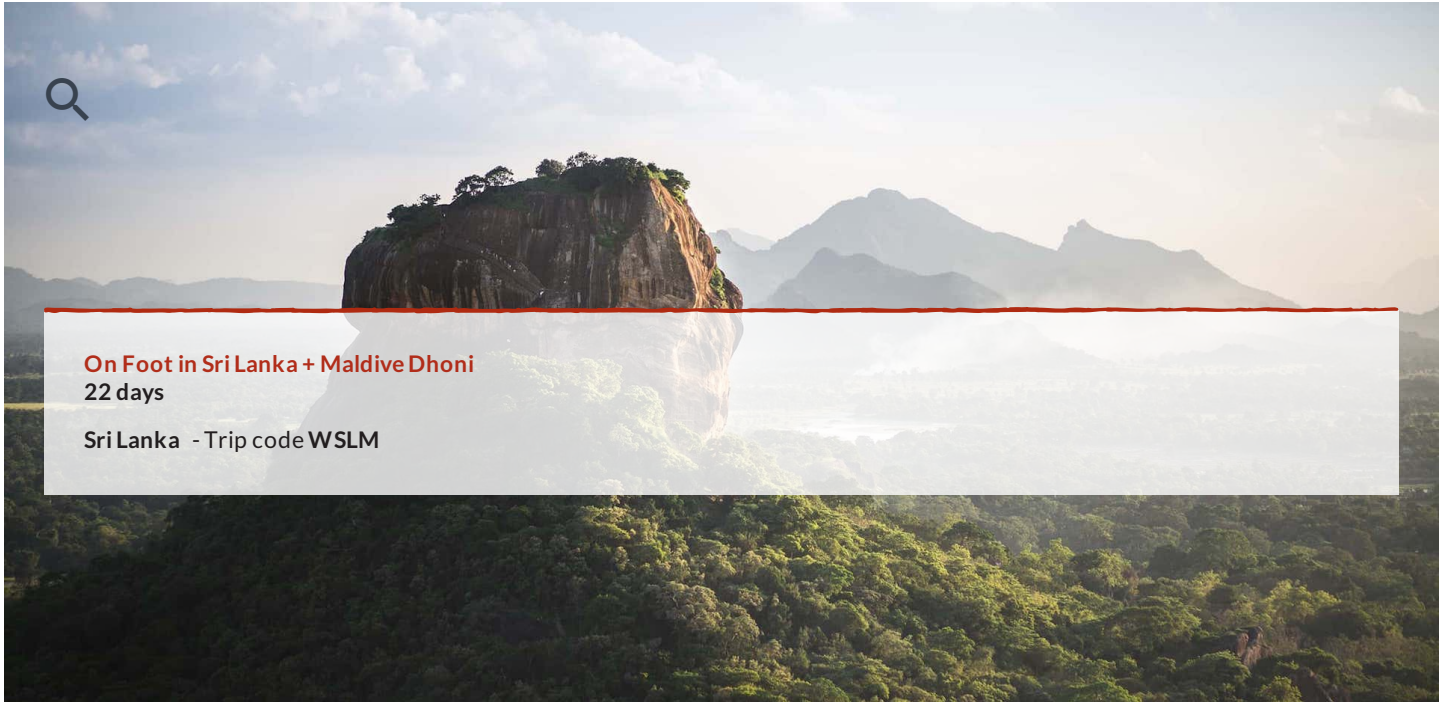


EXPLORE!



