

# Scintillating Sri Lanka

23 October 2025

17 Day Fully Hosted Tour



## SCINTILLATING SRI LANKA

Discover the magic of **Sri Lanka** on an unforgettable 17-day journey that takes you through ancient heritage sites, breathtaking landscapes, and vibrant cultural experiences. This thoughtfully designed tour seamlessly blends exploration, wildlife encounters, and immersive cultural activities, offering a deep connection to Sri Lanka's rich history and natural beauty.

Journey through time as we explore some of **Sri Lanka's** most iconic UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Climb the awe-inspiring **Sigiriya Rock Fortress**, often referred to as the "Eighth Wonder of the World," and admire its ancient frescoes and dramatic ruins. Wander the historic city of **Polonnaruwa**, once the island's ancient capital, and explore the sacred city of **Anuradhapura**, where centuries-old stupas, temples, and royal palaces reveal the depth of Sri Lanka's past. This journey is a perfect way to connect with the island's fascinating history and culture.

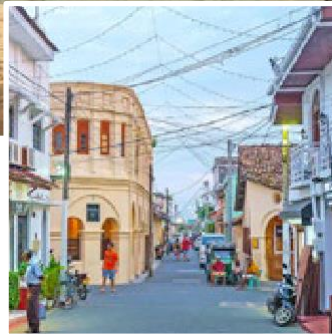
Venture into the wild on exhilarating **Jeep safaris** in **Yala National Park**, a renowned reserve teeming with wildlife. Keep an eye out for elephants, elusive leopards, and a variety of bird species in their natural habitats. Enjoy the enchanting experience of a **sunset safari**, where the park's wildlife comes alive as the day fades. Additionally, visit **Minneriya National Park**, famous for its large elephant herds, and the **Turtle Hatchery** in Galle, where efforts to protect endangered turtles are underway.

Step into the charming hill town of **Nuwara Eliya**, known as "Little England" for its cool climate, English-style architecture, and sprawling tea plantations. Explore lush tea plantations, learn about the tea-making process at a local factory, and indulge in a traditional **high tea** at the elegant **Grand Hotel**. Wander the town's quaint streets and take in the stunning mountain scenery, waterfalls, and gardens, as you feel transported to a different time.

Experience the cultural heart of Sri Lanka in **Kandy**, another **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Visit the revered **Temple of the Tooth Relic**, one of Buddhism's most sacred sites. Take a scenic drive around **Kandy Lake**, and join a **Sri Lankan cooking demonstration**, learning how to create delicious local dishes. Kandy's bustling markets, traditional arts, and rich heritage offer a captivating cultural experience.

While every day is filled with exciting discoveries, you will also have ample time to relax and unwind. Stay in luxurious accommodations, including jungle chalets in **Yala**, seaside escapes in **Galle**, and premier hotels in **Colombo**. Whether sipping Ceylon tea amidst the scenic hills or enjoying a sunset boat ride along the **Madu River**, this tour offers the perfect balance of adventure and relaxation.





# SRI LANKA ITINERARY

23<sup>rd</sup> October to 8<sup>th</sup> November 2025

## THU 23 Home – Negomba, Sri Lanka

Today, we embark on our exciting journey to Sri Lanka. Depart from New Zealand and board our flight to Colombo, the vibrant capital of Sri Lanka. Upon arrival, we will be warmly welcomed by our local English-speaking guide and transferred to our hotel in Negombo for some relaxation after the journey. Meals provided in flight.

## FRI 24 Negombo – Minneriya – Habarana

This morning, we embark on a scenic drive to Habarana, with an exciting stop at **Minneriya National Park**. This national park, located in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka, was first declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1938 and later designated as a national park in 1997. Minneriya is renowned for its impressive herds of elephants, providing a unique opportunity to observe these magnificent creatures in their natural environment.

After an exhilarating wildlife experience, we continue our journey to Habarana, where we will settle into our accommodation for the next three nights. The rest of the day is free to relax prior to re-gathering for our **Welcome Dinner** which will set the scene for the coming days.

