

# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days



Sri Lanka is a wonder of nature! From idyllic coastal beaches, dry and rainforests, misty hills to mountain ranges, ecosystem of Sri Lanka is so diverse. Besides, it is probably one of the few countries in the world where so many endemic wildlife species are available such as white spotted chevrotain or grey hornbill. It's no doubt a paradise for nature lovers: a green, forested, tropical island with many freshwater lakes and a great diversity of wildlife, especially of mammals, birds, insects, and plants, many of which are classified as endemic.

This exciting holiday tour awaits you with a special focus on the island's cultural highlights, such as a visit to the historic city of Anuradhapura or the fortress ruins of the monolith Sigiriya. Through Sri Lanka's natural paradises with a variety of wildlife viewing opportunities are another focus, and of course Sri Lanka's most beautiful beaches are not to be missed.

The tour starts with a visit to archaeological sites in the so-called "Golden Triangle". It then continues south through a scenic, hilly region – the home of tea cultivation – to Yala National Park and the unique Sinharaja Rainforest. On any given day, the tropical atmosphere is further enhanced by the cheerful colours of the exotic flowers, the myriad butterflies, and insects as well as the tempting abundance of tropical fruits on offer in the villages everywhere. Sri Lanka has more than something for everyone and never fails to enchant visitors!

## Trip Highlights

- Hike to the historic cities of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya
- Visit six world heritage sites
- Warm, tropical climate
- Deluxe, comfortable hotels with swimming facilities and delicious Sri Lankan cuisine
- Good chance of encountering see leopards, sloth bear and Indian elephants among other various mammals
- Visit a tea estate in the hilly interior
- Colourful butterflies and exotic reptiles amidst rich flora
- Explore the first wetland in Sri Lanka to be granted Ramsar status
- Over 200 species of birds
- Visit tropical spices garden

## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrive in Colombo | Transfer to Habarana (153 km | 3.20 hrs)

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.

Before heading north, we will have the opportunity to freshen up a bit at the airport hotel and have the first of many cups of tea in Sri Lanka!

Then we drive to Habarana, stopping en route for birding.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Lodge  
Meal: Dinner

### Day 2: Tour Polonnaruwa

After breakfast we will set off on a tour of Polonnaruwa. The city was built in the 11th-12th

# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days

century AD. It is considered the second capital of Sri Lanka and is now a World Heritage Site. You can see the ruins of the royal palace as well as the "Gal Viharaya", where four famous stone statues of Buddha can be seen in different positions (standing upright, sitting, lying down). There is also a reception hall, the Lotus Bath, a statue of King Parakramabahu and the Parakrama Samudraya Lake - the latter was created by King Parakramabahu the Great. Other well-known places of worship include the Shiva Temple, the Lankathilake, the Watadage, the Galpotha, the Kiri Vehera and the remains of the former Tooth Relic temple.

After the visits we return to the hotel and the rest of the day at leisure. Overnight stay in Habarana.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Lodge  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Day 3: Visit Anuradhapura

In the morning we visit Anuradhapura. This was the first capital of Sri Lanka and without doubt the greatest in the island's history. It is now home to two World Heritage Sites. We will explore many sites of historical and archaeological interest.

Sri Maha Bodhi (sacred Bo Tree) is a tree planted by monks from an offshoot/sapling of the Bodhi tree under which Prince Siddhartha attained enlightenment in 528 BC.

Sri Maha Bodhi is over 2,200 years old, making it the oldest documented tree in the world.

Only 1,600 stone pillars/columns remain of Brazen Palace (2nd century BC), a magnificent multi-storey former residence of the monks. The most famous of all the Dagobas (stupas; religious site) is Ruwanweliseya (2nd century BC). The original perfectly designed bubble shape could not be recreated so accurately even by modern restoration measures. One of the most famous Buddha statues is the Samadhi statue (4th century AD), which shows Buddha in deep meditation (Samadhi). The Isurumuniya Stone Temple (3rd century BC) is famous for its rock image "the Lovers".

Kuttam Pokuna - two identical bathing pools (6th century AD), were used by monks for swimming. The oldest dogoba on the island, Thuparama Dagoba (3rd century BC), houses the Buddha's right collarbone. We will also visit Mihintale, where Buddhism was first introduced to Sri Lanka. It is a rocky outcrop with many shrines and shelters originally used by the monks. A huge staircase with 1,840 steps consisting of 4.5m wide granite slabs leads up to the top, from where you have a fantastic view over the vast landscape.

