Private Tour. Experience the best of Sri Lanka. Colourful Colombo, ancient cities, Buddhist temples, colonial relics, an elephant orphanage, spice and flower gardens, tea plantations, wildlife, topped off with some blissful beach time in Kalutara!

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights
- Colombo - The Fort, Gamgarama Temple, National Museum
- Kelaniya - Buddhist Temple
- Dehiwela - Zoological gardens
- Dambadeniya - 13th century city
- Anuradhapura - Sri Lankan birthplace of Buddhism
- Polonnaruwa - 11th century city
- Sigiriya - 5th century fortress ruins
- Dambulla - Rock Temple
- Matale - spice gardens
- Kandy & region - Temple of the Tooth, Botanical Garden
- Pinnawala - Elephant Orphanage
- Nuwara Eliya - tea plantation, Hakgala Gardens
- Horton Plains
- Buduruwagala
- Yala & Bundala NP
- Galle - colonial town & fort
- Kalutara - laid back, beautiful palm fringed beach resort

What's Included
- 14 breakfasts and 1 dinner
- 14 nights at standard accommodation (Superior and Deluxe also available)
- Guided touring of Dambulla, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, Pinnawala (optional), Matale, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Udawalawe NP, Yala NP, Bundala NP Galle and Colombo.
- Pinnewela Elephant Orphanage to watch the elephants bathe
- Tea Plantation and tasting - Nuwara Eliya region
- 4x4 Jeep safari to Horton Plains. Game drives in Yala NP and Bundala NP
- Entrance fees to all included sites
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 and day 15
- Escorted by a licensed English speaking chauffeur guide
- All transfers and transportation in private air-conditioned tourism vehicles.

What's Not Included
- Entrance Fees: included
- International flights and visa
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Colombo
Welcome to Sri Lanka and the start of your holiday! Arrive Colombo, included transfer to hotel. Tonight, enjoy Sri Lankan cuisine at our Welcome Dinner. Overnight - Colombo (D)

Day 2: Sightseeing in Colombo
Colombo. Highlights of our sightseeing tour of Sri Lanka’s capital include the Fort – once a colonial stronghold, Galle Face Green – a seaside expanse popular for informal cricket games, the Pettah – a noisy oriental bazaar, a visit to Gamgarama temple, Cinnamon Gardens and Independence Square. We also visit the national museum (closed Friday). Overnight - Colombo (B)

Day 3: Buddhist Temple and Zoological Gardens
Colombo. At Kelaniya we visit the Raja Maha Vihara, a temple graced by Buddha on one of his three visits to Sri Lanka. Continuing our
Sri Lanka Unplugged

Day 4 : Temple Ruins and Rock Fortress
Colombo - Dambadeniya - Anuradhapura. En route to Anuradhapura, we visit 13th century Dambadeniya, once a royal capital. Its principal surviving ruins are the Dalada Maligawa temple and the Dagoba, locally revered thanks to some corporeal relics of Buddha it is said to contain. We also visit Panduwas Nuwara which features a well-preserved walled citadel, Padeniya, Arankele and the rock fortress of Yapahuwa. Overnight - Anuradhapura (B)

Day 5 : Anuradhapura
Anuradhapura. Today, we visit Anuradhapura, the fascinating ancient city and one of Sri Lanka's most important archaeological sites. It contains vast artificial lakes, temples, statues including the Samadhi Buddha, dagobas (solid hemispheres topped with spires), royal baths and museums. We also visit the holy Sri Maha Bodhi tree under which Prince Siddharta attained enlightenment. It is also the oldest historically documented tree on earth. Later a visit to Mihintale. Overnight - Anuradhapura (B)

Day 6 : Giritale via Dambulla
Anuradhapura - Dambulla - Polonnaruwa - Giritale. En route to Giritale, we visit the stunning Aukana Buddha statue and the impressive Dambulla Rock Temple which contain beautiful frescoes of Buddha. We then visit ancient Polonnaruwa, an 11th century city of compact size. We explore the ruins of the Royal Palace, temples and Gal Vihara which boasts 3 enormous Buddha figures. Overnight - Giritale (B)

