

The Best of Sri Lanka's Nature, Culture & Wildlife | 17 Days



Sri Lanka is a paradise for nature lovers with various possibilities to explore its Natural History & the rich culture. This 17-day holiday trip with special focus to the nature and cultural highlights of the island to observe wildlife are another main focus on this trip. Of course, the most beautiful beaches of Sri Lanka should not be missing.

This is the most comprehensive itinerary of the island, especially customised for travel-to-nature Asia customers, as it includes the undiscovered Northern provinces, an area where few tourists are yet to travel. From the ornate Hindu temples of Jaffna in the north and the secluded beaches of the east, to the wildlife of rarely visited Gal Oya national park, Wilpattu – the very first national park of Sri Lanka, and the famous and most visited Yala National Park and the popular highlights of Sigiriya and Kandy in-between; this is a trip that explores everything that Sri Lanka has to offer.

Trip Highlights

- The unexplored north, including the Hindu temples of Jaffna
- Game drives in Wilpattu, Gal Oya and Yala National Parks
- Sri Lanka Leopard & Indian Elephant among mammals likely to be encountered
- Colourful birds and butterflies with a rich flora
- Crowd less Trincomalee Beach
- Discover the ancient capital of Anuradhapura
- Climb the rock fortress at Sigiriya for breathtaking views

- Explore Polonnaruwa and Primates Research Centre
- Magnificent Cave Temple at Dambulla
- The beautiful lakeside town of Kandy
- Galle Dutch Fortress Accommodation at well appointed & exclusive hotels with traditional character

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Colombo | Transfer to Negombo (13 km | 30 mins)

Welcome to Sri Lanka! Upon arrival in Colombo a *travel-to-nature Asia* Tour guide/leader, who will accompany us throughout the tour, will be at the airport to greet and take us to our hotel which is about 15 km away and takes approximately 30 mins from the airport. Please look out for your name-card once you exit out of arrival area.

Rest of the day at leisure.

Accommodation: Goldi Sands Hotel
Meal: Dinner

Day 2: Drive Negombo - Wilpattu (130 km | 3 hrs)

After breakfast at the hotel, we will leave for Wilpattu National Park on the coastal road. On arrival at Wilpattu National Park we will be transferred to Big Game Campsite for accommodation in Camps. Lunch at the Campsite. Leave on a Game Drive by Safari Jeeps in Wilpattu National Park. Return to Campsite. BBQ Dinner.

Accommodation: Big Game Camp
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 3: Morning Safari Game Drive | Afternoon drive to Anuradhapura (50 km | 1 hr)

Breakfast at Campsite. Morning we leave for a safari game drive at the Wilpattu National Park. On completion return to the campsite.

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Afternoon proceed to the sacred city of Anuradhapura to explore. Anuradhapura is Sri Lanka's ancient capital, 5th century BC - 9th century AD and the centre of the island's Buddhist civilization. In antiquity and the interest, it is the equal of any ancient 'buried city'. The island's oldest Buddhist shrines - some dating back to 3rd century BC are found here. Impressive white 'dagabas' (relic chambers) and monuments, embellished with handsome stone carvings and sculpture, the oldest documented tree on earth - The Sri Maha Bodhi (over 2000 years old), pleasure gardens, beautifully executed stone baths and ponds, a superb irrigation system of reservoirs and canals are the attractions of Anuradhapura. Check in at Hotel in Anuradhapura.

Accommodation: Rajarata Hotel
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 4: Drive Anuradhapura - Jaffna (196 km | 3.65 hrs)

Breakfast at the Campsite. Leave to the Northern capital of the country, Jaffna, a city famous for its rich history and exotic spices. Notice the subtle but definite change in the terrain as the otherwise dominant coconut palms all but disappear and the landscape is taken over by the mysteriously beautiful Palmyra Palms which are iconic of Sri Lanka's north and east. If early enough you may be lucky to see wild elephants crossing the A9 road. As you travel further north, time seems to slowdown as you see fewer and fewer vehicles on the road. The landscape seems to stretch to impossibly distant horizons on

either side of the road. Upon arrival check in at Jetwing Jaffna 4* for two night stay.

