

Sri Lanka

July- August 2012

07 nights / 08 days

Tour cost \$1,600

Additional costs:

International air (est.) \$1,650

Visa \$10

Tips \$90

Single supplement \$ 500



This extraordinary island set in the Indian Ocean, off the south eastern tip of India, has thousands of years of diverse culture. Still a predominantly Buddhist country, it also has strong Hindu, Christian and Muslim communities as well. Incredibly fertile and a great producer of exotic fruits and it was for centuries the spice producer of the world famous for its Cinnamon & Pepper. It is now best known for its tea plantations established by the British in the cooler, misty and incredibly picturesque hill country. With a strong cultural past that now offers over 7 UN World Heritage sites, Sri Lanka was once one of the richest countries in Asia. In more recent times it has not developed at the dramatic pace of its neighbors in the region adding to its charm and character. From beautiful beaches, unbelievable flora and fauna (much endemic), amazing architecture as well as a vast amount of historical & religious sites, white water rafting, cycling and many other adventures for the more active and finally the friendliest of people who carry infectious smiles with them every day!



Included in the price

- Hotels, most meals
- Transportation in an air-conditioned vehicle.
- The service of an experienced English Speaking National Guide
- Entrance fees to Pinnawela, Polonnaruwa, Dambulla Cave Temple, Temple of Tooth and Cultural Dance Show also city tour of Colombo / Kandy / NuwaraEliya and Negombo
- 2 Water Bottles per person per day on the bus.
- Government Tax

All prices are subject to revision due to fuel prices.

Not included:

- Additional transfers, optional sightseeing or entrance fees to locations not mentioned on the program.
- Compulsory Supplements (if any imposed during that period) at hotels
- Beverages not mentioned
- Early check in or late checkout
- Optional excursions
- Expenses of personal nature

Sri Lanka



THE AMAZING HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE WILL TAKE YOU TO:

- ✓ Colombo
- ✓ Pinnawala
- ✓ Habarana
- ✓ Polonnaruwa
- ✓ Dambulla
- ✓ Kandy
- ✓ Nuwara Eliya
- ✓ Negombo

THE FACTS

- ✓ Population 21 million
- ✓ 3 main languages - Sinhala, Tamil and English.
- ✓ Buddhist majority (70%), with Hindu, Christian and Muslim minorities.
- ✓ Gained independence from Britain in 1948
- ✓ Democratic Socialist Republic since 1978
- ✓ The top exports are: Tea, Textiles, Gems & Foreign Remittances

THE TRIVIA

- ✓ Has the highest concentration of Leopard in the world
- ✓ 8 of the world's UN World Heritage Sites
- ✓ Is one of the world's 25 Biodiversity Hot Spots
- ✓ World's 3rd largest tea producer
- ✓ The Sinhalese name, Sri Lanka, means, "The Resplendent Land" or "Holy Ceylon."
- ✓ Is famous for its Ceylonese Sapphire
- ✓ Has 1,340km of tropical coastline

OUR FAVOURITE THINGS TO DO:

1. Join in a game of cricket - the cricket-mad locals are always happy for an extra pair of hands
2. Immerse yourself in the Esala Peraherain Kandy – a colorful festival involving huge processions of glittering elephants, dancers and drummers
3. River bathing – we encourage you to go local and join in on daily life; take a dip in a refreshing river, dry out on a sundrenched rock!
4. Enjoy every single moment you spend on this paradise island

OUR FAVOURITE THINGS TO EAT:

1. Eat the freshest chilled crab with your feet in the sand under the stars by the Indian Ocean
2. An egg hopper for breakfast with seenisambol! Watch out of the 'kata sambol' - it's a definite challenge (spicy wise)
3. Buffalo Curd & Treacle - start and you won't be able to stop!
4. Cashew nut curry – so rich and creamy you will never forget it

OUR FAVOURITE THINGS TO BUY:

1. Hand woven Sarongs from Barefoot - they have the most incredible selection in the brightest of colors and are reasonably priced. Great gifts if you can bare to give them away.
2. A bottle of local brew called ARRACK ...a daring drink for the adventurous.
3. Cashew nuts from Kadjugama
4. Plenty of the best Ceylon tea to continually remind you of this amazing island and to give to those who missed the opportunity to visit Sri Lanka

Day 1--AIRPORT – COLOMBO(approx 1 hour)

Arrive at Bandaranaike International Airport. **Welcome to Sri Lanka!** You are met by your Diethelm Travel Representative in the arrival area and transfer to Colombo.