## Trip Highlights

- **Sigiriya Rock Fortress & Polonnaruwa:** Explore the towering **Sigiriya Rock Fortress** and the historic ruins of **Polonnaruwa, UNESCO World Heritage Sites**.
- **Anuradhapura:** Discover Sri Lanka's first ancient capital, **Anuradhapura**, renowned for its stupas and royal palaces.
- **Kandy:** Visit the sacred **Temple of the Tooth Relic** and the lush **Royal Botanical Gardens** in **Kandy**.
- **Nuwara Eliya:** Experience the charm of **Nuwara Eliya**, set amidst tea plantations and picturesque landscapes.
- **Yala National Park:** Enjoy thrilling **safaris** in **Yala National Park**, home to leopards, elephants, and diverse wildlife.
- **Galle & Coastal Beauty:** Explore **Galle Fort**, cruise along the **Madu River**, and encounter the **Silt Fishermen** of Koggala.
- **Colombo:** End your journey with a tour of **Colombo**, visiting colonial landmarks and **Independence Square**.

### Exclusive Experiences:

- Scenic Train through tea country.
- Jeep Safaris in Yala.
- Tea plantation tours and tastings.
- Sri Lankan cooking demonstration
- High Tea at the Grand Hotel.
- Visit a Turtle Hatchery
- Historic Mount Lavinia Hotel

## Discover Sigiriya and Polonnaruwa – Journey

### SAT 25 Through Ancient Sri Lanka

(B) (D)

Today, we embark on a full-day exploration of two of Sri Lanka's most iconic historical sites, **Sigiriya** and **Polonnaruwa**.

This morning, we begin with a visit to **Sigiriya Rock Fortress**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, built in the 5th century by King Kashyapa (477-495 AD). Often referred to as the "Eighth Wonder of the World," this towering citadel, also known as the "Lion Rock," rises 200 meters above the surrounding jungle. We will climb the rock to explore the remnants of this ancient fortress, including its impressive moat, rampart, and beautifully designed gardens, particularly the sophisticated water gardens. Along the way, we visit the famous frescoes of the 'Heavenly Maidens,' painted on the rock's surface in rich earth pigments, accessed by a spiral stairway.

After exploring Sigiriya, we continue to **Polonnaruwa**, another UNESCO World Heritage Site and the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Polonnaruwa. Also known as **Pulathisipura** and **Vijayarajapura** in ancient times, is a vast treasure trove of historical ruins, royal palaces, and intricate temples. Our knowledgeable guide will lead us through this fascinating ancient city, providing insights into its rich history and cultural significance.

After a full day of discovering these remarkable sites, we return to Habarana for a relaxing evening and dinner at our accommodation.

### SUN 26 Anuradhapura – A Journey Through History

(B) (D)

This morning, we depart from the hotel for a **full day** visit to **Anuradhapura**, one of Sri Lanka's most historically significant cities.

Located in the north-central plains, **Anuradhapura** is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was the country's first ancient capital. Situated along the historic **Malwathu Oya River**, the city is renowned for its well-preserved ruins, which include ancient stupas, temples, and royal palaces. These magnificent structures reflect the rich cultural and religious heritage of Sri Lanka.

After a day filled with exploration and discovery, we will return to Habarana for dinner and a relaxing evening at the hotel.

### MON 27 Scenic Journey to Kandy

(B) (D)

Today, we embark on a picturesque drive to **Kandy**, nestled in the lush hills of the Central Province. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Kandy is renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage.

Along the way, we visit the **Matale Spice Garden**, where we discover Sri Lanka's ingredients.

This afternoon, we arrive at our hotel, our home, for the next two nights. After settling in, we take part in an engaging **Sri Lankan cooking demonstration**, where we learn how to prepare some of the country's most iconic dishes. Later, we come together for dinner this evening at our hotel.

## TUE 28 Exploring Kandy's Cultural Treasure

(B) (D)

This morning, we begin our day with a scenic drive along **Upper Lake Drive**, offering stunning views of the surrounding hills and the picturesque **Kandy Lake**.

Along the way we stop at **Market Square**, Kandy's oldest market, where you can experience the vibrant hustle and bustle of local life. The market is brimming with small stalls offering a variety of goods, from fresh produce to traditional crafts.

Next, we visit the **Arts & Crafts Centre**, where we discover the intricate and unique designs of Kandyan arts and crafts, deeply influenced by the region's rich Buddhist and Hindu traditions.

