

Spiritual Sri Lanka.

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SRI LANKA | 3DAYS / 2NIGHTS

Route: Round-trip from Colombo to Beruwala or Marawila

Type of tour: Culture and nature

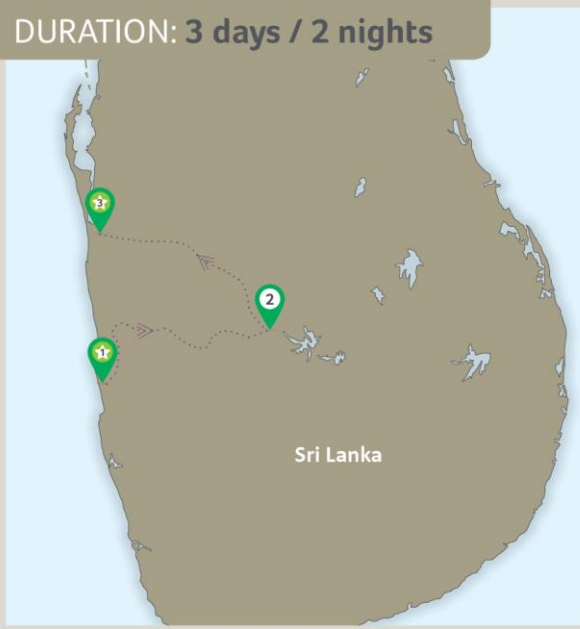
Departure days: Daily

TOUR OVERVIEW

Visit the top cultural and historical landmarks in central Sri Lanka with this spellbinding three-day tour. Immerse yourself in a world of lush landscapes, picturesque lakeside cities, historic temples and ancient citadels clawed back from the jungle. Breathe in the fragrances of Sri Lanka at herb and spice gardens and meet some of the friendliest and gentlest creatures in the animal kingdom at an elephant orphanage. Enjoy, too, cultural shows and spiritual experiences travelling across this picturesque island.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

DURATION: 3 days / 2 nights



Start & finish destination
1. Colombo 3. Marawila

Destinations
2. Kandy

Kandy: This beautiful city is home to the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic and its associated palaces and gardens

Sigiriya: The 'Lion Rock' rises almost 200 metres above the jungle offers stunning panoramic views

Dambulla: Buddhist cave temple carved deep into a mountain and decorated with frescoes

Matale: Wander through spice gardens redolent with the scents of Sri Lanka... cinnamon, turmeric, nutmeg...

Peradeniya: Explore the vast and ancient botanical gardens, which boast more than 4,000 species of plants

Pinnawala: Visit an elephant orphanage and watch these gentle giants live a carefree life in a safe environment

DON'T MISS

Kandy: Visit the Kandy bazaar and immerse yourself in the sights, sounds and scents of the Orient in what is one of the ultimate Sri Lankan experiences

Matale: Breathe in the scents of Sri Lanka at a verdant and fragrant spice gardens complex and learn how they are used for cooking traditional dishes

Peradeniya: The giant Java willow tree whose massed jumble of roots and branches spreads out so much that its circumference is almost 1,800 metres

DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 | COLOMBO – KANDY (110km – 2 hrs)

Arrival at Colombo Airport for meet and greet by Aitken Spence Travels guide and transfer to your hotel in Kandy, Sri Lanka's second-largest city. Heading inland, the climes become cooler, the landscapes ever more verdant and the countryside hillier before arriving at this ancient city. Contemporary Kandy is renowned for its beautiful lakeside location, framed by lush hills, and an all-pervasive divinity. Visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, the holiest site of all for Sri Lankan Buddhists, which was built in the 16th century solely for the purpose of housing a relic of one of the Lord Buddha's canine teeth. The tooth relic is ritually cleansed every week by monks and the scented waters they use are considered holy. Situated on the banks of Kandy Lake, the innermost section where temple itself is located is surrounded by a moat and wall. Other notable structures include the Golden Canopy, the New Palace and the Royal Palace, the old courthouse, the Queen's Bathing House, the National Museum and the sanctuary. Cap off the day with a night at a

dramatic cultural show, which features 12 folk and traditional dances accompanied by ceremonial drums and a drum orchestra. And prepare for a sizzling fire walking performance that will have you on the edge of your sea.

