

Sri Lanka



29 Dec 2024 - 13 Jan 2025



Colombo • Anuradhapura • Wilpattu National Park • Mihintale Jaffna • Trincomalee • Sigiriya • Polonurruwa • Dambulla Kandy • Pinnawela • Negombo

Sri Lanka is steeped in a history dating back over 2,000 years and is home to some of the best preserved ancient monuments in all of Asia. Here a centuries old heritage lives on in the culture and daily lives of the Sri Lankan people encompassing a rich tapestry of cultural practices, beliefs and traditional ways of life. Join WEA Travel touring the island's surprising north to discover the beauty, history and cultural diversity of this ancient land and its welcoming people. Explore a path less travelled, UNESCO designated World Heritage sites, authentic villages, old arts and crafts, vibrant bazaars and charming colonial architecture on this niche cultural tour. Extraordinary landscapes, lush tea plantations, breathtaking beaches and fabulous cuisine also delight visitors to this jewel in the Indian Ocean.

Tour Leader: Helen Bulis has qualifications in Sociology, Women's Studies and Art History. She is a great communicator and a friendly leader who has led groups throughout the world, South East Asia and Sri Lanka for WEA Travel. Passionate about art and history, when in Adelaide she is a guide at the South Australian Art Gallery.

Inclusions: Airfares with Singapore Airlines; Fully escorted Adelaide to Adelaide; Hotel accommodation (average 4 star); Local guides; All meals as per itinerary; All entrance fees; All transport including transfers and comfortable coaches; Pre & Post tour get togethers; Study Notes.



16 Days \$8995

Based on twin share + airline taxes (\$255 Feb 2024) + visa (USD \$50 Feb 2024)
Single supplement \$1050 • Balance due 10 October 2024

Day 1 Sunday 29 December

Adelaide to Colombo

Depart Adelaide this morning with Singapore Airlines to Singapore. Here you connect with your flight to Colombo where you are welcomed and transferred to your superb hotel for the next three nights.

Overnight Colombo
Meals in flight

Day 2 Monday 30 December

Colombo

After a leisurely breakfast you begin exploring Colombo. The capital of Sri Lanka has been known to traders for 2000 years and was ceded to the British Empire in 1815. It is an eclectic and mesmerising mix of old and new with the relaxed charm of a bygone era melding with the energy of a lively city. Your touring includes Gangaramaya Buddhist Temple, the Fort district with the Pettah Colombo's leading bazaar district; Galle Face Green Viharamahadevi Park & Beira Lake. (sights may vary on the day according to local conditions)

Overnight Colombo
Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

Day 3 Tuesday 31 December

Colombo

This morning you have a guided tour of the National Museum of Colombo which houses a vast collection of books, archaic palm manuscripts, rock sculptures and a unique collection of demon masks. The remainder of the day is at your leisure. There is so much to see and do in this colourful city you'll be spoilt for choice and your tour leader is on hand to assist. Tonight a gala New Year's Eve dinner has been arranged for you which is a wonderful way to see in 2025.

Overnight Colombo
Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner



Day 4 Wednesday 01 January

Colombo to Anuradhapura

Today you travel to Anuradhapura in north central Sri Lanka. This stupendous UNESCO World Heritage site was the first capital between the 5th and 9th centuries AD. Considered the grandest city of ancient Sri Lanka and one of the most sacred Buddhist sites in the world, its riches include Ruwanweli Maha Seya, the greatest stupa in Sri Lanka and the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhiya, the sacred fig tree, one of the world's oldest. Marvel at the serene beauty of the Samadhi Buddha here as well as plethora of treasures.

Overnight Anuradhapura
Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner



Day 5 Thursday 02 January

Wilpattu National Park

Visit Wilpattu National Park today. An easy drive from Anuradhapura, Wilpattu was designated a sanctuary in 1905 and became a national park in 1938 making it one of the oldest national parks in Sri Lanka. It is world renowned for its leopard population and other animals you may see include elephant, sloth bear, water buffalo, spotted deer and mongoose. There are over a hundred natural lakes and marshy wetlands in the park which attract large populations of water birds such as painted storks, spoonbills, ibis, egret and purple herons.

Overnight Anuradhapura

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner



Day 6 Friday 03 January

Anuradhapura, Mininthale & Jaffna

Depart Anuradhapura this morning stopping at the sacred forest mountain in Mininthale where Buddhism blossomed. There are rock boulders scattered throughout this ancient site and numerous caves which were used by monks for silence and meditation away from any distraction. Time worn architectural feats here include the renowned Kanthaka Chetiya Vahalkada circular stupa on a small peak, the Alms Hall, the ancient stairway of 1840 granite steps, the Refectory and an ancient hospital. See the Mininthale collection of inscriptions written in Brahmi characters mostly in the 10th century, and beautiful carvings and statues of animals, people, divine figures and floral motifs, as well as stone balustrades, pokunas (age old bathing pools or ponds) and dagobas with your local guide. Continue to Jaffna on the far north coast for the next two nights.

Overnight Jaffna

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner



Day 7 Saturday 04 January

Jaffna

Explore the many historical and cultural sights in Jaffna today and experience the rhythm of daily life in this seaside city

away from the beaten path. The majority of the population here are Sri Lankan Tamils and Moors, Hindus and Indian Tamils. Its colonial past includes occupation by the Portuguese in the 1600s the Dutch then the British in 1796. Tamil Tigers occupied the city from the late 1980s until 1995. There are many educational institutions here established during colonial times and its popular historical sites include the Jaffna library and Jaffna Fort. You visit Jaffna market and sample Northern Sri Lankan cuisine which is particularly fragrant and delicious.

