

# buddhist pilgrimage tour to sri lanka



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# Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka is an island nation in the Indian Ocean, separated from India by the Palk Strait. It is “almost” linked to India by a mostly underwater atoll called Adam’s Bridge. It is a very lush, tropical island setting just north of the equator.

Theravada Buddhism is the religion of the majority of Sri Lanka practiced by 70.2% of Sri Lanka's population. Practitioners of Buddhism can be found amongst the Sinhalese population as well as the Tamil population.

Throughout most of its history, Sri Lankan kings have played a major role in the maintenance and revival of the Buddhist institutions of the island. During the 19th century, a modern Buddhist revival took place on the island which promoted Buddhist education and learning.

## Tour Highlights

- ❖ Sri Lanka’s Cultural Triangle:- Sacred City of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the world's major archaeological sites.
- ❖ Lion Rock Fortress in Sigiriya
- ❖ Hill Capital of Sri Lanka -:The Temple of the Tooth Relic, or The Dalada Maligawa, which holds the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha
- ❖ Wild Life - : One of the finest **wildlife** watching countries in South Asia

Endless beaches, timeless ruins, welcoming people, oodles of elephants, rolling surf, cheap prices, fun trains, famous tea and flavorful food describe Sri Lanka.

On arrival at the Bandaranayke International Airport, you will be blessed to get your first taste of warm Sri Lankan hospitality; A Representative from Island Leisure Lanka will welcome you at the Airport & proceed to Colombo.

## Day 01 – Airport – Colombo

A Representative from Island Leisure Lanka will welcome you at the Airport & proceed to Colombo.

### Check – in to the Hotel

#### Colombo

Colombo is the commercial capital of Sri Lanka and is by far the most happening city in the country! From the street hawkers in the noisy bazaars of the Pettah area to the blue collared, tie clad businessmen of the World Trade Centre, Colombo is where Sri Lanka's economic and financial heart beats. From the grand old mansions of the by-gone era to the department stores and shady tree-lined boulevards of today, Colombo is able to satisfy everyone from the prince to the pauper. The shopping, nightlife, and the dining experience in Colombo are pretty amazing and there's plenty of other historical, cultural and religious places of interest in the city too.



### Overnight stay at Global Towers or Similar

## Day 02 - Colombo – Anuradhapura

Breakfast at the Hotel

Check-out from the hotel & proceed to Anuradhapura

Approx. Travel Time: 4 Hrs

### Anuradhapura - The ancient capital of Sri Lanka dating back to 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

From stunning rock carvings and temples to giant stone pillars, history lovers are in for a rare treat at Anuradhapura, the first capital of ancient Sri Lanka. Located 206 km from Colombo, Anuradhapura is a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the world's major archaeological sites. Perfectly landscaped pleasure gardens, vast irrigation lakes and places of religious worship are a plenty here and Anuradhapura also features the spectacular Ruwanweli Seya dagoba and the sacred Sri Maha Bhodi is the oldest documented tree in the world. It is a sapling of the very tree under which the lords Buddha attend enlightenment in Buddhagaya India.





Other attractions include the "Isurumuniya Lovers" rock carvings, Thuparamaya, Lovamahapaya, Abhayagiri Dagaba, Jetavanarama, Mirisaveti Stupa and Lankarama. They are situated in Anuradhapura, the capital of the ancient Anuradhapura Kingdom.

**Lunch - Own arrangement by the guest**

**In the afternoon visit Minitale**

Mihintale is a mountain peak near Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka. It is believed by Sri Lankans to be the site of a meeting between the Buddhist monk Mahinda and King Devanampiyatissa which inaugurated the presence of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. It is now a pilgrimage site, and the site of several religious.

**Dinner & Overnight stay at Miridiya Lake Resort or Similar**

**Day03 Anuradhapura-Avukana-Polonnaruwa-Sigiriya**

Breakfast at the Hotel

**Check-out from the hotel & proceed to Avukana**

Avukana was built during the reign of King Dhatusena in the 5th Century. Standing over 40 feet high, Avukana is the tallest of the ancient Buddha statues in the country.

