



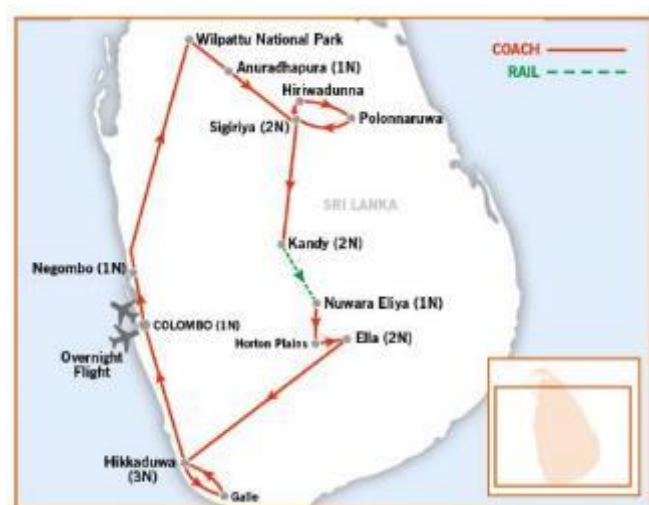
Spirit of Sri Lanka Tour Dossier

Discovery Tour | 15 Days | Active

Negombo – Anuradhapura – Sigiriya – Kandy – Nuwara Eliya – Ella –
Hikkaduwa – Colombo

A land ripe with incredible adventure, journey through Sri Lanka's extensive history, culture and nature, discovering the ruins of ancient civilisations, spotting exotic wildlife and hiking the hill country as you go.

- Safari in Wilpattu National Park
- Climb the spectacular rock fortress of Sigiriya
- Visit Kandy's sacred temple
- Trek to Worlds End at Horton Plains
- Relax in the beach town of Hikkaduwa
- Explore Colombo by jeep



Spirit of Sri Lanka tour inclusions:

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

Discovery Tours:

Designed for those who wish to be further immersed in the authentic charm of Asia; our Discovery Tours include more cultural and active experiences. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and Local Guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

Our Discovery Tours include:

- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

Active Tours:

'Spirit of Sri Lanka' is an **Active** tour. This is one of the most demanding trips Wendy Wu Tours offers. As a whole, this itinerary requires a high level of fitness.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time, often involving climbing quite a number of steps without handrails
- In Hiriwadunna, Horton Plains National Park and Ella there will be trekking for up to 4 hours at a time
- You will be required to get on and off the river boat on the Mahaweli River without assistance

Of course, our National Escorts 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. If you require any more information about the pace of our Discovery Tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

Itinerary – Spirit of Sri Lanka

Days 1-2: Negombo

Meals Included: Dinner

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.



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 - Anuradhapura

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, 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 at the hotel travel 4-5 hours (170km) to Wilpattu National Park, where you will take an exciting jeep safari tour of the park. (The safari will last approximately 3 hours). Continue 1.5 hours (57km) to your hotel in Anuradhapura and check in for an overnight stay.



Destination Information

Wilpattu National Park - Sri Lanka's largest national park, Wilpattu is home to a vast number of leopards. Named due to the large number of 'Willus' (natural lakes) that are found scattered throughout the park. Apart from big cats and varied landscapes, the park is also home to an impressive population of elephants, sloth bears, spotted deers, mongoose and water buffalo.

Day 4: Anuradhapura – Sigiriya

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Depart Anuradhapura after breakfast and drive 1-2 hours (74km) to Sigiriya for a two-night stay. In the afternoon, explore the Sigiriya rock fortress, also known as Lion Rock, sure to be a highlight of your time in Sri Lanka. 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 5: Sigiriya - Hiriwadunna & Polonnaruwa

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Start your day with a village trek in Hiriwadunna, where you will catch a glimpse of rural life in Sri Lanka. The walk will take approximately 3 hours and involve light climbing and walking over uneven ground. Later, drive to the UNESCO World Heritage listed site of Polonnaruwa and tour the ruins. There will be approximately 2 hours of easy sightseeing on foot while exploring the palace and temples. Return to Sigiriya.



Destination Information

Hiriwadunna - Your village excursion will include a walk along the banks of an artificial reservoir (also known as a wewa). The walk will take you through local farms, villages before crossing a river on a small boat to a farm, where you will be met by the farmer. Continue through dense bush, where you may spot elephants, monkeys and other wildlife.

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 6: Sigiriya – Kandy

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Depart Sigiriya this morning and drive approximately 2-3 hours (90km) to 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. 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, a bustling bazaar, an arts and crafts centre and enjoy a stroll through a local market. This evening listen to the Thewawa at the evening Pooja ceremony.



