

EXPLORE!

Book with confidence

Highlights of Sri Lanka + Maldiv Dhoni Cruise

SRI LANKA - TRIP CODE SLHM

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

Experience the cultural highlights of Sri Lanka and combine it with a week snorkelling and relaxing in the Maldives. Spending a week in each, this trip gives a flavour of Sri Lanka's culture, wildlife and history as well as cruising remote atolls through turquoise waters in the Maldives.

- **Sri Lanka's culture** - Walk around ancient kingdoms, see Buddhist temples and visit the revered 'temple of the tooth'
- **Sri Lanka's wildlife** - Search for wildlife including leopards, elephants and sloth bears in Wilpattu National Park
- **Dhoni Cruise** - Cruise through the Maldives visiting remote fishing villages and snorkelling in idyllic surroundings looking for marine life



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 13
Lunch: 7
Dinner: 6



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)
Naturalist(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus
4WD



ACCOMMODATION



TRIP PACE:
Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
12 - 18

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

Trip information

Climate and country information

Sri Lanka

Climate

Year round high temperatures in coastal regions: Colombo averages 27°C. It is much cooler in the hills with Kandy averaging 20°C and Nuwara Eliya down to 16°C. Springlike temperatures in the hill country, but chilly evenings. Two monsoon periods: Apr-Sep when rain is confined to the southwest; and Oct-Mar when it falls in the northeast.

Time difference to GMT

+6

Plugs

3 Pin Round

Religion

Buddhism

Language

Sinhala, Tamil

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Kandy - Cultural show - £5.00

Temple of the Tooth - £8.00

Botanical Gardens, Kandy - £8.00

Whale watching - £40.00

Clothing

Sri Lanka: Select your clothes carefully, bearing in mind that the climate is tropical and that upland areas are cooler and more temperate. Lightweight rainwear is also essential, and warmer clothing for the highland walks and chilly night temperatures in the mountains. When visiting religious sites you will need to dress respectfully by covering your knees and shoulders, plus taking off your shoes and hats. You may like to wear socks for temple visits as the ground can get very hot and burn the soles of your feet. You will need to bring long trousers, or buy a sarong locally.

Maldives: Only lightweight clothing is needed. Local people in Male and in villages on the islands find western styles of dress extremely offensive. Brief shorts, tight fitting clothing etc. should be avoided by both men and women. A sarong and something to cover the head (for women) is recommended. Don't forget swimming gear and clothes to protect you from the sun including a wide brimmed hat. You may consider wearing a Tshirt whilst snorkelling to avoid bad sunburn on the back and shoulders.

Footwear

Lightweight shoes and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. We recommend a soft bag such as a rucksack or holdall as whilst on the Dhoni Cruise your luggage needs to fit underneath your bed in the cabin. Remember, hotel porters are not always available, so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order

to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow £50 for tipping (£25 in Sri Lanka and £25 in the Maldives). Your tour leader will account to you for any organised tipping.

Sri Lanka

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£6.00	£9.00	£3.50	£1.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange	Where To Exchange
Sri Lankan Rupee.	US\$ and UK£ are equally good	In most major towns.

ATM Availability

Yes, usually in major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards can usually be used in most large shops and restaurants. Please note that Foreign Office advice warns about the problem of credit card fraud in Sri Lanka so please consider this when deciding if to pay by card while on tour.

Travellers Cheques

Are not easy to change and where they can be changed the exchange rates can be poor.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, 4WD

Accommodation notes

Accommodation in Sri Lanka can be varied and on our trips we stay in a mix of hotels, heritage properties, camp sites and homestays. Standards do not equate to standards in the UK and it's best to approach each type of accommodation with an open mind. Service can be slow in places especially when travelling with a group. Hot water is not always available 24 hours a day in some of the smaller properties, and with a group staying you might find if you are showering last you may miss out on the hottest water.

In the Maldives we work with a local operator who owns a number of different Dhonis; all of which are

different sizes with different layouts. The boats we are most likely to be using are 6-10 berth Dhonis and we will either use one or two boats depending on the group size and make-up. All Dhonis that we use are fitted with diesel engines, which are used most of the time when we are travelling. Some of the boats still have sails but these are used very infrequently.

All Dhonis are inspected annually in order to retain their license. They carry enough lifejackets for all clients and crew plus buoyancy aids and a dinghy with small outboard engine. All boats have a CB radio, and for most of the voyage the boat is in mobile phone range of the islands. Full fire fighting equipment is also carried on every boat. There will be a minimum of 4 or 5 crew on board including the captain and cook - depending on the number of people on the boat. Most of the cabins offer couchette accommodation on a twin share basis with all bedding provided. The cabins are small and simple but adequate for sleeping and changing. In most of the cabins there will be bunk beds and so the person on the top will need to be prepared to climb up to their bed. Facilities are shared, and each boat has 3 or 4 toilets and 2 or 3 showers on board. There are plugs available in each cabin with electricity available when the boat's generator is running (when the boat is moving or the crew are cooking meals) so it is possible to charge cameras and phones during the tour. Good quality snorkelling equipment including mask, snorkel, flippers and swim noodles are provided (we will ask for your shoe/flipper size before you travel). You are free to bring your own equipment should you wish. No scuba diving equipment is carried on board.

