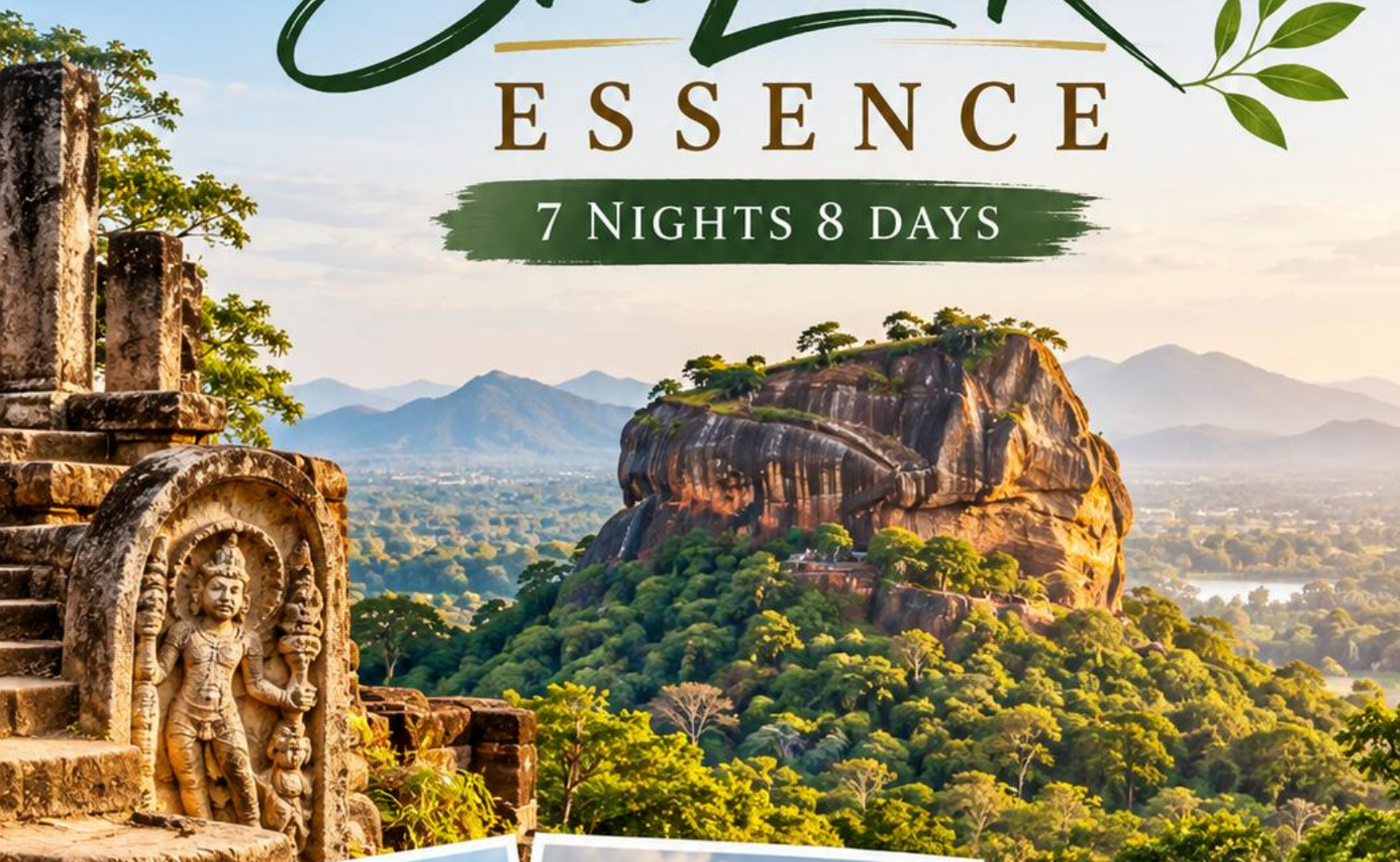




# Sri Lanka

## ESSENCE

7 NIGHTS 8 DAYS



# ITINERARY SUMMARY

| Day    | Overnight                      | Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 01 | Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla | Arrive at <b>Bandaranaike International Airport</b> and travel to Sri Lanka's <b>Cultural Triangle</b> . Enjoy your first taste of authentic Sri Lankan cuisine with a <b>local lunch</b> before checking in to your hotel and relaxing for the remainder of the day.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Day 02 | Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla | Experience authentic rural Sri Lankan life with a <b>traditional village excursion</b> , including a scenic <b>tractor ride</b> , <b>catamaran ride</b> , local village activities, and a <b>traditional Sri Lankan cooking experience</b> . Enjoy an authentic <b>village lunch prepared with local ingredients</b> before returning to the hotel for a relaxing afternoon.                                                                                  |
| Day 03 | Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla | Begin early with a visit to the iconic <b>Sigiriya Rock Fortress</b> , exploring the <b>Lion's Paw Terrace</b> , <b>ancient frescoes</b> , <b>Mirror Wall</b> , <b>Royal Water Gardens</b> , and panoramic summit views. Continue to <b>UNESCO-listed Polonnaruwa</b> , where you will discover ancient royal monuments, temples, stupas, palace complexes, and the remarkable <b>Gal Viharaya Buddha statues</b> .                                           |
| Day 04 | Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla | Enjoy a <b>full day at leisure</b> in the Cultural Triangle. Relax by the pool, enjoy your hotel's facilities, or simply take in the peaceful surroundings. <b>Lunch and dinner are included at the hotel</b> , allowing for a completely relaxed day between sightseeing experiences.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Day 05 | Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla | Enjoy an exciting <b>3-hour 4x4 Jeep Safari</b> in <b>Minneriya or Kaudulla National Park</b> , depending on seasonal wildlife movements. Search for <b>wild Asian Elephants</b> , deer, wild buffalo, crocodiles, monkeys, peacocks, and numerous bird species while enjoying a <b>safari snack pack</b> during the experience.                                                                                                                              |
| Day 06 | Kandy                          | Travel from the Cultural Triangle to <b>Kandy</b> , stopping at the <b>UNESCO World Heritage Site of Dambulla Cave Temple</b> to admire its ancient Buddhist murals, statues, and cave shrines. Continue to a traditional <b>Spice Garden</b> , enjoy a <b>Sri Lankan curry cooking demonstration</b> , and savour an <b>authentic Sri Lankan lunch</b> before arriving in Kandy.                                                                             |
| Day 07 | Kandy                          | Discover Kandy's cultural heritage with a visit to the sacred <b>Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic</b> and the beautiful <b>Royal Botanic Gardens, Peradeniya</b> . Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before visiting a <b>Ceylon Tea Factory</b> , learning about traditional tea production, and enjoying <b>High Tea</b> . Continue to a <b>Gem Factory &amp; Showroom</b> before concluding the day with a vibrant <b>Kandy Cultural Fire Dance Show</b> . |

