



## Wild Sri Lanka.

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**SRI LANKA | 4DAYS / 3NIGHTS**

Route: Round-trip from Colombo to Beruwala or Marawila

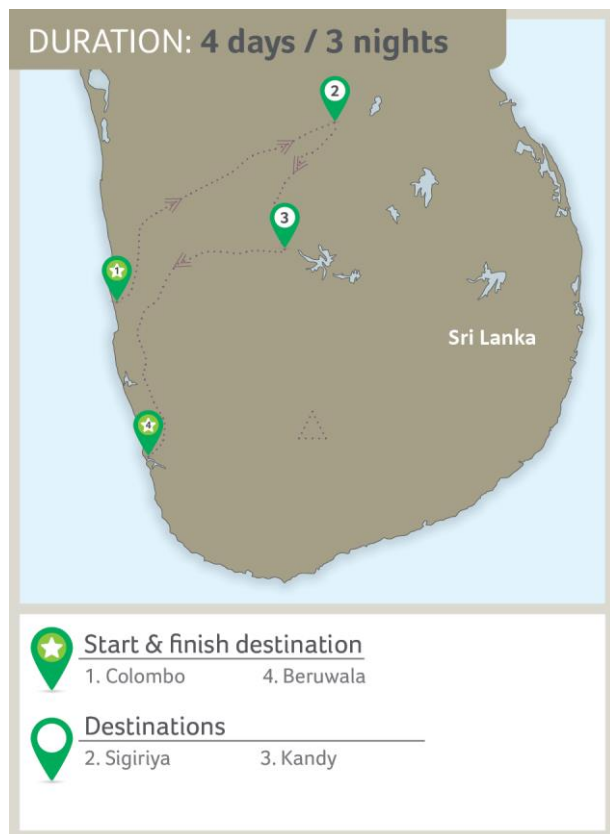
Type of tour: Culture and nature

Departure days: Daily

## TOUR OVERVIEW

Spend four magical days exploring Sri Lanka's central highlands, visit picturesque lakeside cities, historic temples and ancient citadels clawed back from the jungle. Breathe in the island's fragrances 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. You also have the option of visiting the ruins of a royal city or going on safari in a national park

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



**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...

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

**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 AIRPORT – GIRITALE or SIGIRIYA (150km – 3 hrs)

Arrival at Colombo Airport for meet and greet by Aitken Spence Travels guide and transfer to your hotel in either Giritale or Sigiriya.

- Overnight at Royal Lotus Hotel or Kassapa Lions Rock resort. Dinner included.

### DAY 2 | SIGIRIYA

Begin the day 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 this 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

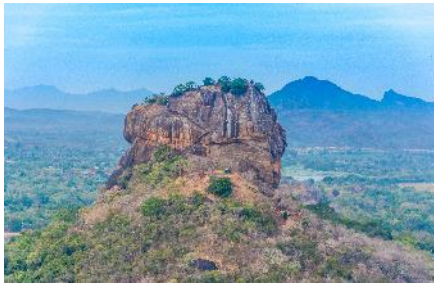
lion's 'belly' and climb to the top via a spiral staircase that snakes its way around the rock. From the summit, enjoy breathtaking views over the surrounding landscape and beyond into horizon.

In the afternoon, you can choose from two optional excursions: a tour to the well-preserved ruins of the ancient city of Polonnaruwa or a safari in a national park.

The cultural option is the Ancient City of Polonnaruwa, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Polonnaruwa was built about 1,000 years ago and features a large artificial lake, which is still in use and feeds a network of irrigation canals, the remains of a royal palace and a number of temples and administrative buildings. Admire the Gal Viharaya with its four statues of the Buddha carved out of rock, the Audience Hall, the Lotus Bath and the statue of King Parakramabahu. Contemplate also the Shiva Temple, the Lankathilake, the Watadage, the Galpotha and much more.

The adventure option is a visit to a national park for a safari. Head to either Minneriya National Park or Kandulla National Park for a jeep safari. Traverse these wild wetlands in search of elephants, amphibians and other species.

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



### **DAY 3 | GIRITALE or SIGIRIYA – DAMBULLA – MATALE – KANDY (90km – 2 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 a spice and herb gardens in Matale. 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. 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.**

### **DAY 4 | KANDY – PERADENIYA – PINNAWALA – SELECTED BEACH RESORTS (205km – 3.5 hrs)**

Visit Peradeniya Royal Botanical Gardens after breakfast at the hotel. The gardens' 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**

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### **TOUR GUIDE:**

- Operated with Russian-speaking guide

### **ACCOMMODATION:**

- Three nights on a half-board basis

### **MEALS:**

- Breakfast from day 2 to day 4 and dinner on day 1, day 2 and day 3

### **TRANSPORT:**

- Air-conditioned transportation as stated in the programme

## **NOT INCLUDED**

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- Expenditures of a personal nature, drinks and meals or items not stated explicitly in the programme
- Lunch throughout the tour
- Gratuities for driver and guide
- Entrance fees for all sights and attractions
- 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**

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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