

SCINTILLATING SRI LANKA

17 October 2026

18 Day Small Group Hosted Tour
From your Front Door & Back Again





SCINTILLATING SRI LANKA

Discover the magic of **Sri Lanka** on an unforgettable 18 day journey that takes us 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.

The charming hill town of **Nuwara Eliya** is known as "Little England" for its cool climate, English-style architecture, and sprawling tea plantations. We will 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.

This tour 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.

In Kandy, we 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, we will also have ample time to relax and unwind at 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.



Trip Highlights

- **Minneriya National Park:** Renowned for the largest gatherings of Asian elephants.
- **Sigiriya Rock Fortress & Polonnaruwa:** Full-day exploration of two of Sri Lanka's most iconic historical sites.
- **Anuradhapura:** Discover Sri Lanka's first ancient capital, renowned for its stupas and royal palaces.
- **Kandy:** Sri Lankan cooking experience and visits to the sacred Temple of the Tooth Relic and the lush Royal Botanical Gardens.
- **Nuwara Eliya:** Enjoy picturesque landscapes of Nuwara Eliya, known as 'Little England', with visits to lush tea plantations and a traditional High Tea experience at the Grand Hotel.
- **Scenic Journey from Nuwara Eliya to Ella:** Well-known for its stunning views.
- **Yala National Park:** Enjoy thrilling Jeep safaris in Yala National Park, home to leopards, elephants, and diverse wildlife.
- **Galle & Coastal Beauty:** Explore Galle Fort, cruise along the Madu River.
- **Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery:** One of the few places where all five species of sea turtles come to nest.
- **Historic Mount Lavinia Hotel:** Originally built as the Governor's residence in 1806, it is now one of the oldest and most renowned hotels in the country.
- **Colombo:** City tour visiting colonial landmarks and Independence Square.

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17 October - 2 November 2026

SAT 17 Home – Negombo, Sri Lanka

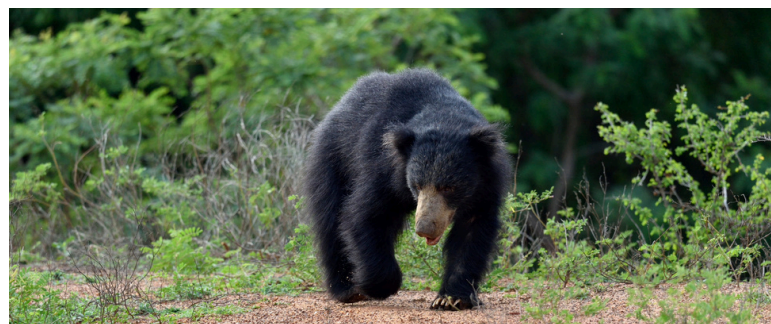
Today, we embark on our exciting journey to Sri Lanka. Depart from New Zealand and board our flight to **Colombo**, the vibrant capital of Sri Lanka. Upon arrival, we will be warmly welcomed by our local English-speaking guide and transferred to our hotel in **Negombo** for some relaxation after the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

SUN 18 Negombo – Minneriya – Habarana

(B) (D)

This morning, we embark on a scenic drive to Habarana, with an exciting stop at **Minneriya National Park**. Centered around a vast reservoir, the park was first declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1938 and later designated as a national park in 1997. Renowned for hosting the largest gatherings of Asian elephants, Minneriya also shelters a rich diversity of wildlife, including deer, sambur sloth bears, and various bird species. Here, we will have the unique opportunity to witness these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat.

After an exhilarating **Jeep Safari** 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.





MON 19 Discover Sigiriya and Polonnaruwa (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.



TUE 20 Anuradhapura – A Journey Through History (B)(D)

Today, journey to the ancient city of **Anuradhapura**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and one of Sri Lanka's most treasured landmarks. Located in the island's north-central plains, this historic city served as the country's first capital from the 5th century BC to the 9th century AD, and stood at the heart of its flourishing Buddhist civilization.