Afternoon proceed on a sightseeing tour of Jaffna, one of the oldest human settlements in the peninsular region of Northern Sri Lanka. The city was the epicenter of a decade's long conflict that has now ended.

Jaffna has it all, friendly people, a rich culture, salubrious climate and a picturesque environment go to make it a veritable traveler's paradise. Now that the guns have fallen silent and peace is in sight, domestic tourism in this long forgotten northern retreat is gradually catching on. After almost 20 years, travelers now can reach Jaffna either by land or air. You will explore the town of Jaffna including visits to the 15th century Nallur Kovil also known as the Kandaswamy Temple, the Jaffna library, a building known for its elegant neo-Mughal design and museum the bustling main street which is a hive of economic activity and the grand Old Dutch Fort of Jaffna. On completion return to the hotel. Rest of the day at leisure.

Accommodation: Jetwing Jaffna
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 5: Day trip to Pedro & Manalkadu

Breakfast at the hotel. Morning visit the northern utmost point in land of Sri Lanka – Point Pedro.

Point Pedro is a town, located in Jaffna District at the northernmost point of the island. Cotton is produced around Point Pedro in the fertile calcic red latosol soils. The eastern coast of Point Pedro forms a 5 km wide, 32 km long beach with sand dunes up to 100 feet high, extending to Thalayady.

The porous soil has a water table deep underground with an estimated one billion liters of fresh water. During pre-colonial and even in colonial times, Point Pedro was a bustling hub of export/import activities. The people, whose descendants involved in the import/export business, continue to form the majority of the population of Point Pedro.

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Then travel towards the shimmering sands of Manalkadu to take a short walk. The bright afternoon sky hangs heavy upon the pale golden sands that reflects its wild luminescent light and the heat of the sun. Spreading across acres before your eyes will be what resembles a semi-desert heightened by the presence of a few hefty dunes. They loom up like giants, standing out against the otherwise bare landscape. The spectacle that unfolds before you though, is mysteriously breathtaking. On completion return to the hotel – rest of the day at leisure .

Accommodation: Jetwing Jaffna
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 6: Drive Jaffna - Trincomalee (250 km | 5 hrs)

Breakfast at the hotel leave for Trincomalee.

Leave the very north of the country today and head to the beaches of the east coast. En route we will stop at the hot springs of Kanniyai, where there are seven hot wells of varying temperatures, commonly referred to as 'the Seven Wonders of Sri Lanka'. Check in at Trinco Blu by Cinnamon 4*. Rest of the day at leisure on the beach. Dinner & overnight stay at the hotel.

Accommodation: Trinco Blu by Cinnamon
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 7: Trincomalee Free Day

Breakfast at the hotel. Rest of the day at leisure on the beach.

Today is free for you to relax by the hotel pool or do some optional activities such as whale watching (March - August) or snorkeling. The tropical conditions of the Indian Ocean mean it is the habitat to hundreds of thousands of varied species. Your leader will give you further information, and costs, for the optional activities before you arrive in Trincomalee.

Accommodation: Trinco Blu by Cinnamon
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Optional Activities: Whale watching excursion in Trincomalee which is the best place for dolphin and whale watching or snorkeling.



Day 8: Drive Trincomalee - Habarana (100 km | 2 hrs) | Visit Sigiriya Rock Fortress

Breakfast at the hotel leave for Habarana. Check in at Cinnamon Lodge Habarana 5* for two nights stay.

Late afternoon proceed to visit the Sigiriya Rock Fortress, a world heritage site, built by king Kashyapa (473 -491 A.D). The Lion rock is a citadel of unusual beauty rising 200 meters from the plains overlooking the surrounding countryside giving far-reaching views. Used as a safe haven from invaders, the route to the top is up a series of steep steps and gangways. From the base, where a moat surrounds impressive water gardens, you ascend 200m, passing an overhanging rock under which superb portraits of native maidens holding flowers and temple offerings still adorn the rock wall, 'the world-renowned frescoes of the 'Heavenly Maidens' of Sigiriya, which are in a sheltered pocket of the rock approached by a spiral stairway . Crowning the flat-topped summit of the rock are extensive remains of the King's Summer Palace from where there are breath-taking views of the surrounding countryside. The descent is much easier and you can cool off in the hotel pool at dusk.