On the way from the airport stop for a delicious Tambili (King Coconut) to quench your thirst and rehydrate after a long flight.

Check-in at Hotel in Colombo. Here, you will have some time to relax by the beautiful hotel pool or enjoy an city tour of the bustling capital.

Colombo (derived from Sinhalese name Kola-amba-thota which means "mango harbor", altered by the Portuguese to honor Christopher Columbus), is the cultural capital and largest city and commercial center of Sri Lanka. (The new administrative capital of Sri Lanka is Sri Jayawardenepura-Kotte.) Sightseeing highlights include the Colombo National and Dutch period museums, old and new parliament houses, Gangarama Buddhist Temple, Town Hall, and the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall. Apart from excellent shopping, Colombo offers visits to one of the world's leading tea auctions, an 18 hole Golf Course, seasonal Buddhist and Hindu pageants, international cricket tournaments, plush casinos, enjoyable evening entertainment and excellent restaurants. State-of-the-Art communications and Cyber services are available in the hotels and other outlets. The Pettah area, which is in the heart of Colombo, is a beehive of activity. Traders and payment hawkers of all kinds flock to Colombo and it's a well-known fact that Pettah is where the best deals are made

Explorer Colombo by local transport – TukTuk.

Optional – experience a traditional High Tea at the Terrace of the Galle Face Hotel or a sunset Cocktail.

Overnight stay at Colombo

Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 2 COLOMBO – PINNAWELA(approx 1 ½ hrs) – HABARANA(approx 2 ½ hours)

After breakfast commence your journey through this amazing island.

Stop at a Pineapple-Plantation and have your first experience with this delicious tropical fruit. Sri Lanka is well known for its sweet pineapples.

En route visit ***The Elephant Orphanage in Pinnawela*** in time to witness the feeding and bathing of the baby elephants. The elephant orphanage was established in 1975 and started with seven orphans. Today some of these orphans enjoy the fortune of seeing their grandchildren born in the same location. With the help of local and foreign experts, Pinnawela started a scientific captive-breeding programme for elephants. A considerable number of books and research articles on Pinnawela have been published in several languages.

If interested and time permits, visit Yapahuwa - one of the great architectural sites of the island. It is worthy of a visit as it is relatively quick to see, interesting and beautiful. Although not as significant as other Cultural Triangle sites it does have a special individual charm.

Overnight stay at Dambulla or Habarana

Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 3 POLONNARUWA(approx 45 minutes)

Excursion to 12th Century Sinhalese capital, **Polonnaruwa**; to see the ruins of the Royal Palace and Gal Vihara where three giant Buddha statues are carved out of rock.

Thereafter visit to Piyawera Project Pre School in Polonnaruwa, a project initiated & carried out by Hemas group. Through their Piyawara initiative Hemas has committed themselves to promoting Early Childhood Care & Development (ECCD) in Sri Lanka, by working with government, teachers and parents to up-grade existing pre-schools in remote regions and add new model preschools to the government network.

On completion return to Hotel and unwind.

Leave in the afternoon for the staggering rock fortress at Sigiriya. The spectacular ***Rock Fortress of Sigiriya***, 19 kilometers North East of Dambulla is one of Sri Lanka's major attractions. The Rock was the Fortress of the "King Kasyapa" who murdered his father and stole the throne from his elder brother who was the rightful heir to the throne. Kasyapa built his fortress in this 182-meter high rock to protect himself from his enemies.

Overnight stay at Dambulla or Habarana

Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 4 HABARANA

After an early breakfast drive to Hiriwaduna – a village that lies sprawled around a reservoir located off the main Habarana road.

On arrival begin an exciting trek - Begin your trek along a shaded, gravel path that leads on to the bund of the reservoir, which is a stunning mixture of contrasts. The ashen trunks of long dead trees rise up starkly against the lush, green vegetation of the wetlands in the background, their skeletal shapes the perfect spots for roosting egrets. Thereafter, cross the overspill and make your way towards the sandy embankment, which is your pick up point for an easy crossing by "Oruwa". Reach the far shore and then make your way along a narrow, shady path that cuts through a banana plantation until you reach a clearing in which stands a house of wattle and daub, the home of a chena farmer and his family. Enjoy a cool, sweet drink of king coconut before you begin the next phase of your trek, which will lead you through vegetable plots and into a scrub forest, where a waiting bullock cart will transport you through jungle and passed paddy fields to your next destination.

