



## Sri Lanka Highlands to the Indian Ocean Cycling, Hiking & Walking



Steady

*This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.*

### DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

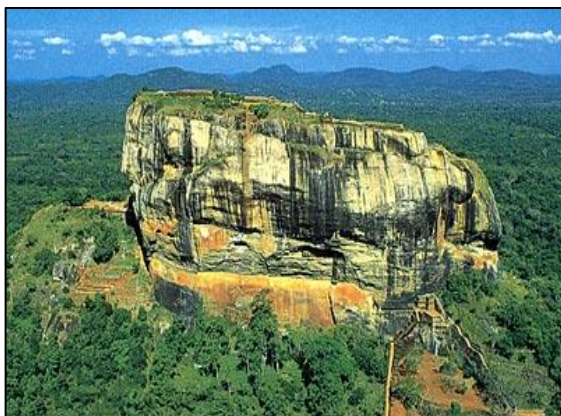
*This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. 'B,L,D' refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.*

#### DAY 1 ARRIVAL AND TRANSFER TO NEGOMBO

Arrive Colombo and transfer to your accommodation in Negombo. Situated by the shores of a lagoon the town was once a trading port for the Portuguese and Dutch, who came here in search of spices, mainly Cinnamon. An afternoon to explore the town; delightful canals, interesting creeks and an extensive lagoon. Hotel.  
*Estimated transfer time from Airport to Negombo is 30min*



#### DAY 2 NEGOMBO / SIGIRIYA / DAMBULLA / SIGIRIYA



Today we leave for Sigiriya. After checking in at our hotel, in the afternoon we get our hands on our bikes and take a leisurely ride to Dambulla where we hike up to the 1st Century temple donated to Buddhist monks by king Walagambahu. Dambulla is a World heritage Site and has amongst the most impressive cave temples in Sri Lanka. The complex of five caves have over 2000 sq m of painted walls and the ceiling is the largest area of paintings found in the world. These caves contain over 150 images of the Buddha of which the largest is the colossal figure carved out of rock and spanning 14 meters. Hotel **B**

*Negombo to Sigiriya 150kms; drive 4-5 hr Sigiriya to Dambulla approximately 18kms (Cycle)*

### DAY 3 SIGIRIYA

After breakfast we cycle to Sigiriya Rock, and climb to the 5<sup>th</sup> century rock fortress a world heritage site which was built by King Kashyapa (477- 495 AD). The 'Lion Rock' is a citadel of unusual beauty rising 200 meters from the scrub jungle. The rock is the innermost stronghold of the 70 hectare fortified town. A moat, rampart, and extensive gardens, including the renowned water gardens, ring the base of the rock. Visit the world-renowned frescoes of the 'Heavenly Maidens' of Sigiriya, which are in a sheltered pocket of the rock approached by a spiral stairway. These frescoes are painted in earth pigments on plaster. Hotel **B**

### DAY 4 SIGIRIYA / MINNERIYA / POLONNARUWA

This morning we cycle the 35km to the Minneriya National Park, where we take a Jeep Safari to visit the interiors of the National Park. The Minneriya Tank was created by King Parakarambahu at the height of Polonnaruwa glory as the capital of Sri Lanka. The national park based largely around the huge tank (reservoir) was created rather more recently but serves as an important gathering place for Sri Lanka's large population of elephants. It is a great place for elephant spotting all year round – though as the dry season makes water scarce between June and September, more and more elephants gather on the shores of Minneriya Tank. Indeed by late August and September, the awe inspiring site of up to 300 elephants can often be seen, in a phenomenon known as 'The Gathering'. It is the largest concentration and gathering of Asian elephants that can be seen anywhere in the world. Watching baby elephants playing with each other, bull elephants tussling for dominance and the great matriarchs surveying the scene is not a sight you are likely to forget in a hurry.