| Day    | Overnight                            | Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 08 | Departure /<br>Optional<br>Extension | Enjoy your final breakfast before travelling from Kandy to <b>Bandaranaike International Airport</b> for your onward flight. Alternatively, extend your holiday with an <b>optional Negombo beach extension</b> or continue onwards to the <b>Maldives</b> . |



## Day 01 – Arrival in Sri Lanka → Cultural Triangle

**Location:** Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla

---

### Arrival – Bandaranaike International Airport

Upon arrival at **Bandaranaike International Airport (CMB)**, you will be warmly welcomed by your airport representative and guide, marking the beginning of your Sri Lankan adventure.

After completing the arrival formalities and collecting your luggage, meet your private guide and begin your journey towards the heart of Sri Lanka's **Cultural Triangle**.

The Cultural Triangle is home to some of the island's most extraordinary ancient cities, sacred temples, royal palaces, archaeological treasures, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites, making it one of the most fascinating regions to explore.

---

### Transfer – Airport → Cultural Triangle

Settle into your private air-conditioned vehicle and enjoy a comfortable journey from the western coast towards the historic heartland of Sri Lanka.

#### Distance & Drive Time

- Approx. **3.5 hours**

#### Road Conditions

- Well-maintained highways
- Rural roads

#### Terrain

- Flat coastal plains
- Tropical countryside

- Agricultural landscapes
- Gradually transitioning into Sri Lanka's dry-zone countryside

As you travel inland, the scenery gradually changes from the busy surroundings of the airport and coastal settlements to quieter rural landscapes, coconut plantations, paddy fields, traditional villages, and dry-zone forests.

Your guide will introduce you to Sri Lanka's history, culture, traditions, and everyday life along the way, providing an informative first glimpse into the island before reaching the Cultural Triangle.

---

### **En Route – Authentic Sri Lankan Lunch**

Break the journey at a specially selected local restaurant for your first opportunity to experience the flavours of **authentic Sri Lankan cuisine**.

Sri Lankan cooking is celebrated for its fragrant spices, fresh tropical ingredients, coconut-based curries, aromatic rice, sambols, and distinctive regional flavours.

Enjoy a selection of traditional dishes prepared using locally sourced ingredients, providing a delicious introduction to the island's culinary heritage.

### **Lunch Experience**

Depending on the restaurant's menu, you may enjoy traditional favourites such as:

- Fragrant Sri Lankan rice
- Seasonal vegetable curries
- Dhal curry
- Coconut sambol
- Spiced fish or chicken
- Traditional Sri Lankan accompaniments

This relaxed lunch stop also offers an opportunity to experience the warmth and hospitality that are such an important part of Sri Lankan culture.

---

### **Continue to the Cultural Triangle**

Following lunch, continue your journey towards **Sigiriya, Habarana, or Dambulla**, depending on your selected hotel.

As you travel deeper into the Cultural Triangle, the landscape becomes increasingly peaceful, with ancient reservoirs, forested areas, traditional farming communities, and open countryside surrounding the road.

This region has been at the centre of Sri Lankan civilisation for more than two millennia and contains some of the island's most important archaeological and religious sites.

---

### **Afternoon – Hotel Check-in & Leisure**

Upon arrival, check in to your hotel and settle comfortably into your accommodation.

After the journey, the remainder of the afternoon and evening are intentionally kept free, allowing you to relax and recover from your international flight.

Take advantage of the hotel's facilities, enjoy a refreshing swim, relax in the gardens, or simply unwind in the peaceful surroundings of the Cultural Triangle.

This gentle introduction ensures you are rested and ready for the exciting cultural, historical, and wildlife experiences ahead.

---

### **Evening – At Leisure**

Spend a quiet evening at the hotel and enjoy the tranquil atmosphere of Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle.

Depending on your accommodation, you may enjoy views across tropical forests, surrounding countryside, or the distinctive landscapes that characterise this historic region.

---

### **Meals**

**Lunch:** Local restaurant

**Dinner:** At the hotel

**Hotel:** Half Board basis

---

### **Overnight**

**Overnight:** Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla



## Day 02 – Authentic Sri Lankan Village Experience

**Location:** Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla

---

### Morning – Breakfast at the Hotel

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the hotel and take the morning at a relaxed pace.

Today's programme offers a wonderful opportunity to step away from Sri Lanka's famous archaeological sites and experience the **traditional rural lifestyle of the Cultural Triangle**.

