Itinerary

10 Day Safaris of Sri Lanka Small Group Tour

***IMPORTANT NOTE: Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.**

DAY 1: Arrival Negombo, Sri Lanka

On arrival at Colombo international airport you will be met by our tour representative and transferred to your hotel in Negombo.

MEALS: Nil

OVERNIGHT (3 STAR OPTION): Terrace Green Hotel & Spa, Negombo

OVERNIGHT (4 STAR OPTION): Pledge Scape, Negombo

DAY 2: Negombo ~ Anuradhapura

Rise early this morning for a visit to the bustling Negombo Fish Market. Morning is the best time to explore this vibrant marketplace, and your leader will guide you through the organised chaos of vendors showcasing freshly caught delicacies such as crab, lobster, and squid. After saying farewell to Negombo, travel to Wilpattu National Park – the largest national park in Sri Lanka, famed for its unique 'Willus' (natural rainwater lakes) and thriving leopard population. This diverse wilderness is also home to a variety of birdlife including Painted Stork, Openbill, Jungle Fowl, Pintail, Whistling Teal, and Spoonbill; reptiles such as the Mugger Crocodile, Cobra, and Rat Snake; as well as flora like Palu, Weera, and Milla. Mammals often sighted here include Elephants, Leopards, Sloth Bears, Sambar Deer, and Spotted Deer. Afterwards, continue your journey to Anuradhapura.

APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME: 5.5 hours

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT (3 STAR OPTION): Heritage Hotel, Anuradhapura

OVERNIGHT (4 STAR OPTION): Rajarata Hotel, Anuradhapura

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Sightseeing around ancient city of Anuradhapura

DAY 3: Anuradhapura ~ Dambulla

Your morning is free to spend at your leisure, with the option to embark on a sightseeing tour of the ancient capital of Anuradhapura. Once a powerful monastic city that reigned supreme for over a millennium, Anuradhapura was ruled by 113 successive kings and 4 queens. It was a majestic sprawl of magnificent palaces, ornate pleasure gardens, exquisite sculptures, and vast Buddhist temples. The three main ‘dagabas’ rank among the largest architectural creations of the ancient world, surpassed in size only by the pyramids of Giza.

In the afternoon, visit the sacred Mihintale Temple, a mountain peak near Anuradhapura believed to be the site where Buddhist monk Mahinda met King Devanampiyatissa—marking the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka. Today, Mihintale is a revered pilgrimage site. Afterwards, continue to Dambulla or Habarana for your overnight stay.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT (3 STAR OPTION): Lario Resort, Dambulla

OVERNIGHT (4 STAR OPTION): Fresco Water Villa, Dambulla

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Anuradhapura - Bodhi Tree Temple

Anuradhapura - World Heritage Site of Ancient Kingdom Ruins

Anuradhapura - Bike Tour

DAY 4: Dambulla ~ Sigiriya ~ Hiriwaduna ~ Minneriya ~ Dambulla

In the morning you have the option to climb “Sigiriya” or Lion's Rock a UNESCO world heritage site, the unique icon of Sri Lanka. It is a steep climb with many steps and a decent level of fitness is required. A testimony to the inventiveness of the ancient civilizations of the land, the once impenetrable stronghold of King Kassapa, ‘Sihagiri’ or Lion’s Rock as it was called then, is considered to be the 8th wonder of the world today. The feats of artistry, architecture and engineering at Sigiriya continue to impress visitors with their utter magnificence, even thousands of years on. Intricately landscaped pleasure gardens sprawl out below the rock, giant lion paws hewn in stone mark the entrance to the fortress at its foot and a highly polished mirror wall still carries the scrawled writings of ancient poets. A somewhat treacherous climb up the rock is well worth it to see the impressive ruins of a once glorious city at the summit – 370m high. And the 360-degree view from the top is equally astounding.

Late morning we visit Hiriwaduna for a local Village tour. Take a fun ride in a bullock cart swaying from side to side on an unpaved trail, enjoy a nature walk through a scrub jungle, and wade through a local stream with low hanging branches and cross a lake in an ‘oruwa’, the traditional mode of over water transport. Spend time with a farmer harvesting crops under his guidance and taste authentic village cuisine prepared by the farmer’s family with freshly picked produce and local herbs cooked in clay pots over an open hearth fuelled by firewood. In the afternoon we take another exhilarating jeep safari through the Minneriya National Park which is highly famous for its elephants and wildlife and especially the famous Elephant Gathering where you can see up to 300 majestic Asian elephants at once.

APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME): 2.5 hours

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT (3 STAR OPTION): Lario Resort, Dambulla

OVERNIGHT (4 STAR OPTION): Fresco Water Villa, Dambulla

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Sigiriya - Lion Rock

NOTE: The visit to Sigiriya takes approximately 3.5 hours. The final 30-minute climb from the Lion's Paw to the summit involves steep and narrow walkways and steps. Those who prefer not to climb to the top can wait at the Lion's Paw for the group's return. Access to sites like the water garden, boulder garden, frescoes, and mirror wall requires climbing.

