



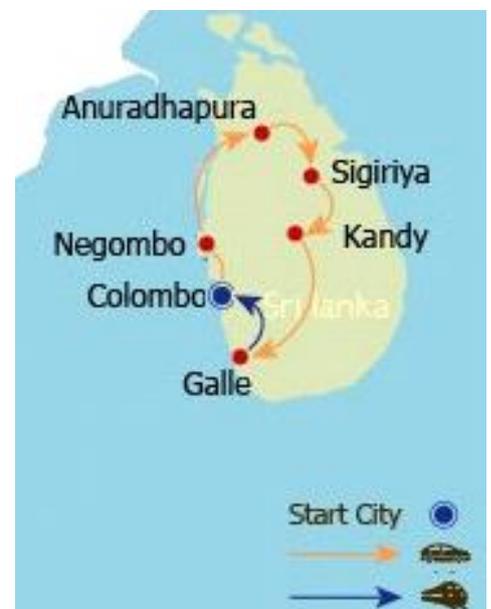
Photo by
Reina Luck

SRI LANKA - 13 DAY SAMPLE ITINERARY

Negombo - Anuradhapura - Sigiriya - Kandy - Galle - Colombo

Sri Lanka is a tropical and incredibly diverse island off the southern tip of India, offering holiday makers everything from pristine sandy beaches to ancient Buddhist temples and lush green hills dotted with tea plantations - and wildlife! Its tourism industry suffered major setbacks from its 20 year civil war, which ended in 2009, as well as devastation from the 2004 tsunami. But it is slowly getting back on its feet and there are many reasons for visiting the 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean'

- Its blissful tropical climate
- Tea lovers paradise! The cool Hill Country is covered with tea plantations on every available slope
- The beaches are a majestic golden-tan colour, fringed with swaying palm trees and backed by orchards, rice paddies and lowland tea plantations
- Sri Lankans are incredibly kind, smiling and welcoming
- You can buy label Western clothes at a discount as well as bringing home teas, spices and brightly coloured clothes
- It's a fantastic place to pick up precious gem stones
- The great variety of food, which has been shaped by its colourful historical and cultural past
- It is jam-packed with world heritage sites
- It is one of the best places in Asia for seeing wildlife such as leopards, elephants, deer and plentiful birdlife



Tourist season for Sri Lanka is December – April. But December & February are high peak season. Travel is therefore proposed for mid-March – an ideal time for being less crowded and to avoid the Monsoon period.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 - Arrive in Colombo, Sri Lanka - Negombo

Your chauffeur guide will pick you up at Colombo airport and transfer you to your hotel in **Negombo**, (about 1 hour away) - a seaside town renowned for its fishing industry. Check in and relax after the long flights.

Overnight: Negombo

Day 2 – Negombo

Breakfast, Lunch

Boat trip on the Negombo Lagoon: Celebrate the natural beauty of Negombo, cruising the smooth waters of one of Sri Lanka's largest coastal lagoons. You will see a wide range of water birds, waders and the gull colony on the sand flats according to the tides and the season. Also local fishermen and their boats.

Lunch at a local restaurant

Visit the **Angurukaramulla Temple** (Bodhirajaramaya) with its 6m-long reclining Buddha.

Overnight: Negombo

Or you could skip this day and add 1 night in Anuradhapura (next stop) for visiting Wilpattu National Park to enjoy the wildlife. Wilpattu is not very crowded and it is located in Anuradhapura.

Day 3 - Negombo - Anuradhapura

Breakfast, Lunch

10h30 Depart for a 5 hour drive to **Anuradhapura**, which is the capital city of North Central Province and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Lunch along the way at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Anuradhapura

Optional extra night here for the tiger excursion in Wilpattu National Park.

Wilpattu sanctuary, located on the west coast close to the historical city of Anuradhapura, was declared as a National Park in 1938. Wilpattu National Park is home to many villus, or natural lakes which dot the landscape. Except for two, these lakes contain rainwater, thus are important for resident and migratory water-birds. There are approximately 30 species of mammals in the Wilpattu National Park which include the Sri Lankan Elephant, Sri Lankan Leopard, Sri Lankan Sloth Bear, Spotted Deer, Buffalo, Sambar and Mongoose. There is also a wide range of wetland bird species as well as reptiles and amphibians.