Overnight Jaffna

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner



Day 8 Sunday 05 January

Jaffna to Trincomalee

Travel to Trincomalee after breakfast, a sacred city on the gentler east coast and one of the main centres of Tamil speaking culture in Sri Lanka. Beautiful sights here include the ancient Koneswaram Temple,

the temple of a thousand pillars with its ornate shrine and massive Shiva statue and the elaborate Dakshina -Then Kailasam medieval Hindu Temple. You also visit Fort Frederick, Trincomalee war cemetery and the colourful Pathirakali Amman Temple. Trincomalee was fortified following the Portuguese conquest of the Jaffna kingdom. The huge fort was built by the Portuguese in 1623 and occupied by the Dutch in the 18th century also the French.

Overnight Trincomalee

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner



Day 9 Monday 06 January

Kokilai Lagoon

After breakfast you take a short drive south of Trincomalee to board a launch for a bird watching tour on Kokilai Lagoon, a pristine natural water body consisting of seagrass beds, oyster beds, mangrove swamps, deltas and mudflats. It is home to a large variety of bird and wildlife including elephants and crocodiles.

Overnight Trincomalee

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

Day 10 Tuesday 07 January

Trincomalee to Polonnaruwa & Sigiriya

Visit the second oldest of Sri Lanka's kingdoms UNESCO World Heritage protected Polonnaruwa today. See its medieval monuments attesting to the glory of Sri Lanka's past including the Royal Palace complex, the Gal Viharaya with its four magnificent statues of Buddha cut from a single slab of granite, the Shiva temple, the Lotus bath and King Parakramabahu's statue. Continue to Sigiriya known as the Lion Rock, another World Heritage site and one of Sri Lanka's premier attractions. Over the next two days you explore Sigiriya, Asia's best preserved city of the first millennium, and its surrounds. A fusion of symmetrical and asymmetrical elements you see the remains of the sophisticated irrigation systems, ramparts, water gardens, moats and palace ruins.

Overnight Sigiriya

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner



Day 11 Wednesday 08 January

Sigiriya

Today you visit a local village by riding in a traditional bullock cart through the paddy fields. Learn about local agriculture and lifestyles and enjoy an authentic Sri Lankan style lunch. You also visit the Minneriya Safari Park where hundreds of Sri Lankan elephants gather on the grasslands.

Overnight Sigiriya

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner



Day 12 Thursday 09 January

Sigiriya to Dambulla & Kandy

Depart Sigiriya for Dambulla Caves the largest and best preserved cave temple complex in the country. Dating back almost two thousand years these five caves are full of mosaics, murals and paintings relating to Buddha as well as statues of Sri Lankan kings and Hindu gods. In Matale you visit a Spice Garden for a presentation on using plants in medicine and cooking. Throughout the ages Sri Lanka has been renowned for its fragrant cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, mace and pungent spices. Continue to beautiful Kandy nestled in the highlands amongst tropical forests and tea plantations and check in for the next two nights.

Overnight Kandy

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

Day 13 Friday 10 January

Kandy

Explore exotic Kandy, the last stronghold of the Sinhala Kings and a cultural sanctuary where legends, traditions and folklore

thrive. An exquisite city of temples, palaces and fine gardens you tour Dalada Maligawa, the famed Temple of the Sacred Tooth the resting place of one of Buddha's teeth, Hindu Shrines, the old Royal Palace and the Royal Botanical Gardens and Orchid House, said to be one of the most beautiful gardens in all of Asia. Kandy is also synonymous with arts and crafts and you visit a craft village to see fine local craftsmen at work. Tonight you are treated to a cultural dance performance.

Overnight Kandy

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

Day 14 Saturday 11 January

Kandy to Pinnewela & Negombo

Journey through picturesque high country and velvety green tea plantations today stopping for a guided tour to learn the art of tea growing, picking and tasting. Continue to Pinnewela Elephant orphanage, set up by the National Zoological Gardens Department to care for young abandoned or displaced elephants.

Overnight Negombo

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

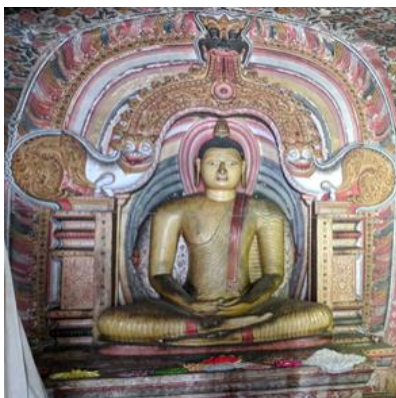
Day 15 Sunday 12 January

Negombo

Today is a free day at your lovely hotel to explore the interesting old town quarter at leisure, enjoy the tropical beaches, relax and celebrate a fabulous journey.

Overnight in flight

Breakfast • Dinner



Day 16 Monday 13 January

Colombo to Singapore & Adelaide

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Singapore just past midnight. From here you connect on to Perth and Adelaide.

Overnight in flight

Meals in flight



E&O



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ALL SIGHTS SUBJECT TO LOCAL AVAILABILITY ON THE DAY