DAY 5: Dambulla ~ Matale ~ Kandy

After breakfast we travel overland to Kandy stopping at the famous Dambulla Cave Temple. Standing approximately 100m high, the approach to the entrance of the caves entails climbing up the face of the rock, although stone steps have now been cut to make the climb easier. Whilst climbing to the entrance of caves, take time to stop and enjoy the view of the surrounding area, which is truly breathtaking. On the way to Kandy you can visit a spice Garden in Matale, as well as also enjoy a Head massage. There are shops where you can purchase different spices of Sri Lanka.

In the evening visit the sacred Temple of the sacred tooth relic (optional). Just north of the lake, the golden-roofed Temple of the Sacred Tooth Houses Sri Lanka's most important Buddhist relic – a tooth of the Buddha. During puja (offerings or prayers), the heavily guarded room housing the tooth is open to devotees and tourists. However, you don't actually see the tooth. It's kept in a gold casket shaped like a dagoba (stupa), which contains a series of six dagoba caskets of diminishing size. The entire temple complex covers a large area, and as well as the main shrine there are numerous other temples and museums within the complex.

NOTE: When entering temples, hats and shoes must be removed. Avoid leaving shoes on the roadside, as monkeys may steal them. Use the designated shoe storage service for a small fee or pack them in your bag.

APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME): 3.5 hours

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT (3 STAR OPTION): Oak Ray Regency, Kandy

OVERNIGHT (4 STAR OPTION): Royal Kandyan, Kandy

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Temple of The Tooth

Cultural Show

DAY 6: Kandy ~ Nuwara Eliya ~ Scenic Train from Nanu Oya to Ella

Experience the beautiful countryside as we travel to Nuwara Eliya today, also known as "Little England". Once here we take a short city tour before catching the train at Nanu Oya for the famous scenic train journey classed as one of the World's best! Sit back and relax as the 3 hour journey glides through rolling hills and over bridges until you get to Ella in the heart of the country. Once in Ella, check in to your hotel and enjoy the remainder of the day at your own leisure.

NOTE: Train tickets from Kandy to Nanu Oya are in very high demand, especially during peak seasons (December–April and August). While every effort is made to secure tickets, in the rare event they are unavailable, you will travel via private vehicle instead.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT (3 STAR OPTION): Oak Ray Ella Gap Hotel, Ella

OVERNIGHT (4 STAR OPTION): Hide Ella, Ella

DAY 7: Ella - Sightseeing Tour

Enjoy a full day sightseeing around stunning Ella today, including Little Adams Peak, Nine Arches Bridge, Ravana waterfalls and Ella Gap. The main attraction of Ella is the breath-taking view from the ‘Ella Gap’ – looking out between the towering bulk of Ella Rock on the right and through a gap in the hills to the plains far, far below. While the village itself may not offer much in the way of attractions the locality certainly makes up for it. The majestic Ella rock looming over the village provides an arduous but rewarding hike – and the views from the top are well worth the effort. The beautiful Ravana Ella waterfall is an impressive cascade – the widest in Sri Lanka, is also a sight not to miss. The nearby caves are steeped in legend according to which, the ancient king Ravana held the Indian princess Sita captive in them. Enjoy your second night in Ella.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT (3 STAR OPTION): Oak Ray Ella Gap Hotel, Ella

OVERNIGHT (4 STAR OPTION): Hide Ella, Ella

DAY 8: Ella ~ Kalutara

After breakfast we drive towards the coast for a well deserve beach stay. Sit back and relax on the long drive as we head back to the coast to enjoy your final two nights relaxing on Sri Lanka's stunning coastline. On arrival, check in to your hotel and the remainder of the day is at your own leisure.

APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME): 4.5 hours

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT (3 STAR OPTION): Mermaid Hotel & Club, Kalutara

OVERNIGHT (4 STAR OPTION): Mermaid Hotel & Clubl, Kalutara

DAY 9: Kalutara - Free Day

Spend the whole day at your own leisure, relaxing on the beach, sipping cocktails and reminiscing about everything you have experienced over the last 8 days. A tour to Sri Lanka is not complete without experience some quality time on the stunning beaches and treating yourself to some fresh seafood and cocktails!

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT (3 STAR OPTION): Mermaid Hotel & Club, Kalutara

OVERNIGHT (4 STAR OPTION): Mermaid Hotel & Clubl, Kalutara

DAY 10: End of Tour ~ Departure

Unfortunately your holiday to Sri Lanka has come to an end. After breakfast and check out and meet your driver for your transfer back to the airport for your return flight home. We hope you have a wonderful onward journey, or feel free to stay behind and spend more time on the stunning coast and beaches of Sri Lanka.

APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME): 3 hours

MEALS: Breakfast