



## Itinerary

### Sri Lanka & Maldives: Ancient Lands to Island Sands

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE:** Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.

#### DAY 1: Arrive Colombo ~ Negombo

Upon arrival to the wonderful island of Sri Lanka, you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel in Negombo, approximately a 30-minute drive from the airport. Most airlines arrive around 10pm so it will likely be a late arrival. Extend your time in Negombo by adding extra nights pre-tour.

**MEALS:** None

**OVERNIGHT (3 Star):** Terrace Green Hotel & Spa (Deluxe Room) or similar

**OVERNIGHT (4 Star):** Pledge Scape (Deluxe Room) or similar

#### DAY 2: Negombo ~ Sigiriya ~ Dambulla

Rise early this morning for a visit to the Negombo fish market. Morning is the best time to visit the market – your leader will help you navigate the organised frenzy of vendors displaying delicacies like crab, lobsters, and squid.

Say goodbye to Negombo and make the drive to Dambulla, where you'll spend the next two nights. Settle into your hotel then in the late afternoon, head out for one of the highlights of any visit to Sri Lanka, a visit to the magnificent palace of Sigiriya (Lion Rock). This dramatic rocky outcrop, rising from the surrounding plains is topped by a ruined palace. It's a good workout to get to the top – your leader will share stories of the ancient civilization who once lived atop the rock as you climb, and the sight at the top makes it well worth it. In the evening, return to Dambulla.

#### Special Information:

*Today's total driving time is approximately 5 hours.*

*The visit to Lion Rock takes around 3.5 hours in total. From the Lion's Paw there is a steep, 30-minute climb over often narrow walkways and steps to reach all the points of interest at the site. Those who do not want to climb can wait at the Lion's Paw until the rest of the group return. You must climb to access sites like the water garden, boulder garden, frescoes, and the mirror wall.*

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT (3 Star):** Lario Resort (Standard Room)

**OVERNIGHT (4 Star):** Fresco Water Villa (Deluxe Room)

**OPTIONAL TOURS:**

### **DAY 3: Polonnaruwa ~ Minneriya Elephant Safari**

Morning optional activity to Polonnaruwa, the capital of the Indian Chola Dynasty after Anuradhapura was conquered in the late 10th century. These ruins are close together and generally in much better repair than those you have just seen. Cycling amid the remains of 1000-year-old Polonnaruwa is once again the best way to get around. Once the heat of the day has eased, you'll visit more palaces, temples, and stupas. A likely highlight will be the massive stone Buddhas: 14-metre-high granite carvings of the iconic reclining Buddha which represent the zenith of Sinhalese rock carving. You'll also visit the well laid-out museum, which has scale models of many of the buildings to show how they would have existed in their time.

In the evening enjoy a game drive in the Minneriya National Park (Approximate 40 Mins) Minneriya National Park is a haven for flora and fauna. Being part of the elephant corridor, which joins up with Kaudulla National Park and Wasgomuwa National Park, you have guaranteed sightings of elephants throughout the year. Every year during August to October, one of the most awesome wildlife spectacles "The Gathering" takes place. Over 300 elephants are seen making their way to Minneriya tank as the ancient tank slowly dries up giving way to fresh grass and shoots which is a feast in abundance. Apart from elephants, there is a huge species of birds, mammals, reptiles, fishes, butterflies, etc. The highlight of the park is the Minneriya reservoir with its historical importance, built in 3rd century AD by the famous monarch King Mahasen. It covers an area of 4,670 acres. Return to your hotel and spend the rest of the day at leisure.

#### **Special Information:**

*Depending on the period of the year / weather we will provide the safari at different national parks with prior notice, Kaudulla National Park or Eco Park which are located within the same region.*

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT (3 Star):** Lario Resort (Standard Room)

**OVERNIGHT (4 Star):** Fresco Water Villa (Deluxe Room)

#### **OPTIONAL TOURS:**

*Polonnaruwa AUD\$125 pp*

*Cycle Hire \$12 pp*

*Picnic Lunch \$17 pp*

### **DAY 4: Dambulla Cave Temple ~ Kandy**

This morning you will take a short drive to the incredible Dambulla Cave Temple. Here you'll discover five caves filled with around 150 beautiful statues and paintings of Buddha – some as many as 2000 years old. Explore the magical cave complex as your leader explains why this World Heritage-listed site has been a place of worship for thousands of years. In the afternoon, start your journey to Kandy. Along the way, stop off in the city of Matale where you will visit a local spice garden and learn about the spices that have played such an important role in Sri Lanka's cultural heritage. Continue to Kandy where you'll have a free evening to explore. Though it's the second-largest city in the country, Kandy maintains a laidback

atmosphere. Perhaps take a peaceful stroll around the city's centre piece lake.

**Special Information:**

*Today's total driving time is approximately 2.5 hours.*

*Please note that there are many steps to the caves and a dress code which requires you to remove your shoes and cover up your shoulders and legs.*

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT (3 Star):** Oak Ray Regency (Standard Room)

**OVERNIGHT (4 Star):** Royal Kandyan (Deluxe Room)

## DAY 5: Kandy ~ Cultural Show

Encircled by verdant hill country and home to a picturesque lake, bustling market, old shops and some great restaurants, Kandy is one of Sri Lanka's most pleasant cities. It was at one time also home to Sri Lanka's last king, who managing to resist European control long after the coastal areas had surrendered. This morning optional activity - you'll can visit Dalada Maligawa (the Temple of the Tooth), which houses the country's most sacred relic: a tooth said to be the Buddha's. Pilgrims have been coming to pay homage at this site since the 16th century.