Day 4 - Anuradhapura - Sigiriya

Breakfast, Lunch

Anuradhapura is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. It was considered sacred to the Buddhist world. Today you will visit the following sites:

1. The **Abhayagiri complex:** Abhayagiri monastery is one of the most interesting & atmospheric quarters of Anuradhapura. The sheer scale of the ruins of the monastery is prodigious; the setting, scattered amidst beautiful light woodland, is magical; a lost city particularly memorable at dawn or dusk.
2. The historical **Sri Maha Bodhi:** a sacred fig tree in the Mahamewna Gardens. It is said to be the right-wing branch (southern branch) from the historical Sri Maha Bodhi at Buddha Gaya in India under which Lord Buddha attained Enlightenment. It was planted in 288 BC and is the oldest living human-planted tree in the world with a known planting date. Today it is one of the most sacred relics of the Buddhists in Sri Lanka and respected by Buddhists all over the world.



Abhayagiri Stupa (Flickr, David Stanley)



The sacred fig tree (Flickr, Bill Littman)

3. Move to the **Thuparamaya:** an ancient Buddhist temple containing the earliest Dagoba (a Tibetan style of pagoda) to be constructed in the island, dating back to the reign of King Devanampiya Tissa (247-207 BC). The temple has been formally recognised by the Government as an archaeological site.

Lunch at a local restaurant

Drive about 2 hours to **Sigiriya**. Check in upon your arrival and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight: Sigiriya

Day 5 - Sigiriya

Breakfast, Lunch

Today you journey to the **Sigiriya Rock Fortress (Lion Rock)**, a marvel which baffles even modern-day architects. The name refers to a site of historical and archaeological significance dominated by a massive column of rock nearly 200 metres (660 ft) high. According to the ancient Sri Lankan chronicle the Culavamsa, this site was selected by King Kasyapa (477 – 495 CE) for his new capital.

He built his palace on top of this rock and decorated its sides with colourful frescoes. On a small plateau about halfway up the side of this rock he built a gateway in the form of an enormous lion, hence the name Lion Rock. It is renowned for its 5th century pre-Christian frescoes as well.



Thuparamaya (Kate Turkington)



Sigiriya Rock Fortress (Flickr, Jean-Marc Astesana)

Lunch at a local restaurant

In the afternoon, explore rural Sri Lanka through a visit to the village of **Hiriwadunna**. Travel deep into the countryside by bullock cart, and all along the way you will see paddy fields and vegetable plantations.

Later, sail to the other side of a lake by catamaran to enjoy the sunset.

Overnight: Sigiriya

Day 6 - Sigiriya - Kandy

Breakfast, Lunch

Pick up for transfer to the **Dambulla Cave Temple**, consisting of five cave temples carved under a very large overhanging rock. The temple is still functional and remains the best-preserved ancient edifice in Sri Lanka.

Head off on a 3 ½ hour drive to **Kandy**. Stop en route for lunch and visit a spice garden where you can enjoy a 15 minute complimentary **Ayurveda Massage** utilizing warm and often herbal oil. [This massage at Spice Garden is a comprehensive one but really just a promotional activity.](#)

As soon as you arrive in Kandy, watch an attractive traditional Kandyan **cultural dance**. [Cultural Dance Show in Kandy will be on stage from 17h00-18h00, so will depend on timing.](#)

Overnight: Kandy

Day 7 - Kandy

Breakfast

This morning you will have a chance to encounter an array of plants too many to be named. Visit the **Royal Botanical Garden** situated in Peradeniya, which is Sri Lanka's largest botanic garden.

You will see a fine collection of orchids, a stately avenue of royal palms, the extraordinary, aptly named cannonball fruit tree and 40m-high Burma bamboo.

This afternoon is free for your own arrangement and exploration, or maybe to spend more time in the Gardens which are open until 17h00. Taking a walk around **Kandy Lake** is another good option, although not on your own after dark.

Overnight: Kandy

Day 8 - Kandy

Breakfast , Lunch

Visit the **Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic**: The golden-roofed Temple of the Sacred Tooth houses Sri Lanka's most important Buddhist relic – a tooth of the Buddha. During *puja* (offerings or prayers), the heavily guarded room housing the tooth is open to devotees and tourists. However, you don't actually see the tooth which is kept in a gold casket shaped like a stupa.

