



Highlights of Sri Lanka Tour Dossier

Classic Tour | 15 Days | Comfortable

Negombo – Sigiriya – Kandy – Nuwara Eliya – Yala National Park – Ahungalla
- Colombo

Marvel at magnificent temples, see the World Heritage Rock Fortress at Sigiriya, search for elephants and other wild animals at Yala National Park, discover the fascinating caves at Dambulla and explore the ruined cities of Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura.

- Climb the spectacular rock fortress of Sigiriya
- Explore the ruins of medieval Polonnaruwa
- Visit Kandy's sacred temple
- Safari with elephants in the national park
- Wander the historic city of Colombo



Highlights of Sri Lanka tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All Meals
- 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.

Classic Tours:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Sri Lanka on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escort or local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

Comfortable Tours:

'Highlights 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 at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples 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 – Highlights of Sri Lanka

Days 1-2: Arrive Negombo

Fly 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.

Please note: For tours travelling from January to April, renovations to the runway at Colombo airport may cause longer than normal wait times at immigration upon arrival in Sri Lanka.



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: Negombo - Sigiriya

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 5 hours (171km) to Sigiriya for a three-night stay. This road is bumpy at times due to continual road construction. Upon arrival, 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.



Destination Information

Sigiriya - The ancient city of Sigiriya lies at the 180m summit of the granite peak known as the 'Lion's Rock'. One of the most dramatic sites in Sri Lanka, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1982.

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.

Day 4: Sigiriya - Polonnaruwa

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 - refer to **Appropriate Dress** section below. Return to Sigiriya.



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.

Day 5: Sigiriya - Anuradhapura

Drive approximately three hours to Anuradhapura and explore the magnificent ancient city. Exploration of this ancient city involves approximately four hours on foot. Visit the Bo Tree before returning to Sigiriya, where the remainder of the afternoon is free at leisure.

Destination Information

Anuradhapura - One of Sri Lanka's most ancient cities. The city's greatest treasures are its dagobas; domes enshrining sacred relics. The most notable is the Ruvanveliseya Dagoba, dating back to the 2nd century BC. Also visit the Jetavanaramaya, the largest dagoba in the world, and the Thuparamaya, said to contain the collarbone of Buddha, and the first dagoba built in Sri Lanka.

Bo Tree - The most renowned Buddhist relic is the sacred Bo Tree. It is said that Emperor Asoka's daughter brought to Anuradhapura a branch of this tree, under which Buddha is said to have gained enlightenment. Planted over 2,250 years ago, it is the oldest surviving historical tree in the world.

Day 6: Sigiriya - Kandy

Depart Sigiriya this morning and drive approximately 45 minutes 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 1.5 hours to the town of Kandy, stopping to visit a spice garden in Matale, where there is easy sightseeing on foot for approximately 1.5 hours. Drive a further hour to Kandy and check into your hotel.



Destination Information

Dambulla Rock Temple - Dating back to the 1st century BC, the famous Dambulla Rock Temple is made up of five caves that have been converted into shrine rooms containing around 150 Buddha statues and colourful frescoes. In the first cave you will see the 14m statue of Buddha cut out of the rock. At the Buddha's feet are Ananda, the most loyal disciple, as well as other seated Buddhas nearby. The second cave is the largest, also known as the Cave of the Great Kings, where there are 16 standing and 40 seated statues of Buddha. The frescoes on the ceiling depict scenes from Buddha's life and important events from the country's history. Inside the cave is a spring created from the drips from the ceiling, which is said to have healing powers and is used in sacred rituals.

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 7: Kandy

Drive approximately 1 hour to the Peradeniya Royal Botanical Gardens, the largest botanical gardens in Sri Lanka. After some time to explore the beautiful grounds, there will be a picnic lunch served within the grounds. Later tour the city of Kandy, which involves approximately 4 hours sightseeing. Visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic before continuing to the remains of the Royal Palace. The temple can be very crowded during daily prayer services. This evening watch a cultural dance show.



Destination Information

Peradeniya Royal Botanical Gardens - The largest botanical gardens in Sri Lanka. Here you will see a collection of ornamental plants used to produce spices.

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.

Remains of the Royal Palace - Now the National Museum, the primary exhibits are in the Palle Vahala, the former Queens Palace, and consist of weapons, jewellery, tools and other artefacts.

Day 8: Kandy – Nuwara Eliya

Say goodbye to Kandy as you begin the three hour (75km) drive to Nuwara Eliya, visiting a tea plantation and tea factory on route. Upon arrival proceed to your hotel and check-in for an overnight stay. In the afternoon explore Victoria Park and wander the city centre to see the colonial buildings.



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 to be an excellent location for tea production due to the cool climate, which creates tea with a unique flavour.

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.

Victoria Park - A beautiful public park located in Nuwara Eliya. The park is also an excellent place for bird watching, as there are a number of rare birds here.

Day 9: Nuwara Eliya – Yala National Park

Depart the green hills of Nuwara Eliya and travel to approximately 5 hours (200km) to Udawalawe National Park, where the Udawalawe Elephant Transit Home is located. Here you will tour the area and learn about the care of orphaned and abandoned baby elephants (spend approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour here).



Drive a further 2-3 hours to Yala National Park (100km) and check-in for the next two nights. The road leading into the park is very bumpy and full of potholes, and has the National Park surrounding the road. This evening is free at your leisure.