Rather than simply observing the countryside, you will have the opportunity to interact with local traditions, discover how village communities live, and experience the flavours of authentic Sri Lankan home cooking.

---

### Late Morning – Traditional Sri Lankan Village Experience

Later in the morning, proceed to a traditional village for an immersive countryside experience.

#### Duration

- Approx. **2.5 – 3 hours**

Surrounded by paddy fields, tropical vegetation, village homes, lakes, and ancient irrigation landscapes, this experience provides an authentic glimpse into the daily life and traditions of rural Sri Lanka.

The Cultural Triangle is not only a region of ancient kingdoms and magnificent monuments, but also a living landscape where traditional farming and village customs continue to play an important role.

---

## Experience Highlights

### Scenic Tractor Ride Through the Countryside

Begin your experience with a scenic **tractor ride** through the surrounding countryside.

Travel along peaceful rural tracks bordered by paddy fields, coconut palms, tropical vegetation, irrigation channels, and traditional village homes.

The relaxed journey provides an excellent opportunity to appreciate the natural beauty of the dry zone while observing local agricultural activities and everyday village life.

---

### Traditional Catamaran Ride

Continue with a peaceful ride aboard a traditional **catamaran** across a nearby village lake or reservoir.

These simple traditional boats have long been used by rural communities for fishing and transportation. As you glide across the calm waters, enjoy views of the surrounding countryside and look out for birds and other wildlife around the water's edge.

The experience offers a wonderfully tranquil perspective of rural Sri Lanka.

---

### Rural Landscapes & Village Life

Explore the peaceful surroundings of the village and gain an insight into the daily rhythms of rural Sri Lankan life.

See traditional homes, home gardens, agricultural fields, coconut palms, and local communities going about their everyday activities.

Your local hosts will share stories about village customs, farming practices, family traditions, and the importance of community life, providing a more personal understanding of Sri Lankan culture.

---

### Traditional Sri Lankan Cooking Experience

One of the highlights of the experience is the opportunity to discover **traditional Sri Lankan cooking**.

Observe or participate in the preparation of a selection of local dishes using fresh ingredients sourced from the surrounding area.

Learn how traditional spices, coconut, herbs, vegetables, rice, and locally available produce are combined using time-honoured cooking methods to create the distinctive flavours of Sri Lankan cuisine.

This hands-on element makes the experience particularly memorable, offering an authentic connection with the country's culinary traditions.

### **Village Lunch**

Conclude your village experience with an authentic **Sri Lankan village lunch**, prepared using traditional cooking methods and locally sourced ingredients.

Enjoy a delicious selection of rice, curries, vegetables, sambols, and other local specialities in a relaxed rural setting.

More than simply a meal, this experience offers an opportunity to enjoy genuine Sri Lankan hospitality and discover how food remains an important part of family and community life.

---

### **Return to Hotel**

Following the excursion and village lunch, return to your hotel in the **late afternoon**.

The remainder of the day is intentionally kept free so that you can relax after your morning of exploration.

---

### **Afternoon – At Leisure**

Spend the rest of the afternoon enjoying the peaceful surroundings of your hotel.

Relax beside the swimming pool, take a stroll through the gardens, enjoy the hotel's facilities, or simply unwind in the tranquil atmosphere of the Cultural Triangle.

After an immersive morning, this slower-paced afternoon provides the perfect balance between cultural discovery and relaxation.

---

### **Meals**

**Lunch:** Village experience lunch

**Dinner:** At the hotel

**Hotel:** Half Board basis

---

### **Overnight**

**Overnight:** Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla



## **Day 03 – Sigiriya Rock Fortress & Polonnaruwa**

**Location:** Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla

---

### **Early Morning – Sigiriya Rock Fortress**

Rise early and depart your hotel at approximately **5:30 AM** for an unforgettable visit to the legendary **Sigiriya Rock Fortress**, one of Sri Lanka's most iconic landmarks and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The early start is particularly rewarding, offering cooler temperatures for the climb and the opportunity to experience the ancient fortress before the heat of the day. As the morning light spreads across the surrounding forests and plains, the dramatic rock rises almost 200 metres above the landscape, creating one of Sri Lanka's most spectacular archaeological settings.

---

### **Transfer – Hotel → Sigiriya**

Enjoy a short drive through the peaceful countryside towards the base of the ancient rock fortress.

#### **Drive Time**

- Approx. **20 – 30 minutes**
- 

### **Sigiriya Rock Fortress (UNESCO World Heritage Site)**

#### **Visit Duration**

- Approx. **2.5 – 3 hours**

Begin your climb of **Sigiriya**, the remarkable 5th-century royal citadel created by King Kashyapa.

Built upon a towering natural rock formation, the complex combines sophisticated urban planning, landscaped gardens, ancient water engineering, defensive structures, royal architecture, and extraordinary artistic achievements.

As you ascend, your guide will bring the history of the fortress to life, explaining how this extraordinary site functioned as both a royal residence and a fortified citadel.

---

## Highlights of Your Visit

### Lion's Paw Terrace

Reach the famous **Lion's Paw Terrace**, where enormous stone paws mark the entrance to the final ascent towards the summit.

The paws are the surviving remains of a much larger lion-shaped gateway that once dominated the approach to the royal palace.

---

### Ancient Frescoes

Admire the celebrated **Sigiriya Frescoes**, depicting graceful celestial figures painted more than 1,500 years ago.

Their vivid colours, elegant forms, and remarkable preservation provide a fascinating insight into the artistic achievements of ancient Sri Lanka.

