



## Sri Lanka Explorer

Flexible Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 2

Colombo - Wilpattu – Sigiriya – Kandy – Nuwara Eliya – Bandarawela –  
Udawalawe - Yala– Deniyaya - Weligama - Hikkaduwa

Discover the wonders of Sri Lanka on this laid-back journey with plenty of time to explore for yourself. Travel to ancient temples, beautiful beaches and spot elephants and leopards on this nature and wildlife packed itinerary.

- Explore lush tea plantations
- Learn to cook like a local
- Discover the delights of Colombo
- Visit Kandy's sacred temple
- Look for leopards on safari
- See Galle's historic fort



#### Sri Lanka Explorer tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Most Meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking national escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers)
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with AFTA, ATAS and CATO

*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.*

#### Flexible Tours:

Ideal for those who want more choice in what they do. Flexible tours include all the main sights but allow some free time for your own exploration or relaxation. Optional excursions, often more active in nature, are available for those that want to discover more.

#### Physical Level 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'Sri Lanka Explorer' is rated 2 on the physical level scale. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Sightseeing will involve climbing quite a number of steps, often without handrails, especially at Sigiriya
- There will be some uneven surfaces during the safari in Yala which could make for a bumpy ride

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 tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

## Itinerary –Sri Lanka Explorer

### Day 1: Arrive Colombo

Fly to Colombo. Upon arrival, your Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours will meet you at the Bandaranaike Airport in the Arrivals Hall and transfer you to your hotel for an overnight stay. (D)

#### Destination Information

**Colombo** – The de-facto 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 2: 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. Please refer to Appropriate Dress section below. The remainder of the day is at leisure. (B,L,D)



#### 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 3: Wilpattu National Park

Travel to Wilpattu National Park where the abundance of wildlife have made their home around the many lakes. Enjoy an afternoon Jeep safari with the chance to spot elephants, sambar deer and even leopards. Continue to Anuradhapura for an overnight stay. (B,L,D)



#### Destination Information

**Wilpattu National Park** – No wildlife excursion can be truly experienced unless you go on safari and Wilpattu National Park is no stranger to expeditions thus far and you can be sure that leopards will almost always make a grand entrance here.

### Day 4: Sigiriya

Rise early and drive to Ritigala Jungle Monastery, where you will explore the ancient ruins. Please refer to Appropriate Dress section below. This road is bumpy at times due to continual road construction. Continue to Sigiriya. This afternoon is at your leisure to relax or explore. (B,L, D)



#### 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.

### Day 5: Sigiriya

Explore the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Sigiriya Rock Fortress, or 'Lion Rock', the heart of King Kassappa's kingdom between 477 and 495AD. There are many steps, most with railings leading up to the top of the Rock Fortress and the ascent involves a very steep climb so extra care is needed here. Please ensure you bring plenty of water with you today and you wear a hat for sun protection. You will spend approximately 2 hours here climbing the Lion Rock, appreciating the spectacular views and touring the surrounding gardens and ruins.





Afterwards, drive onwards to Matale for lunch, visiting a spice garden on the way to learn about the ayurvedic properties of the native plants and take part in a cooking demonstration. Continue to Kandy, where this afternoon will be free for you to explore independently. (B,L)

#### **Destination Information**

**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.

### Day 6: 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. Please refer to Appropriate Dress section below. This evening is yours at leisure. (B,L,D).



#### **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.

**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 7: Nuwara Eliya

Leave Kandy this morning and travel to the lush hillside town of Nuwara Eliya, known as the 'Little England' of Sri Lanka. Visit a tea plantation on the way for a tour and to taste the produce, before some free time to explore the town. (B,L)

#### **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 8: Bandarawela

Today enjoy a morning at leisure or rise early for an optional sunrise walk at Horton Plains National Park. Set on a high-altitude plateau, Horton Plains encompasses an eco-system so unique and fascinating that it is a part of the UNESCO World Heritage site that covers the whole of Sri Lanka's Central Highlands. Later drive to the spectacularly set hill village of Ella for lunch with a view, before continuing to Bandarawela. (B,L,D)



#### Destination Information

**Ella** – Ella is situated at an elevation of 1,041 metres and the area has a rich bio-diversity, dense with numerous varieties of flora and fauna. Ella is surrounded by hills covered with cloud forests and tea plantations. The town has a cooler climate than surrounding lowlands, due to its elevation. The Ella Gap allows views across the southern plains of Sri Lanka.

### Day 9: Udawalawe National Park

Travel around 2 and a half hours to the Elephant Transit Home located near Udawalawe National Park, where abandoned baby elephants are cared for before they are released into the national park. This afternoon enjoy a jeep safari for a chance to spot more of these magnificent animals in the wild. (B,L,D)



#### Destination Information

**Udawalawe National Park** – With 100s of elephants, wild buffalo, sambar and spotted deer, and giant squirrel, this Sri Lankan national park is one of the nation's finest. In fact, for elephant-watching, Udawalawe National Park often surpasses many of the most famous East African national parks.