Our journey continues to the **Gem Museum**, where we explore a dazzling collection of precious and semi-precious gemstones found in Sri Lanka, including sapphires, rubies, and emeralds. We learn about the gem mining process, as well as the techniques of cutting and polishing these beautiful stones. The museum also highlights the cultural and economic importance of gemstones in Sri Lanka.

We then visit the **Kandy Temple of the Tooth Relic**, one of Sri Lanka's most revered spiritual sites. According to legend, the sacred tooth of the Buddha was smuggled into Sri Lanka in the hair of an Orissan princess to protect it from desecration. Today, the Relic is considered the country's most prized possession and remains a focal point of Buddhist worship and pilgrimage.

Afterward, we explore the **Royal Botanical Gardens in Peradeniya**, once a 14th-century pleasure retreat for the Pandyan kings. These lush gardens are home to a vast collection of exotic plants and trees, providing a serene environment for a peaceful stroll.

The afternoon is at your leisure, allowing you to explore Kandy at your own pace or relax at the hotel.

## Journey to Nuwara Eliya – "Little England"

### WED 29

(B) (L) (D)

Start your day with a scenic journey from **Kandy** to **Nuwara Eliya**, a charming town often referred to as "Little England" for its colonial architecture and cool, refreshing climate.

En route, we enjoy a visit to the magnificent **Ramboda Falls**, one of Sri Lanka's most breathtaking waterfalls, standing at 109 meters tall. Nestled in the **Pussellawa area** along the A5 highway, this natural wonder is formed by the **Panna Oya**, a tributary of the **Kothmale Oya**, and is the 11th tallest waterfall in the country.

Upon arrival in **Nuwara Eliya**, we check in to our home for the next two nights. In the evening, we gather together for a delightful dinner and unwind, settling into the peaceful atmosphere of this picturesque hill town.





Sigiriya Rock Fortress

### Nuwara Eliya – The ‘Little England’ of Sri Lanka

THU 30

(B) (HT) (D)

Nestled amidst picturesque mountains, valleys, waterfalls, and lush tea plantations, **Nuwara Eliya** is often referred to as "Little England" due to its charming colonial architecture and cool climate. Although it is one of the coldest places in Sri Lanka, the temperature feels more like an English spring day, with cooler nights. The British influence is evident throughout the town, with quaint country cottages and Queen Anne-style mansions dotting the landscape.

This morning, we embark on a **city tour of Nuwara Eliya**, known for its invigorating mountain climate and breathtaking scenery. As the heart of Sri Lanka’s tea-growing region, Nuwara Eliya produces a significant share of the world’s finest tea. Sri Lanka’s tallest mountain, **Pidurutalagala** (8,282 ft), stands majestically nearby, and the town also boasts one of South Asia’s finest 18-hole golf courses.

Following the tour, we visit a **tea plantation** to witness the fascinating process of tea plucking and enjoy a taste of freshly brewed Ceylon tea. A guided tour of the **tea factory** will provide a deeper insight into the intricate art of tea production. To complete the experience, we indulge in a **famed high tea** at the renowned **Grand Hotel**, while soaking in the beauty of the surrounding tea fields.

Afterward, return to the hotel, and the rest of the day is at leisure for you to relax and soak in the serene atmosphere.



### Scenic Train Journey to Ella & Yala National Park

FRI 31

(B) (D)

This morning, we depart from the hotel and transfer to **Nuwara Eliya railway station** to board a scenic train ride to **Ella**. Known for its stunning views, this train journey offers breathtaking sights of lush green hills, sprawling tea plantations, and picturesque landscapes.

Upon arrival in **Ella**, we will transfer to our hotel in **Yala**. Covering 126,786 hectares, including the **Strict Natural Reserve (Block II)**, **Yala National Park** is home to an incredible array of wildlife. The most visited section, **Block I** (14,101 hectares), was established in 1938 and is famous for its herds of elephants, leopards, spotted deer, sambhur, crocodiles, mongoose, wild boar, wild buffalo, and much more. Yala is also a haven for birdwatchers, with more than 130 recorded bird species, including both resident and migratory birds.

The rest of the afternoon is free for you to relax and enjoy the natural surroundings at your leisure.