The afternoon ride takes us to Polonnaruwa. This was the second capital city of Sri Lanka, built in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, and is another world heritage site. Here you can see the ruins of the Royal Palace, the Gal Viharaya, where 4 splendid statues of the Buddha in 'Upright', 'Sedentary' and 'Recumbent' are postures carved out of rock. There are also monuments of famous places of worship such as the Shiva Temple, the Lankathilake, the Watadage, the Galpotha, the Kiri Vehera and the remains of a former Temple of the Tooth Relic. Hotel **B**

*Sigiriya to Polonnaruwa Approximately 55 kms*



### DAY 5 POLONNARUWA / KNUCKLES (RIVERSTON) / KANDY

Today on our drive to Kandy we walk in the Knuckles Mountain Range which is separated from the Central Hills by the Mahaveli Valley to the South and East and the Matale Valley to the West. Getting its name from its shape of a clenched fist, what makes it unique is the geographical character of its location. Perpendicular to the range that runs from Laggala to Urugala are three distinct but lesser ranges while there are other minor ranges running parallel to it. There are a total of 34

clearly identified such ranges within the 62 square miles. Continue to Kandy. Hotel **B**

### DAY 6 KANDY / KITULGALA

Kandy offers many historical, cultural and religious sites, and on this morning's walking tour we will visit one of the cultural highlights of Sri Lanka, the "Dalada Maligawa". Better known as the "temple of the tooth", it is a Buddhist temple complex that holds one of Buddha's molars which for Buddhists has a great "symbolic" significance. The complex is relatively large, architecturally interesting and has impressive detail. After the temple visit, we walk around the historic center and take in the unique

atmosphere that prevails here in the heart of the city. In the afternoon, we leave the busy city life and go into the famous Botanical Garden, which dates back to around 1371 and having its contemporary appearance from around 1821 when the first group of British gardeners made its mark on the garden. It contains an impressive collection of southeast Asia's flora, as well as a large population of "flying dogs" which are large fruit eating bats with a wing span about 1.5 meters!

A late afternoon transfer to Kitulgala and our hotel for the night. **B**

*Kandy Kitulgala approximately 60 Kms around 2 hr*



## DAY 7 KITULGALA

Today we have a hike in the Kitulgala Rainforest. Accompanied by our guide we cross the Keleni River in an open catamaran-type traditional wooden boat with no sail and then walk deep into the rainforest to see flora and fauna and where crystal clear water reveals shoals of fish. Return to hotel. **B**

## DAYS 8 and 9 KITULGALA / NALLATHANNIYA (ADAM'S PEAK) / NUWARA ELIYA

Now one of the highlights of the trip - the ascent of Adams Peak. Though not the highest mountain in Sri Lanka at 2250m, the striking pyramid shape is certainly the most remarkable. A depression in the rocky summit resembles a huge footprint, which has been venerated as a sacred site from remote antiquity. Identified by Buddhists as the Buddha's footprint, by Hindus as that of Shiva, and by Muslims as Adam's. Later the Portuguese attributed it to St. Thomas the Apostle. **B**

*(The climb to Adams Peak starts late evening and the descent completes the following morning).*

*Kitulgala to Adams peak approximately 55km, 1 ½ hr.*

After spending a relaxing morning to recover from the walk, we leave for Nuwara Eliya in the afternoon. **B**

*Adams Peak to Nuwara Eliya approximately 75 km, 2 ½ hr.*

## DAY 10 NUWARA ELIYA / HORTON PLAINS / NUWARA ELIYA

Today we head for Horton Plains for a walk on a on a high windswept saddle at 2100m. These Plains are hard to reach but the scenery is well worth the effort, Bakers Fall, Gem Pit Pool, the Chimney Pool, and the Leg of Mutton Pool just some of the features we will be passing. Return to our hotel in Nuwara Eliya. **B**

*Nuwara Eliya to Horton Plains approximately 30km and travelling time will be 40 min.*

## DAY 11 NUWARA ELIYA /YALA / TISSAMAHARAMA

After breakfast we leave for Tissamaharama and check in at our hotel.