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.

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

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning embark on an early river expedition along the Mahaweli River, spotting a variety of wildlife along the banks. After lunch, visit Upali, a local brass maker, who will welcome you into his home where you can learn more about his craft. There will be an optional music and dance performance this evening to catch a glimpse of the rich and vibrant culture of Sri Lanka (at own expense).

Destination Information

River Expedition - Embark on a boat ride along the longest river in Sri Lanka, the Mahaweli River. A naturalist, who will assist you in spotting a wide array of exotic birds, amphibians and a few reptiles, will accompany you while you admire the scenic beauty of the area.

Brass Maker Visit - Visit Upali, a brass maker known for his skill and humble nature, who will welcome you to his home and his workshop. Both Upali and his wife have been brass makers for many years and during your visit, you will learn about their craft. You'll even have the opportunity to try it yourself! End your visit to with a cup of Ceylon tea.

Day 8: Kandy - Nuwara Eliya

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Enjoy the morning free at leisure before saying goodbye to Kandy as you drive to Peradeniya railway station and board a train to Nanu Oya (train journey approximately 2 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, stopping to visit a tea plantation and tea factory on route.



Please note: your group luggage will be transported by a separate coach directly to Nuwara Eliya. 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 to be an excellent location for tea production due to the cool climate, which creates tea with a unique flavour.

Day 9: Nuwara Eliya - Ella

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Travel 1-1.5 hours (30km) to Horton Plains National Park. Embark on light trek around the plains where you may be lucky enough to spot some of the varied wildlife. Trek 1.5 hours (4.5km) on the designated trail to view the Worlds End and another 1.5 hours (4.5km) to meet the coach. Please note that there are no railings at the Worlds End so please approach the cliff edge carefully. It's recommended to bring some water and a hat today as shade is limited. Later, visit a local tea plantation to witness first-hand how the tea is produced before continuing to Ella for a two-night stay.

**Destination Information**

Horton Plains National Park - This UNESCO World Heritage site is located in the heart of the island, painted with unending stretches of green pastures. With an altitude above 2000m, the plateau sweeps over 31 metres square. The plateau comes to a sudden end at the stunning World's End, with a head-spinning 1127m drop.

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.

Ella - A charming small village in the hill country of Sri Lanka, nestled amongst lush green tea plantations. Admire the stunning views and laid back rural lifestyle.

Day 10: Ella

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Spend today trekking through the Ella region. The trail will take you through tea plantations, paddy fields and thick forest. The trek will take approximately 2-3 hours and will include walking uphill. For the adventurous, there is an option to climb to the Ella Rock - a strenuous climb that offers panoramic views over the Ella Gap. Trekking to the top will add approximately 1 hour to your hike. End the trek with a stroll through a small village, where you can view the daily lives of the locals.

Destination Information

Ella Trek - Ella is the perfect place to explore more of the tea country of Sri Lanka by foot. Enjoy the scenic views, rolling tea plantations and discover local rural life.

Day 11: Ella - Hikkaduwa

Meals Included: Breakfast

Say goodbye to Ella as you make your way down from the hill country. Drive 5-6 hours (235km) to the beach town of Hikkaduwa for a three-night stay. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.



Destination Information

Hikkaduwa - One of the most popular beach towns in Sri Lanka since the 1970s, Hikkaduwa offers lovely beaches, a wide variety of restaurants to select from and the opportunity to snorkel (at own expense).

Day 12: Hikkaduwa - Galle

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Drive to Galle to embark on walking tour with a local guide, consisting of 2 hours on foot. Visit such sites as Galle Fort, the lighthouse, the Dutch Museum and the Dutch Reformed Church while learning about the history and colonial culture of the area.

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 - Located in 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: Hikkaduwa

Meals Included: Breakfast

Enjoy today at leisure to further explore the area independently or spend the day relaxing at the hotel.

Day 14: Hikkaduwa – Colombo

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, drive 2.5 hours (105km) to Colombo. Upon arrival, 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, enjoy a Sri Lankan themed farewell 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.

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.

Day 15: Colombo

Meals Included: Breakfast

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

Spirit 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 in 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!

Evenings at Leisure:

Due to the more intrepid nature of our Discovery clients, and to give you more flexibility and choice when travelling on selected Discovery tours; we have carefully balanced special highlight meals with evenings at leisure so that you can explore the many culinary delights that Sri Lanka has to offer. Alternatively, you can use this time to enjoy the facilities of your hotel. Your National Escort will be happy to provide you with advice about good places to eat, and assist in the booking of transportation to get you there (at your own expense).

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, 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 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