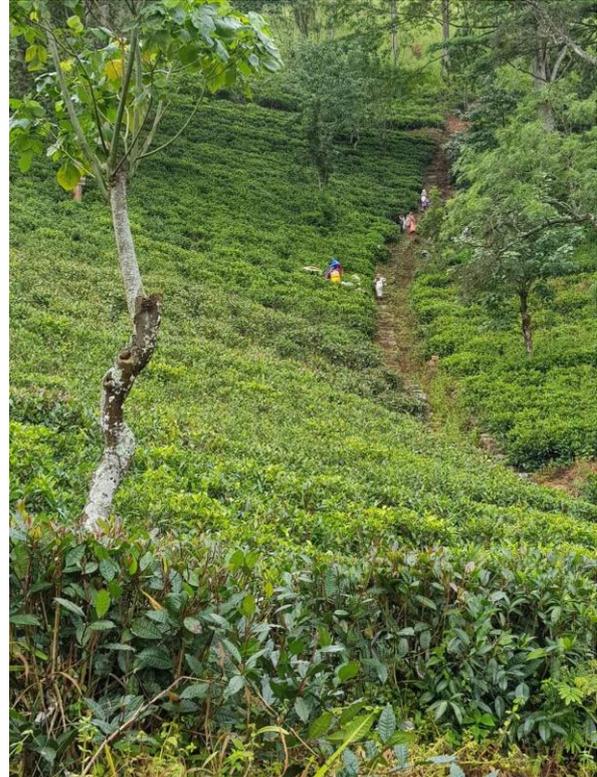
The complex includes a series of smaller temples, shrines and museums.

Lunch at a local restaurant

Afternoon sightseeing at the **Garagama Tea Estate** for a better understanding of Ceylon tea. You will visit a tea factory and witness how tea is produced. Tea tasting. **Overnight:** Kandy



Avenue of royal palms (Kate Turkington)



Tea Estate (Kate Turkington)

Day 9 - Kandy - Galle

Breakfast , Lunch

About a 6 hour drive to **Galle**, with a stop for lunch along the way.

Check in and enjoy free time for the rest of the day. **Overnight:** Galle

Day 10 - Galle

Breakfast, Dinner

Today, walk around the **Galle Fort (Dutch Fort)**, which is a fortification first built by the Portuguese and reinforced by the Dutch a few years later. The unique architecture, with the interaction of European architecture and South Asian traditions, makes it a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Dinner this evening in a local restaurant for authentic local cuisine.

Overnight: Galle

Day 11 - Galle - Colombo

Breakfast, Lunch

Enjoy a 3-4 hour **train journey** from Galle to **Colombo** along the spectacular Indian Ocean coastline. Your local chauffeur guide will meet you in Colombo and take you to lunch at a local restaurant.

Then on to a city sightseeing tour in the afternoon:

1. **Independence Square** where you will find Independence Memorial Hall, a Sri Lankan national monument built for commemoration of the independence of Sri Lanka from British rule.
2. **Gangaramaya Temple** - one of the most important temples in Colombo, being a mix of modern architecture and cultural essence. This Buddhist temple includes several imposing buildings including a museum, a library, a residential hall, a three storeyed Pirivena (monastic college for the education of Buddhist priests in Sri Lanka), educational halls and an alms hall.

3. **Galle Face Green** - a 5 ha (12 acres) ocean-side urban park, which stretches for 500 m (1,600 ft) along the coast, in the heart of Colombo. The promenade was initially laid out in 1859 by Governor Sir Henry George Ward and was initially used for horse racing. It has also been a golf course, and has been used for cricket, polo, football, tennis and rugby.



Galle Face Green (Flickr, Dennis Sylvester Hurd)



Gangaramaya Temple (Flickr, Ankur P)

4. **Colombo National Museum** (closed on public holidays) - Some of the Museum's galleries date back to its inception almost 140 years ago. They demonstrate all manner of exhibits from the island's earliest agricultural civilizations to the modern colonial period. The exhibits include ancient rock inscriptions, swords, jewellery, coins, frescoes and lamps. Newer galleries have guns and breathtaking watercolour paintings of the colony of Ceylon by Englishmen who ventured here. The library houses a special Bronze Age collection of artefacts. The Museum's most famous exhibit is the red-velvet throne of the King of Kandy.
5. The **former British Administrative Center**.

Overnight: Colombo.

Day 12 - Colombo

Breakfast

Day at leisure to explore for the last time on your own and for final shopping and packing.

Overnight: Colombo.

Day 13 - Depart

Breakfast

Transfer to the airport for flights home.



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