

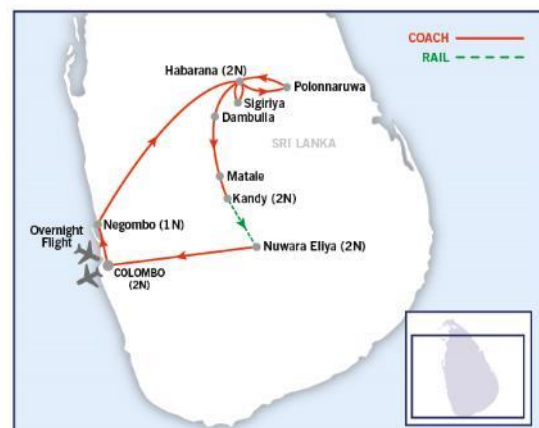


Charms of Sri Lanka Tour Dossier

Exclusive Tour | 11 Days | Comfortable
Negombo – Habarana – Kandy – Nuwara Eliya

Sri Lanka is an enchanting land of beauty, diversity and unique culture that has long enthralled travellers. Venture amongst its timeless ruins, delicious gastronomy and incredible natural beauty to capture its essence for yourself.

- Visit the spectacular rock fortress of Sigiriya
- Discover the ruins of medieval Polonnaruwa
- Take a safari in Minneriya National Park
- Tour a tea plantation in Nuwara Eliya
- Enjoy unique Sri Lankan dining experiences
- Explore Colombo in a World War 2 Jeep



Charms of Sri Lanka tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals where stated
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or local guides
- Visa fees for UK and EU passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with ABTA, ATOL and IATA

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, meals not stated in the itinerary, insurance of any kind, tipping and early check in or late checkout. These are all payable locally.

Exclusive Collection Tours:

These tours have been meticulously designed with the more discerning traveller in mind. Our deluxe journeys through Asia feature distinctive and exclusive experiences which bring the region to life. Our exclusive collection tours include:

- Unique experiences
- Small group sizes
- Porter service to and from your hotel rooms
- UK chauffeur transfers
- A mid-tour Laundry service

Comfortable Tours:

'Charms of Sri Lanka' is a **comfortable** tour. Although this is the easiest grading of tour Wendy Wu Tours offers it still requires a reasonable level of fitness.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Sightseeing often involves climbing quite a number of steps, often without handrails

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Itinerary – Charms of Sri Lanka

Days 1-2: Negombo

Meals included: Dinner

Travel by chauffeured transfer to the airport for your flight to Colombo. Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to Negombo for an overnight stay. Your National Escort/Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours will meet you at the Bandaranaike Airport in the Arrivals Hall tonight. Together with any other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer (45 minutes) to your hotel and check-in.



Destination Information

Negombo - Negombo was once an important commercial trade centre, well known for offering the best cinnamon in the world. Negombo was one of the first towns taken by the Portuguese, only to be captured by the Dutch in 1640 and then recaptured by the Portuguese some months later. The British eventually took control of the town in 1796.

Day 3: Habarana

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

This morning a tour introduction will either be held in the hotel or on the coach. There will not be food or drinks served at this meeting; it is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in Sri Lanka. After breakfast, travel approximately 4-5 hours (150km) to Habarana for a two-night stay. This road is bumpy at times due to continual road construction. Upon arrival, drive to nearby Sigiriya and tour the Rock Fortress, also known as Lion Rock. There are many steps, most with railings leading up to the top of the Rock Fortress so extra care is needed here. Please ensure you bring plenty of water with you today and you wear a hat for sun protection. The ascent involves a very steep climb, so those who are unfit may have some difficulty. Beware of local 'helpers' as they may charge a fee for their assistance. You will spend approximately 2 hours here climbing the Lion Rock and touring the surrounding gardens. This evening enjoy a unique dining experience at a Paddy Museum at a nearby resort.



Destination Information

Habarana - A small village located in the heart of Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle, ideally located to many of the main tourist sites in the area.

Rock Fortress - Built by King Kashyapa, the rock fortress is also known as the 'Lion Rock' because a massive lion carved out of the rock once sat at the entrance to the palace. Today only the lion's paws remain. On the summit are the foundations of the Royal Palace built for King Kashyapa, along with a pool, sunrise-facing throne constructed from solid rock and panoramic views of the town below. You will also see the three distinct landscaped gardens; the Water Gardens, Boulder Gardens and Terrace Gardens.

Paddy Museum Dinner - Situated on the veranda of a Paddy Museum, this speciality restaurant features Sri Lankan cuisine with a rustic and simple ambiance. Meals are prepared in a traditional village kitchen; in clay pots and on traditional clay stoves and served in a traditional manner.

