

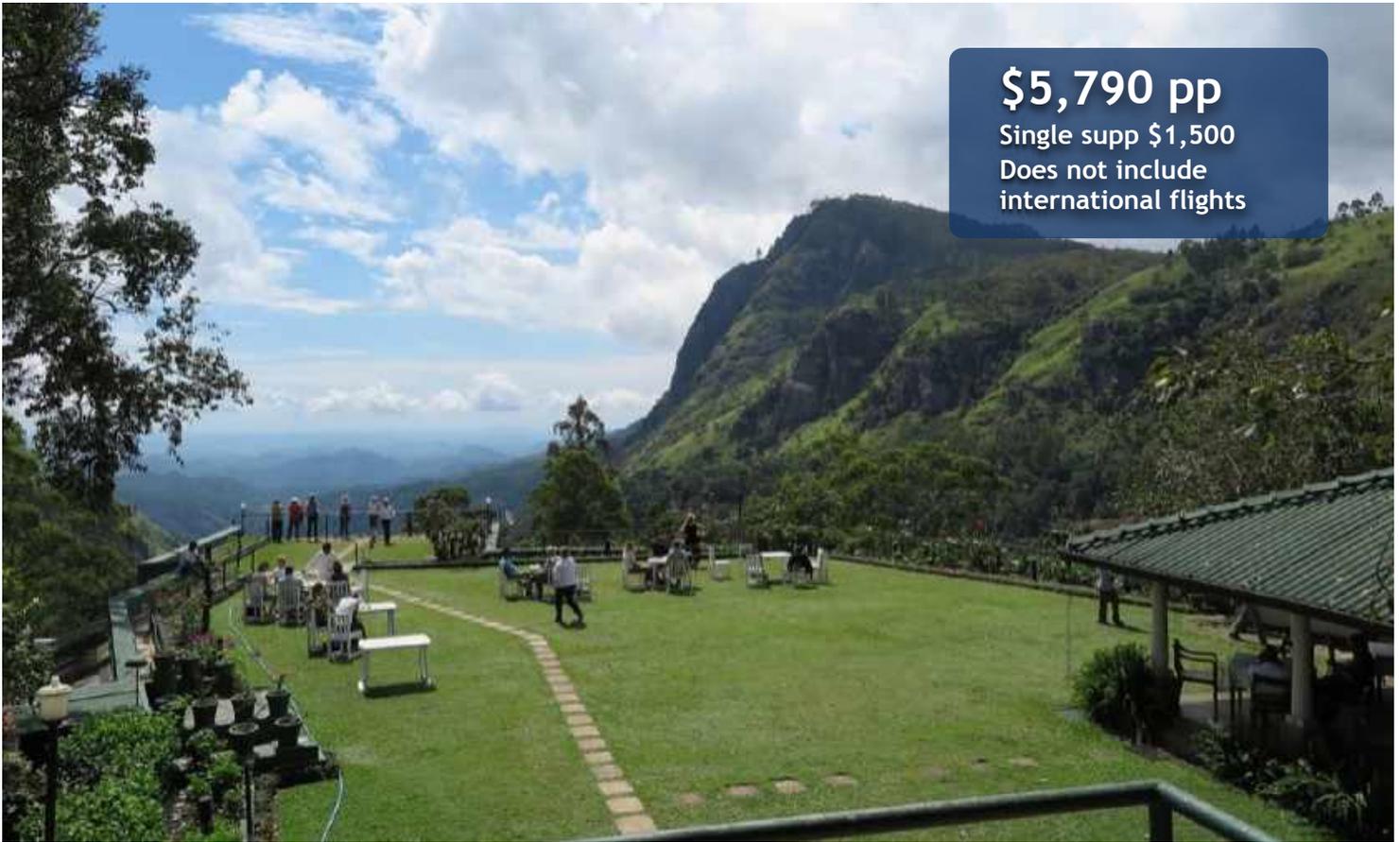
Stunning Sri Lanka

Departing
6th November 2023

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different





\$5,790 pp

Single supp \$1,500

Does not include
international flights

SRI LANKA – FOOD, SAFARIS AND HISTORY

Sri Lanka is an island-nation in the Indian Ocean separated from India by the Palk Strait. It is “almost” linked to India 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 only ceased in 1972 with the appointment of a president. Sri Lanka’s population of around 22 million is multi ethnic with four main groups. Sinhalese (mostly Buddhist) are the majority, followed by Tamils (mostly Hindu), Moors (with Arab origins) and Burghers – a mixed group of Portuguese and Dutch origin who are mainly Christians.

About 30% of the island is covered by forest and about 10% of this is national park. Generally speaking, it is a poor country but tourism is helping to change that. The quality of hotels and accommodation where we stay is extremely good. Apart from the tourist industry, Sri Lanka has a key source of income from tea exportations, spices, rubber textiles and petroleum refining. We’ll visit the temperate tea growing region with its rolling hills and tea plantations.

