothes and souvenirs upstairs) and on to see the traders of the old slum area. Do some shopping at your leisure before returning for a late lunch. Do note the meeting places because it will be almost impossible to stick together as a group in Kandy city. Of course, you can always get a tuk--tuk back to the hotel for just a few dollars. Dinner is at the hotel.

Overnight: Kandy Cinnamon Citadel Hotel

Meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 08 Saturday

KANDY to NUWARA ELIYA

Depart at 9.00am for the 3½ hour drive to the tea--growing region of Nuwara Eliya, stopping for lunch (at own cost) along the way. This region is about 1,600 metres above sea



level so you will find it cooler, especially at night. On the way, visit a tea plantation and its factory to witness the process of turning the raw green leaf in to the familiar black finished product. Learn how the *two leaves and a bud* are carefully picked and of the many processes involved in bringing a cup of pure Ceylon Tea. Tea and cake are served before another ½ hour drive to your hotel where you will have dinner. Your hotel is a 10--minute walk from the town centre — do be sure to stroll in to enjoy the atmosphere of the vendors selling their wares.

Tip: Nuwara Eliya is great for cheap shoes (especially for kids), cheap trekking gear (kids and adults) and has a few bars where you can have a drink and mix it with the locals. There are beautiful botanical gardens and a 9-hole golf course too.

Overnight: Grand Hotel, Nuwara Eliya

Meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 09 Sunday

NUWARA ELIYA

For those up for it, there's an optional excursion to Horton Plains National Park. Depart at about 9.00am for the 1.5 hour drive through beautiful countryside to trek to the spectacular World's End and Baker's Falls (9kms / about 3 hrs walk). This region offers an outstanding variety of lovely scenery from mountains to grasslands, marshes to trout streams. At World's End, the plateau plunges 300 metres in a straight, sheer drop. If you're lucky you'll spot monkeys, deer and other wildlife plus some of the region's distinctive flora and rare highland birds.



Note: There are no safety signs, railings or warnings at the lookouts and waterfall on the World's End trek. Children MUST be supervised at all times and stay on the track at the viewing points. Ideally, appoint one adult to be at the front and one at the back of the group. It is not dangerous as long as the children do not stray from the well--marked track or run ahead.

You'll return for a late lunch with the rest of the day to enjoy the township or the hotel grounds. If you love High Tea, your guide can help you transfer to

the Tea Factory Hotel. Dinner is at the hotel. The Indian café and restaurant next door offers great value if you feel like dining out.

Overnight: Hotel Grand Nuwara Eliya

Meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 10 Monday

NUWARA ELIYA to YALA NATIONAL PARK

Depart at about 9.00am for the 3--hour drive to Yala. The views as you descend some 900 metres are breathtaking. Take an early lunch stop at the picturesque township of Ella with its many arts and crafts shops and cafés. Further down the valley, stop at Reewara Falls where the roadside traders and their food and wares add great colour and variety. On arrival at Yala, the country's second largest National Park & one of the best places in the country for animal spotting, there's time before dinner to rest or swim in the hotel's magical pool.



Overnight: Jetwing Yala Hotel

Meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 11 Tuesday

YALA NATIONAL PARK

An early morning or late afternoon jeep safari of about 3 hours is included today. Your choice – up early and take a boxed breakfast or head off after lunch to Yala National Park. Its open, undulating terrain made it known for elephants, bears, monkeys, wild boar & birdlife but recently the park has received notoriety for leopard conservation. Its beautiful salt and fresh water lagoons are a haven for a large variety of resident and migrant birds and crocodiles. Tonight, enjoy a dinner staged in the forest surrounding the hotel.



Overnight at Jetwing Yala

Meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 12 Wednesday

YALA to GALLE

Hit the road at about 9.00am and stop for lunch along the way (own cost) before arriving at the hotel right on beautiful Unawatuna Beach on the southwest coast. Close to Galle, here you'll experience the different flavour and culture of this former Dutch region. Dine out (own expense) at one of the many local restaurants.



Overnight: Calmender Hotel, Unawatuna

Meals: Breakfast only — a great area to eat out locally

Day 13 Thursday

GALLE

The morning is free to relax on the beach or explore the busy and colourful local area. At about 3.00pm your guide will take you to the old Dutch fort in Galle where sunset makes for fabulous photos. Watch the locals enjoy the beach; stroll through the shops for great arts and crafts; spot the turtles offshore or join the local kids in a game of cricket. Dine at the fort or head back to the hotel.



Overnight: Calmender Hotel, Unawatuna

Meals: Breakfast only

Day 14 Thursday

GALLE – AIRPORT – HOME

Your last day before flying home late in the evening. Spend the day as you wish and use your room until 6.00pm, have dinner locally and enjoy the facilities until 8.00pm when you depart for the airport with your guide.

Overnight: Calmender Hotel, Unawatuna

Meals: Breakfast only

Day 15 Saturday

ARRIVE HOME

Arrive into Sydney Airport in the early evening, leaving you all of Sunday to sort your photos and relive the wonderful memories.





Sri Lanka Family Tour

Please contact us for a quote.

Minimum numbers: The tour requires a minimum of 4 people to guarantee departure.

How to book: To secure your place on the tour, complete a booking form and provide a \$250 deposit per person at the same time (or before). We offer a full travel service and can plan and book your flights subject to your preferences across airlines, schedules and availability. Please call for a quote.

Payment terms: If not booked on a group basis, payment for flights falls due within 5 days of booking them. If booked on a group basis, total tour cost less deposit paid is due no later than 60 days prior to departure. Failure to meet these terms may mean your place on the tour is forfeited.

Payment for optional excursions: Your in-country guide will keep a tab of all of the extra excursions and additional expenses incurred by you and your family. The final amount due will be advised on the last day and is payable by cash only (not credit card) in local, Australian or US currency. For costs of the optional excursions, please refer to the separate brochure which will allow you to budget.

This brochure provides general information and photos are for representation only. Information is correct as at time of printing, however changes may occur without notice.

It is the traveller's responsibility to check individual itineraries in detail in conjunction with the complete Terms and Conditions (including for currency fluctuations) available on our website at www.bluedottravel.com.au before making a decision to travel.

ACCOMMODATION

All accommodation is of good quality, around 3½ to 4½-star. At a minimum, you will have clean rooms and comfortable beds wherever you go and sometimes, impressive luxury. The local service can be different to here at home but just remember you are on holidays in a very special part of the world.

The properties and room types mentioned in this itinerary are those we have requested. Should any not be available, an equivalent alternative will be provided. Please view the links below only as an indication of what awaits.

- [Jetwing Blue, Negombo](#)
- [Cinnamon Lodge, Habarana](#)
- [Cinnamon Citadel, Kandy](#)
- [Grand Hotel, Nuwara Eliya](#)
- [Jetwing Yala](#)
- [Calmender Hotel, Unawatuna](#)