Visit the magnificent Peradeniya Botanical Gardens with its immense fig tree and impressive orchid collection. Considered among the finest botanical gardens in all of Asia, this is a great spot for the kids to run around in. Next up, witness the cultural show. In the early evening, join a Local family to spoil your sweet tooth with a Kandyan sweet-filled Sri Lankan dinner and cooking class.

**Special Information:**

*When visiting the Temples, you must take your hats and shoes off, do not leave your shoes at the side of the road or the monkeys will run off with them. Store them with the 'shoe keepers' for a small charge or put them in your rucksack.*

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT (3 Star):** Oak Ray Regency (Standard Room)

**OVERNIGHT (4 Star):** Royal Kandyan (Deluxe Room)

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**OPTIONAL TOURS:**

*Temple of The Tooth AUD\$14 pp*

## DAY 6: Scenic Train from Kandy to Nanu Oya ~ Nuwara Eliya

Depart Kandy and board a morning train bound for Nuwara Eliya. Nestled even deeper into tea plantation country, Nuwara Eliya sits at an elevation of 1800 metres, making it one of the coolest regions in Sri Lanka. Favoured by the Scots and English during the colonial-era, remnants of the past can be seen in sculpted gardens and manor homes decorating the city today. In the evening head to the sky-scraping Single Tree temple and embark on a short 40- minute hike, taking in spectacular views of the surrounding

hills and tea fields.

**Special Information:**

*Today's train journey is approximately 3.5 hours.*

*Train tickets from Kandy to Nanu Oya are in very high demand, especially over high season (December - April, and August). While we always try our best to secure tickets, on the rare occasion that we cannot you will be provided with a private vehicle.*

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT (3 Star):** Oak-Ray Summer Hill Breeze (Deluxe Room)

**OVERNIGHT (4 Star):** Mirage Kings Cottage (Deluxe Room)

### DAY 7: Tea Factory Tour ~ Colombo

Make a morning visit to the Pedro Tea Estate. Built in 1885, this fascinating factory still features some original pieces of machinery. You'll have a new appreciation for your humble morning brew after learning about the production process and discovering how the finest tea leaves are transformed into Ceylon black tea. If touring the factory inspires a thirst, you'll have the chance to sample some of the final product yourself. Thereafter, make your way to the Colombo.

As the capital city of Sri Lanka, Colombo holds the lifeblood of our island amidst a bustling array of cultural, shopping, and dining experiences. At the heart of the city is the picturesque Beira Lake, which hosts the Seema Malaka and adjacent Gangaramaya Temples against the backdrop of Colombo's rising futuristic skyline. A step back in time, however, is best taken at the National Museum – a refurbished mansion of a colonial governor, which sits close to the lush Viharamahadevi Park as well as the historic Independence Square.

**Special Information:**

*Today's total driving time is approximately 5.30 hours.*

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT (3 Star):** Mirage Colombo (Standard Room)

**OVERNIGHT (4 Star):** Morven Hotel Colombo (Deluxe Room)

### DAY 8: Colombo ~ Maldives

Following breakfast, you'll be taken to the airport for your flight to the Maldives. Upon arrival at Malé international airport, make your way to the Club Adaaran Rannalhi resort desk. Check in for your speedboat transfer to the resort and enjoy the quick 45 minutes transfer to paradise.

Upon arrival, settle into your accommodation, and spend your first afternoon at your own pace. Stroll along the soft sandy beaches, dip into the crystal-clear lagoon, or simply relax in the tropical surroundings. End your day with a delightful international buffet dinner at the main restaurant and enjoy the serene atmosphere as you unwind.

**MEALS:** Lunch, Dinner, Snacks

**OVERNIGHT:** Club Adaaran Rannalhi Resort

### DAY 9: Maldives Free Day

Start your morning with a hearty breakfast before diving into a day full of activities. Choose from complimentary options like snorkelling to explore the vibrant marine life or optional excursions (\*surcharges apply) such as island hopping, dolphin safaris, or a visit to a traditional Maldivian village. For a bit of indulgence, book a relaxing massage, reflexology session, or manicure at the resort's spa (surcharges apply). In the afternoon, try one of the exciting water sports like windsurfing, scuba diving\*, or water skiing\*.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Snacks

**OVERNIGHT:** Club Adaaran Rannalhi Resort

### DAY 10: Maldives Free Day

Today is all about doing as much or as little as you like. Spend your morning lounging on the beach, taking in the tropical views, or exploring the lagoon with complimentary snorkelling gear. For those seeking adventure, consider optional activities (\*surcharges apply) like a guided fishing trip, or take a relaxing spa treatment to rejuvenate.

For something special, treat yourself to a unique destination dining experience\* or enjoy refreshing cocktails at the resort's bar as the sun sets.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Snacks

**OVERNIGHT:** Club Adaaran Rannalhi Resort

### DAY: 11 Depart Maldives

After breakfast and check out you will be transferred by speedboat back to Malé in time for your return flights home. You will be advised of your transfer time 24 hours prior. Alternatively, extend your stay by booking extra nights at the resort! Pricing is listed in the 'Options & Upgrades' tab. Contact us to purchase.

**MEALS:** Breakfast