Food and drink

Sri Lanka

Traditional Sri Lankan cuisine is excellent, and although it can be very spicy there are many dishes that feature cooling coconut milk or have a spicy sambar on the side to allow you to adjust the meal to your taste. There isn't a culture of eating out in Sri Lanka, most locals will eat at home, and as such there are very few restaurants around, and those that exist tend to be in hotels. As tourism develops a few independent restaurants are beginning to appear, mainly in Colombo but also in Kandy, Galle and in the coastal resorts. During the tour we will endeavour to eat out at local restaurants wherever possible but for many nights, at this point in time, the hotel restaurants are the only option available.

Maldives

All meals and a bottle of drinking water each day are provided on board the Dhonis. There is a bar for any additional soft and alcoholic drinks you may wish to buy, a dining area and a sundeck to relax and sunbathe throughout the day.

It should be noted that it is not permitted for tourists to bring alcohol in to the country and it will be confiscated at the airport if you attempt to do so.

People requiring a gluten free diet may struggle a little in the Maldives. Breakfasts are often mashuni - a tuna and coconut combination which is served with roti style bread or a more western start to the day with eggs and toast. Most lunches and dinners will have a pasta element and during the afternoons the boat crew will often bake a cake. Whilst plenty of fresh veg, meat and fruit is also provided if you do follow a gluten free diet you may wish to take some snacks with you to supplement the diet on board the dhoni.

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Sri Lanka: All foreign nationals who intend to visit Sri Lanka for a short stay of up to six months, including transit passengers, must apply for travel authorization online prior to travel to the country.

All UK, EU, US, Australian, New Zealand and Canadian nationals can obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) for a fee of 35USD. To do so you must visit <http://www.eta.gov.lk> and apply for it prior to travel. It is strongly recommended that you print and bring a copy of the ETA approval notice with you. The Sri Lankan authorities require that your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after departure from Sri Lanka.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Maldives: Citizens of the UK, Australia, New Zealand, US and Canada are given a free 30 day permit on arrival. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

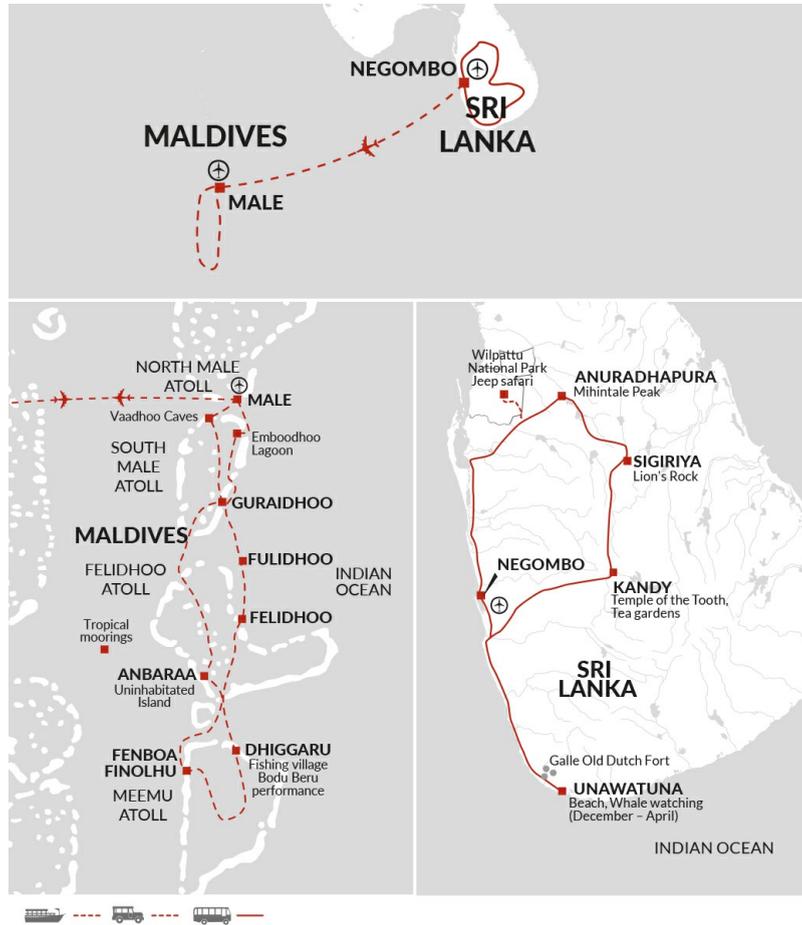
On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Sri Lanka

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A plus Polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. We strongly recommend the wearing long sleeved shirts and the liberal application of insect repellents containing DEET as a precautionary measure to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. These precautions should be taken at all times as the mosquitoes are also active during daylight hours. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Additional Information



East Coast Itinerary

Reviews



AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE



AIRPORT
TRANSFERS