Between the structures and bathing pools we will be able to observe many bird species. These include Pond Herons, White-breasted Waterhen, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Brahminy Kite, Crested Tree Swifts, Indian Blue Roller, Rose-ringed Parakeets, Black-rumped Woodpecker and many more. The Palm Squirrels, which we will see regularly during the tour. Two other mammals we will probably encounter for the first time this morning: the agile Hanuman or Grey Langur or also called Hulman and the Toque Macaque.

Furthermore, we may encounter a wide range of lizards, possibly even a big banded Water Monitor, up to one metre long.

After sightseeing we return to the hotel and the rest of the day at leisure. Overnight stay in Habarana.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Lodge  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days

## Day 4: Day trip to Sigiriya Fortress

Our next destination is Sigiriya Fortress, built in the 5th century (477-495 AD) by King Kashyapa and now a World Heritage Site.

Visitors can climb the steps carved into the stone, but it is a steep climb and not suitable for people with a fear of heights. World-famous frescoes of the Heavenly Maidens can be reached and viewed during the climb up a spiral stone staircase in sheltered corners of the rock. The frescoes were painted with earth colour pigments on plaster/mortar. Birding is equally rewarding as we climb up. Shahin Falcons nesting on the rock is regularly seen and the surrounding primary forest is optimal habitat for many other bird species.

Lion Rock is an incredibly beautiful citadel rising 200m out of the jungle undergrowth. The rock was the protective bulwark of the 70ha fortified city. A moat, rampart and extensive gardens - including the renowned water gardens - lie at the base of the rock and encircle it.

After sightseeing, we return to the hotel. Overnight stay in Habarana.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Lodge  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 5: Drive Habarana - Kandy (95 km | 2.66 hrs) | Vist Dambulla

After breakfast we leave Sigiriya and drive south towards Kandy. In between we will stop and climb the Dambulla Stone Temple, which was given to the Buddhist monks by King Walagambahu in the 1st century BC. This temple is also a World Heritage Site and is the most impressive of Sri Lanka's cave temples. The collection of five caves with over 2,000sqm of painted walls and ceiling areas is the largest cave painting in the world in terms of area. Over 150 images of Buddha can be admired here, the largest being a 14m Buddha carved in stone.

Our journey continues to the spice cultivation areas around Matale. We will visit one of these spice gardens, learn about the different types of spices Sri

Lanka is famous for and get an insight into their cultivation and processing. Of course, the spices can also be bought here, although they are often cheaper in German supermarkets than locally in Sri Lanka.

Further towards Kandy, the vegetation becomes denser and greener - a clear sign that we are leaving the dry zone and entering hilly, rainier landscape areas.

Kandy is a city steeped in history, having been the headquarters of a succession of Kandyan kings until it was taken by the British in 1815. The famous Temple of the Tooth, situated on Lake Kandy, is one of the most famous Buddha temples in the area and attracts thousands of visitors every year. The town is traditionally a centre for music and dance and performances of both art forms can be attended and viewed almost every night (see programme notices at the hotel). For fellow travellers who would like to go to a dance performance, we would recommend this for the first evening. They should then leave Peradeniya Gardens a little earlier than the rest of the group to arrive at the theatre in time. In Kandy we stay for two nights at the Chaaya Citadel.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Citadel  
Meals: Breakfast, Breakfast



# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days

## Day 6: Explore Kandy

After breakfast we visit the Royal Botanical Garden in Peradeniya. This was built as a pure pleasure garden by a Sinhala king, but later expanded by the British. An amazing number of tree, plant and flower species grow here in an area of 59.5 ha.

We continue with a city tour of Kandy. The city was the last capital of the Sri Lankan kings and is now a World Heritage Site. The name Kandy conjures up images of grandeur, splendor and glory. This is also reflected in the tradition, folklore and legends that are lovingly kept alive. We drive around Lake Kandy, created in 1798 by the last Sinhala King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe, visit the town and bazaar, the handicraft centre, a gemstone museum and a gemstone cutter.

Later in the day, we drive to a hilltop tea estate about 10 km from town, where very attractive birds such as Blue-tailed or Layard's and Plum-headed Parakeets, Black Eagles and Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike can be seen, among others.

