

Viva Sri Lanka

Explore the historic monuments, cultural heritage, social intricacies, and natural wonders in cities, towns, and country -- Negombo, Minneriya, Habarana, Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa, Dambulla, Kandy, Galle, and Colombo

10 Days / 08 Nights

Departures: [February 17-26, 2017](#) [August 18-27, 2017](#) [December 01-10, 2017](#)



ACCESS CHINA TOURS



Group and Private Fine Touring in China and Asia

Tour Program Summary

Set in the Indian Ocean in South Asia, the tropical island nation of **Sri Lanka** has a history dating back to the birth of time. It is a place where the original soul of Buddhism still flourishes and where nature's beauty remains abundant and unspoilt. This is an island of magical proportions, once known as Serendib, Taprobane, and Ceylon. Discover refreshingly Sri Lanka!

Your tour starts from **Negombo**, a characteristic Fishing Town North of Colombo. It is a Gourmet's Paradise with Sea Food in plenty. Apart from the above, it has a unique charm of its own with a beautiful Lagoon, narrow streets and Churches dotting the landscape.

Minneriya National Park is a haven for flora and fauna. Being part of the elephant corridor, you have guaranteed sightings of elephants throughout the year. Every year during August to October, one of the most awesome wildlife spectacles "The Gathering" takes place. Over 300 elephants are seen making their way to Minneriya tank as the ancient tank slowly dries up giving way to fresh grass and shoots which is a feast in abundance.

This morning visit the **Sigiriya** Rock fortress - thought to be one of the oldest tourist attractions in the world, and declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982. Standing more than 200m tall over the surrounding plains, the rock is said to be a solidified magma plug, from a long eroded and extinct volcano. On its summit are the remains of a palace, built by King Kasyapa in the 5th century AD. The second most ancient of Sri Lanka's kingdoms, today the city of **Polonnaruwa** remains one of the best planned archeological relic sites in the country, standing testimony to the discipline and greatness of the kingdoms first rulers. It has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982.

Like Sigiriya, **Dambulla** is a vast isolated rock mass and it was here that king Valagam Bahu took refuge from invasions in the 1st century B.C., later turning the caves into a rock temple. **Kandy** was the last royal capital and it is one of the most charming towns in Sri Lanka, famous for its gorgeous setting beside a lake, cradled by hills and surrounded by the sinuous lines of tea plantations. The city of Kandy is considered as the cultural capital of Sri Lanka declared as a UNESCO World Heritage site as it is home to the Sacred Temple of the Tooth, most revered by Buddhists. Kandy was the last Kingdom of Sri Lanka.

The **Galle** Fort built with solid granite by the Dutch, in 1663, is another UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is the largest remaining fortress in Asia, built by European occupiers. In recent times Galle has acquired a reputation for becoming a cultural center by hosting the now famous and very popular annual literary festival during the first quarter of the year with famous international writers and poets participating.

Colombo -- bursting with life and colors, the island's largest city that was once the capital of Sri Lanka, is now its commercial hub. This modern city with an ancient heart is a monument to its colonial history. Its architecture is influenced by the Portuguese, Dutch and British. Today, it is a mix of modern architecture among colonial buildings.

Fly home from Colombo and farewell to the "Pearl of the Indian Ocean".

Tour Daily Itinerary

Day 01 Depart Fly from North America to Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Day 02 **Colombo** ⇄ **Negombo** Arrive at Colombo Bandaranaike International Airport today; met by our Airport Representative and will be introduced to your private English-speaking guide/driver. Transfer from Airport to your hotel (approx. 20 minutes drive) in Negombo for check-in.

After some rest in your hotel room, meet your guide in hotel lobby in the afternoon and start Negombo sightseeing tour. Negombo has the added ornament of picturesque lagoon. Visit the Dutch built Canal Hamilton, a small Dutch Fort dated 1678 with a beautiful Dutch Church of the same date and the beautiful Angunukaramulla Buddhist Temple.