---

### Mirror Wall

Walk alongside the historic **Mirror Wall**, originally polished to such a high degree that it was said to reflect the king's image.

The wall also preserves centuries-old graffiti and verses written by visitors, providing a fascinating record of how generations of travellers experienced Sigiriya.

---

### Royal Water Gardens

Explore the beautifully designed **Water Gardens**, featuring symmetrical pools, channels, fountains, moats, and sophisticated hydraulic systems.

The gardens demonstrate the extraordinary engineering knowledge of the ancient civilisation and remain one of the most impressive features of the entire Sigiriya complex.

---

### Ancient Palace Ruins

Continue towards the summit to discover the remains of the ancient royal palace.

Explore the stone foundations, terraces, reservoirs, and other structures while learning about the royal life that once unfolded at the top of this dramatic fortress.

---

### Panoramic Views from the Summit

The final ascent rewards you with spectacular panoramic views across the surrounding forests, villages, reservoirs, and distant countryside.

From the summit, appreciate the strategic location of Sigiriya and the remarkable scale of the ancient landscape surrounding the fortress.

---

### Return to Hotel – Breakfast & Refreshment

Following your exploration of Sigiriya, descend from the fortress and return to your hotel.

Enjoy a well-earned **breakfast** and take some time to refresh and relax before continuing with the afternoon's archaeological exploration.

---

### Late Morning – Transfer to Polonnaruwa

After breakfast and a short period of relaxation, continue towards **Polonnaruwa**, the magnificent medieval capital of Sri Lanka.

### Transfer – Cultural Triangle → Polonnaruwa

#### Drive Time

- Approx. **1 – 1.25 hours**

#### Road Conditions

- Well-maintained rural roads

#### Terrain

- Flat dry-zone countryside

The journey takes you through peaceful rural landscapes, traditional farming communities, ancient irrigation reservoirs, and dry-zone forests, providing an insight into the countryside that has supported Sri Lankan civilisation for centuries.

---

### En Route – Authentic Sri Lankan Curry Lunch

Pause at a specially selected local restaurant for a traditional **Sri Lankan curry lunch**.

Enjoy a selection of freshly prepared curries, fragrant rice, vegetables, sambols, and local accompaniments, allowing you to experience another authentic expression of Sri Lanka's rich culinary heritage.

The relaxed lunch provides a welcome opportunity to recharge before continuing your archaeological exploration.

---

## **Afternoon – Polonnaruwa Ancient City (UNESCO World Heritage Site)**

### **Visit Duration**

- Approx. **2.5 – 3 hours**

Continue to **Polonnaruwa**, Sri Lanka's magnificent medieval capital and one of the finest surviving examples of an ancient South Asian city.

The city flourished particularly during the 11th and 12th centuries and reached its greatest prominence under **King Parakramabahu I**, whose ambitious building projects transformed Polonnaruwa into a centre of royal power, Buddhist learning, art, and engineering.

Today, the extensive archaeological complex provides a fascinating glimpse into the sophistication of medieval Sri Lankan civilisation.

---

### **Highlights of Your Visit**

#### **Ancient Royal Monuments**

Explore impressive monuments associated with the island's medieval kings, including ceremonial structures, royal buildings, and beautifully preserved stone architecture.

---

#### **Temples**

Discover ancient Buddhist temples and image houses adorned with intricate carvings and architectural details that reflect the spiritual and artistic achievements of the period.

---

#### **Stupas**

Admire imposing ancient stupas that once served as important centres of Buddhist worship and pilgrimage.

---

#### **Archaeological Ruins**

Explore the remains of palaces, monasteries, bathing pools, gateways, stone inscriptions, and other structures scattered throughout the ancient city.

Together, these ruins reveal the remarkable scale and sophistication of Polonnaruwa's urban civilisation.

---

### **Historic Palace Complexes**

Visit the remains of the ancient royal palace and surrounding structures, where kings once governed the medieval kingdom of Sri Lanka.

Your guide will explain the role these buildings played within the royal administration and daily life of the ancient capital.

---

### **Gal Viharaya**

Conclude your exploration with the extraordinary **Gal Viharaya**, home to four magnificent Buddha images carved directly from a single granite outcrop.

The serene expressions, intricate details, and remarkable craftsmanship of these sculptures make Gal Viharaya one of the artistic masterpieces of ancient Sri Lanka.

---

### **Return to Hotel**

Following your guided exploration of Polonnaruwa, return to your hotel in the Cultural Triangle.

After an enriching day combining two of Sri Lanka's greatest archaeological treasures, enjoy a well-deserved evening at leisure.

---

### **Evening – At Leisure**

Relax at the hotel, enjoy the swimming pool or gardens, and take time to reflect on the extraordinary history and craftsmanship encountered throughout the day.