On Foot in Sri Lanka + Maldive Dhoni

22 days

Sri Lanka - Trip code WSLM

On Foot in Sri Lanka + Maldive Dhoni

Exploring on foot is one of the most rewarding ways to discover both Sri Lanka's past and its contemporary culture. Hiking through the jungle to ancient sites, alongside throngs of pilgrims on an ascent of sacred Adam's Peak, or to a Buddhist temple for the night, we experience these special places in a different way to the less active visitor. The natural beauty of the island is also ours to enjoy; trekking through the grasslands of the Knuckles mountain range, the primal rainforest of Sinharaja and emerald green tea plantations of the Highlands.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Sigiriya** - Hike jungle trails and ascend iconic Lion Rock
- ★ **Kumbalgama** - Trek to Buddhist temple for overnight and join in temple life
- ★ **Adam's Peak** - Join pilgrims on an ascent of this sacred mountain
- ★ **Diverse landscapes** - Enjoy Sri Lanka's mountains, tea plantations, rainforest and beaches
- ★ **Colombo** - Discover the capital's colonial heritage on a walking tour
- ★ **Sri Lankan cuisine** - Sample spicy curries and street food

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, sometimes with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join trip in Negombo on the shores of the Indian Ocean

The trip begins this afternoon in the coastal town of Negombo, famous for its fishing industry and golden sands. Our hotel is just a 15 minute drive north of the airport and a great place to relax after the journey to Sri Lanka. We may see fishing boats bring in the day's catch or a stunning sunset over the ocean.



Accommodation: Catamaran Beach Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Visit Dambulla cave temples; jeep safari in search of elephants

We head inland today and stop to visit Dambulla, a complex of cave temples which date from the 1st century B.C. This atmospheric World Heritage Site still attracts scores of worshippers. We will visit five separate caves, which contain a large number of Buddha images and a few sculptures of Hindu Gods. In the early afternoon, we drive to either Minneriya or Kadawla National Park (depending on the season), where we enjoy a jeep safari to look for the herds of wild elephant that live here in large numbers. These parks are also home to an array of birdlife, including painted storks.



Accommodation: Acme Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Hike to Sigiriya and climb Lion Rock; explore Polonnaruwa

We make an early start this morning, heading off with a packed breakfast through the jungle and on village trails, to the ancient site of Sigiriya. On arrival we will climb the 200m high iconic Lion Rock ahead of the crowds and whilst it is still relatively cool. The ruins of this 5th century 'Sky Fortress' are one of Sri Lanka's major attractions, a stupendous sight to behold and a feat of consummate engineering skill. The fortress was built in just seven years to protect the palace of merciless King Kassapa, who had assassinated his father and deposed his brother. Unfortunately for the king, despite its impregnable reputation, he was defeated here by his brother after a reign of 18 years. A series of steps and steel stairways ascend to the top of the rock and halfway up, tucked beneath a sheltering overhang of rock, are the famous frescoes - the Sigiriya Damsels, their colours still glowing. Before the final ascent to the summit, we pass between a set of enormous lion paws carved out of the rock - all that remain of an ancient gateway that gave Sigiriya, the 'Lion Rock', its name. From the summit there are magnificent views of the surrounding jungle and countryside.

In the afternoon we will explore another ancient site on foot, the remains of the city of Polonnaruwa, which reached the height of its glory in the 12th century, when it was a thriving commercial and religious centre. The city still maintains many of its spectacular buildings and monuments, with arguably the most impressive being the Quadrangle which contains a superbly decorated circular shrine. Another famous feature of this deserted city is the group of carved images of the Buddha, known as Galvihara. These four colossal figures are all hewn out of solid granite and the Reclining Buddha alone is no less than 14 metres long.

We can expect this morning's six kilometre hike to take around three hours including the ascent/descent of 200m Lion Rock. The afternoon walk at Polonnaruwa is around four kilometres and will take approximately three-and-a-half hours including sightseeing. The terrain is flat.



Accommodation: Acme Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Trek in the Knuckles Range; drive to Kandy

This morning we head south to the Knuckles Mountain Range for a hike through the region's abundant forests and grasslands. Resembling a clenched fist, the mountains are a remarkable microcosm of the country, the isolated cloud forests providing a haven for a rich diversity of flora and fauna. To the south and east of the Knuckles lies the Mahaveli Valley, whilst the Matale Valley (also known as the spice valley of Sri Lanka) to the west encircles a collection of peaks unrivalled anywhere else in the country. Returning to our bus, we continue to Kandy where we enjoy an orientation walk in the city with our Leader.