Return to your hotel for relaxation; stay overnight in Jetwing Blue Negombo (super deluxe room); enjoy a **Welcome Dinner** in hotel. <D>



Day 03 ⇄ **Habarana** / **Minneriya** Breakfast in the hotel; met by your guide/driver in the lobby and drive to the Habarana (approx. 4.5 hrs). En-route, enjoy 'Coconut Estate and Pineapple Plantation' experience.

Out of the main types of crops grown in Sri Lanka, coconut comes second only to tea in terms of magnitude in growth. This morning you will visit one such scenic coconut estate where you will learn the many usages of the coconut tree. Your visit to a pineapple plantation will help you to witness the 'thorny' task of picking pineapples.

Continue your journey and check-in to your hotel in Habarana where you will spend your two nights. Later this afternoon, enjoy a Game Drive in the Minneriya National Park to see wild elephants.

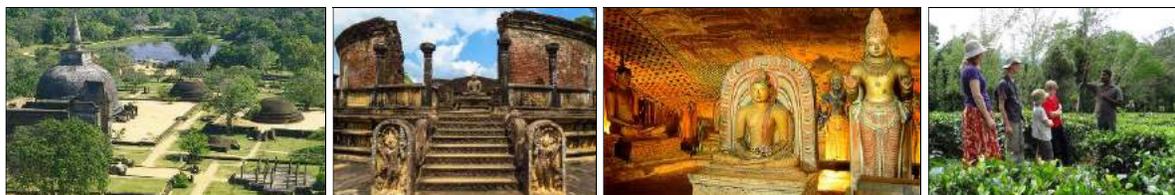
Return to the hotel afterwards and stay at Cinnamon Lodge Habarana (deluxe room); evening is free and dinner are on your own. <B-L>



Day 04 ⇄ **Habarana** ⇄ **Sigiriya** ⇄ **Polonnaruwa** Breakfast in the hotel; met by your private guide/driver in the lobby and drive to a UNESCO World Heritage, Sigiriya Rock Fortress (approx. 40 min.) This huge Rock Fortress is thought to be one of the oldest tourist attractions in

the world, and it offers its visitors nothing less than a breathtaking experience. Standing more than 200m tall over the surrounding plains, the rock is said to be a solidified magma plug, from a long eroded and extinct volcano. **Guests should have good fitness levels to be able to climb the Rock fortress. Time needed to ascend to the top is about 1 hour at a moderate pace.**

This afternoon, drive to Polonnaruwa (approx. 1.5 hrs) to visit the 5th century Ancient City of Polonnaruwa and the Archaeological Museum. Return to your hotel in Hanarana by evening for your own relaxation. <B-L>



Day 05 🚗 **Dambulla** Breakfast in the hotel and check out of hotel; picked up by guide/driver in the hotel lobby and drive (approx. 3 hrs) to Kandy. Along the way, visit a UNESCO World Heritage, Dambulla, known for its richly painted cave temples.

Also, visit a Spice Garden in Matale to see many different types of spices Sri Lanka is famous for. Matale spice gardens are among the best on the island. A processing and training unit has been set up in the area and farmers are grouped in a cooperative to ensure fair prices and you will also be able to purchase spices grown and produced in this region.

Arrive in Kandy later this afternoon and check in at your hotel for relaxation. Stay 2 nights in Cinnamon Citadel Kandy (deluxe room). <B-L>

Day 06 **Kandy** Breakfast in hotel; meet your private guide/driver in the hotel lobby and start Kandy City exploration. Begin your day with a visit to the Temple of the Tooth – legend says that a sacred tooth relic of the Lord Buddha was brought to Sri Lanka in the 4th Century A.D and was enshrined within the Dalada Maligawa or the *Temple of the Tooth*. This sacred relic has ever since been the symbol of sovereignty for the Sinhalese kings and always enshrined in great splendor. Prayer services are held daily and can be viewed by visitors.

Late afternoon, visit Rahju's Residence who has been a professional artist in Sri Lanka for the last thirty years, and his half Norwegian half Sri Lankan background gives him a unique perspective into our island, and this experience offers you a chance to meet a local resident and chat with him.