SAT 1

NOV **Yala Safari Adventure**

(B) (D)

This morning, we embark on an exhilarating **Jeep safari** through **Yala National Park**, one of Sri Lanka’s most renowned wildlife reserves. As we journey through the park, we have the chance to observe a wide range of wildlife in their natural surroundings. Yala is home to herds of elephants, elusive leopards, wild boar, wild buffalo, crocodiles, peacocks, jackals, sloth bears, and many other fascinating species.

We return to our hotel for some rest and relaxation then in the afternoon, we set out for a second **safari**, providing another opportunity to experience the park’s incredible wildlife as the sun sets, casting a golden glow over the landscape.

This is an ideal time to see the animals at their most active and take in the beauty of Yala’s wild terrain.



## **Journey to Galle – Coastal Beauty and Scenic River** **SUN 2 Ride** (B) (D)

This morning, we leave **Yala** and embark on a scenic drive along Sri Lanka's stunning southern coast to Galle. Along the way, we visit charming coastal villages and catch a glimpse of the iconic **Stilt Fishermen** in **Koggala**, a picturesque and unique tradition of Sri Lanka's southern shores.

Upon arrival into **Galle**, our home for the next three nights provides the perfect base to explore this historic city and the surrounding area.

In the evening, we unwind with a peaceful **boat ride along the Madu River**. This scenic journey takes you through a network of islands and wetlands, immersing you in the natural beauty and diverse ecosystem of Sri Lanka's coastal landscape.

After the boat ride, return to the hotel for a relaxing evening, and enjoy dinner together.



## **MON 3 Explore Historic Galle** (B) (D)

Today, we embark on a **city tour of Galle**, a historic city on Sri Lanka's southwest coast. Our journey takes us to **the Majestic Galle Fort**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built by the Portuguese in the 16th century and later expanded by the Dutch, the fort is surrounded by impressive stone sea walls. Inside, the car-free streets showcase a unique blend of Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonial architecture. Notable landmarks include the 18th-century **Dutch Reformed Church** and the iconic **Galle Lighthouse**, perched at the fort's southeast tip.

This afternoon, we visit a **Turtle Hatchery**, where conservationists work to rescue turtles endangered by the fishing industry. The hatchery plays a vital role in rehabilitating injured turtles and releasing baby turtles into the ocean. Each year, up to 7,000 baby turtles are released, though, as in nature, only about 5 percent are expected to survive to adulthood.

After a day filled with rich experiences, we return to the hotel and enjoy a relaxing dinner together.

## **TUE 4 Galle – Day at Leisure** (B)

Today, enjoy a full day at leisure in **Galle**. Take the opportunity to explore the city at your own pace, relax by the beach, or simply unwind at your hotel. Whether you choose to discover more of Galle's historic charm or indulge in some personal relaxation, the day is yours to enjoy as you wish.