**Proceed to Polonnaruwa (UNESCO World Heritage site)**

Polonnaruwa - The ancient capital of Sri Lanka dating back to 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

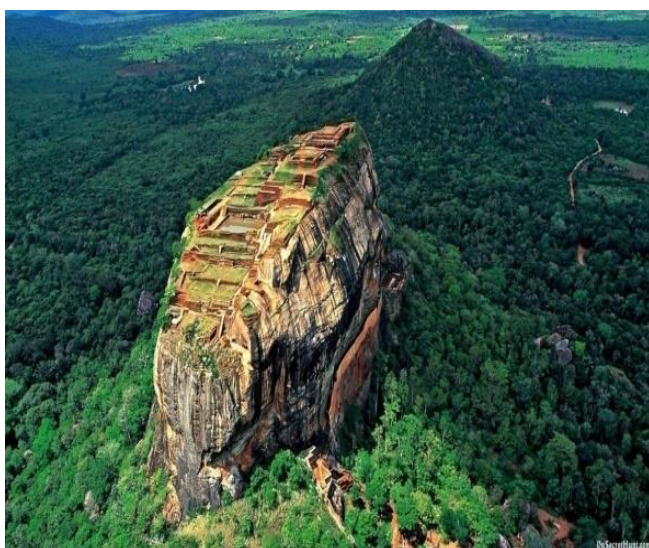
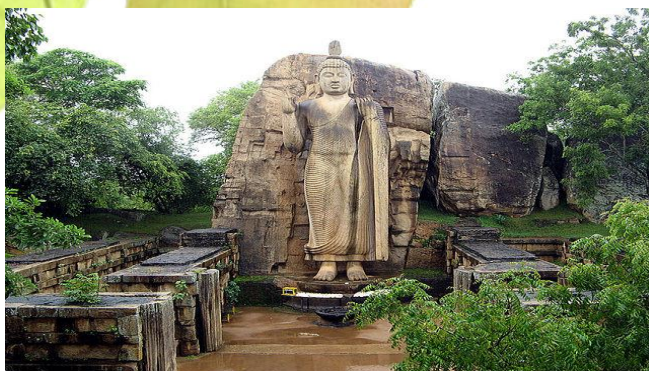
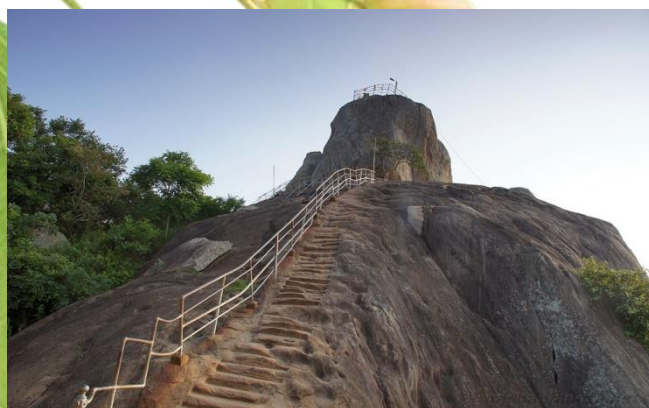
Polonnaruwa is Sri Lanka's second oldest kingdom and features a plethora of ruins and places of religious worship. Ancient Sinhala architecture combined with the South Indian architectural characteristics is what sets Polonnaruwa apart from Anuradhapura. Some of the many interesting places to visit in Polonnaruwa include the Gal Viharaya (Stone temple), Lankathilake Buddhist shrine, the Tivanka Image House, the Nissanka Latha Mandapaya and of course the famous Moonstones - the unique rock carvings found at the entrances or at the bottom of stairways to temples, shrines, dagobas, and other important buildings.

**Lunch Own Arrangement**

**Proceed to Sigiriya**

**In the evening climb the Sigiriya Rock Fortress**

Sigiriya is a magnificent rock fortress built in the 5th century A.D. This majestic Citadel in the sky was the refuge of King Kasyapa who murdered his father and stole the throne from his elder brother - the rightful heir to the throne. Kasyapa built his fortress on this 182 meter high rock to protect himself from his enemies. Sigiriya is world-renowned for its 'Mirror Wall', which consists of poems and paragraphs carved





by some of the thousands of visitors who visited the rock many years ago, and of course for its magnificent frescoes, similar to the Ajantha frescoes of India. Sigiriya is in fact, the best-preserved city Centre in Asia from the first millennium and has been named as a world heritage site.