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Accommodation: Cinnamon Lodge Habarana
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 9: Day trip to Polonnaruwa (Primate Research Center) & Minneriya National Park

After breakfast at the hotel proceed to Polonnaruwa to explore Primate Research Center (Subject to prior approval) and watch different species of monkeys and their behaviors with Prof. Dr. Dittes or his Colleagues.

Primate Research Center is known locally as the "Monkey Camp". Primate research center is the Association for the Conservation of Primate Diversity, under the umbrella of the Smithsonian Institution Primate Biology Program, based in Sri Lanka and the USA. The studies on the monkeys have been highlighted recently in the movie theater film "Monkey Kingdom" (produced with Disney Nature). The work also has been featured in many documentary films for TV on the BBC, Discovery, Animal Planet and others).

On completion proceed on a Jeep Safari at the Minneriya National Park - 8,890 hectares of Minneriya National Park consists of mixed evergreen forest and scrub areas and is home to favorites such as sambar deer, leopards and elephants. However the central feature of the park is the ancient Minneriya Tank (built in 3rd century AD by King Mahasena). During the dry season (June to September), this tank is an incredible place to observe the elephants who come to bathe and graze, as well as the huge flocks of birds (cormorants and painted storks to name but a few) that come to fish in the shallow waters. On

completion return to the hotel for dinner and overnight stay.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Lodge Habarana
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 10: Drive Habarana - Kandy (100 km | 2.5 hrs) | Kandy Sightseeing

Breakfast at the hotel and leave for Kandy. Check in at Cinnamon Citadel 4*. Afternoon proceed on a sightseeing tour of Kandy, the last capital stronghold of the Singhalese Kings.

Kandy is located on a small lake surrounded by verdant hills and you spend the afternoon in and around the town. The most must visit attraction is the Temple of the Tooth, which houses Sri Lanka's most important Buddhist relic. The Tooth of Buddha was taken from the funeral pyre in 543 BC and only found its way to Sri Lanka in the 4th century AD. Rich in history and traditions the Temple of the Tooth attracts devotees and pilgrims worldwide who visit the temple each day and is also the focal point during the magnificent Procession or Perahera during the month of August. Some of our trips in August should coincide with the Kandy festival, but the exact dates, decided by priests, are not known until 5 months prior to the event.

Kandy's other attractions are its traditional arts and crafts, the folk dances as well as its busy and colorful streets shops and eateries. An iconic colonial monument, the Queens Hotel sitting close to the lake of Kandy, still retains its old colonial charm. A Tuk Tuk Ride Will Be Included as a part of the Sightseeing Tour of Kandy.

In the evening visit the Temple of the Tooth Relic and thereafter witness a cultural show featuring traditional Sri Lankan dancing and fire eating. Return to the hotel for dinner & overnight stay.

Recommended Optional sites and activities:

The Magnificent Dambulla Cave Temple, which was donated by king Walagambahu in the 1st century BC to Buddhist monks. Dambulla is a World Heritage site and is the most impressive of Sri Lanka's cave

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temples. The complex of five caves with over 2000 sq. meters of painted walls and the ceiling is the largest area of paintings found in the world. These caves contain over 150 images of the Buddha of which the largest is the colossal figure of the Buddha carved out of rock spanning 14 meters.

Kandy Perahera - Held annually in August for 01 week the Kandy perahera is perhaps the most important and the most colorful of all pageants held in the island. Kandy's 4 devalas – natha, Vishnu, skanda and pathini lead the procession each followed by a train of colorfully caparisoned elephants. The golden karanduwa – a replica of the dagoba shaped casket in which the sacred tooth is enshrined is carried by the magnificent tusked temple elephant adorned with colorful drapes, lined with tiny electric bulbs. The perahera or procession consists of approximately 100 elephants.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Citadel
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 11: Drive Kandy - Gal Oya (200 km | 5 hrs)

Breakfast at the hotel and leave for Gal Oya. Check in at the Gal Oya Lodge "Eco Concept" for two nights. Rest of the day relax by the pool with breathtaking view of the surrounding rocky mountains.