Day 4: Habarana

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Drive approximately 1.5-2 hours and discover the UNESCO World Heritage listed site of Polonnaruwa this morning. There will be approximately 2 hours of easy sightseeing on foot while exploring the palace and temples. Continue to Minneriya National Park and embark on a jeep safari, approximately 3 hours in length. Another special experience awaits you this evening! Indulge in a procession of delicious gourmet dishes as you dine in a torch and candle lantern lit cave.

Destination Information

Polonnaruwa - Polonnaruwa was the capital of Sri Lanka from the 11th to the 13th centuries and is a well-preserved city of stupas, frescoes and statues. Visit the ruins of the Royal Palace, Audience Hall and the Bathing Pool in the Royal Palace group, along with the Thivanka Image House, which possesses the best frescoes from the Polonnaruwa period. Also tour Gal Vihara, a magnificent group of rock temples consisting of four separate statues; a meditating Buddha, a smaller Buddha said to be visiting heaven, a standing Buddha and the reclining Buddha entering Nirvana, which is 14 metres long.

Minneriya National Park - Centred around the ancient Minneriya Tank, built by King Mahasen in the 3rd century AD, this national park is one of the best places in Sri Lanka to spot elephants.

Day 5: Habarana - Kandy

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Depart Habarana this morning and drive approximately 3-3.5 hours (95km) to view the Dambulla Rock Temple. The temple is made up of five decorated caves and has two main viewing areas consisting of approximately 800 steps. You will spend 1.5 hours sightseeing on foot with light climbing of steps involved. Continue the town of Kandy, stopping to visit a spice garden in Matale for lunch. This afternoon explore Kandy, the last capital of the Sri Lankan kings.



Destination Information

Spice Garden - Sri Lanka is famous for its spices, and today you will visit a spice garden where cinnamon, cardamom, pepper creepers and other spice trees are planted. Learn how spices are grown and processed before having lunch.

Kandy - Kandy is situated 500m above sea level and is known for its culture and beauty. It is a sacred Buddhist city, famous for the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, Dalada Maligawa. Each year the tooth relic is honoured in Esala Perahera, a religious parade with elephants, drummers and dancers performing in the streets.

Day 6: Kandy

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning participate in an authentic Sri Lanka culinary experience in a colonial-style home with a local family. Later, explore the city of Kandy. Visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic (where there are small amounts of steps and the temple can be very crowded during daily prayer services) before continuing to a gem museum and enjoy a stroll through a local market. This evening view a colourful cultural show. This evening you will be given a coupon that you can use to dine in either of the two main restaurants, Far Pavilions Restaurant or the Royal Spice Indian Restaurant, located in the hotel.



Destination Information

Sri Lankan Home Experience - You will be met with welcome drink of either fresh fruit juice or local beer before sitting down at dining table to share an authentic meal with the family. Dishes may include fish, chicken or prawn curry, green mangoes in a Sri Lankan spiced gravy, mallung (raw greens tossed in coconut, onion and lime), paripu (lentils), bandakka (okra stir fried with spices and coconut milk) and red rice (a staple of Sri Lankan cuisine) followed by a desert of fresh tropical fruit. Local Ceylon Tea and coffee will be served upon request, the coffee is brewed from beans grown organically on the family plantation.

Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic - The temple houses an important Buddhist Relic, a tooth of the Buddha. Stolen at his funeral, the tooth was smuggled into Sri Lanka hidden in the hair of a princess who fled from India. The relic of the tooth is kept in a two-storey shrine fronted by large elephant trunks.

Day 7: Kandy – Nuwara Eliya

Meals included: Breakfast

Enjoy the morning free at leisure before driving to Peradeniya railway station to board a train to Nanu Oya (train journey approximately two hours). As our train is a day train, our seats will be in an AC Chair Car. More than likely you will not be able to purchase any food or drink on the train, so if you need snacks make sure to pre-purchase them before boarding. The train carriages are shared, so at all times please be aware of your belongings. Travel by coach to Nuwara Eliya and check into your deluxe hotel for a two-night stay. Later partake in a high tea experience, where you can sip on a cup of Ceylon tea while enjoying some sweet and savoury delicacies.



Please note: a separate coach directly to Nuwara Eliya will transport your group luggage. Please pack anything you will need for today's touring in your daypack.

Destination Information

Nuwara Eliya - Situated at 2,000m above sea level, Nuwara Eliya is the main hill station of Sri Lanka and is known as 'Little England', as it resembles an English country town. It is considered an excellent location for tea production due to the cool climate, which creates tea with a unique flavour.

Day 8: Nuwara Eliya

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

This morning visit a tea plantation where you can tour the tea factory to learn more of the tea process from plucking to packaging. Later commence a tour of Nuwara Eliya and visit Gregory Lake and Victoria Park. In the evening, partake in a fine-dining experience with a difference! Enjoy a six-course meal in a converted train carriage used to transport tea from Nuwara Eliya in the 1950's.