Day 7 : Sigiriya and spice gardens
Giritale - Sigiriya - Kandy. To Sigiriya – the elevated and mysterious 5th century fortress ruins of King Kasyapa. The ‘Lion Rock’ is a citadel of unusual beauty rising 200 metres from the scrub jungle. Visit the world-renowned frescoes of the ‘Heavenly Maidens’ of Sigirya, which are in a sheltered pocket of the rock approached by a spiral stairway. At Matale, we visit an exotic spice garden. Overnight - Kandy (B)

Day 8 : Elephant Orphange and Kandy
Today, you can choose to visit the elephant orphanage in Pinnawela, home to around 60 elephants. Continuing, we visit the ruined temples of Embekke, Gadaladeniya and Lankatilleke and the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens. Back in Kandy, a scenic lakeside town, we visit the lake, bazaar, gem museum and lapidary. Tonight, we visit the Temple of the Tooth Relic. After, we enjoy a cultural dance show. Overnight - Kandy (B)

Days 9-10 : Nuwara Eliya and Tea plantations
Kandy - Nuwara Eliya. Departing Kandy, we head further into Sri Lanka’s hill country surrounded by tea plantations. Situated at 6,525 ft/1,990 m, Nuwara Eliya is one of the highest towns in the region. Today, we enjoy a sightseeing tour and visit Hakgala Gardens. By jeep on day 10, we depart early for Horton Plains. Located on a high windswept saddle, Horton Plains offers the walker stunning panoramic views. We’ll hike to Bakers Fall passing en route the Gem Pit Pool, the Chimney Pool, and the Leg of Mutton Pool and then return to Nuwara Eliya. Overnight - Nuwara Eliya (B2)

Day 11 : Yala National Park
Nuwara Eliya - Yala National Park. Continuing to Yala National Park, en route we visit the Mahayana Buddhist rock sculptures at Buduruwagala. This evening, we enjoy a jeep safari. The largest national park in Sri Lanka, Yala is home to elephants, wild boar, buffalo, leopard, crocodile and myriad birdlife.

Note: Yala NP is usually closed sometime between Sept - early Oct due to drought. The length of the close varies from year to year. Overnight - Yala National Park (B)

Day 12 : Bundala National Park and Galle
Yala National Park - Kalutara. This morning, we visit Bundala National Park – a bird sanctuary. We visit the town of Galle and it’s 17th century fort. Within the fort, are narrow streets filled with churches and colonial buildings. We then continue to Kalutara, an ideal tropical beach holiday with it’s sparkling warm blue seas and a lush fringe of palm trees, all bathed in warm golden sunshine. Overnight - Kalutara (B)

Days 13-14 : Beach Time
At leisure on Sri Lanka’s tropical palm-fringed coast. Optional excursion to Ratnapura, home of Sri Lanka’s famous gem trade. There are around 200 gem pits in Ratnapura and many lapidaries where the mined stones are dressed, cut and polished.

Sri Lanka Unplugged - 15 days
www.onthegotours.com
uk 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
USA 1 866 377 6147 SA 0800 982 686

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

updated on 12-04-2016
Sri Lanka Unplugged

Day 15 : Colombo
Kalutara - Colombo. Today we travel via the coast road to Colombo and onward departure transfer to the airport. End of arrangements.

Yala National Park
Yala National Park is usually closed in September and early October. This is due to prevailing drought conditions. So if Yala is high on your priorities for your trip to Sri Lanka then avoid departures in September.

Visas
Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Sri Lanka.

To apply for your ETA visit www.eta.gov.lk

All nationalities require a visa to enter Sri Lanka. Your visa application must be submitted to the Ministry of Emigration and Immigration via the online ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation) prior to departure.

The Visa issued will be a Double-Entry Tourists Visa applicable for 30 days from the date of arrival to Sri Lanka.