- **Overnight at hotel in Kandy. Dinner included.**

DAY 2 | KANDY – SIGIRIYA – DAMBULLA – MATALE – KANDY (180km – 4 hrs)

Take to the road after a delicious breakfast for a day steeped in Sri Lanka's rich heritage. Begin on a high with a climb to the fifth century Sigiriya fortress, which sits atop a rock that dramatically rises almost 200 metres above the rainforest. King Kashyapa built a citadel at the top of this giant boulder known as the 'Lion Rock', which was the innermost stronghold of a vast fortified city. In time it came to be abandoned and forgotten, covered by dense overgrowth until the British encountered it and began a painstaking archaeological exploration. Today, the terraced gardens and cisterns, the moat, the 'Mirror Wall' and the fragile frescoes of the 'heavenly maidens' among the other remnants of this once thriving city offer only a tantalising indication of what once stood here. Pass through the lion's 'belly' and climb to the top via a spiral staircase that snakes its way around the rock. From the summit, enjoy breathtaking views over the surrounding landscape and beyond into horizon.

Continue to the Golden Temple of Dambulla and explore this 2,000-year-old sacred pilgrimage site carved deep inside a mountain. This awe-inspiring complex of five caves is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that features thousands of metres of painted walls and ceiling, and contains more than 150 images of the Lord Buddha as well as a few of deities and Sri Lankan kings. Each cave dates from a different era and tells its own story, with defining aspects such as a colossal 14-metre Buddha statue chiselled out of the rock or a frescoed ceiling with more than 1,500 images of Buddha. Proceed to Matale to visit a spice and herb gardens. Sri Lankan spices such as turmeric, nutmeg, cardamom, cinnamon and lemon grass are considered among the best in the world. Witness a cookery demonstration and learn about the culinary and therapeutic values of these products.

- **Overnight at hotel in Kandy. Breakfast and dinner included.**



DAY 3 | KANDY – PERADENIYA – PINNAWALA – SELECTED BEACH RESORTS (205km – 3.5 hrs)

Drive around the lake built by Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe, the last of the Sinhalese kings, in 1798. Explore the city centre, whose mix of Sinhalese and British colonial architecture gives it an air of almost being suspended in time, and wander through the vibrant bazaar, where just about everything imaginable seems to be for sale. Visit, too, an arts and crafts centre, a gem museum and a gemstone workshop. Continue to the Peradeniya Royal Botanical Gardens, whose origins can be traced back to the 14th century. The British, always keen gardeners, gave them a structure and introduced a variety of plants and flowers, creating the blooming fields of orchids and fragrant spices you see today... there's even a tree planted by King George and Queen Mary in 1901. While to stroll along the 'Avenue of Palms' as it opens onto the Great Lawn with its solitary giant Java willow tree is a spine-tingling sensation. Transfer to your beach hotel, stopping en route at the Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage, which was founded in 1975 with just five calves, growing to more than 100 today. As well as all the elephants rescued from the rainforests, there have been dozens of births at the shelter, with the first arriving in 1984. Here, they are fed, bathed and allowed to roam freely. Catch sight of them at feeding time – a bottle for the calves and coconut leaves for the adults – and then watch these gentle giants frolicking in the waters of the River Maha Oya at bath time.

- **Transfer from Pinnawala to beach resorts between Beruwala and Marawila. Breakfast included.**

END OF SERVICES

INCLUDED

TOUR GUIDE:

- Operated with Russian-speaking guide

ACCOMMODATION:

- Two nights on a bed-and-breakfast basis

MEALS:

- Breakfast from day 2 to day 3 and dinner on day 1 and day 2

TRANSPORT:

- Air-conditioned transportation as stated in the programme

NOT INCLUDED

- Expenditures of a personal nature, drinks and meals or items not stated explicitly in the programme
- Lunch throughout the tour
- Gratuities for drive and guide
- Entrance fees for all sights and attractions: USD 80.00 per person
- Any alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, mineral water, etc
- Compulsory festival/peak season surcharges if stated separately
- Video camera and photography permits at the Temple of the Tooth Relic in Kandy; video camera permits at Elephant Orphanage
- Optional tours and activities
- Travel Insurance or any loss or extra cost arising due to unforeseen circumstances such as flight delays, accidents, etc

RECOMMENDATIONS

Comfortable and light clothing is the most suitable for travelling in Sri Lanka. Visitors should not wear sleeveless shirts, shorts, short skirts or skimpy clothing when visiting temples, religious or official buildings. Shoes should be removed before entering a temple or private house. Sun protection, sun glasses, a hat and mosquito repellent can be very useful during your stay. Clients arriving in early morning flights will have to wait until the last tour participant has arrived.