Destination Information

Tea Factory and Tea Plantation - During your visit you will observe the process of manufacturing tea, and learn how tea is graded. You will also have the opportunity to taste a cup of pure Ceylon tea.

Railway Carriage Restaurant - From the moment the railway master blows his whistle to welcome you aboard, you know that you are in for a unique dining experience. Dine in a converted third-class carriage of the Udapussellawa narrow-gauge railway line, once used to transport tea.

Day 9: Nuwara Eliya - Colombo

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Depart the lush green rolling hills of Nuwara Eliya and travel 6 hours (168km) to Colombo. Upon arrival, enjoy some time at leisure to relax or do some independent exploration of Colombo. In the evening head to the Gallery Café, housed in the former office of world-renowned Sri Lankan architect, the late Geoffrey Bawa, for dinner.

Destination Information

Colombo - The formal capital city and the business and commercial centre of Sri Lanka. Originally a small sea port, Colombo became prominent in the 15th century with the arrival of the Portuguese. The Dutch later arrived in the 16th century but it wasn't until the British arrived in the late 18th Century that Colombo developed into a major city.

Day 10: Colombo

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

This morning commence a tour of the city in World War 2 era jeeps. Enjoy this unique experience as you explore the city in the open-topped vehicles. Sightseeing today includes the Old Dutch Hospital, Old Parliament, Old Colombo Lighthouse, Slave Island and National Museum amongst others. In the evening, proceed to the coveted Ministry of Crab for a farewell dinner.

Destination Information

Old Dutch Hospital - Considered to be one of the oldest buildings in Colombo, it has been lavishly restored and is now one of the most popular shopping and dining precincts in the city.

Old Parliament - Built the 1930s during the British colonial era, the new-Baroque style building originally housed the Legislative Council of Ceylon.

Old Colombo Lighthouse - Located in the South Port of Colombo, the lighthouse was built in 1952 and opened by the first Prime Minister of Ceylon.

Ministry of Crab - Friends and fellow foodies, Mahela Jayawardene, Kumar Sangakkara and Dharshan Munidase decided to create Ministry of Crab as a celebration of Sri Lanka's seafood.

Day 11: Depart Colombo

Meals included: Breakfast

Today is a free day to further explore the vibrant city of Colombo independently before being transferred to Bandaranaike Airport to board your onward flight home. On arrival at the airport in the UK, be met by your airport chauffeur who will transfer you back home.

Charms of Sri Lanka Travel Information

Visas

A visa is required for entry into Sri Lanka. A standard visa processing service is included in your tour cost. You will need to complete the visa application form following the instructions on the visa help sheet. Once completed you will need to email or post the appropriate documents to our office in order for us to process your visa with the embassy. Once your visa has been approved we will send you a copy of the completed visa by email for you to print out and take with you when you travel to Sri Lanka. Any passports and visa applications that require an express service will incur an extra fee. Your passport must be valid for 6 months from your date of return from Sri Lanka, and should have at least 2 blank pages for your Sri Lanka visa.

In rare cases, you may be required to provide further information or documentation to the Sri Lankan embassy and/or be required to attend an interview at the embassy. If this is the case, we will notify you as soon as we have been advised.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is home to a melting pot of cuisine. Throughout years of colonisation and influence from other countries and a history of spice trading, Sri Lankan has adapted its own distinct flavor. While travelling in Asia, it is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. Meals as outlined the itinerary (excluding drinks) are included in our Spirit of Sri Lanka group tour. Please be aware that dishes selected for your meals reflect the cooking styles and signature dishes of the local area you are in.

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. When eating meals on group tours, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional ‘family style’; meaning that various dishes will be laid out in the centre of the table top. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody.

We recommend that when it comes to Sri Lankan food, you stay open-minded and try to be adventurous!

Accommodation

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and a telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide.

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage-type hotel. In remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local five-star standard, but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between UK and Sri Lanka. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner city roads in Sri Lanka have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in Sri Lanka have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections below are approximations only.

Development in Sri Lanka

Although Sri Lanka is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in the UK. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort/Local Guides.

Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions that demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places that hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a National Escort. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with Local Guides.

Tipping Policy

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Sri Lanka is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

Appropriate Dress

When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in conservative, non-revealing clothing. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and pants or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women. Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their daypack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads to feel more comfortable while sightseeing at mosques. When visiting Jain temples, you must not wear or take in any leather items such as belts, watches, camera straps, purses and shoes.

Religious sites and homes throughout Sri Lanka – for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside.

We recommend shoes that easily slip on and off, and carry a pair of thick, old socks in your daypack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces. The following itinerary will indicate when you need to consider this.

Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Itinerary changes

It is our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Last updated: October 2016