---

### **Meals**

**Breakfast:** At the hotel

**Lunch:** Local restaurant

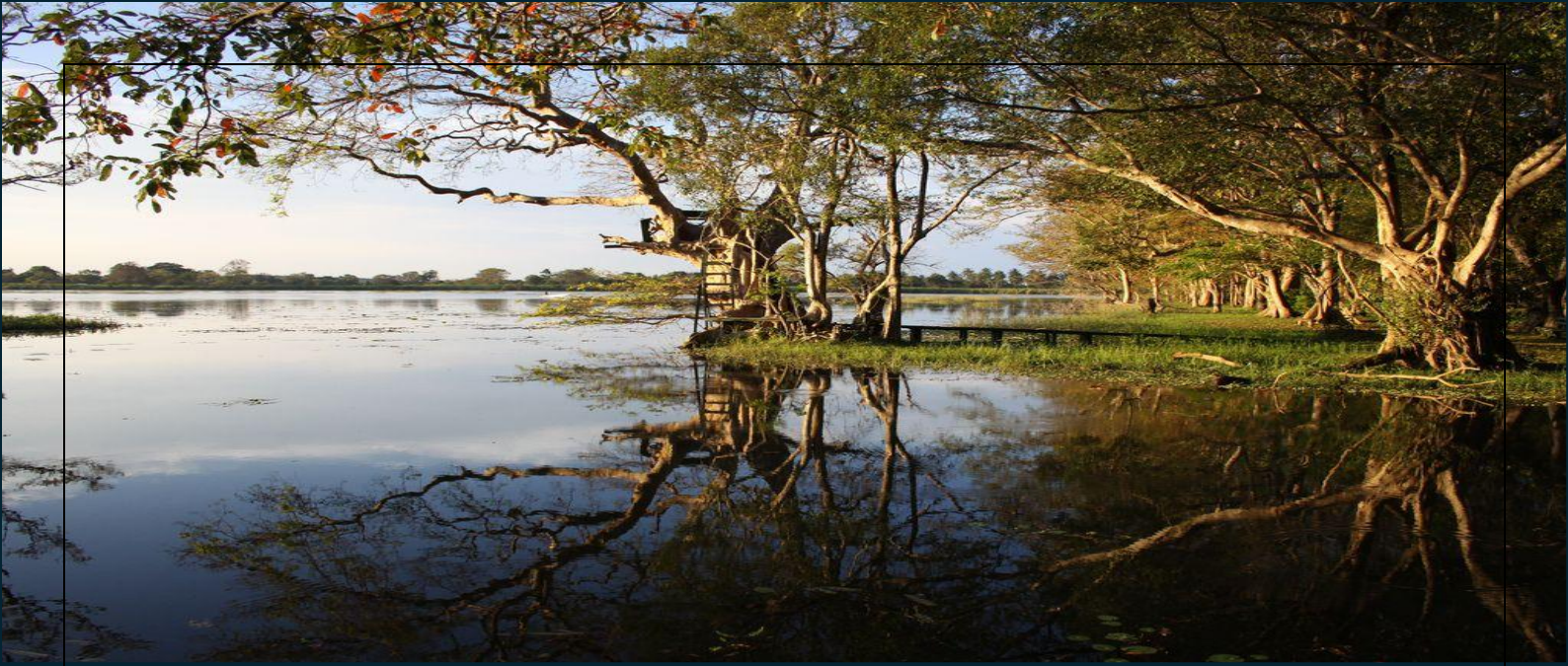
**Dinner:** At the hotel

**Hotel:** Half Board basis

---

### **Overnight**

**Overnight:** Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla



## **Day 04 – Leisure Day in the Cultural Triangle**

**Location: Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla**

---

### **Morning – A Relaxed Start**

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the hotel before settling into a peaceful day surrounded by the natural beauty of Sri Lanka's **Cultural Triangle**.

After the previous day's early morning climb of Sigiriya and exploration of Polonnaruwa, today is intentionally unhurried, allowing you to slow the pace and enjoy the hotel and its surroundings at leisure.

Take the morning to relax in the comfort of your accommodation, make use of the hotel's facilities, or simply enjoy the tranquillity of the surrounding countryside.

---

### **Morning – At Leisure**

The Cultural Triangle is characterised by open countryside, tropical vegetation, ancient reservoirs, and quiet rural landscapes.

Spend the morning at your own pace. Depending on your hotel, you may wish to enjoy the swimming pool, relax in the gardens, take a gentle walk around the property, or simply unwind with a book while enjoying the peaceful surroundings.

This free time also provides an opportunity to recharge before continuing your Sri Lankan journey.

---

### **Afternoon – Leisure & Relaxation**

#### **Lunch at the Hotel**

Enjoy a relaxed **lunch at the hotel**, with time afterwards to continue enjoying the property.

The afternoon remains completely unhurried. Relax beside the pool, take in views of the surrounding countryside, or enjoy the hotel's leisure facilities and hospitality.

For those looking for a quieter experience, this is an ideal opportunity to simply embrace the slower rhythm of life in the Cultural Triangle.

---

### **Evening – Peaceful Cultural Triangle**

As the afternoon fades into evening, continue to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the region.

The transition from daylight to evening brings a particularly tranquil character to the Cultural Triangle, with the surrounding countryside becoming quieter and the tropical landscape taking on softer tones.

Enjoy dinner at the hotel and spend the remainder of the evening at leisure.

---

### **Meals**

**Breakfast:** At the hotel

**Lunch:** At the hotel

**Dinner:** At the hotel

**Hotel:** Full Board basis

---

### **Overnight**

**Overnight:** Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla



## **Day 05 – Minneriya National Park Safari**

**Location:** Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla

---

### **Morning – Leisure & Breakfast**

Enjoy a relaxed breakfast at the hotel and a leisurely morning before setting out for one of Sri Lanka's most memorable wildlife experiences.

After the cultural and historical discoveries of the previous days, today's programme introduces the natural side of the Cultural Triangle, taking you into the dry-zone wilderness in search of Sri Lanka's iconic Asian elephants and other wildlife.

The relaxed morning also allows you to enjoy the hotel facilities before departing for the afternoon safari.

---

### **Afternoon – Minneriya or Kaudulla National Park Jeep Safari**

#### **Transfer – Hotel → National Park**

Depart by private vehicle towards the selected national park.

The choice between **Minneriya National Park** and **Kaudulla National Park** will depend on seasonal conditions and the location of wildlife movements on the day.