In the evening we visit the famous Temple Tooth Relic and afterwards - for those who are interested - there is a cultural show with traditional Sri Lankan dance. At the end of the evening we return to our hotel for overnight stay.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Citadel  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



## Day 7: Drive Kandy - Nuwara Eliya (76 km | 2.5 hrs)

After a leisurely breakfast we drive about 70+ km from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya. The drive takes us deeper into the hill country and past a number of tea estates en route. We will visit one of them and during the guided tour we will get an overview of the different production processes of top quality Ceylon tea - of course we will have the opportunity to taste the finished products.

Nuwara Eliya is the capital of the hill country and a delightful place. A golf course and a horse racing track are reminders of the popularity this resort had for the British during the Raj period. And the sounds of the bygone era also resonate in the quaint Hill Club as well as the Victorian style of architecture. Pine trees are a feature of the area and it seems noticeably cooler than one would normally expect at an altitude of 1,890 metres. After lunch at our hotel, we stroll around town a bit and visit Victoria Park, a small public garden very reminiscent of similar grounds in British cities.

Upon arrival we check into the Grand Hotel 4\* for couple of night stay. In the evening, a city tour - visit to "Little England" - is on the programme, then return to the hotel and overnight.

Accommodation: Grand Hotel  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 8: Day trip to Horton Plains National Park

We should leave Nuwara Eliya early in the morning to increase our chances of seeing some attractive wildlife that are endemic to Sri Lanka. We will spend full day on the Horton Plains, Sri Lanka's highest plateau. Although it is only 28 km from Nuwara Eliya, the road to get there is in poor condition with sloping grades and steep inclines. But the drive is worth it because the plateau is a fascinating place, a mixture of open grasslands and patches of forest, the trees overgrown with epiphytes. The scenery is spectacular and on a clear day you can see the top of Adam's Peak far west in the distance. At the end of the world, where the

# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days

plateau drops 1,000 m steeply, a cauldron of air turbulence and clouds forms during the day.

In the forest we will certainly hear, and hopefully see, the very tame Purple-faced Leaf Monkey. This is a subspecies with longer fur that lives here in the hill country. Tennant's Giant Squirrels and Dusky Squirrels are also seen here. In the open grasslands we may see a herd of Sambar Deer.

For birders, Horton plain is equally regarding. Pied Bush Chats are one of the most common bird inhabitants but other species to look for include Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Black Eagle, Sri Lanka Woodpigeon, Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, The Ceylon Whistling Thrush and more.

Although at first glance the habitat may not seem typical for reptiles, the Horton Plains can boast some endemic reptile species, but they are very difficult to find. Time permitting, we will also visit the Hakgala Botanical Gardens on the outskirts of the city. Here we would have another chance to meet the Purple-faced Leaf Monkey, which often visit this attractive garden in troops. If we continue to follow a circular route around the botanical garden, we might see more species of birds such as Scimitar Babbler, Yellow-eared and Black Bulbuls, Dark-fronted Babbler, Kashmir and Grey-headed Flycatchers, Scarlet Minivet and Sri Lanka Hill White-Eye and more.

Return to the hotel on time to enjoy the dinner in style. Overnight stay in Nuwara Eliya.

Accommodation: Grand Hotel  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Day 9: Drive Nuwara Eliya - Kalawana (168 km | 5 hrs) | Visit Sinharaja Rain Forest

After breakfast at the hotel we will drive to the Sinharaja Rainforest. A jewel among the last untouched rainforests in the country, located in the wet zone of Sri Lanka. This continuous virgin forest is home to 8,900 hectares of breathtaking beauty. Beautiful springs, streams, rivers, waterfalls, leopards, monkeys, butterflies and moths, rare trees, valuable

shrubs and medicinal herbs can be discovered under the green canopy.

A leisurely walk on trails through the Sinharaja Primeval Forest will be an unforgettable experience of seeing, hearing and feeling for nature lovers. Due to its high biodiversity and ecological importance, this forest has been designated as a National Wildlife Sanctuary and by UNESCO as the country's only World Heritage Site.

For the overnight stay we continue to Kalawana. Check-in at the Boulder Garden Resor "Boutique Concept". The rest of the day is at leisure.

Accommodation: Blue Magpie Lodge  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



### Day 10: Drive to Embilipitiya (90 km | 2.5 hrs) | Udawalawe National Park

We depart early this morning for Embilipitiya. Upon arrival, we first check into a hotel.

Late in the afternoon we continue by jeep safari to Udawalawe National Park. The park was established in 1972 to protect the water catchment area of the Udawalawe reservoir, a crucial step in securing the livelihood of the farmers of the south-eastern dry zone.