There are so many reasons to visit this country. There is much to see and do, yet it is a relatively small country, with each region wonderfully different. The indigenous and colonial history is fascinating. The food is fabulous. The scenery is spectacular. Plus, the abundance of wildlife, a drawcard for travellers, will take you by surprise. Visiting the national parks you can spot sambar deer, Sri Lankan elephants, leopards, sloth bears, crocodiles, water buffalo and hundreds of birds species.

It’s no wonder that a few years back, Lonely Planet rated this wonderful country as the “hottest travel destination on the planet”. Grab your camera and joins us.



**DAY 1, Monday 6th November
TRANSFER AND ARRIVAL**

Depart Australia and arrive into Colombo international airport around midnight (flights TBA and not included in tour cost). You'll be met by your guide and transferred to your hotel in Negombo, Jetwing Blu (or similar) about 25 minutes drive. *Meals in flight*



**Day 2, Tuesday
7th November
NEGOMBO**

Given the late arrival of your flight, today is a late start. Sleep in and have a hearty breakfast (try the egg

hopper) before heading off on a tour late morning to the famous Negombo Fish Markets. Called Lellama, which means the place of bargain, buying and selling is done in a rhythmic fashion and is a unique aspect of Sri Lankan markets. After that, you'll return to the hotel for relaxation or to stroll around the surrounds before driving to Colombo to visit some of the capital's core sights. Your guide

will help you exchange your Aussie dollars for the local currency during the day. *B/D*

**Day 3, Wednesday 8th November
NEGOMBO — HABARANA**

After breakfast you'll depart for The Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage. Located on the banks of the Maha Oya, the orphanage houses young elephants who find themselves displaced and lost from their natural habitats for various reasons - environmental changes due to development projects, injury or being abandoned by their parents. Then, travel to Habarana where, late in the afternoon, you'll have time to relax and enjoy the beautiful grounds of the hotel. Located in the north central area of the island, Habarana is a part of Sri Lanka's dry zone. Thanks to the genius of the ancient kings dating as far back as the 5th Century AD, the Sri Lankan dry zone is anything but, with hundreds of lakes and reservoirs which are



connected by an elaborate network of canals. The region has breathtakingly beautiful scenery. Dinner and 3 nights stay at Cinnamon Lodge Harbarana (or similar). *B/D*

 **Day 4, Thursday
9th November
HABARANA
REGION**

Over the next two days, you'll visit the following places of



interest. Your guide will coordinate the order of each destination with the group.

- Sigiriya Rock Fortress
- Tour of the ancient medieval kingdom ruins of Polonnaruwa (with a cycling option at a small additional cost)
- Morning village tour of of Hiriwadauuna via tuk tuk, bullock cart and boat
- Safari jeep tour of Minneya National Park

Lunch is included today at a local village restaurant. Dinner is at the Cinnamon Lodge. *B/L/D*

 **Day 5, Friday 10th November
HABARANA REGION**

The UNESCO listed Polonnaruwa rose to fame as the country's capital after the decline of the previous capital Anuradhapura. The monuments of this medieval city are relatively well preserved and give clear evidence of the glory of Sri Lanka's past. Hiriwadunne Village, just 10 minutes from your hotel, passes the surrounding scrub jungle, marshland and a local village - a hive of early morning activity. The amazing birdlife, butterflies and possible sightings of crocodile only add to the charm of seeing the villagers as they go about their early morning tasks. One of the main icons of the country, the Rock Fortress of Sigiriya is a must-see. A mighty 200m high fortress of a 5th century King, Sigiriya is famous for entrancingly beautiful frescoes which are found in a sheltered pocket of the rock. The old stairway to the top led through the mouth of a huge crouching lion, carved from the rock — today only the paws remain. Ruins of the royal citadel are on the summit. Minneya National Park is a relatively small park making it easy to spot elephants and dozens of other animal species and birds in their natural habitat via 4WD jeep. Dinner at the Cinnamon Lodge. *B/D*

 **Day 6, Saturday 11th November
HABARANA — KANDY**

After breakfast you'll depart for Kandy. En-route, visit the UNESCO listed Dambulla Cave Temple and Spice Garden Matale for tour and lunch. The climb to the Cave Temple is steep but well worth

the effort. Watch out for the monkeys, they can be very curious! The spice gardens tour is very interesting and good for lunch (take your mozzie repellent). Check in to your hotel and then transfer to the city for an evening service at the Sacred Temple of the Tooth of Buddha. Dinner and two nights at your hotel — the OZO, Kandy (or similar). *B/L/D*