### **Dinner & Overnight stay at Sigiriana Resort by Thilanka or Similar**

#### **Day 04 Sigiriya – Kandy**

Breakfast at the Hotel

**Check-out from the hotel & board to your coach, You will be transferred to Kandy**

**En route visit Dambulla Cave Temple & the Pinnwela Elephant Orphanage**

The Dambulla Temple is located on a gigantic rock towering more than 160 m above the surrounding area. The Rock itself is more than 1.5 km around its base and summit is at 550 m. The caves on this rock were the refuge of King Walagamba when he was in exile for 14 years. After his return to the throne in the 1st century BC, King Walagamba had this magnificent rock temple built at Dambulla. The caves feature a mixture of religious and worldly paintings and sculptures. Several reclining Buddha's which includes the 15 m long sculpture of the dying Buddha. The famous Dambulla frescoes on the walls and ceiling dates back to the 15th-18th centuries.



#### **Heading to Pinnawela & visit Elephant Orphanage**

The Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage is situated northwest of the town of Kegalle, halfway between the present capital Colombo and the ancient royal residence Kandy. It was established in 1975 by the Sri Lanka Wildlife Department in a 25 acre coconut property adjoining the Maha Oya River. The orphanage was originally founded in order to afford care and protection to the many orphaned Elephants found in the jungles of Sri Lanka.



#### **Proceed to Kandy**

The hill capital of Kandy, the last stronghold of Sinhala kings against the British Empire, lies picturesquely surrounded by mountains and rivers just 120 km away from Colombo. Kandy features the most sacred of all Buddhist shrines - the temple of the tooth or The Dalada Maligawa, which holds the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha. The temple is surrounded by the charming Bogambara Lake, adding tranquility into the hearts and souls of the thousands of devotees that flock the city of Kandy each day.



**Lunch - Own arrangement by the guest**

City tour & shopping in Kandy



When in city tour you will have the time to do some shopping in Kandy, where you could fetch souvenirs in wood, copper, silver, brass, ebony, bronze, ceramics, lacquer work, handlooms, batiks, jewelry and reed-ware at bargain prices!!

Next- Sightseeing of Kandy with Upper lake drive, Market square etc.

**Visit Kandy Temple**

**Check in to the Hotel**

**Dinner & Overnight stay at Thilanka Kandy or Similar**

### Day 05 – Kandy – Mahiyanganaya – Badulla – Ella

Breakfast at the Hotel

**Check-out from the hotel & proceed to Mahiyanganaya**

**Visit Mahiyanganaya Raja maha Viharaya**

Mahiyangana Raja Maha Vihara is an ancient Buddhist temple in Mahiyangana, Sri Lanka. It is believed to be the site of Gautama Buddha's **first** visit to the country, and is one of the Solosmasthanas, the 16 sacred religious locations in Sri Lanka. Currently this temple has been declared as one of archaeological site in Sri Lanka.

**Proceed to Badulla & visit Muthiyangana Raja maha Viharaya**

**Lunch – Own arrangement by the guest**

On the 8th year after attaining the Enlightenment, the Lord Buddha made His **3rd visit** to Kelaniya on the invitation by a king of Naga people named Maniakkitha. During this visit, a local chieftain named Indaka invited Lord Buddha to visit his place in Badulla. At the end of sermons made by Lord Buddha there, Indaka had wanted something to worship in memory of Lord Buddha's visit. The Lord Buddha is said to have given him a few of His hairs and a few drops of sweat that turned into pearls Indaka had enshrined these sacred hair and pearls in a stupa, believed to be the stupa here. Indaka, the chieftain of then Deva people is now regarded as a deity, reigning the Namunukula mountain range and Muthiyangana Raja Maha Viharaya.

**Proceed to Ella**

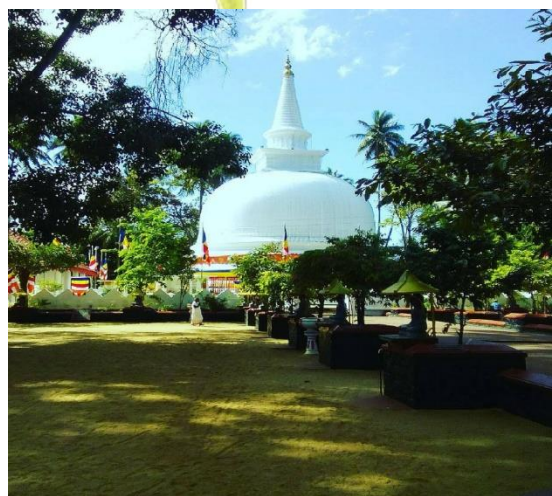
**Dinner & Overnight stay at Hotel Oak Ray Ella Gap or Similar**

### Day 06 – Ella - Thissamaharama

**Check-out from the hotel & proceed to Thissamaharama**

**En route visit Buduruwagala Temple**

Buduruwagala is an ancient buddhist temple in Sri Lanka. The complex consists of seven statues and belongs to the Mahayana school of thought. The statues date back to the 10th century. The gigantic Buddha statue still bears traces of its original





stuccoes robe and a long streak of orange suggests it was once brightly painted. The central of the three figures to the Buddha's right is thought to be the Buddhist mythological figure-the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. To the left of this white painted figure is a female figure in the thrice-bent posture, which is thought to be his consort-Tara.

