



# Best of Sri Lanka (BSLA)

## 11 Night Private Tour

Get ready for an unforgettable journey through the heart of Sri Lanka - a land of vibrant culture, breathtaking landscapes, and incredible wildlife. This tour brings you face-to-face with the island's rich heritage and natural beauty, offering something for every kind of traveller.

Cook alongside locals during a charming village encounter, climb the legendary Sigiriya Rock Fortress, and wander through the ancient Dambulla Caves. Go on safari in search of elephants at Minneriya and leopards in the wilds of Yala National Park. Along the way, you'll stroll through lush spice gardens, visit the sacred Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, enjoy a colourful Kandyan dance performance, and explore the misty hills of tea country. Round off your adventure with a visit to a heartwarming turtle conservation project and some well-deserved relaxation on Sri Lanka's golden beaches.

### Highlights:

- Village encounter with cooking demonstration
- Climb the amazing Sigiriya Rock Fortress
- Safari in search of elephants in Minneriya National Park
- Explore the amazing Dambulla Caves
- Walk around a Spice Garden
- Visit the revered Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic
- Enjoy a Kandyan dancing performance
- Explore a tea plantation
- Go in search of leopards at Yala National Park
- Relax on golden beach
- Visit a turtle hatchery - a renowned conservation project

### What's included:

- Getting there: Return flights to Colombo
- Transport: Return airport transfers, private air conditioned car or mini-van (min 3 pax) throughout and first class train from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya
- Accommodation: 11 nights total duration (including 1 night on each flight) - 9 nights in 4\* hotels
- Meals included: 9 breakfasts
- English speaking driver / guide

### Not Included

- Any meals (other than the one mentioned in the itinerary), drinks, tips, expenses of personal nature.
- Early/late check-in/out service at hotels (surcharge if requested)
- Optional excursion/tours
- Travel insurance and visa

# Full Itinerary

## Day 1: Overnight Flight

Board your overnight flight from the UK to Colombo Airport CMB.

## Day 2: Negombo

Upon arrival in Colombo, you'll be greeted by our representative and transferred to Negombo, just 20 minutes away. Known as Sri Lanka's "Little Rome," this lively beach town offers a mix of sun, sand, and history. With its colonial churches, Dutch-era fort, colourful fish markets, and scenic canals, Negombo is a charming introduction to the island. After check-in, enjoy your free time exploring the town or unwinding by the sea.

ACCOMMODATION: 4\* Earl's Regent Negombo or similar



## Day 3: Village Encounter with Cooking Demonstration

After breakfast, set off for Dambulla, a scenic three-hour drive into Sri Lanka's cultural heartland. En route, immerse yourself in rural life with a village safari - travel through lush rice fields, glide across a serene lake by catamaran, and enjoy a traditional lunch with a local family beside the paddy fields. Arrive in Dambulla and check in to your hotel, where the evening is yours to relax.

ACCOMMODATION: 4\* Hotel Habarana Village, Habarana or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast.



## Day 4: Sigiriya Rock Fortress and Minneriya National Park Safari

Today take a short 30-minute drive to Sigiriya to explore one of Sri Lanka's most iconic landmarks - the ancient Rock Fortress. Built in the 5th century by King Kashyapa, this magnificent citadel rises dramatically above the surrounding plains and is a remarkable example of early urban planning and engineering. As you climb to the summit, you'll pass the world-famous frescoes of celestial maidens, the polished 'Mirror Wall' etched with ancient visitors' inscriptions, and the remains of royal gardens and pools carved into the rock. At the top, enjoy breathtaking panoramic views of the lush landscape below.

In the afternoon, head to Minneriya National Park for a thrilling jeep safari. Just 40 minutes away, this 8,800-hectare sanctuary is best known for its impressive gatherings of wild elephants, often seen in large herds near the Minneriya reservoir. The park is also home to a variety of other wildlife, including deer, crocodiles, monkeys, and over 160 species of birds. After an exciting day, return to your hotel and relax.

ACCOMMODATION: 4\* Hotel Habarana Village, Habarana or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast.





## Day 5: Dambulla Caves, Spice Garden & Kandy

After breakfast, visit the Dambulla Cave Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Sri Lanka's most remarkable cultural landmarks. Perched atop a rocky hill, this sacred complex features five cave temples adorned with over 150 Buddha statues and vibrant murals that date back over 2,000 years. The climb is well worth the effort, offering sweeping views and a deep sense of the island's spiritual heritage.



From there, continue your journey to Kandy, stopping en route at a spice garden in Matale. Stroll through fragrant greenery while learning about the island's world-renowned spices - how they're grown, harvested, and used in traditional medicine and cuisine.

On arrival in Kandy, Sri Lanka's last royal capital, immerse yourself in the city's rich cultural charm. Visit the revered Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, which houses a sacred relic of the Buddha, then explore a gem museum to learn about the island's famous precious stones. In the evening, enjoy a vibrant cultural performance showcasing traditional music and Kandyan dance.

ACCOMMODATION: 4\* Hotel Kandy Myst by Cinnamon, Kandy or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast.

## Day 6: Train to Nuwara Eliya and Tea Plantation

After breakfast, embark on a scenic first-class train journey from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya, a breathtaking three-hour ride through misty mountains, cascading waterfalls, and emerald-green tea plantations. This charming route, once travelled by British planters, offers stunning views of villages nestled in the hills and terraced vegetable gardens. Upon arrival, explore Nuwara Eliya, affectionately known as “Little England” for its colonial architecture, rose gardens, and cool climate. Wander through the town’s highlights, from the racecourse to the historic Hill Club and the beautifully manicured golf course. Visit a tea plantation and factory to learn about the island’s rich tea heritage, tracing its origins back to the 19th century and witnessing the process from leaf to cup. After a day in the highlands, return to your hotel and unwind.