Together with some land areas that have only recently been taken back from cultivation, the park offers some fascinating characteristics that definitely

# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days

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worth a visit. The elephant density in the park is quite high, making Udawalawe one of the most reliable places to encounter elephants in their natural habitat all year round. The population is 400-500 animals, often spotted in herd sizes of up to 50. The open steppe areas are hidden under thick manna grass that grows to the borders of the large reservoir in the centre and the Walawe River. Other park areas consist of abandoned teak plantations or dense jungle scrub. This diversity of habitats is the basis for the wide range of wildlife that lives there. Besides elephants, the park also has leopards (I think we would have to be very lucky to see one), Toque Monkeys, Grey Langur, spotted deer, wild pig and sambar. Furthermore, Uda Walawe is naturally home to numerous bird species, especially birds of prey such as the White-bellied Sea Eagle and the Serpant Eagle.

In Udawalawe there is also the "Elephant Transit Home", a transit station for baby elephants that have been separated from their herds or have lost them somewhere in Sri Lanka. Here they find a temporary home, are cared treated for by vets, get milk and food until they are 3-4 years old enough to be released back into the wild in the park. For this they are marked beforehand and afterwards tracked and monitored until they have joined an existing herd, have been taken in by it and have been fully accepted and integrated.

At the end of the day we drive back to our hotel where we will spend the night.

Accommodation: Grand Udawalawe Hotel  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 11: Drive Embilipitiya - Yala (103 km | 2.75 hrs) | Visit Kataragama

After an early breakfast we will leave to reach Yala National Park before lunch. Upon arrival we check in for two nights at the Jetwing Yala 4\*, a very comfortable tourist hotel on the coast.

In the afternoon we head to Kataragama to visit the Kataragama Temple. This is a temple complex of Hindus and Buddhists, belonging to the Skanda

Murukan or also called Kataragamadevivo. It is one of the few religious places in Sri Lanka that is worshipped by the majority Sinhala Buddhists, the minority Hindu Tamils, the Muslims and the indigenous Vedda people. Basically, a number of modest shrines are located there, the most important being the one dedicated to Skanda-Murukan or also better known as Kataragamadevivo.

Almost all the shrines, as well as the nearby Kiri Vehera, are looked after by the Buddhists. Exceptions are the shrines of the Tevayani, Shiva (Siva) and the Muslim mosque. Until the 1940s, Hindu pilgrims from Sri Lanka and South India made the arduous pilgrimage on foot. After that, mostly Sinhala Buddhists came and the worship of Kataragamadevivo became the most popular among the Sinhalese people.

After the sightseeing we return to the hotel and the rest of the day at leisure.

Accommodation: Jetwing Yala  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 12: In Yala

Today, we should definitely have an early start in order to go on a bird and mammal exploration tour through the national park by jeep first thing in the morning. Early morning is the best time to see a sloth bear or a leopard. It is also the time of day when bird activity is at its highest, so we will see a lot in this beautiful reserve. A network of trails criss-crossing the national park allows visitors to see different areas such as open landscapes where Spotted deer or Sambar deer graze, riverine vegetation along river courses, secluded lakes and coastal areas. It is not allowed to walk around in the park outside the designated trails, but we will still be able to observe many birds this morning. Peacocks are common and therefore frequently seen. In the first hours after sunrise, Lafayette and Ceylon Jungle Fawl emerge from hiding places in the undergrowth to display and call. Birds of prey such as Changeable Hawk-eagles, white-bellied Sea-eagles and Grey-headed Fish eagles are common here.

# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days

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We return back to our hotel for lunch. Afterwards, we go on a second jeep safari into Yala National Park, mainly to find leopards. The occurrence of the Yala Leopard is unpredictable - as with all felines in general - as the territories are quite extensive. Nevertheless, there are always stories of animals that have certain favourite spots and are said to be frequently seen there. Wild boars, on the other hand, are much more conspicuous, and Ruddy Mongooses and Grey mongooses are also more common, the latter being recognisable by their black tail tips. Elephants are also seen in Yala, but still hard to find amidst the forest. If we are lucky, we might get the chance to watch a family group bathing in one of the water pools. To complete the array of dazzling creatures: Monitor lizards are plentiful and Mugger Crocodiles usually inhabit the larger contiguous patches of water. But as with all such excursions, rare wildlife sightings in Yala ultimately depend on some luck.

At the end of the day we return to the hotel and spend the night there.