In the evening, witness a Cultural Show featuring traditional Sri Lankan dancing; lunch and dinner are on your own. <B-L>



Day 07 🚗 **Peradeniya** Breakfast in the hotel; met by guide & driver in the hotel and drive to the

 **Galle**

nearby Peradeniya and explore the [Royal Botanical Gardens](#).

Founded in 1824, the garden contains some of the most valuable collections of plants and trees in the world. You will be accompanied by Mr. Bandara Palipana, Professor of Botany, who would take you for a fascinating walk around the Royal Botanical Gardens in Kandy, which is renowned for its collection of orchids.

Later on, drive to Galle (approx. 4 hours) and check-in at your hotel for leisure. Stay at [Jetwing Lighthouse Hotel Galle \(deluxe room\)](#). <B-L>

Day 08 **Galle**

Breakfast in the hotel; proceed to [Handunugoda](#) which produces *Virgin White Tea*, the only tea untouched by hand. This tea possesses over 10% antioxidants and is considered the purest tea in the world. You are guided around the estate by the resident estate manager. The process of plucking of the Virgin white tea is demonstrated and a comprehensive explanation is given on the culture of tea. After being shown around the whole plantation, guests can see the tea manufacturing process taking place at the factory, and also go on to taste over 20 different teas produced at the estate.

Thereafter, enjoy a [Tour of Galle](#). The ancient trading post of Galle, said to be the famous Tarshish of the Bible. Historically, this World Heritage site was the essential port of call for Chinese, Persian, Arab and Indian traders. The Portuguese arrived in the 1500's and built a settlement with a fort of palm trees and mud, which was captured by the Dutch (and finally the British!) who built the 400 year old fort with great ramparts and bastions to protect their presence. Today, narrow streets are lined with old houses displaying their Dutch heritage and the community within the fort is a bustle with daily life, behind the fortified walls of this ancient, maritime citadel.

Return to hotel and remainder of the day is free for leisure. <B-L>



Day 09  **Colombo**

Breakfast in hotel; picked up by guide/ driver and drive (approx. 2 hrs) to Colombo, executive capital of the country, and enjoy a city tour upon arrival.

Visit the [Gangaramaya Temple](#), a famous Buddhist temple daily frequented by many devotees. Gangaramaya is a center for Buddhist studies, containing a museum and a Pirivena. The place is a hub in the Sri Lankan Buddhist culture, and it is also engaged in social welfare and takes it as a duty of a religious institution.

Next, visit the [National Museum](#) that contains a collection of regalia of the country, including the throne and crown of the Kandyan monarchs as well as many other exhibits telling the story of ancient Sri Lanka.

After your own lunch, proceed on a [Walking Tour of Old Colombo](#). Marvel at the hidden colonial treasures in the company of Mark Forbes, as he narrates to you a story based on the history of Sri Lanka. Mark, a Colombo

native, has hosted walks in Colombo for several years under the Colombo City Walks banner. Your experience will put you at the heart of the chaotic hustle at Pettah Bazaar. You will also stop by Old Dutch Museum and the Old Dutch Hospital which is now a complex with high-end restaurants, bars and shops. Your walk ends here, and you may have a drink or two and enjoy the scene.

Late afternoon, return to your hotel for relaxation and a **farewell dinner**; stay at charming Taj Samudra Hotel Colombo (club floor room). <B-D>



Day 10 → Return Breakfast in hotel; picked up by guide/driver in hotel lobby and transfer to the airport for your homebound flight. Service ends.

Changes to Itinerary: Access China Tours has made all possible attempts to ensure the accuracy of tour itineraries. Circumstances beyond our control may occur. We reserve the right to change itineraries, sightseeing activities, and common carriers, and to substitute hotels when necessary. Service of a similar category and standard will be maintained if such changes are made. The Service Voucher in your last pre-departure packet will provide the operational itinerary summary, final transport and hotel information.