Then to the Yala National Park, famous for its high density of leopards, perhaps the highest in the world. We will also see mammals such as wild boars, several species of deer and wild buffaloes well as reptiles including crocodiles. As is common in Sri Lanka there is a huge diversity of stunning birdlife including migratory species such as the flamingo. It is also one of the few places in the world where the severely endangered black necked stork can still be seen. The uniqueness of the park is the sheer diversity of the habitat, dense jungles suddenly give way to lagoons and open plain areas and the park has a simply beautiful sea



front. Huge, stark boulders dominate the horizon and the elegant, languorous leopard can often be seen basking atop the sun baked rock. Return to Hotel. **B**

*Nuwara Eliya to Tissamaharama approximately 190Km's and travelling time will be 5 Hours*

### **DAY 12 TISSAMAHARAMA / BUNDALA / WASKADUWA**

This morning we visit the Bundala National Park. This park falls within the south eastern arid zone of Sri Lanka, with a climate that can be classified as hot and dry. The terrain is generally flat with sand dunes bordering the coastline, and vegetation consists mainly of dry thorny scrublands and lagoons. A total of 383 plant species have been recorded in the park, including 6 endemic and 7 species considered as nationally threatened. It is also home to 32 different species of mammals, 5 of which are classified as threatened. For keen birdwatchers, the complex wetland system has a rich bird life (approximately 197 species), including several species of migratory waterfowl. This has led to the declaration of the park as Sri Lanka's first 'Ramsar' wetland – one of great international importance. Hotel **B**



### **DAY 13 WASKADUWA**

Today will be spent at leisure under the palms at Waskaduwa, this secluded crescent shaped beach is the perfect place to lie back and relax. Hotel **B**

### **DAY 14 WASKADUWA / COLOMBO**

After breakfast we set out on our drive to Colombo where you have the afternoon at leisure. Hotel **B**  
*Approximately 190Kms and travel time will be 2 ½ Hours.*

### **DAY 15 COLOMBO (WALKING SIGHTSEEING) / NEGOMBO**

A walking tour of the city is planned for today. The city skyline has dramatically changed during the last decade, trendy malls and cafes sit alongside old colonial architectural monuments and local eateries. The city tour will take you pass the Colombo harbor to the area known as the Fort, the Island's administrative and main banking quarter. The colorful religious edifices in the different zones of the city reflect the countries multi-ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. The Cinnamon Gardens, the 'chic' residential section of Colombo with its numerous villas and mansions blends well with the recently restored racecourse and Victoria Park. After the tour we head to Negombo for the final night. Hotel **B**

### **DAY 16 NEGOMBO / DEPARTURE TRANSFER**

Transfer to International airport. With a wide range of memorable and unusual experiences in the baggage we take leave of Sri Lanka and fly back home. **B**

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Throughout the trip we will be using comfortable accommodation in Hotels, Bungalows or Lodges with en suite bathrooms; all facilities equivalent to three star category or similar.

## **FOOD**

Breakfast is included throughout the trip. Lunches and dinners are not included, this allows you the option of choosing where you would like to eat, which is very much part of the adventure. Meals in restaurants will cost around £10 per person.

## **HEALTH AND HYGIENE**

We have an excellent record of staying fit and well in Sri Lanka. The key seems to be our enthusiasm for local vegetarian food, and care with water, peeling fruit, avoiding salads etc. All the accommodation we are using on the trips maintains high standards on food hygiene.

## **LANGUAGE**

The official language is Sinhala and Tamil is spoken by around one fifth of the population. However, English is widely spoken and used in most areas open to visitors.

## **TIPPING**

It is custom and practice to tip in South Asia. You should perhaps allow the equivalent of around £30 per person for porters, guides, drivers etc. Try to avoid giving sweets, biscuits, pens or cash to children or anyone who has not rendered a service

## **SRI LANKAN VISAS**

A full passport is required to apply for the Sri Lanka visa, with a validity of at least 6 months beyond the intended duration of stay in the country. It is the client's responsibility to complete all the application procedures and obtain their visas before the intended date of departure. We have no say in the immigration and consular processes and are not responsible for their actions. UK passport holders can find more information on the website of Sri Lankan High Commission or <http://www.eta.gov.lk/slvisa/>

## **CLIMATE**

In Colombo it will be warm around 30°C, and sometimes humid. In the hills it can be pleasantly cool with temperatures averaging 15 °C. The climate in the country is tropical with higher rains during the monsoon period; in the North and East the monsoon period is from October to January and in the South and the West from May to late June.

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