Please note: Your passports are required in order to gain entry into National Parks so please ensure you bring them with you today.

Destination Information

The Elephant Transit Home - The home cares for abandoned and orphaned baby elephants, providing them with food, shelter and medical care before they are released into the Udawalawe National Park.

Yala National Park - Yala is the largest National Park in Sri Lanka, and is most famous for its herds of elephant. It is also home to a large number of other wild animals, including boars, buffalos, leopards, bears, dears and crocodiles.

Day 10: Yala National Park

Today there will be a morning and evening jeep safari through Yala National Park, Sri Lanka's most famous national park, each safari is approximately 3 hours in length. Please note there are no toilets available during the park excursions.

Day 11: Yala National Park - Ahungalla

Depart Yala and drive approximately 4.5 hours to Ahungalla. On the way, stop and visit the Hummanaya Blowhole, Mulkirigala Rock Temple and Dikwella Wewurukannala Temple. After lunch stop to view the famous stilt fisherman at Welligama. Upon arrival in Ahungalla, check into your hotel for a two night stay.



Destination Information

Hummanaya Blowhole - The second largest of the six large blowholes in the world, located at the top of a fissured cliff about 20m above sea level.

Mulkirigala Rock Temple - This cave temple contains Buddha figures surrounded by wall paintings depicting scenes from the life of Buddha.

Dikwella Wewurukannala Temple - One of the most remarkable Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka. The temple is dominated by the largest Buddha statue in the country, which stands at 160ft high.

Welligama - Stop to view the iconic stilt fishermen of Sri Lanka. A tradition kept alive by only 500 families, the fishermen balances 2m above the water on a cross bar tied to a vertical pole, planted underwater. With one hand, they hold the stilt and the other their fishing rod. A truly remarkable sight!

Ahungalla - A small coastal town located in the Galle district, Ahungalla is the perfect spot to relax and admire the sandy beaches.

Day 12: Ahungalla - Galle

Drive 25 minutes (20km) to Galle to embark on a walking tour of this fascinating city. Visit such sites as Galle Fort, the lighthouse, the Dutch Museum and the Dutch Reformed Church. Today will include easy sightseeing in the Old Town and Dutch Fort, consisting of approximately 2 hours on foot.



Destination Information

Galle Fort - Built by the Portuguese in 1588, it was fortified by the Dutch during the 17th century. Covering 36 hectares, the fort contains an amazing number of buildings from over the years. Considered one of the best examples of a fortified city built by Europeans in Asia, it was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage listed site in 1988.

Galle Lighthouse - Stunningly located on the edge of Galle Fort, the lighthouse is one of 14 left in Sri Lanka and is considered the oldest.

The Dutch Reformed Church - Originally founded in 1640, the present building dates from 1752 to 1755. The floor of the church is covered with granite tombstones and there is a small graveyard on the premises.

Day 13: Ahungalla - Colombo

Enjoy the morning at leisure before driving approximately 1.5 hours (100km) to Colombo, stopping en route to visit Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery. Upon arrival in Colombo, check into your hotel for an overnight stay.



Destination Information

Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery - Home to Sri Lanka's pioneering sea turtle conservation, established in 1981.

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 14: Colombo

Tour the vibrant city of Colombo today. Discover the Fort District, stroll Pettah Market and visit the Dutch Church of Wolvendaal. Also explore the Kelaniya Buddhist Temple and the Colombo and Natural History Museums. This morning will entail easy sightseeing, approximately 3 hours in duration. The remainder of the day is at leisure.



Destination Information

Fort District - Having been ruled by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British, the Fort District is a treasure trove of grand old colonial architecture. Now the city's cosmopolitan central business district, the Fort District was the centre of both the British and the Dutch administrations of Sri Lanka. Many of the grand old buildings built during these times are dotted throughout the area and still in use as government buildings today.

Pettah Market - A colourful series of open-air markets and bazaars located in the Pettah district, selling everything from fruit, vegetables and fabrics to household goods.

Dutch Church of Wolfendhaal - Built in 1749, the Dutch Church is one of the most important Dutch Colonial era buildings in Sri Lanka. The church is in the form of a cross, with walls 1.5m thick and the floor includes intricate tombstones to Dutch colonists.

Kelaniya Buddhist Temple - A major pilgrimage site for Buddhist devotees, who believe that the Lord Buddha visited this site on the 8th year of Enlightenment.

Colombo and Natural History Museums - Located closely together, the Colombo National Museum tells the story of ancient Sri Lanka, with collections including the regalia of Sri Lanka. The Natural History Museum displays the natural history of Sri Lanka.

Day 15: Depart Colombo

Any time before your flight is free day to further explore the vibrant city of Colombo independently. Transfer to Bandaranaike Airport to board your onward flight home.

Please note: For tours travelling from January to April, renovations to the runway at Colombo airport will mean that airline check-in will commence 5 hours prior to departure and close 90 minutes prior to departure – an earlier transfer to the airport will be required.



Highlights 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 three to four-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 the UK; 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 29 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.

Please note that from 06 January 2017 to 06 April 2017 Colombo airport will be partially closed from 08:30 to 16:30 to allow for resurfacing of the runway. This means flights will only be allowed to arrive and depart outside of these hours, there may be long queues at immigration and airline check-in counters. In anticipation of the added wait time at the airport, check-in will commence 5 hours prior to departure and will close 90 mins prior to departure. All passengers must adhere to the new regulations.

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