Evening at leisure or **OPTIONAL** Excursion to **Minneriya National Park**, Minneriya Tank was built by King Mahasen in third century AD. This national park is based largely around the huge tank (reservoir) and serves as an important gathering place for a large population of elephants. A great place for elephant spotting all year round – the dry season makes water scarce between June and September hence more and more elephants gather on the shores of Minneriya Tank. By late August and September up to 300 elephants can often be seen, this phenomenon is known as 'The Gathering' and is the largest gathering of Asian elephants that can be seen anywhere in the world. The Minneriya National Park also consists of wet lands, which have global significance

Overnight stay at Dambulla or Habarana

Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 5 DAMBULLA / HABARANA – KANDY (approx 3 hours)

After breakfast leave for Kandy, en route visit to Dambulla Rock Cave Temple & a Spice Garden in Matale. The ***Dambulla Cave Temple*** consists of a complex of Buddhist image houses. Its rock ceiling is one large sweep of colorful frescoes, some of which date back to over 2,000 years, which depicts Buddhist mythology, and the tales of the Buddha's previous births. This cave temple has the largest number of Buddha statues all housed in one place, including a 14 meter long, colossal figure of the recumbent Buddha carved out of the rock.

Visit a Spice Garden to learn all about Sri Lankan spices and experience a Sri Lankan curry cookery demonstration.

Kandy – UNESCO World Heritage also famous for its rich ancient arts & craft including drum making, dumbara mat waving, crafting Kandyan jewelry, dancing etc.

Wander around the lake and the streets of Kandy getting a feel for this wonderful city and explore the local markets. Visit the beautiful Royal Botanical Gardens and see its treasures of tropical flora. Keep an eye out for the amazing fig tree!

The Temple of the Tooth, the palace complex and the holy city of Kandy are associated with the history of the dissemination of one of the most important religions of humanity, Buddhism. The Temple of Kandy is the product of the last peregrination of the relic of the tooth of Lord Buddha. Religious services (pooja) with traditional music and drumming are held daily at dawn, mid-day and in the evening where guests can participate.

This evening witness a colorful Kandyan Dance Performance

Overnight stay at Kandy

Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 6 KANDY – NUWARA ELIYA (approx 2 ½ hours)

Morning depart for the hill station of Nuwara Eliya some 6,000 feet above sea level.

Train journeys in Sri Lanka are an absolute must. Take the most magical train journey through Sri Lanka's tea country with prime seats in the observation carriage. A fabulous way to see Sri Lanka's hill villages, tea country and see the daily lives of the local people. Your driver will take your luggage and meet you at your destination. It's hassle free!

(Confirmation of the train tickets will be provided 07 days before the date of train journey)

Offering spectacular views of beautiful green hillsides, rushing waterfalls and tea plantations, This most celebrated of hill stations is set in a stunning mountain valley. On the way to the hill country don't miss the visit to a tea plantation and factory while you enjoy the superb views of the countryside.

Your overnight stay will be at the famous and beautiful Grand Hotel at NuwaraEliya.

Overnight stay at NuwaraEliya

Breakfast, lunch dinner

Day 7 NUWARA ELIYA –KITULGALE – NEGOMBO (approx 5 hours)

Leave the hill country and drive to the coast to **Negombo**

The route also offers the opportunity to stop at **Kithulgala**, where the film 'Bridge over the River Kwai' was filmed and you will have the chance to see the St Clair's and Devon Waterfalls en route.

Optional – if interested we could arrange a nature walk or white water rafting in Kitulgale.

Negombo – which is one of Sri Lanka's busiest fishing centers and is also famous for coconut products, cinnamon, ceramics and brassware.

Farewell-Dinner

Overnight stay at Negombo

Breakfast, lunch dinner

Day 8 NEGOMBO – AIRPORT (approx 20 minutes)

Depending on your departure flight and if interested, visit the lively fish market early morning to see the catch of the day.

Transfer to the airport and departure.

HOTELS

Galle Face Hotel, Colombo – Standard

Chaaya Village, Habarana – Superior

Amaya Hills, Kandy – Superior

St. Andrews, NuwaraEliya – Standard

Jetwing Sea, Negombo – Superior