#### **Drive Time**

- Dependent on the selected national park

#### **Terrain**

- Dry-zone countryside
- Rural roads and park access roads

The journey takes you through the characteristic landscapes of Sri Lanka's dry zone, where open fields, scrubland, forests, ancient irrigation reservoirs, and traditional farming areas create an important habitat for wildlife.

---

## **Wildlife Safari**

### **Safari Duration**

- Approx. **3 hours**

Board a specially equipped **private safari jeep** and enter the national park for an approximately three-hour wildlife experience.

Rather than following a fixed route, the safari follows the natural rhythms of the park, with your experienced safari tracker and driver looking for signs of animal activity and choosing routes where wildlife is most likely to be encountered.

---

## **The Elephant Country**

The Minneriya and Kaudulla landscapes are particularly renowned for their **Asian elephant populations**.

The national parks surround large ancient reservoirs, which provide water and open grazing areas for elephants and other wildlife. During periods of seasonal water movement, elephants may gather in significant numbers around these reservoirs, creating one of the most memorable wildlife spectacles in Sri Lanka.

Your safari team will help you observe these magnificent animals responsibly from the vehicle while maintaining a respectful distance.

---

## **Wildlife You May Encounter**

### **Asian Elephants**

The principal highlight of the safari, with opportunities to observe elephants feeding, bathing, walking through grasslands, or gathering near water.

### **Spotted Deer**

Look out for herds of spotted deer moving through the open grasslands and woodland edges.

### **Wild Buffalo**

Wild water buffalo may be encountered near wetlands, reservoirs, and areas of dense vegetation.

### **Crocodiles**

Keep watch around the edges of water bodies, where crocodiles may be seen resting quietly in the shallows or along the banks.

## Monkeys

Several species of monkeys inhabit the surrounding forests and may be spotted moving through the trees or feeding near the park roads.

## Peacocks

Sri Lanka's spectacular peacocks are frequently seen in open areas, where their striking plumage adds another beautiful element to the safari experience.

---

## Safari Snack Pack

During the safari, enjoy a **snack pack** provided for the journey.

This offers a convenient opportunity to enjoy a light refreshment while remaining immersed in the surrounding wilderness.

---

## Return to Hotel

Following approximately three hours of wildlife exploration, leave the national park and return to your hotel in the Cultural Triangle.

The drive back provides another opportunity to enjoy the changing scenery of the dry-zone countryside before returning to the comfort of your accommodation.

---

## Evening – At Leisure

The remainder of the evening is intentionally relaxed.

Unwind beside the swimming pool, enjoy the hotel's gardens and facilities, or simply relax after an afternoon spent exploring the wilderness.

Enjoy a peaceful evening and dinner at the hotel.

---

## Meals

**Breakfast:** At the hotel

**Lunch:** Safari snack pack while on safari

**Dinner:** At the hotel

**Hotel:** Half Board basis

---

## Overnight

**Overnight:** Sigiriya / Habarana / Dambulla



## Day 06 – Cultural Triangle → Kandy

Location: Kandy

---

### Morning – Breakfast & Check-out

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before checking out and departing for **Kandy**, Sri Lanka's historic hill capital and the cultural heart of the central highlands.

Today's journey marks a beautiful transition in the landscape, taking you from the dry-zone plains of the Cultural Triangle towards the cooler, greener mountains surrounding Kandy.

---

### Transfer – Cultural Triangle → Kandy

#### Distance & Drive Time

- Approx. **2.5 – 3 hours**, depending on traffic and road conditions

#### Road Conditions

- Well-maintained roads
- Some winding sections as you approach the central highlands

#### Terrain

- Dry-zone plains gradually changing into lush central highlands
- Tropical vegetation, cultivated land, villages, and rolling hills

As the journey progresses, the landscape becomes increasingly green and undulating, with the dry forests and open countryside of the Cultural Triangle gradually giving way to the fertile hills and dense vegetation of central Sri Lanka.

---

### En Route – Dambulla Cave Temple

## UNESCO World Heritage Site

### Visit Duration

- Approx. **1.5 hours**

Pause at the magnificent **Dambulla Cave Temple**, one of Sri Lanka's most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites and one of the country's best-preserved cave temple complexes.

Set within a dramatic rocky outcrop, the temple consists of a series of caves containing centuries-old religious art, sculptures, and murals.

As you move through the caves, discover an extraordinary collection of Buddhist imagery created and preserved across generations.

---

### Highlights of Dambulla Cave Temple

#### Ancient Buddhist Murals

Admire the extensive murals covering the cave ceilings and walls.

The paintings depict scenes from Buddhist traditions, stories, and religious history, with intricate patterns and rich colours creating an atmospheric setting within the caves.

#### Buddha Statues

Discover numerous Buddha statues in different poses and sizes, ranging from intimate devotional images to imposing figures dominating the cave interiors.

#### Cave Shrines

Each cave has its own character and devotional atmosphere, with shrines arranged around the natural contours of the rock.

#### Religious Artworks

The combination of sculpture, painting, architecture, and natural rock formations makes Dambulla a particularly fascinating place to appreciate Sri Lanka's Buddhist artistic heritage.

---

### Spice Garden Experience

Continue your journey towards Kandy with a visit to a traditional **Sri Lankan spice garden**.

Sri Lanka has long been renowned for its spices, which have played an important role in the island's cuisine, traditional medicine, trade, and cultural heritage.

Explore the gardens and discover how spices such as **cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, pepper, nutmeg, turmeric, and vanilla** are cultivated and used.

Your visit offers an opportunity to see these ingredients in their natural form and learn how they contribute to the distinctive aromas and flavours of Sri Lankan cooking.