Health Requirements
You should seek medical advice before travelling to Sri Lanka from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide Tetanus, Polio, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Typhoid are strongly recommended. You are also advised to take anti-Malarial medication.

Water
As tap water is not safe to drink in Sri Lanka, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available in shops, shops and restaurants. You should also avoid salads which may be washed in unhygienic water.

Currency
The currency of Sri Lanka is the Sri Lankan Rupee.

Pound Sterling, US Dollars or other major currencies can be exchanged only in Sri Lanka, as the Rupee is presently exchangeable only in destination. The Rupee is non-exportable, so spend it all before you leave! There are plenty of money changers in Colombo, at the airport, in the street and at hotels. A growing number of ATMs in Colombo and Kandy accept foreign-issued cards. Credit cards are widely accepted for purchases. Visa and Mastercard withdrawals can be performed at banks.

Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

Entrance Fees & Tip Kitty
Entry fees are not included within the cost of this tour and need to be paid locally in Sri Lankan Rupees (LKR) and they will be collected on day 2 of your tour.

If travelling to India on our Delhi to Colombo tour, entrance fees for the India section of your tour will be collected by your guide in India and payable in India Rupees (INR)

PLEASE NOTE: The tipping kitty is to be paid in LKR and it will be collected on day 2 of your tour.

Our ‘tipping made easy’ doesn’t include a tip for your group tour guide, where we suggest an amount of approx USD$3 - 7 per day multiplied by the duration of your tour. Naturally though, the amount is up to you. The tip for your guide is an entirely personal gesture.

Climate
Situated in the Indian Ocean, at the base of the Indian Sub-Continent and around 880km north of the equator, the island nation of Sri Lanka has a pleasant tropical climate and despite its two short monsoon seasons has no ‘off-season’ as such. The average temperature of the low lands ranges between 25 – 30 degrees C, with higher temperatures in April. The hill country is particularly popular at this time of the year where temperatures can be 5 to 8 degrees cooler during the day, yet rather chilly at night.

With our ‘tipping made easy’ policy, a nominal pre-determined amount is collected from all group tour participants to cover tips en route.

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

updated on 12-04-2016
Sri Lanka Unplugged

Time and Voltage
Sri Lanka is 5 hours and 30 minutes ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Sri Lanka does not observe daylight saving.

Standard voltage is 230 - 240V; 50Hz AC. Sockets are of the 3 round-pin variety, similar though not identical to European sockets. Use a power adaptor with a hairdryer or other appliances.

What to Pack
• Suitcase or frameless backpack/rucksack if preferred.
• Small day bag for your camera, water, sunglasses, i-Pod etc.
• Please see the heading ‘Etiquette’ for recommendations on what/not to wear.
• Personal first aid kit.
• Sunglasses, hat, umbrella, money belt.
• DEET - based industrial strength mosquito/insect repellent.
• High factor sunscreen and bathers/swim costume.
• Anti-bacterial hand gel/wet wipes and flat pack toilet paper/tissues.
• Universal adapter for your hairdryer, i-Pod or digicam
• Two spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport in case of loss or theft.
• Although film is available at similar prices to the UK or Australia, it is advisable to carry all you anticipate using from the UK, particularly if your camera uses the APS ‘drop-load” film.
• Spare camera batteries, especially if you possess a digital camera, which requires specialist high-power batteries.
• Pack as light as possible to leave room for the souvenirs!

Food and Drink
Sri Lanka offers a diversity of cuisine. The national dish is rice and curry (even for breakfast). A typical Sri Lankan meal consists of a ‘main’ curry that could be fish or meat with several side dishes including vegetables, chutneys and ‘sambol’. Made of ground coconut, onion, chilli, dried fish and lime, sambol is fiendishly hot. Excellent seafood can be found along the coast, including local crab, prawns and tuna. Local specialities include appa or hoppers which are small rice-batter pancakes eaten with palm treacle and yoghurt.

Roti stuffed with fresh chilli, onions and cooked eggs, griddled meats or fish are also popular. Kotu roti is chopped roti with onions, vegetables and meat.