The Gal Oya National Park - History and Geography
Gal Oya national park Sri Lanka located in the Uva Province which is situated in the south-east of Sri Lanka; the Gal Oya National Park was established in 1954 by the Gal Oya Development Board, primarily to protect the catchment area of the vast 'Senanayake Samudra' Reservoir which is the largest reservoir in Sri Lanka. It was subsequently handed over to the Department of Wildlife Conservation in 1965.

The Gal Oya National Park is rich in both fauna and flora and about 45 percent of the Park is covered by evergreen forest while a further 33 percent is taken up by savanna areas. The Park spans over 25,000 hectares in total and has three mountains within its boundaries vis-à-vis Danigala, Nilgala and Ulpotha with the highest peak reaching 900 metres.

The Buddhangala Sanctuary, one of the four protected areas which make up the Gal Oya National Park, has ruins of a Stupa and other buildings dating back to the 2nd Century BC. It is believed that Lord Buddha visited here during his last time in Sri Lanka. In the hilly country to the West of the Park was one of the last strongholds of Sri Lanka's indigenous tribes, the Vedda. The Vedda are the forest-dwelling, indigenous people of central Sri Lanka. They have inhabited the island for hundreds of years, living off the land and being at one with nature.

Despite this, Gal Oya is also one of the least visited national parks as it is remote and largely undeveloped for tourism, making it a hidden gem for nature lovers.

Accommodation: Gal Oya Lodge
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 12: In Gal Oya | Morning Boat Safari | Evening Jeep Safari

Early Morning take a boat safari on Sri Lanka's largest lake and discover wildlife from a whole new perspective. We may be lucky enough to see the elephants swimming between islands or bathing at the lake's edge. Birdlife is exceptional on the lake, and migratory birds swell their ranks during the months of December to April. On completion return to the hotel. Have breakfast at the hotel and relax until the afternoon.

Late afternoon proceed on a Jeep Safari to explore the magnificent habitats and wildlife at the Gal Oya

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National Park. Wild elephants' herds that can be seen here throughout the year, so keep your eyes open. Crocodiles can also be spotted lazing along the banks and more. On completion return to the hotel.

Accommodation: Gal Oya Lodge
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 13: Drive Gal Oya - Yala National Park (200 km | 5 hrs)

After our leisurely breakfast, driving southwards we head towards Yala National Park but en route will make various stops to break the journey. We should finally reach Yala in the afternoon for lunch and check-in at the splendid hotel Jetwing Yala 4* where we stay for two nights. The afternoon will be free for relaxation at the hotel and to enjoy the hotel pool, the private beach and the surrounding.

Optional: If you're not tired you can head out in 4WD jeeps for afternoon game drive. Yala is Sri Lanka's most well known national park, famous for having a higher concentration of leopard per square kilometre than anywhere else in the world. Located in Sri Lanka's lowland dry zone in the south eastern corner of the country, Yala National Park is extensive, covering some 97,881 hectares across five 'blocks'. Yala's vegetation primarily consists of dense secondary forest, semi-arid thorny scrub, brackish lagoons and mangroves since the park borders the coastline. With this diverse habitat comes a huge array of wildlife, including elephant, Sloth bear, Spotted deer, Water buffalo, Sambar deer, Wild boar, langur and macaque. Bird counts are also high, with over 215 species recorded, including thousands of migrating waterfowl. Our group will be split evenly between jeeps and will be joined by the tour leader, naturalist and tracker who will each sit in a different vehicle. The drive this afternoon will last around 3 - 4 hours, before we return to the hotel to freshen up and have dinner.

Accommodation: Jetwing Yala
Meal: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 14: Explore Yala National Park - Full Day Safari

Today full day game drive is enjoyed inside the Yala National Park and we will be taking our picnic meals with us. An early start will be necessary to enter the National Park in jeeps for a morning of bird and mammal watching.