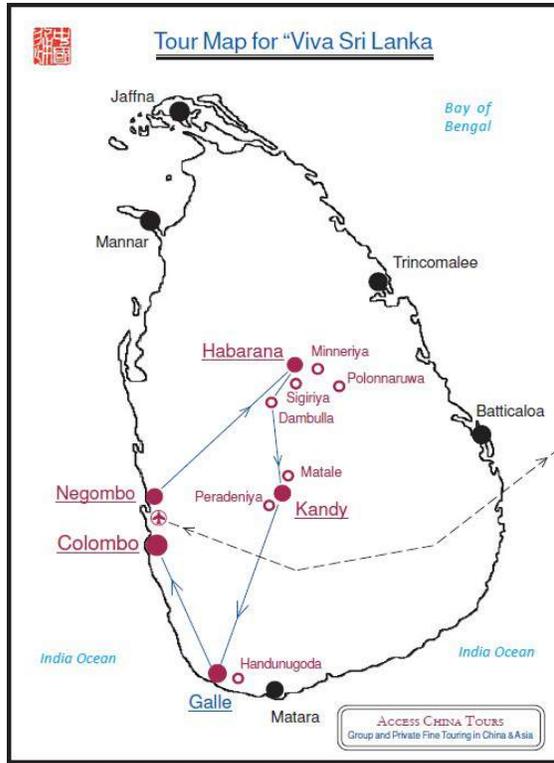
Deluxe & First Class Hotels Selected for This Tour



Jetwing Blue Negombo



Cinnamon Lodge Hanarana



Cinnamon Citadel



Jetwing Lighthouse Hotel Galle



Taj Samudra Hotel Colombo

Tour Land Price Inclusions & Exclusions

Tour Land Prices: **\$2,790 USD** per person double occupancy (for a group of 2-5 travelers)
 \$2,650 USD per person double occupancy (for a group of 6-9 travelers)
 \$2,470 USD per person double occupancy (for a group of 10-16 travelers)

Single Supplement Cost: **\$1,060 USD** for single occupancy in hotels throughout the tour

What's Included in 'Tour Land Prices'

- Deluxe & first class category hotel double occupancy accommodations with breakfast
- Arrival and departure transfers on tour dates
- Transfers and luggage (1 piece of 45 pounds per person for domestic flights) handling
- Pre-departure information packets
- Current applicable government taxes
- All sightseeing, visits, cultural events, and activities listed in the itinerary
- All meals (*all breakfasts, 6 lunches, and 2 dinners*) as specified in the itinerary
- Service of a private English-speaking National Tour Guide (*for 6 & more travelers*)
- Service of a private English-speaking Chauffeur Guide throughout the tour (*for 2-5 travelers*)
- Private motor vehicle with AC and a professional driver or chauffeur driver
- Gratuity to driver and local assisting staff

What's Not Included in 'Tour Land Prices'

- International air ticket
- Trip cancellation, baggage, accident, and medical insurance
- Some lunches and dinners
- Gratuities to your private English-speaking National Tour Guide (*for 6 & more travelers*)
- Items not listed and/or specified as included in the itinerary

Cancellation Policy: **\$600 USD pp deposit is required at sign up.** All cancellation notices must be received in writing and will become effective as of the date of receipt by *Access China Tours*. We assess cancellation fees of all tours according to the following schedule:

90 days or more prior to departure	\$300 per person *
89 to 60 days prior to departure	\$600 per person *
59 to 30 days prior to departure	\$900 per person *
29 to 15 days prior to departure	\$1200 per person *

* Plus any charges assessed by government agencies, land suppliers, cruise companies and airlines.

Within 14 days of departure100% forfeiture of the tour price per person

Access China Tours will not grant partial refunds for any unused trip arrangements after the trip has commenced or any refunds to participants who do not complete any portion of the itinerary. Any airline tickets issued are subject to the carrier's refund and cancellation policy. **We strongly recommend you purchase trip cancellation/interruption insurance to protect your travel investment.** If a tour is forced to be cancelled due to government's travel warnings, declared or undeclared wars, hostilities, civil disturbances, strike, riot, epidemic, and quarantines, *Access China Tours* will refund all participants' payment less any irretrievable expenses and loss (visa fees, airline penalties, communication cost, and non-refundable booking cost, etc.). However, *Access China Tours* will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by tour participants (e.g., non-refundable "advance purchase" air tickets, insurance & medical expenses, passport and visa expenses, etc.).