**Day 7, Sunday 12th November
KANDY**

Today you'll walk through the busy city of Kandy. The Sacred City of Kandy was inscribed by UNESCO as Sri Lanka's fifth and the world's 450th World Heritage site, cited for its religious and historical significance as an internationally renowned Buddhist pilgrimage site and as Sri Lanka's last royal capital. The markets, old colonial buildings plus the shops in the old slum area are fascinating. In the afternoon, the vehicle will take you to Arthur's seat viewpoint (high above the city), the botanical gardens. Later, you can watch the local cultural show with singing and dancing. Subject to time, there may be an option in the afternoon to visit a local gem factory. This is a medium/hard sell style destination — you've been warned! (Laze around the pool or visit town if this is not for you). Dinner at the OZO, Kandy. *B/D*

**Day 8, Monday
13th
November
KANDY —
NUWARA
ELIYA**

Today you'll take the train to the tea-growing region of Sri



Lanka — Nuwara Eliya. The trip will take about 4 hours and will take you through mesmerising countryside. On arrival, check in to your hotel for two nights — the "very British" Grand Hotel. In the afternoon you'll take a sightseeing tour of the town and visit a tea plantation before returning to the hotel for dinner. *B/L/D*

 **Day 9, Tuesday 14th November
HORTAIN PLAINS**

Those up for a trek will take an early morning excursion to The Hortain Plains National Park and World's Ends. The trek to Worlds End and the beautiful Baker's Falls is around 3 hours. This is a very scenic region with an astounding variety of landscapes from mountains to grass lands, from marshes to trout filled streams. The trek could be considered easy to medium level, however, there are a few short, harder sections. It will depart about 5.30am and return around midday. You'll be driven straight to the stunning Tea Factory Hotel, for lunch, which is included. This is an old tea factory in the

most beautiful of settings you could imagine. Drive back to the Grand Hotel late in the afternoon. *B/L/D*

Day 10, Wednesday 15th November NUWARA ELIYA — ELLA

Today you'll drive about 90 minutes to the very pretty township of Ella. The views from certain lookouts in this region are stunning. Check in to the gorgeous 98 Acre Resort (or similar) for the night. In the afternoon, you will visit the wonderful creation of British Colonials named "Nine Arch Bridge". This is one of the most visited and photographed bridges in Asia. Wander the streets of the little mountain town of Ella for some shopping at the arts and crafts stores. Great cafes too! *B/L/D*



Day 11, Thursday 16th November ELLA TO YALA

Before breakfast another opportunity to

walk to the Little Adam's Peak to watch the Sunrise. After breakfast, you'll check out of the hotel for transfer by coach to Yala on the south east of the island. The national park in Yala is the second biggest in the country. On arrival, check in to the lovely Jetwing Yala (or similar) for two nights. The stunning resort is the perfect place to relax and take a swim in what could be the best pool in Sri Lanka! Dinner at the hotel. Warning... you may never want to leave. *B/D*

Day 12, Friday 17th November YALA

Today you'll take a jeep safari either early in the morning or late in the afternoon – you choose. Yala National Park is known for its abundant elephants plus leopards, bears, crocodiles, wild boar and many species of birdlife. Its open undulating terrain made it famous for elephants for many years, but



the park has also received much recognition through National Geographic and the Discovery channels, who documented the leopard research conservation and identification

program. Several salt and fresh water lagoons are a haven for a large variety of resident and migrant birds. Dinner and overnight at Jetwing Yala. *B/D*

Day 13, Saturday 18th November YALA — GALLE

After breakfast the group will depart for UNESCO-listed Galle on the Southwest coast to experience the style, architecture and cuisine. The south of Sri Lanka has evolved a distinctly unique culture. On route we'll visit a local family village home for lunch where you will join in the preparation of a few typically southern dishes. Learn how to prepare fish ambul thiyal and a curry made of young jackfruit which, correctly prepared makes a great substitute for meat. It's a favourite among Sri Lanka's vegetarians! The curry powder used for this dish is a unique mix of powdered coriander, cumin, cinnamon, cardamom, and cloves. In the afternoon we'll arrive at the hotel with a little spare time before exploring the Dutch city of Galle on foot. A photo of the lighthouse with the sun setting is quite special. Dinner and overnight stay at Amari, Galle (or similar). *B/D*

Day 14, Sunday 19th November GALLE AND DEPARTURE

Today could be spent enjoying a wander through Galle at your leisure (great for shopping) and around the lovely beach resort. Another option is to take a Madu River boat trip for lunch and see the local fisherman go about their day. The mangroves are amazingly beautiful and there's birdlife to be spotted. (Note, the South Coast around Galle is where the famous still pole fishermen used to fish. Sadly, nowadays they'll do it only for a few dollars so the tourists can take photos). The hotel is booked for a late checkout. You'll need to depart for the airport at about 7pm (to be confirmed by your guide). *B/D*



Day 15, Monday 20th November ARRIVE HOME

Your flight home (not included in the tour cost) is likely to be very early in the morning. You'll need to be at the airport a few hours before departure. Your guide will stop at a hotel nearer to the airport for rest, wifi etc. *Meals in flight*



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.