Early morning is the best time to come across a Sloth Bear or Leopard but it is also the time of peak bird activity and there will be much to see in this wonderful reserve. A network of tracks criss-cross the accessible areas of the National Park embracing open country, where herds of Spotted Deer and Sambar graze, riverine forest, secluded lakes and coastal mudflats. It is not permitted to walk inside the park except at designated areas but despite this restriction we should see many wildlife including many bird species during the morning. Peacocks are common and in the first few hours after dawn Sri Lanka Junglefowl emerge from cover to display and call. Raptors include Changeable Hawk-Eagle, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, and Grey-headed Fish-Eagle.

The Yala Leopards, like big cats everywhere, are unpredictable in their appearances but tales of obliging animals are frequent. Whether it is particular individuals becoming accustomed to human visitors, or a consequence of recent droughts, there is no doubt that diurnal sightings of Leopards in Yala have become much commoner in recent years and we will hope that good fortune is on our side as we tour the Park.

Sometimes the cats may be observed padding along the road, or disappearing into cover but the best views are obtained when one is discovered in a tree and such individuals may spend hours dozing on a convenient branch to the delight of the tourists.

Wild Boar are in general much more conspicuous than their predators and both Ruddy and Grey Mongooses occur, the former distinguished by a black tail tip. The larger Stripe-necked or 'Badger' Mongoose is also a Yala resident. Elephants are widespread inside Yala but surprisingly elusive and hard to see amid woodland. If you are lucky you may chance upon a family group bathing in one of the pools. To complete a dazzling array of creatures, Land and Water Monitors are numerous and large Mugger Crocodiles

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inhabit the bigger pools. As with all such excursions, luck will play a big part in what we see during our time in Yala but no visit is ever dull and we are certain to encounter an impressive variety of species.

It is a Park regulation that all vehicles should exit by nightfall so we are obliged to leave before the emergence of the many nocturnal inhabitants of Yala.

Back to the hotel for dinner & overnight.

Accommodation: Jetwing Yala
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 15: Yala Morning Safari | Drive Yala - Galle (180 km | 2.5 hrs)

Wildlife tends to be at its most active during the early morning and to take advantage of this we have a morning game drive in Yala National Park. Leopards and Sloth bears will be high priority but we will also be seeking any of the inhabitants not seen during the previous visits. Our naturalist guide will also focus on Yala's diverse birds, with our game drive lasting around 3 hours. After completion return to our hotel for a rest and lunch afterwards.

After lunch you set off and drive along the coastal road to the historic port of Galle, which dates back to the 17th century, and now a UNESCO world heritage site. Upon arrival Check in at Radisson Blu 4*. Rest of the day at leisure on the beach. Dinner and overnight stay at the hotel.

Accommodation: Radisson Blu
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 16: Visit Galle | Drive Galle - Colombo (140 km | 2.5 hrs)

After breakfast at the hotel proceed on a sightseeing tour of Galle. Once the chief port of Ceylon as Sri Lanka was named by the British. It is still well known for hand-made lace, tortoise shell curios and ebony elephants. You can also visit the Galle fort (spanning 90 acres), which was originally built by the Portuguese and later extended by the Dutch in 1663. This is a world heritage site.

After Galle visit you leave for Colombo. If time permits, drive through the Colombo Commercial area of the "Fort" so named, because both the Portuguese and Dutch had a Fort at this point. Drive passed "Pettah" – a noisy Oriental bazaar with a hotchpotch of Humanity, ancient vehicles, bargains, mosques & temples. Visit Hindu temple & drive pass Jumi-UL Alfar Jumma Mosque, Continue the tour through the Wolvendaal Dutch Church, Hultsdorf Law courts, to the residential area of Cinnamon Gardens and on to the Independence Square and Bandaranayke Memorial International Conference Hall. And also visit Gangaramaya Temple.

Upon arrival in Colombo check in at Cinnamon Grand 5*. In the evening take a city tour of Colombo by night. You will cover the main sites and also enjoy some street food and last minute shopping. On completion return to the hotel. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Grand
Meal: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 17: Depart Colombo

Transfer to airport by private vehicle for our homeward-bound flight.