## **WED 5 Galle – Colombo** (B) (L)

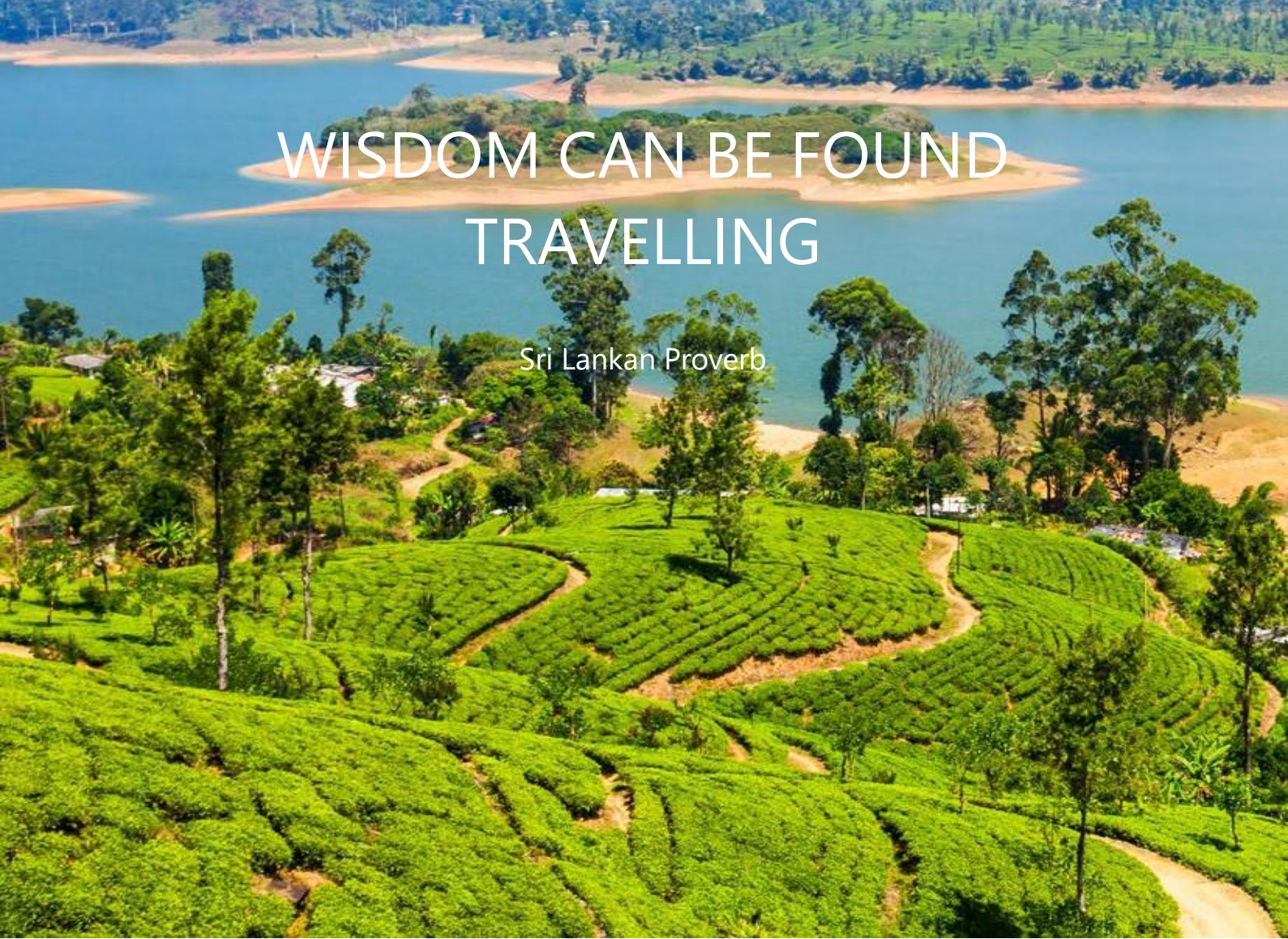
This morning, we leave **Galle** and begin our journey to **Colombo**. Along the way, we stop for a delicious **lunch at the historic Hotel Mount Lavinia**, offering ocean views whilst we dine.

Upon arriving in **Colombo**, we check in to our hotel for the next two nights.

The remainder of the afternoon is yours to relax at the hotel or explore Colombo at your own pace.

# WISDOM CAN BE FOUND TRAVELLING

Sri Lankan Proverb



## THU 6 Exploring Colombo and Surrounds

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This morning, we set out to explore **Colombo** and its fascinating surroundings. Our first stop is **Fort**, the city's vibrant financial hub, home to the **Colombo Stock Exchange** and the towering **World Trade Centre**, where Sri Lanka's key financial operations take place.

We then visit the historic **Echelon Barracks**, once a British military garrison and later the headquarters of the Ceylon Army following Sri Lanka's independence. This site holds deep historical significance, linked to the early leadership of the country's first Prime Minister.

Our journey continues to **Sea Street**, famous for its goldsmithing tradition dating back to the early 19th century under British rule. This area was historically dominated by the Chetties, an influential merchant community.

We also visit the bustling **Bazaar**, admire the intricate stone carvings of a Hindu Temple, and explore the historic **Dutch Church of Wolvendaal**. The day concludes with a visit to **Independence Square**, a landmark that symbolizes Sri Lanka's independence and colonial heritage.

After a full day of exploring, we return to the hotel and gather for a **Farewell Dinner**, celebrating the conclusion of our unforgettable journey.