Colonialism left an indelible stamp on the local cuisine. A popular Dutch-Portuguese dish is Lamprais (rice steeped in stock with a special curry), accompanied by frikkaedels (meatballs), baked and served in banana leaves.

Sri Lanka grows some of the finest tea in the world for export. Your best chance for a good cuppa is in the hill country, where tea plantations and hotels serve the pick of the locally harvested crop.

Trading Hours
• Generally 0930 – 1400 – 1900hrs or later.
• Shops are closed on Sunday. In tourist areas, shops are open from 1000 – 2200hrs, including Sunday.
• Markets are open 0800 – 1830hrs Monday – Saturday (limited sections on Sun).
• Banks are open 0830 – 1230hrs and 1330 – 1700hrs Monday – Friday.

Shopping
Sri Lanka is excellent for gemstones especially sapphires, moon-stones and cats-eye. Other items to look out for include spices, wood carvings and other handicrafts, clothing of types, batik and hand-woven textiles, brassware, handmade lace from Galle and of course tea. Tea varies in quality, so if you’re buying in bulk, ask for a tasting! If seeking modern local chic, Colombo offers a selection of department stores and stylish boutiques. Refrain from buying souvenirs made of coral (creation of this sort of tourist that contributes greatly to the destruction of Sri Lanka’s reefs), ivory or the hides of endangered animals.

Etiquette
Despite the inevitable ups and downs of travelling abroad, you will generally be shown great hospitality in Sri Lanka. In return, please demonstrate sensitivity and respect for the local customs. Sri Lanka is a conservative country; so care should be taken to dress respectfully in large cities and towns, for example when at markets or public places.

• Don’t try to sneak into temples and mosques that forbid non-Hindus or non-Muslims.
• Never touch a carving or statue of a deity within a temple.
• Do not touch locals on the head or point the soles of your feet at a person, religious shrine or image of a deity. This is very disrespectful.
• Take care to dress conservatively and ensure that limbs are covered when entering any place of religion. Please also ensure footwear and headwear is removed if entering any Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim place of worship.
• Both ladies and gentlemen will need to dress conservatively and cover all shoulders and knees when visiting any sacred site in Sri Lanka including Dambulla, Kandy Temple of the Tooth, Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura. Men and Women are not permitted to wear headgear or footwear at sacred sites in Sri Lanka - these must be removed prior to entry.
• Ladies should avoid wearing ‘clingy, tight or suggestive attire, and stick to cool, flowing cottons in busy city areas and markets. T-shirts are fine!
• Beach attire is fine on beaches, in a resort or by a hotel pool and at tourist sites but ladies, avoid wearing bikini tops anywhere but on the beach or at the pool.
• Nudity and topless bathing are prohibited. Heavy fines can be imposed.
• Displays of intimacy are not considered suitable in public.
• Ex-military style clothing should not be worn.
• It is polite to ask permission before taking photos of people.
• Use your right hand for giving, taking, eating or shaking hands as the left is considered to be unclean.
• Don’t be surprised if you are frequently the centre of attention when travelling around the country. Staring unabashedly is not a social taboo.
• Do carry toilet paper with you (or adjust to the Sri Lankan habit of using water instead), but don’t throw it down the toilet without first checking to see if there’s a basket to put it in (narrow pipes clog easily).
• Don’t be surprised to see men defecating or urinating in public when restrooms are...
Sri Lanka Unplugged

not readily available. Women, in the same circumstance, tend to use cover of darkness and huddle in groups.

• Mosques are open to non-Muslims but cannot be visited during prayer time, particularly noon on Friday.

• Photography is prohibited in certain sections of sacred sites. Do not attempt to be photographed with Buddhist bhikkus (monks) or to pose for photos with statues of Buddha or other deities or paintings.

• Do be open and friendly in conversations with locals. Sri Lankans can be quite talkative, asking strangers questions (about marital status, salary, etc.) that might be interpreted as overly personal in other cultures.