

BUDDHIST ITINERARY 5 NIGHTS / 6 DAYS

DAY 1 : AIRPORT - NEGOMBO - PUTTALAM - ANURADHAPURA - MIHINTALE - ANURADHAPURA

Arrival at Airport by Early morning flight. Meet and assist upon arrival by Aitken Spence Travels Representative and leave for Negombo.

Breakfast at a Restaurant.

Later departure to Anuradhapura. Arrive in Anuradhapura. Anuradhapura was the first capital and undoubtedly the grandest city of the ancient Ceylon. It is the home of two world heritage sites. Many places of historical and archaeological interest could be visited. Sri Maha Bodhi (Sacred Bo-Tree) was brought as a sapling of the tree under which Prince Siddhartha attained to enlightenment and it is over 2200 years old and is the oldest historically documented tree in the world. The Brazen Palace (2nd century B.C), the 1600 stone columns you see are all that is left of a magnificent multi-storied residence for monks. Ruwanweliseya (2nd century B.C) is the most famous of all the dagobas. It originally depicted the perfect "bubble shape" that modern restoration has not been able to accurately reproduce. "Samadhi" Buddha statue (4th century AD) is one of the most famous statues, depicting the Buddha in a state of "Samadhi" or deep meditation. Isurumuniya rock temple (3rd century B.C) is well known for its rock carvings.



Lunch at a Restaurant.

Afternoon, visit Mihintale

Mihintale is where Buddhism was first introduced to Sri Lanka. Mihintale is regarded as the cradle of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. The rock is riddled with shrines and rock dwellings. A grand stairway of 1,840 steps made out of granite slabs 15" wide leads to the summit from where one could get a splendid view of the surrounding countryside.



Dinner and Overnight Stay in Anuradhapura

DAY 2 : ANURADHAPURA - POLONNARUWA - KANDALAMA

After Breakfast excursion to Polonnaruwa

The island's medieval capital (built in the 11th and 12th century AD) rose to fame after the decline of Anuradhapura. It is a world heritage site.

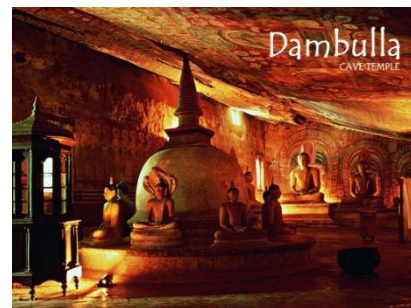
Many of the ruins are in an excellent condition. Its great artificial lake, the Parakrama Samudra which covers an area of 6,000 acres, feeds a network of irrigation canals and minor tanks. Visit the ruins of the Royal Palace, the Gal Viharaya which has 4 splendid statues of the Buddha in 'Upright', 'Sedentary' and 'Recumbent' postures carved out of rock, the Audience Hall, the Lotus Bath and the statue of King Parakramabahu. 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.



Lunch at a Restaurant.

Afternoon, visit Dambulla.

The Dambulla rock temple was built by King Walagambahu in the 1st century B.C. and it is a World Heritage Site. It is the most impressive of Sri Lanka's cave temples. The complex of five caves with over 2000 sq. metres of painted walls and ceilings, is the largest area of paintings found in the world. It contains over 150 images of the Buddha of which the largest is the colossal figure of the Buddha carved out of rock and spanning 14 metres.



Dinner and Overnight Stay in Dambulla

DAY 3 : KANDALAMA – SIGIRIYA - KANDALAMA

After Breakfast climb the 5th century Sigiriya rock fortress which is a world heritage site, built by King Kashyapa (477-495 AD). The "Lion Rock" is a citadel of unusual beauty rising 200 metres from the scrub jungle. The rock was 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.



Lunch at a Restaurant

Evening at leisure at Hotel.

Dinner and Overnight Stay at Heritage Kandalama

DAY 4 : KANDALAMA - MATALE - KANDY –

After Breakfast leave for Kandy

En route visit **Aluvihare Temple and also visit a spice garden** in Matale to see different spices for which Sri Lanka is famous for. You will be introduced to different spices and shown how some of these spices are grown and processed.



Continuation to Kandy

Lunch at a Restaurant.

Afternoon, visit Kandy City. Kandy was the last capital of the Sri Lankan kings and is a World Heritage Site. The name 'Kandy' conjures visions of splendour and magnificence. Many of the legends, traditions and folklore are still lovingly kept alive. Drive around the Kandy lake built by the last Sinhala king, Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe in 1798. Visit the Kandy town, the bazaar, an arts & crafts centre and a gem museum / lapidary. **Also visit the Temple of the Tooth Relic** and thereafter witness a cultural show.



Dinner and Overnight Stay in Kandy

DAY 5 : KANDY – BEACH HOTEL

After Breakfast leave for Beach Hotel.

Lunch en route at a Restaurant.

Dinner and Overnight Stay at a Beach Hotel.



15 OCT : BEACH - COLOMBO - KELANIYA - AIRPORT

After Breakfast leave for Colombo

Colombo like many capital cities in developing countries is fast changing its face. Almost overnight, skyscrapers arise from where old buildings once stood. Yet in some parts, the old world charm is retained. For example, there is a 100-year-old clock tower and several British built colonial buildings. Other places of interest are the Pettah bazaar - where one can shop for bargain. Visit to **Gangarama Temple**.



Lunch at a Restaurant.

Thereafter visit Kelaniya

Visit the Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya, which was built in the 3rd century B.C. Kelaniya is one of the three places visited by the Buddha during his visits to Sri Lanka.



Later departure to Airport to take your return flight.

END OF TOUR