## **Sri Lankan Curry Cookery Demonstration**

Continue with an engaging **traditional Sri Lankan curry cookery demonstration**.

Watch as local ingredients, freshly harvested herbs, aromatic spices, coconut, and other produce are combined to create authentic Sri Lankan dishes.

Learn about the importance of balancing flavours and spices in Sri Lankan cuisine, as well as some of the traditional techniques used to prepare curries.

The demonstration provides a more personal introduction to the island's culinary traditions and the connection between Sri Lankan cooking and its rich agricultural heritage.

---

## **Authentic Sri Lankan Lunch**

Enjoy a freshly prepared **Sri Lankan lunch at the spice garden**, featuring traditional flavours and locally sourced ingredients.

A selection of fragrant rice, vegetable curries, sambols, and other local specialities offers an authentic taste of the island's culinary heritage.

This relaxed lunch also provides a pleasant break before continuing into the hills towards Kandy.

---

## **Transfer – Spice Garden → Kandy**

After lunch, continue the journey towards **Kandy**.

As you approach the city, the landscape becomes increasingly dramatic, with wooded hills, tropical vegetation, winding roads, and glimpses of the surrounding mountains.

Kandy is situated in a natural basin among the central highlands and is known for its deep cultural significance, historic temples, traditional arts, and distinctive hill-country atmosphere.

---

## **Arrival in Kandy – Hotel Check-in**

Upon arrival, check in to your hotel and settle into your accommodation.

The remainder of the afternoon and evening is deliberately free, allowing you to relax after the day's journey and enjoy the facilities of your hotel.

Take time to unwind and appreciate the cooler atmosphere of Sri Lanka's hill country before dinner.

---

## **Evening – At Leisure**

Enjoy a peaceful evening at the hotel.

Relax in the comfort of your surroundings, take a gentle stroll if desired, or simply enjoy a quiet dinner after a day combining history, spirituality, culture, and cuisine.

---

### **Meals**

**Breakfast:** At the hotel

**Lunch:** Spice Garden

**Dinner:** At the hotel

**Hotel:** Half Board basis

---

### **Overnight**

**Overnight:** Kandy



## **Day 07 – Kandy Heritage, Tea & Cultural Experience**

**Location:** Kandy

---

### **Morning – Breakfast at the Hotel**

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before setting out to discover the cultural, spiritual, botanical, and artistic heritage of **Kandy**, Sri Lanka's historic hill capital.

Surrounded by forested mountains and centred around the tranquil waters of Kandy Lake, the city was the last royal capital of the Sri Lankan kings and remains one of the country's most important cultural centres.

---

### **Morning – Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic**

#### **Visit Duration**

- Approx. **1 – 1.5 hours**

Begin the day's exploration with a visit to the revered **Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic**, one of Sri Lanka's most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Located within the historic Royal Palace complex beside Kandy Lake, the temple is believed to house a sacred relic of the Buddha, making it an important spiritual destination for Buddhists from Sri Lanka and around the world.

Explore the temple complex with your guide, taking in its richly decorated interiors, traditional Kandyan architecture, shrines, ceremonial spaces, and intricate decorative details.

The visit offers an opportunity to understand the important relationship between Buddhism, the Kandyan monarchy, and Sri Lanka's cultural identity.

---

## **Late Morning – Royal Botanic Gardens, Peradeniya**

### **Visit Duration**

- Approx. **1.5 – 2 hours**

Continue to the magnificent **Royal Botanic Gardens, Peradeniya**, one of Sri Lanka's most celebrated botanical attractions.

Originally associated with the Kandyan royal tradition and later developed as a botanical garden during the colonial period, the gardens extend across extensive landscaped grounds along the Mahaweli River.

Stroll through beautifully maintained avenues and collections showcasing Sri Lanka's extraordinary tropical plant life.

---

### **Highlights of the Royal Botanic Gardens**

#### **Orchid Collections**

Discover an impressive collection of orchids, displaying the delicate shapes, colours, and varieties for which tropical Sri Lanka is particularly well known.

#### **Giant Bamboo**

Walk among towering bamboo specimens that create one of the garden's most striking natural landscapes.

#### **Royal Palm Avenues**

Stroll beneath elegant avenues of royal palms, among the most recognisable features of the gardens.

#### **Tropical Plants**

Explore extensive collections of tropical trees, flowering plants, medicinal species, and other botanical varieties.

#### **Landscaped Gardens**

Enjoy the peaceful combination of lawns, mature trees, ornamental gardens, and winding pathways, providing a relaxing contrast to the more structured sightseeing of the previous days.

---

### **Lunch – Local Restaurant**

After the morning's sightseeing, enjoy lunch at a **specially selected local restaurant**.

This provides an opportunity to experience another taste of Sri Lankan cuisine while taking a comfortable break before continuing the afternoon programme.

---

## **Afternoon – Ceylon Tea Factory Experience**

Continue with a visit to a traditional **tea factory**, introducing you to one of Sri Lanka's most important agricultural products and cultural exports: **Ceylon Tea**.

Sri Lanka's central highlands provide ideal conditions for tea cultivation, with elevation, cool temperatures, rainfall, and fertile mountain soils contributing to the distinctive character of the island's teas.

---

### **Discover the Tea-Making Process**

#### **Tea Leaf Processing**

Learn how freshly harvested tea leaves are carefully handled after they arrive at the factory.

#### **Withering**

Discover how the freshly picked leaves are spread out and allowed to lose moisture, preparing them for the next stages of production.

#### **Rolling**

See how the leaves are rolled to break down their cellular structure and release the compounds that contribute to the eventual character of the tea.