Uncover the ruined city of Anuradhapura and explore the awe-inspiring **Brazen Palace**, once an immense nine-storey monastic complex. Here we will also see the revered **Sri Maha Bodhi a Bo tree**, which is over 2,000 years old and grown from a branch of the very tree beneath which the Buddha attained enlightenment.

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

WED 21 Scenic Journey to Kandy (B)(L)(D)

We begin our day with a visit to the **Matale Spice Garden**, a fragrant paradise nestled along the way to Kandy. Wander among the green **garden of spices and herbs**, feeling their textures and inhaling their rich aromas. Learn how these plants are cultivated in their natural environment, discover their medicinal and culinary uses, and taste a variety of Sri Lanka's signature spices. Gain insight into the island's centuries-old spice traditions, and browse the garden shop for unique, spice-inspired products to take home.

We then continue our scenic journey to **Kandy**, the jewel of Sri Lanka's central highlands. Nestled among rolling mountains, lush tea plantations, and vibrant rainforests, the city is a haven for both nature lovers and culture enthusiasts. Admire the harmonious blend of colonial-era and traditional Kandyan architecture.

In the afternoon, we immerse ourselves in the flavors of Sri Lanka during a hands-on **cooking class**. Set in a charming Kandy kitchen, we will chop, stir, and season our way through a selection of **authentic local dishes**. Discover the secrets behind Sri Lankan cuisine, engage in every step from fresh ingredients to final presentation, and capture your insights in a personal notebook. We end the day by savoring the meal we have prepared, a true taste of Kandy's culture, a feast for the senses, and an experience to remember.



THU 22 Kandy City Tour

(B) (D)

This morning, we set out on a **guided sightseeing tour of Kandy**, a UNESCO World Heritage-listed city brimming with culture, history, and natural beauty.

We begin at the **Royal Botanical Gardens** of Peradeniya, a lush sanctuary dating back to the **British colonial era**. Wander through graceful avenues shaded by towering palms and vibrant tropical blooms, home to thousands of rare and exotic plant species from around the world.

Then we continue to the magnificent **Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic**, one of Sri Lanka's most revered landmarks. Step inside this sacred temple to learn about its centuries-old history and the deeply venerated relic of the Buddha it enshrines.

We finish our sightseeing tour at the **Gem Museum**, where we will watch a short film on Sri Lanka's gemstone mining and explore a collection of exquisite locally crafted jewelry.

FRI 23 Nuwara Eliya via Ramboda Falls

(B) (L) (D)

We begin our scenic drive towards **Nuwara Eliya**, known for its rolling tea estates, cool climate, and old-world charm.

Along the way we stop at the magnificent **Ramboda Falls**, cascading gracefully from the lush highlands. Its waters cascade in a stunning display, joining with Dunsinane Falls to form a striking Y-shaped twin waterfall. Surrounded by verdant forest and rugged cliffs, Ramboda Falls is a perfect spot to pause, take photographs, and fully immerse yourself in the beauty and tranquility of the highlands.

After this breathtaking experience, we continue our journey to Nuwara Eliya, arriving in the late afternoon to our accommodation amid serene mountain scenery.



SAT 24 Nuwara Eliya – "Little England"

(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 begin our day with a **city tour of Nuwara Eliya**, known for its invigorating mountain climate and breathtaking scenery. Enjoy a visit to **Gregory Lake** and **Victoria Park**, two of the town's must-see highlights. Stroll along the scenic shores of Gregory Lake and wander through Victoria Park's 27 acres of vibrant flowers, towering trees, and tranquil pathways, perfect for a leisurely walk or simply soaking in the fresh mountain air.

We will also have time to explore the **Winter Market**, the **Bale Bazaar**, where local vendors offer cozy clothing suited to Nuwara Eliya's cool climate, along with authentic handicrafts and regional specialties. It's the perfect place to pick up souvenirs and experience the town's unique charm.