ACCOMMODATION: 4\* Mirage Kings Cottage, Nuwara Eliya or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast





## Day 7: Yala National Park Safari

After breakfast, depart for Yala, home to Sri Lanka's most renowned national park. In the afternoon, set out on an exhilarating jeep safari through Yala National Park, a vast wilderness of grasslands, forests, and lagoons that spans over 1,200 square kilometers. As you navigate the rugged trails, keep an eye out for elephants, sloth bears, crocodiles, spotted deer, and a rich variety of birdlife. Yala is also famous for having one of the highest leopard densities in the world, offering a rare chance to spot this elusive predator in its natural habitat. After an unforgettable wildlife adventure, arrive at your hotel and spend the evening at leisure.

ACCOMMODATION: 4\* Hotel Chaarya Resort, Yala or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast



## Day 8: Tangalle Beach

Today, proceed to Tangalle, a coastal haven known for its tranquil beaches, swaying palms, and laid-back charm. Upon arrival, check in to your hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. Whether you choose to unwind by the pool, stroll along the quiet shoreline, or simply soak in the serene surroundings, Tangalle offers the perfect setting for rest and relaxation.

ACCOMMODATION: 4\* Hotel Sooriya Resort, Tangalle or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast.



## Day 9: Galle and Turtle Hatchery

After breakfast, embark on a scenic drive to the southern coast for a day excursion to the Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery and the historic Galle Fort (approximately 45 minutes).

The Kosgoda Hatchery, one of Sri Lanka's earliest conservation projects, offers a rare chance to observe baby turtles preparing for release into the sea, as well as several adult species including the Olive Ridley, Hawksbill, Green Turtle, Loggerhead, and Leatherback. Run by the Sri Lanka Wildlife Protection Society, the hatchery provides a meaningful wildlife experience with a focus on preservation and education.

Continue to Galle, a charming coastal city steeped in colonial history, where the 17th-century Dutch Fort - now a UNESCO World Heritage Site - stands as a testament to centuries of Portuguese, Dutch, and British influence. Wander through its cobblestone streets, admire the colonial architecture, and take in the ocean views from the forts' ramparts. After the excursion, return to the hotel and relax for the evening.

ACCOMMODATION: 4\* Hotel Sooriya Resort, Tangalle or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast.



## Day 10: Tangalle Beach

Enjoy a full day at leisure in the coastal town of Tangalle, a paradise where golden sands meet the gentle waves of the Indian Ocean. Whether you choose to unwind on the beach, take a dip in the warm waters, or simply relax by the pool with a refreshing drink, the day is yours to enjoy at your own pace.

ACCOMMODATION: 4\* Hotel Sooriya Resort, Tangalle or similar

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast



## Day 11: Transfer to Colombo Airport

Today you will be transferred back to Colombo International Airport for your onward flight home, carrying with you unforgettable memories of your time in Sri Lanka. Some flights arrive the same day, others are overnight.

MEALS INCLUDED: Breakfast.

## Day 12: Arrive in the UK

If your flight home is an overnight flight you will be arriving home today.



# FAQs

## DO I NEED A VISA?

British passport holders require a visa to enter Sri Lanka, and your passport must have an expiry date of at least 6 months after the date you arrive with at least 2 blank pages.

You must apply for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) online before you travel. It only takes a few minutes and allows you to stay in Sri Lanka for up to 30 days, with the option to extend your stay if needed. Visas on arrival are no longer issued.

Please check the FCDO website for more information on visas.

## DO I NEED ANY VACCINATIONS?

Please note that there are no mandatory vaccinations required to enter Sri Lanka. However, we recommend consulting your GP or a travel health clinic before you travel to ensure your routine vaccinations are up to date and to receive any personalised health advice.

## WHAT SHOULD I WEAR TO RELIGIOUS SITES?

When visiting Sri Lanka's beautiful religious sites, we kindly ask all visitors - regardless of gender - to dress modestly as a sign of respect. This means covering shoulders and knees, so please avoid wearing shorts or sleeveless tops. These customs are especially important at sacred locations such as the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy and the Sacred Bo Tree and Stupas in Anuradhapura, where traditions are deeply honoured. As a mark of reverence, you'll also be asked to remove hats, caps, shoes, and slippers before entering temples and religious monuments. Don't worry, most places provide a safe and affordable spot to leave your footwear at the entrance.

## WHAT CURRENCY DO I TAKE WITH ME?

We recommend bringing US Dollars for Sri Lanka - they're easy to exchange and widely accepted.

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE ON TIPS?

While tipping isn't mandatory, it's a thoughtful way to show appreciation, especially considering the modest wages many workers receive. A small gesture can go a long way, so setting aside a little extra for porters, guides, and drivers is always appreciated. Leaving some spare change at restaurants is also a kind way to recognise good service.

## WHO IS THIS TOUR SUITABLE FOR?

This tour is accessible to most people with an average level of fitness and normal mobility, however as there is a lot of climbing and uneven terrain at historical sites, this tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

We recommend a minimum child age of 12 for this itinerary, but for families with younger children please contact us for a tailor-made itinerary.