Meal: Breakfast

Includes

- Airport (pick up/drop off) transfers by private A/C vehicle
- Twin-Sharing accommodation in all Hotel/Resort/Lodge as mentioned
- Daily breakfast throughout the trip, other meals as mentioned in the itinerary
- All sightseeing and long-distance transportation in private air-condition vehicle (cars/SUVs or mini/micro-bus etc. depending on group size). This includes toll taxes, parking, allowance for driver, outstation overnight charges for the driver
- Monument entrance fees : 02 Visits to Wilpattu national park with Jeep Hire,

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Anuradhapura, Nallur Temple, Manalkadu Walk, Hot Water Springs, Sigiriya, Primate Center Visit, 01 Visit to Minneriya National Park with Jeep Hire, Temple of the tooth, Kandyan Cultural Dance Performance, 02 Visit to Gal Oya National Park with Jeep & Boat Hire, 01 Full Day & 01 Half Day Visits to Yala National Park with Jeep Hire, Gangarama Temple

- Two 500 ml mineral bottled water per person per day
- All applicable government taxes

Excludes

- International flight tickets
- Visa fee
- Travel insurance
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Personal clothing and equipment
- Tips for trip leader/guide, driver, hotel staff and porters
- Items of personal nature such as alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, laundry, and other unforeseen expenses
- Items/services not listed in "included"
- Extra expenses/payment for 'Optional' activities/programs if participated

Accommodation

Goldi Sands Hotel, Negombo

Goldi Sands is a glamorous iconic hotel nestled on the golden beaches of Negombo. Just imagine staying in a hotel that's right on the beach, just next to the Indian Ocean... and what a wonderful feeling knowing that the beach is all yours anytime of the day or even the night. Everything at Goldi Sands Hotels is waiting to be experienced.

Big Game Camp, Wilpattu

Big Game Safaris are true believers in creating unique wild experiences for each of its guests in Sri Lanka. Creating awareness of the need to preserve and conserve the island's spectacular wildlife is of vital importance, to ensure that future generations will be able to witness the astounding beauty and variety of Sri Lanka's natural treasures.



Rajarata Hotel, Anuradhapura

Rajarata hotel in Anuradhapura welcomes its guests to experience the grandeur of a by-gone era and the mystique that surrounds the ancient city of Anuradhapura. Nestled in the alluring ancient city, within close proximity to many religious and historical sites, At Rajarata hotel Anuradhapura guests can experience a truly royal atmosphere that goes hand-in-hand with utmost hospitality.

Jetwing Jaffna

Discover the charm of our contemporary cultural heritage across the unique spaces and places in and around Jetwing Jaffna. Whether you step in to our deluxe rooms dressed in northern rustic colours or explore our restaurant inspired by the essence of the peninsula, you will find yourself at home with our legendary Sri Lankan hospitality.

Trinco Blu by Cinnamon

Say hello to sunshiny days on the beach, by the sea, and of course in your whitewashed blue – mosaicked balconies, overlooking the deep blue sea. Once you're

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here with us, stroll around, lunch by the Captain's Deck and go for a little afternoon siesta in your aesthetically done up rooms.

Cinnamon Lodge Habarana

Welcome to experience Cinnamon Lodge Habarana, surrounded by over 2000 trees, that are home to serpent eagles, kingfishers and monkeys alike. We love this co-existence, and so, while we take care of them, we go an extra mile and add a little personal touch to everything we do for you at our home.



Cinnamon Citadel Kandy

Kandy is renowned to be one of the most scenic cities in Sri Lanka. Surrounded by sweeping green hills, misty mornings bordered by the longest river in the country, Cinnamon Citadel Kandy is your ideal retreat for a truly relaxed and carefree getaway. Steeped in cultural and historical significance, this resort is designed in a manner to reflect this rich history and majesty.

Gal Oya Lodge

Discover an ancient land untouched by time...Gal Oya Lodge is a unique Sri Lanka ecolodge spread across 20 acres of private jungle. Take your time enjoying this natural paradise through the experiences we offer, which include a walk with our Vedda neighbors, one of the last remaining communities of the forest-dwelling, indigenous people of Sri Lanka.