Accommodation: Yala Village  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Day 13: Drive to Beruwela (235 km | 4.25 hrs) | Vist Gelle en route

On the way we will visit the Galle Dutch Fort. This fort was built by the Portuguese, but then modified by the Dutch in the 17th century. Even today, after 400 years, the fort still looks shiny and like new due to renovation work by the Archeological Institute of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government, as well as many Dutch people who still own some land within the fort, take great care to keep this place one of the modern wonders of the world.

After the exploration tour, we move ahead to Beruwela, where we will spend two nights in an excellent luxury hotel. Check-in at Cinnamon Bey Beruwela 5\*. Rest of the day at leisure.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Bey Beruwela  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### Day 14: In Beruwela

On our last day in Beruwela we will relax completely. A whole day at leisure and relaxation on the beach.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Bey Beruwela  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



### Day 15: Drive Beruwela - Colombo (68 km | 2 hrs)

After all the free time and relaxation at Beruwela beach we will return to Colombo today.

Upon arrival we check-in at Check in at Cinnamon Grand 5\* . In the afternoon take a city tour of Colombo driving through the commercial area of the "Fort", so called because both Portuguese and Dutch had a fort at this point. We will also pass by "Petta", a noisy oriental bazaar with a mishmash of people, ancient vehicles, traders/shops, mosques and temples. We will visit a Hindu temple and pass by the Jumi-UL Alfar Jumma Mosque before continuing our tour with the Wolvendaal Dutch Church, the Hultsdorf Court, the Cinnamon Gardens and Independence Square areas and the Bandaranayke Memorial International Conference Hall. If time permits we will visit the Gangaramaya Temple and also continue city tour of Colombo by night. We will cover the main sites and also enjoy some street food and last minute shopping. On completion return to the hotel.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Grand  
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days

## Day 16: 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/Lodge/Resort as mentioned on Half-Board basis (Breakfast & Dinner)
- All sightseeing and long-distance transportation in private air-condition vehicle (cars/SUVs or mini/micro-van etc. depending on group size). This includes toll taxes, parking, allowance for driver, outstation overnight charges for the driver
- Hikes through the national parks, jungle safari and other activities
- All sightseeing and long-distance transportation in private air-condition vehicle (cars/SUVs or mini/micro-van etc. depending on group size). This includes toll taxes, parking, allowance for driver, outstation overnight charges for the driver
- An English speaking local guides
- Entrance fees for: Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura, Sigiriya, Local Village Visit in Sigiriya, Dambulla Temple of the tooth, Botanical Gardens, Kandyan Cultural Dance Performance, 01 Visit to Horton Plains with Local Van Hire, 01 Visit to Singheraja Rain Forest, 01 Safari visit to Udawalawe National Park with Safari Jeep, Elephant Transit Home in Udawalawe, 01 Visit 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

#### 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.



# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days

### Grand Hotel, Nuwara Eliya

The Grand Hotel, Nuwara Eliya is a place where our guests are pampered to a royal stay, where comfort and happiness becomes our main goal. We pledge to provide regal, personalized service and facilities for all our guests who are welcomed, with arms wide open to a majestic, exclusive, luxurious refined ambience. Rejuvenates the heart, body and soul at the Grand hotel.

### Blue Magpie Lodge, Sinharaja

The surrounding of the lodge is unique; peaceful, silent, birds humming, water flowing and the cool breeze gives us the feeling of complete relaxation. Natural cool breeze from the Sinharaja forest as well the natural stream gives a soothing sensation for Mind, Body & Soul. The Blue Magpie is inspired by the simple Sri Lankan traditional ways of living.

### Grand Udawalawe Safari, Udawalawe

The Grand Udawalawe Safari Resort, offering 4-star facilities, is the only hotel of its' class in the area. The Grand Udawalawe Safari Resort, situated on 7 acres of land, is located 163 kilometers away from Colombo, and only 500 meters from the Ath Athuru Sevana (Elephant Orphanage), and is only a five minutes' drive from the Uda Walawe National Park.



### 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.

### Cinnamon Bey Beruwala

An expansive green space with a sea-view, tastefully done, chic interiors and a delightful host of unique culinary experiences – it all sounds too perfect to be true, right? Come, stay with us at Cinnamon Bey Beruwala, and all of this will feel like an understatement. Surrounded by coconut trees and vast green lawns, it features bright & spacious rooms with a private balcony.

### 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

# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days

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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 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

# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days

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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 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

# Sri Lanka Classic: Nature, Culture & the Beaches | 16 Days

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(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, 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.

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