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 in the serene atmosphere.



SUN 25 Scenic Journey to Ella (B)(D)

This morning, we set off on a captivating **scenic journey to Ella**. Known for its stunning views, this enchanting route offers breathtaking colourful scenery of lush green hills, sprawling tea plantations, and tranquil woodland.

Upon arriving in Ella, we pause to admire the iconic **Nine Arches Bridge**, also known as the Bridge in the Sky. This stunning colonial-era railway marvel is one of the finest examples of its kind in the country. We will also enjoy breathtaking panoramic views at the **Ella Gap Viewpoint**. Surrounded by lush greenery, it's the perfect spot to soak in the serene beauty of the surroundings.

As we continue toward **Yala**, the landscape transforms into tropical forests and rolling plains, setting the stage for a journey into one of Sri Lanka's most wildlife-rich regions. This scenic drive offers a nature-filled adventure you won't forget.

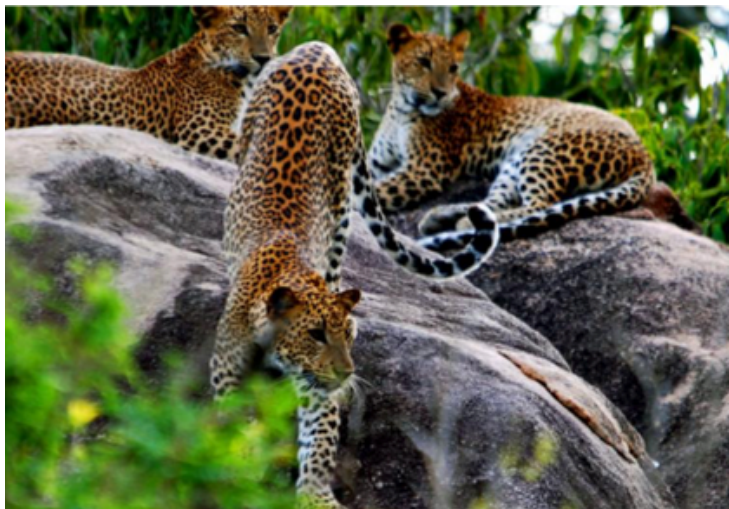
MON 26 Yala National Park (B)(L)(D)

This morning, we embark on an exhilarating Jeep safari through **Yala National Park**, one of Sri Lanka's most renowned wildlife reserves. We begin our adventure in the early morning with a **guided Jeep tour** led by an experienced ranger through forests, grasslands, and lagoons that extend to the Indian Ocean.

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. It is also one of the world's densest leopard populations, offering a rare and unforgettable opportunity to witness this elusive predator.

We will pause for **lunch in the park** enjoying a unique setting surrounded by nature. Beyond its wildlife, Yala is a vital conservation area, preserving an extraordinary diversity of flora and fauna, many species endemic to Sri Lanka.

We return to our hotel for some rest and later in the afternoon, we set out for a **second safari**, providing another opportunity to experience the park's incredible wildlife as the sun sets. This is an ideal time to see the animals at their most active and take in the beauty of Yala's wild terrain.



TUE 27 Yala - Galle (B)(D)

This morning, we leave Yala and embark on a scenic drive along Sri Lanka's stunning southern coast to **Galle**, historic city on Sri Lanka's southwest coast. En route, we stop to talk to the **stilt fishermen** and take some amazing photographs.

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 **Victorian Lighthouse**, perched at the fort's southeast tip.

WED 28 Galle City Tour (B)(D)

After breakfast, we journey south to the captivating coastal city of **Galle** and enjoy a **city tour**. Once the island's most important harbour, Galle brims with history and charm.

Believed to be the "Tarshish" of the bible, this remarkable port city was captured by the Portuguese in 1587, the Dutch in 1640, and the British in 1796, each leaving behind their own architectural and cultural legacy.