Jetwing Yala

Proudly emerging out of the coastal wilderness, our home of Sri Lankan hospitality in the deep south brings a sense of luxury and refinement to the harmonious disorder of our resident grasslands. There are only a handful of places on earth where you may wake up to the calls of a tropical wild, and that too on an uncharted coastline.

Radisson Blu Resort, Galle

Come and stay at Radisson Blu Resort, Galle and enjoy our stunning seaside location. Take a dip in our outdoor pool, our hotel to outlets and the ocean. Relax in one of our 172 modern and stylish rooms, each equipped with a private balcony or terrace and thoughtful amenities such as free Wi-Fi and coffee and tea-making facilities.

Cinnamon Grand, Colombo

Savor your penchant for finer comforts. Let the opulence of our rooms and restaurant seep into your beings. Raise a toast to all the success at our plush restaurants and taste jubilation like never before. When you've enjoyed every bit of your Grand accomplishments, retire to your room, and relish the exquisite comforts that Colombo's most lavish business hotel has to offer.

Group/Individual

On this trip you will be traveling privately with your family & friends. Our representative/tour partner will look after your transfers to and from the airport and will be around to answer other questions you may have about your trip.

Accommodation - Hotel, Resort

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a fine heritage hotel in another or a family-run guesthouse or lodges in a smaller town. Accommodation in remote areas tend to be basic and may not have western amenities.

Single Accommodation

Unless you specifically request a single room (single

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supplement charge applies), we offer double room accommodation throughout the trip.

Food & Transport

Daily breakfasts and dinners are provided/included throughout the trip.

To cover the cost of other meals (mostly lunches and/or some snacks) allowing about €5-7 (approx. US\$5.50 - 8) per day should be enough. Sri Lankan cuisine is a fascinating reflection of the island's heritage; there is a unique fusion of fresh local produce with spices brought to the island over the centuries by Malays, Arabs, Indians as well as the Dutch, Portuguese and English. Despite (or perhaps because of) these influences, Sri Lankan cuisine is often referred to as simply 'Rice and Curry'. This is the staple dish in most restaurants and is usually a serving of rice accompanied by assorted meat and vegetable curries as well as various pickles, 'sambols,' and a handful of tiny poppadum's – all using the contrasting flavours of coconut, chilli, curry leaves, cinnamon and garlic.

Vegetarians are well catered for but please inform us before departure of any special dietary requests. Please note that in Sri Lanka the availability of certain products is minimal or non-existent, for example wheat or dairy-free. Please be prepared for this and you may need to bring these from home. Spicier food can be avoided easily and lots of the hotels will serve Western options alongside traditional food.

For airport, sightseeing transfers, and for long drives we use a private air-con car, jeep, van depending upon group size. Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

Weather

Sri Lanka is a year-round holiday destination thanks to its combination of weather systems ensuring that one or several regions, as well as a section of coastline, is statistically always expecting sunshine. Whilst the best time to go to Sri Lanka is between December and mid-April, which is considered to be the countrywide peak season, the traditional

summer holiday months are also favourable on the east coast which is at its peak from May to September.

Temperatures are fairly constant year-round, with coastal regions enjoying average temperatures of 25-30°C and the highlands 15-18°C on average. If you're travelling during the summer months (May to September) you'll want to head towards the east coast and northern regions for dry, sunny weather, as the west and south west coasts experience rain at this time. On the flip side, the west and south west enjoy favourable weather conditions during the winter months (October to February) when the monsoon season hits the east and north.

Baggage Allowance

At time of writing the standard weight limit is one checked baggage on Qatar Airways is 25kg (55lb) and hand baggage 7kg (15lbs). We recommend packing only one piece of checked baggage. Luggage allowances for both hand and checked luggage are subject to change, we suggest you check the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure.

ESSENTIAL/PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passport & Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for EU passport holders, and other nationalities should check with the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Visas are required if you are German and for most other nationalities. Visa information/regulation might have changed; therefore, for the latest information on

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applying for a visa please follow these links for more information.

<http://www.eta.gov.lk/slvisa/>

Please note: Visa regulations can change without notice, therefore please check the current regulations or contact us.