Sitting on a plateau some 500 metres above sea level, Kandy served as the capital of the last Sinhalese kingdom until falling to the British in 1815. It is a place of cultural and spiritual importance with Buddhists from all over the world coming here to visit its famous Temple of the Tooth, the Dalada Maligawa. The jewelled shrine of the Holy Tooth, said to be Buddha's left canine, is kept in

the upper floor of the original building. The relic was brought from India 1,500 years ago and every year, at the time of the August full moon, it is paraded round the town with great pomp and circumstance during the festival of Perehera.

Today's eight kilometre hike in the Knuckles is expected to take around three to four hours.



Accommodation: Mahaweli Reach Hotel (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 5 - Hike on the Hantane Trail; free afternoon in Kandy

This morning we head out by bus into the hills surrounding Kandy for a hike on part of the Hantane Trail. Passing through beautiful tropical forest frequented by monkeys and a variety of birds, our trek ends at the Ceylon Tea Museum. The museum occupies the refurbished 1925-vintage Hantane Tea Factory and is supported by the Sri Lanka Tea Board and Planters' Association. There are exhibits on tea pioneers such as James Taylor and Thomas Lipton and after visiting we can enjoy a cuppa in the top-floor tearoom.

The afternoon is free to explore more of Kandy. You can visit the Temple of the Tooth or wander round the lake or through the lush Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya, located just outside the city. Kandy has many handicraft workshops, which have plenty of brassware, batik, lacquer work and other craft items to choose from. Kandyan dancers can also be seen performing every night at one or two venues around town.

Today's nine kilometre hike is expected to take around four to five hours.



Accommodation: Mahaweli Reach Hotel (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Scenic train journey to Hatton; walk through the tea plantations

Departing Kandy this morning by train we will enjoy a scenic journey through Sri Lanka's Highlands to Hatton. As the train passes round hills and through valleys, strands of forest give way to the bright green tea bushes that cloak the landscape. Clusters of pickers, usually Tamil women, add splashes of colour in their colourful sarees. In an area known as 'Little England', where we will find red telephone boxes, Victorian colonial architecture and pretty rose gardens - Hatton served the coffee and tea estates of the colonial era. Meeting our trek guide at Hatton station, our luggage is transported by taxi and we set off on foot through the tea plantations on the six kilometre hike to our lodge.

Today's six kilometre hike is expected to take around two hours.



Accommodation: Castlereigh Holiday Bungalow (or similar)



Simple Lodge



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - Walk through tea estates; drive to Dalhousie

This morning we enjoy another trek through the plantations. Tea production is one Sri Lanka's main sources of foreign exchange and the country is the world's fourth largest producer of tea. The humidity, cool temperatures and rainfall of the Central Highlands all combine to produce a very high quality tea. Later today we drive to Dalhousie, the town that is the base for anyone wanting to climb sacred Adam's Peak (2243m), known locally as Sri Pada.

A depression at the top of the peak is said to be Buddha's footprint (or that of Shiva to Hindus and Adam to Christians and Muslims) and, each year during the period between the December and May full moon, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims climb to the top for sunrise.

Today's seven kilometre hike is expected to take around three hours.



Accommodation: Punsisi Rest Guest House (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 8 - Ascend the sacred mountain - Adam's Peak

During the pilgrimage season, the stone staircase to the top of the peak is floodlit and we will set out around midnight joining throngs of pilgrims on the 1000m ascent to the summit, in time for sunrise and amazing views. Outside of the season, the path is not lit and we will depart later in the pre-dawn light to reach the summit later but still whilst the air is cool and to be back down at our guesthouse by early afternoon at the latest.

The Adam's Peak ascent is approximately 1000m the eight kilometre hike is expected to take around eight hours in total.



Accommodation: Punsisi Rest Guest House (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 9 - Train to Belihuloya; trek to our camp

This morning we take the train again, alighting at Idalgashina station to enjoy a hike among beautiful scenery and semi-evergreen forest and grasslands, past the Highland Tea Factory to a point from where we drive to our tented camp near to the river at Belihuloya. The area experiences a specific climate linking the wet and dry zones with the hill country and the low country, all combining to make this an area of the country with a wide range of bio-diversity.