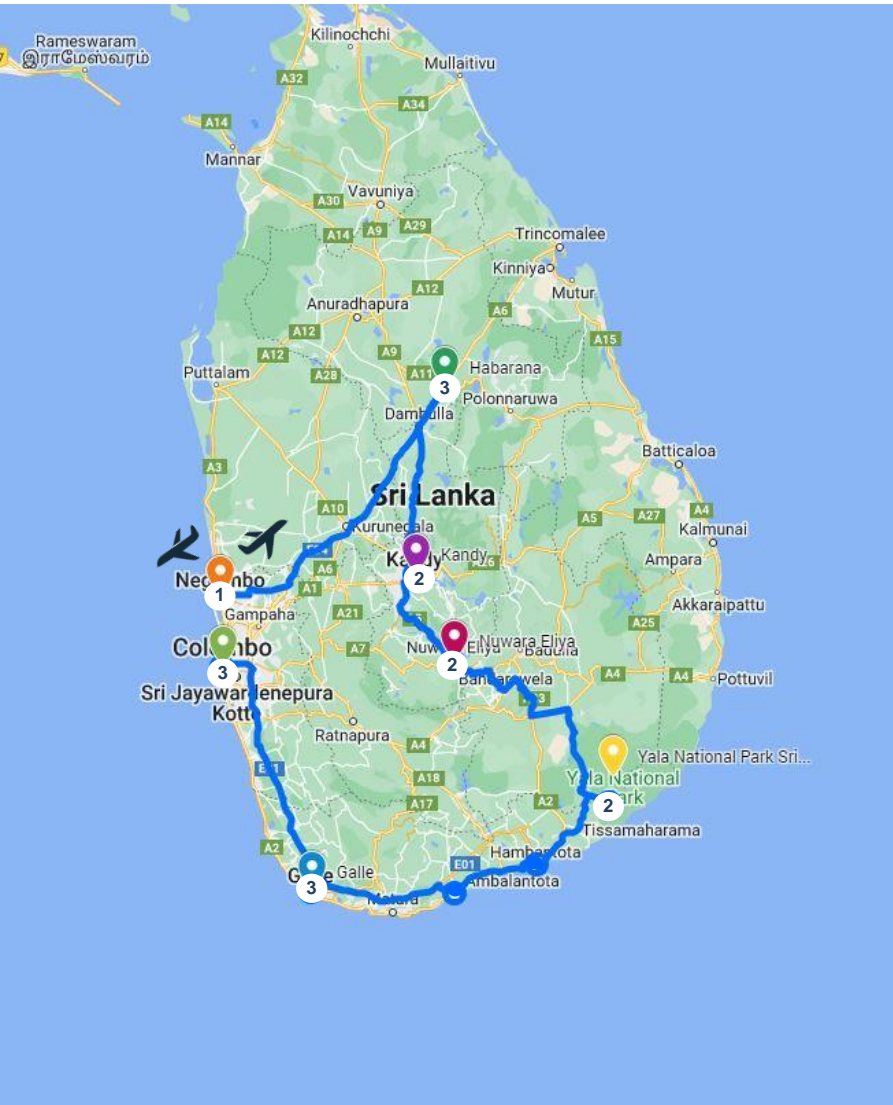
## FRI 7 Colombo - Home

ⓑ

Enjoy a leisurely day with free time to explore **Colombo** at your own pace or simply unwind at the hotel. With access to our rooms until the late evening, there is plenty of time to relax before our transfer to **Colombo Airport** for our **midnight** departure.

As we prepare for our journey back to **New Zealand**, we reflect on the stunning landscapes and unforgettable experiences that made our time in **Sri Lanka** truly special. We arrive back in New Zealand on **Saturday, 8th November**.





# Scintillating Sri Lanka

## 17 Day Tour Includes

Fully hosted from NZ with a **YOURTours Host**

International flights ex Wellington or Auckland

- Other departure locations available on request
- Flight upgrades available upon request
- Home Pick-up/drop-off T&C's apply

Premium accommodation

Services of local English-speaking guides throughout

All Meals as per itinerary

All excursions and activities as per itinerary

All gratuities to local guides and coach drivers

Departs 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025

Price from \$12,495 pp twin share or double room

Single Price from \$14,499 pp

**You are invited to join us on our fully hosted small group tour. As this is one of our Sapphire tours the maximum number of guests is 18.**

Based on the beautiful Kapiti Coast with our guests joining us from all corners of New Zealand, we believe you will be pleasantly surprised by just how much we include in our tour price.

You can be reassured that your tour host will always be one of our friendly well-experienced YOURTours Hosts, ensuring everything is taken care of from start to finish, allowing you to relax and enjoy your tour.



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