Step into the past as we wander through streets lined with graceful **Dutch-era buildings**, their bastions still bearing original names like Zwart, Akeloo, and Aeloes. Our adventure continues as we watch local artisans bring Galle's traditions to life with delicate lace-making, gleaming ebony carvings, and the sparkle of hand-cut gems.

We will also explore the lively **local bazaar**, where colourful stalls overflow with handmade treasures — the perfect souvenirs from this coastal city.

THU 29 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.





FRI 30 Galle - Colombo

(B) (L)

This morning, we leave Galle and begin our journey to Colombo. Along the way, we stop at the **Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery**, a renowned conservation centre established in 1981. Located along Sri Lanka's southern coast, Kosgoda is one of 18 turtle hatcheries in the region and one of the few places where all five species of sea turtles that visit Sri Lanka come to nest.

We then enjoy **Madu river boat safari** gliding through the mangrove marshes and islands. As we drift deeper into this lush waterway, keep an eye out for cormorants, storks and other fascinating species as they dive and swoop in search of prey along the river's lively, rushing waters.

Our journey continues to a riverside **Buddhist monastery**, where you can observe the traditional art of kraal fishing and learn how Ceylon cinnamon is carefully peeled. You may wish to purchase some freshly harvested high-quality cinnamon to take home as a fragrant reminder of your visit. We will make a stop at the **fish spa** for a fun and relaxing "fish therapy" session.

As we continue towards Colombo, we pause for a delicious **lunch at the historic Hotel Mount Lavinia**, offering ocean views whilst we dine.

Our final destination today, **Colombo** is a bustling metropolis home to over five million people. This city is traditionally centred around Fort, a historic district that began as a fortified Portuguese trading port and has evolved into the city's vibrant business hub. The remainder of the afternoon is yours to relax at the hotel or **explore Colombo at your own pace**.



SAT 31 Colombo City Tour

(B) (D)

Today, we immerse ourselves in the vibrant energy of Colombo on a captivating city tour. This sprawling city of over five million people blends history, culture, and modern charm. Centered around Fort, the historic district began as a fortified Portuguese trading post, alongside the serene Beira Lake, both opening out to the sea. Once just a busy stopover, Colombo has evolved into a dynamic city full of surprises waiting to be discovered.

On this city tour, wander through iconic landmarks such as **Independence Square** and **BMICH**, admire the **Aukana Buddha Statue** replica, and step into the world of cricket at the **SSC Cricket Club** and **Sri Lanka Cricket Headquarters**.

We will visit the leafy avenues of **Cinnamon Gardens**, soak in the spiritual calm of **Gangaramaya Temple** and the floating **Seema Malaka Temple** on Beira Lake, and take in the sweeping views along **Galle Face Green**.

Another must-visit attraction where we can uncover the treasures of Sri Lanka's history is the **Colombo National Museum**, where centuries of culture and heritage come alive. Colombo offers a perfect blend of past and present, revealing a vibrant city filled with stories, sights, and experiences waiting to be explored.

SUN 1 NOV Colombo

(B)

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.

MON 2 Colombo - Home

As we return back to New Zealand, we reflect on the stunning landscapes and unforgettable experiences that made our time in Sri Lanka truly special.



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You are invited to join us on our fully hosted small group tour, with a 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 rest assured that your Tour Host will always be one of our friendly well-experienced YOURTours Team Members providing a relaxed and worry-free holiday from start to finish.



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18 DAYS • Fully Hosted from New Zealand with a YOURTours Host

COUNTRY: Sri Lanka

DATES: 17 October - 2 November 2026

Tour Inclusions:

- International flights ex Auckland
- Other departure locations available on request
- Flight upgrades available upon request
- Home Pick-up/drop-off. T&C's apply
- 4* & 5* hotels accommodation
- All gratuities to local guides and coach drivers
- Services of local English-speaking guides throughout
- All Meals as per itinerary
- All excursions and activities as per itinerary
- From \$10,995 per person twin share
- Single: From \$13,495 per person