#### **Fermentation / Oxidation**

Learn how controlled oxidation develops the colour, aroma, and flavour associated with black Ceylon Tea.

#### **Drying**

The leaves are heated to stop the oxidation process and reduce their moisture content, preparing them for storage and packaging.

#### **Grading**

Finally, discover how finished tea is sorted and graded according to leaf size, appearance, and other characteristics.

---

### **Traditional High Tea**

Following the factory visit, enjoy a traditional **High Tea experience**.

Relax with a selection of tea and accompanying treats while appreciating the connection between Sri Lanka's hill country, its historic tea industry, and the global reputation of Ceylon Tea.

This offers a particularly enjoyable way to experience the island's tea heritage rather than simply learning about it.

---

## **Afternoon – Gem Factory & Showroom**

### **Visit Duration**

- Approx. **1 hour**

Continue with a visit to a **gem factory and showroom**, introducing you to Sri Lanka's long-established gemstone and jewellery traditions.

Sri Lanka is internationally recognised for its precious and semi-precious gemstones, particularly **Ceylon sapphires**, which have contributed to the island's reputation as an important source of fine gemstones.

Discover how gemstones are assessed, cut, polished, and transformed into jewellery, while learning about the craftsmanship involved in the process.

The showroom provides an opportunity to view examples of locally produced jewellery and gemstone pieces.

---

## **Evening – Kandy Cultural Fire Dance Show**

### **Performance Duration**

- Approx. **1 hour**

As evening approaches, experience one of Kandy's most vibrant cultural traditions with a **traditional Kandyan cultural performance**.

The programme brings together music, movement, drumming, dance, and spectacular fire-based performances in a lively presentation of Sri Lanka's performing arts heritage.

---

## **Highlights of the Performance**

### **Traditional Kandyan Music**

Experience the powerful rhythms of traditional drums accompanying the performers.

### **Kandyan Dancing**

Watch dancers perform energetic movements inspired by centuries-old artistic traditions.

### **Traditional Drumming**

The distinctive rhythms of Kandyan drums form the heartbeat of the performance, creating an atmosphere of energy and ceremony.

### **Fire Performances**

The performance traditionally culminates with dramatic fire-related displays, creating a memorable finale to the evening.

---

### **Return to Hotel**

Following the performance, return to your hotel and enjoy a relaxing evening after a full day of cultural discovery.

---

### **Meals**

**Breakfast:** At the hotel

**Lunch:** Local restaurant

**Dinner:** At the hotel

**Hotel:** Half Board basis

---

### **Overnight**

**Overnight:** Kandy



## **Day 08 – Kandy → Departure / Optional Negombo or Maldives Extension**

**Location:** Kandy → Bandaranaike International Airport / Negombo

---

### **Morning – Breakfast & Check-out**

Enjoy a final breakfast at the hotel before checking out and preparing for your onward journey.

Take a final moment to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of Kandy and the surrounding central highlands before beginning the journey towards the airport.

---

### **Transfer – Kandy → Bandaranaike International Airport**

#### **Drive Time**

- Approx. **3.5 – 4 hours**, depending on traffic and road conditions

#### **Road Conditions**

- Well-maintained highways and expressways
- Winding roads through the initial hill-country section

#### **Terrain**

- Scenic central highlands gradually descending towards the western lowlands
- Lush mountain landscapes transitioning into flatter tropical countryside

Depart Kandy and begin the scenic journey towards **Bandaranaike International Airport**.

The route gradually descends from the central highlands, offering changing landscapes along the way as misty mountains and forested hills give way to the warmer, flatter lowlands of western Sri Lanka.

The journey provides a final glimpse of the island's diverse geography before arriving at the airport for your onward international flight.

### **Airport Arrival & Departure**

Upon arrival at **Bandaranaike International Airport**, proceed with check-in and the necessary departure formalities for your onward flight.

We recommend allowing sufficient time for airport check-in and security procedures, particularly for international departures.

---

### **Alternatively – Optional Negombo Beach Extension**

For guests wishing to extend their stay in Sri Lanka, the journey can continue with an **optional beach extension in Negombo**.

Located close to Bandaranaike International Airport, Negombo is an ideal final stop for travellers looking to enjoy a few additional days beside the Indian Ocean.

The coastal town is known for its **long sandy beach, traditional fishing heritage, lagoon, seafood, and relaxed seaside atmosphere**.

An extension here allows you to slow down after the touring programme, enjoy resort facilities, take leisurely walks along the beach, or simply relax before your international departure.

---

### **Alternatively – Continue to the Maldives**

Guests may also choose to continue their holiday with an onward journey to the **Maldives**, creating a natural combination of Sri Lanka's cultural and wildlife experiences with a relaxing tropical island escape.

Following the archaeological discoveries, village experiences, wildlife safaris, Buddhist heritage, tea country, and cultural experiences of Sri Lanka, the Maldives offers an opportunity to finish the journey surrounded by turquoise waters, white-sand beaches, and the tranquillity of a private island resort.

---

### **Meals**

**Breakfast:** At the hotel

**Lunch:** Own arrangements / depending on onward travel

**Dinner:** Own arrangements / depending on onward travel

# End of Tour

Your Sri Lankan journey comes to an end as you depart for your onward destination.

From the ancient wonders of **Sigiriya and Polonnaruwa**, to authentic village life, encounters with Sri Lanka's magnificent elephants, the sacred heritage of **Kandy**, fragrant spice gardens, Ceylon Tea traditions, and the warmth of Sri Lankan hospitality, the journey offers an enriching introduction to the island's extraordinary diversity.