### Days 10-11: Yala National Park

Drive for around 2 hours to Yala National Park and check-in for the next two nights. The roads surrounding the buffer zone of the National Park leading to your hotel are unsealed, so please be aware the journey will be bumpy. This evening is free at your leisure.



The next day there will be a morning jeep safari through Yala National Park, Sri Lanka's most famous national park, approximately 3 hours in length, with the option for an additional drive in the afternoon. Please note there are limited toilet facilities available during the park excursions. (B,L,D)

#### **Destination Information**

**Yala National Park** - Yala is the most famous National Park in Sri Lanka and is known for its herds of elephants. It is also home to a large number of other wild animals, including wild boar, buffalo, leopards, bears, deer and crocodiles.

#### **Day 12: Deniyaya**

Depart Yala and drive approximately 4 hours to Deniyaya the gateway to the Sinharaja Forest Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage designated area of virgin rainforest and a biodiversity hotspot. (B,L,D)



#### **Destination Information**

**Sinharaja Forest Reserve** - Located in south-west Sri Lanka, Sinharaja is the country's last viable area of primary tropical rainforest. More than 60% of the trees are endemic and many of them are considered rare. There is much endemic wildlife, especially birds, but the reserve is also home to over 50% of Sri Lanka's endemic species of mammals and butterflies, as well as many kinds of insects, reptiles and rare amphibians.

#### **Day 13: Sinharaja**

Take a morning guided trek through the mist under the tree topped canopies of Sinharaja, Sri Lanka's only remaining primeval rainforest. Over half of the country's endemic wildlife call this their home including the purple-faced langur monkeys, numerous birds and butterflies, as well as many reptiles, amphibians and rare flora such as orchids. Afterwards, head on to the coastal town of Weligama, where the rest of the day will be yours to enjoy at your leisure. (B,L)



## Day 14: Weligama

Soak up the sun today on the beautiful beach of Weligama. Between September to April, you may want to join an optional whale watching trip from the neighbouring town of Mirissa. Otherwise, take a chance to wander along the coast, where you may spot the unique stilt fishermen, an old tradition practiced by around 500 fishing families in the region. (B)



### Destination Information

**Weligama** – A lovely seaside town with a relaxed vibe, famous for its surfing. Also, home to the iconic stilt fishermen of Sri Lanka - a tradition kept alive by only 500 families, the fishermen balance 2m above the water on a cross bar tied to a vertical pole, planted underwater.

## Day 15: Galle - Hikkaduwa

Travel approximately 1 hour west to the city of Galle, Sri Lanka's greatest colonial treasure, and once the greatest port in Ceylon. See the lighthouse and the Old Town and the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Dutch Fort, before exploring narrow streets dotted with Dutch colonial villas, museums and antique shops on a walking or cycling tour. Today will include easy sightseeing in the Old Town and Dutch Fort, consisting of approximately 2 hours on foot. Finish the day in Hikkaduwa, where you will have an afternoon at leisure. (B,L)



### 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 16: Hikkaduwa/ Fly to Australia

Today visit Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery, home to Sri Lanka's pioneering conservation project, established in 1981 to protect Sri Lanka's sea turtles. Later you will experience a thrilling safari on the river Madu to journey through winding waters lined with Mangrove trees ending in the Madu Lagoon on its way to the Indian Ocean. This wetland area is well known for its biodiversity and you can spot many of the 300 species of wildlife discovered in the region so far. Return to your hotel this afternoon where a late check out until 18:00 is provided. Enjoy a wonderful farewell dinner with your group. You will then be transferred to the airport for your flight to Australia, arriving home the following day. Destination Information Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery - Home to Sri Lanka's pioneering sea turtle conservation, established in 1981. (B,L,D)



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## Sri Lanka Explorer Travel Information

### Visas

Entry visas are required by all visitors to Sri Lanka and the Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa which is due 60 days prior to departure. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

The Sri Lankan visa is an ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation), the price of which is included in your fully inclusive package (for Australian passports only) and is applied for online by Wendy Wu Tours. Once completed, Wendy Wu Tours will print this and include it with your final itinerary and documentation. You will need to keep the ETA with your passport and present to authorities upon entry into Sri Lanka.

### 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 local guide 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 Lanka has cultivated its own distinct flavour. Meals as outlined in the itinerary (excluding drinks) are included in our 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 tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based and some meat-based. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. Dishes will usually be served either as a set menu with a few choices, or in a buffet style to allow you to sample many different options.

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, 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 Local Guide or National Escort.

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 Australia 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.

Please be aware that there are heightened security measures being carried out at all hotels, on guests and vehicles entering the properties.

### 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 above are approximations only. Please be aware that there are heightened security measures being carried out on vehicles entering hotels, tourist sights and airports.

### 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 Australia. 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 guide.

### 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 himself, 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.

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.

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 itinerary above will indicate when you need to consider this.

### Climate

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

### Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that when travelling to cities outside of Colombo and other main cities that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Sri Lanka however, other currencies such as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort/Local Guide will remind you to do this before departure.

### Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$250AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.



Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

### Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au)

### Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

### 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 3 weeks prior to departure.

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### 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: September 30, 2019**