Vaccination & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements for this trip. Recommended vaccinations for this trip are: Polio, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhoid, Hepatitis A. The risk of malaria on this trip is slight, but you may wish to consult your GP/Family Doctor or travel health clinic for further advice. Dengue fever and/or Chikungunya are known risks in places visited on this trip. Both are tropical viral diseases spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available for either, and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health we strongly recommend you contact your Medical Professional or a Travel Health Clinic prior to departure for up-to date information.

Local Time

GMT + 5 hours and 30 minutes

Electricity

230/240 volts AC, 50 Hz. There are recharging facilities at most of the hotels, the electricity supply is not 100% reliable but it is usually only off for short periods of time.

Money

The national currency of Sri Lanka is the Sri Lankan Rupee (SLR), with an exchange rate at the time of publication of approximately 357 to the Euro and 325 to the US\$. It is illegal to import or export rupees. Do not accept torn or (very) dirty Sri Lankan banknotes from banks or in change as they will almost certainly not be accepted as legal tender. Please ask for low denomination notes of 100, 200, 500 and 1000. You can change money back from Rupees into Euro or Dollars at the international airport (before going through security), but you must produce an exchange receipt showing that you changed money in Sri Lanka. You are advised to bring most of your money in cash as you may have difficulty changing travellers cheques outside Colombo. It makes no difference whether you bring Euro or US Dollars. You should change your money on arrival at Colombo either at the hotel or airport (please note that the hotel often gives a better rate than the airport).

ATM | Credit Cards

There are ATMs in Colombo and other major cities. We recommend you change most of the money you need for the trip before leaving Colombo. Please do not rely wholly on ATM machines as often they are broken or run out of cash. Credit cards are accepted in larger shops in Colombo and other major cities.

Extra Expenses & Spending Money

You will need to bring some extra money to cover drinks, laundry, souvenirs and any other personal expense, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Though it totally depends on individual but generally an approximate (rough estimate) amount of US\$250 per person, per week should be sufficient (more if you enjoy a few beers); however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount. Or if you are the one frugal with money probably allocating less would also be suffice. Sri Lanka has very good opportunities for shopping, especially for locally made goods, and guides may well offer to take you to emporiums as well as workshops where these goods are made. Many people find this a great opportunity to buy local handicrafts,

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silk, jewelry, carpets etc. Guides will often assume that visitors will want to go shopping, it is very much part of the culture, however if you do not wish to go, please make this clear to your local guide at the time.

Optional Tours may be offered in some city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each optional tour/activity will be arranged locally by our local partner/guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

Tipping

Tipping is of course entirely at your discretion, but it is customary in Sri Lanka. However, do not feel obliged to tip if you are not happy with the service. Tipping can be an awkward affair especially when you are not familiar with the country. Your leader will help with tipping and will provide a list of suggested tips. This will include tips for drivers, porters and other hotel staff, local sightseeing guides/escort, and if trekking will include camp staff such as guide, assistants, cooks and pony men. Sometimes your leader will collect a kitty during the trip and sometimes they will collect the tips towards the end of the trip (occasionally for very small groups the leader may need to collect a little more than the suggested amount).

Tipping of the local leader is not included in the above and is at your discretion. However, we suggest around Rs1000-2000 (approx.€11-25 /US \$12-25) per person for the leader depend upon the group size.

Itinerary Change

In case of some unusual events/incidents the order of programs (sightseeing, excursions etc.) might have to change in order to accommodate the local situations. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements while maintaining the overall integrity of your trip.

The domestic airlines may change their schedule frequently and, in such cases, our local partner/guide will inform you about the changes.

Travel Insurance

We highly recommend to keep a copy of your travel insurance documents on your person while on tour. It's prudent to check thoroughly the inclusions and procedure to file claims prior to purchasing insurance coverage. travel-to-nature Asia will not be responsible for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to purchase appropriate travel insurance from the date of booking.

Important Information

On all guided trips although our leaders/guides are well trained to deal with different capabilities, if they have any concerns about someone's ability to safely partake in an activity, or their impact on other people's enjoyment, we authorize them to take necessary action which, in some circumstances, may involve asking someone to miss that activity.