### **Lunch - Own arrangement by the guest**

Thereafter proceed to Yala & enjoy with a Jeep Safari at Yala National Park

The Yala National Park in southern Sri Lanka has the world's highest concentration of leopards. Much of the nature reserve is parkland, but it also includes jungle, beaches, freshwater lakes and rivers and scrubland. In addition to leopards, the Yala National Park is also home to substantial numbers of elephants, crocodile, wild boar, water buffalo, grey langurs and many more varieties of large animals. The park is also home to birds of prey such as the white-bellied sea eagles, waders, painted Storks, the Indian peafowl and the Sri Lanka jungle fowl. In the southeast, the Park is bounded by the sea and unspoiled natural beaches and sand dunes provide an absolutely beautiful environment.



### **Proceed to Thissamaharama**

The Tissamaharama Raja Maha Vihara is an ancient Buddhist temple in Tissamaharama, Southern Province of Sri Lanka. It was one of the four major Buddhist monasteries established in Sri Lanka, after the arrival of Arhant Mahinda Thera to the country. The site of the Tissamaharama Raja Maha Vihara was consecrated by Lord Buddha himself, who spent some time in meditation there with 500 arhats (individuals who have reached enlightenment), during his third visit to the island. According to Mahavamsa the frontal bone relic (Lalata Dhathu) is enshrined in Tissamaharama stupa as the main relic.



**Dinner & Overnight stay at Grand Tamarind Lake or Similar**

## **Day 07 –Thissamaharama - Colombo**

**Check-out from the hotel & proceed to Colombo**

**En route Visit Wewrukannala Raja maha Viharaya**

The Wewurukannala Vihara temple is dominated by an image of a seated Buddha. It is 160ft high, the largest statue in all of Sri Lanka and dates back to the time of King Rajadhi (1782 – 1798).

**Visit Weherahena Rajamaha Viharaya .**

Weherahena (Veherahena) is popular temple among the buddhist pilgrims. Although there is nothing of historical significance, the story of the temple is quite interesting. In addition, the temple is said be the largest and the first tunnel temple in the world.





## Visit Uthpalawanna Sri Vishnu Devalaya

The little town of Devinuwara or the “City of Gods” is located at the most southern edge of the country, about 6.5kms south-east of Matara. Devinuwara is also known as Dondra in English. At the height of its splendour, in the 13th-15th centuries, Devinuwara has been a busy seaport and a most renowned place of pilgrimage and worship. It had been a landmark with its magnificent temple with a roof of gilded copper flashing far into the sea, and undoubtedly must have been an aid to those who sailed the vast Indian Ocean. The many stone pillars variously sculptured in designs and shapes are evidence of the magnificent shrines and temples in this town that overlooked the ocean up to the latter half of the 16th century.



Proceed to Colombo

Lunch - Own arrangement by the guest

Dinner & Overnight stay at Global Towers or Similar

## Day 08 – Colombo - Airport

Breakfast at the Hotel

Proceed with Colombo City Tour

In the afternoon visit Gangaramaya Temple

The Gangaramaya Temple is one of the bigger Buddhist temples in Colombo. Once you enter the temple buildings you completely forget that you are in a busy city. In the evening, sitting under the Bodhi tree where monks chant and pray, tranquility descends around you. It is definitely not a site to be missed on your visit to Colombo.



Thereafter visit Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya

Being just seven miles from Colombo, Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya is the most sought after Temple for the Buddhists in and around Colombo. On the Eighth year after the Enlightenment, the Lord Buddha has visited this sacred site, which had been the Third and the last visit to Sri Lanka by the Gauthama Buddha. Situated on the banks of Kelani River, which is originating from Sri Pada, makes this Temple surroundings attractive for the devotees who come to worship this hallowed land.



Lunch - Own arrangement by the guest

You will be transferred to the Airport according to your flight schedule

TBN: You should be at the airport 3 hours prior to the time of departure