Our pre-erected spacious walk-in tents come equipped with comfortable mattresses and all bedding and there are flush toilets and cold water camp showers or you could chose to take a dip in the river.

Today's six kilometre hike is expected to take around two hours.



Accommodation: Kinchigune Camp Site (or similar)



Standard Camping



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - Trek to Kumbalgama temple, overnight at temple

Today we trek to the Buddhist temple at Kumbalgama for the unique experience of overnighting at the temple and having time to observe the life of the temple monks and temple rituals and, if you wish, join in. One such ritual is the Bodhi Puja, which is performed to attain merit and respect the wisdom of the Buddha. Guided by one of the monks you will offer a flower basket in front of the Bodhi tree, light oil lamps and incense sticks and put water drops on the roots of the Bodhi tree - all the while meditating on the sound of the leaves and calm environment.

We will stay tonight either in the simple dormitory accommodation of the temple or in tents pre-erected by the camp crew in the grounds of the temple.

Today's nine kilometre hike is expected to take around three hours.



Accommodation: Village Temple (or similar)



Simple Monastery



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 11 - Drive to the Sinharaja Forest Reserve

Today we head for the Sinharaja Rainforest Reserve, a World Heritage Site of lowland evergreen virgin rainforest that is a bird watchers' paradise - 282 species have been sighted here. Other fauna include a large variety of insects, reptiles and amphibians. Although there are a small number of leopards, these are very rarely seen due to the dense foliage. The word 'Sinharaja' means lion king and legend has it that the Sinhala people of Sri Lanka originated from the union between a princess and the lion king who once lived in the forest!



Accommodation: Rock View Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 12 - Rainforest hike ; drive to Unawatuna on south coast

This morning we will enjoy a hike on some of the trails through the rainforest in the company of a specialist park guide who will point out some of the stunning plant, bird and animal-life of the reserve. Sinharaja is one of Sri Lanka's last areas of primary tropical rainforest. More than 60% of the trees are endemic and many of them are considered rare. The forest is often shrouded by rainclouds and the trail may be slippery underfoot.

In the afternoon we head for the seaside village of Unawatuna on the south coast, close to the historic port of Galle.

Today's eight kilometre rainforest hike is expected to take around three hours.



Accommodation: Hotel J Unawatuna (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 13 - Free day relaxing at the beach; option to visit Galle

Today is left free to enjoy Unawatuna and the surrounding area. You can choose to relax on the beach or hire snorkelling equipment, or take a boat trip around the coast or upriver, past small largely uninhabited islands. The pretty coastal town of Galle is just a few kilometres away and easily reached by local bus or taxi. An important trading centre since ancient times, the fortifications that can be seen today were built by the Portuguese and then the Dutch from the 16th to the 17th centuries. The fort ramparts of this World Heritage Site protect the harbour and a myriad of fascinating old houses, churches and warehouses. Today, the town has a strong arts vibe, with foreign and local artists, writers, photographers, designers and poets drawing inspiration from their surrounds. Boutique shops and cafes around the town showcase their work.



Accommodation: Hotel J Unawatuna (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 14 - Train to Colombo; walking tour

We catch an early morning train from Galle to the lively capital Colombo, and have a picnic breakfast on the train. On arrival at the station we will head straight out a walking tour of Colombo (our bags are taken to the hotel) which will take you through the city's commercial heritage in terms of Portuguese, Dutch, and English influences, dating back from 17th century to the 1990s. The afternoon is left free to explore the city further or perhaps do some shopping. In the evening there's the option to join a unique guided walk around some of Colombo's old drinking spots, not the trendy new ones but the old taverns and pubs.



Accommodation: Colombo City Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 15 - Fly to Male, capital of the Maldives

This morning we fly to the Maldavian capital Male and after meeting up with our Explore representative and the rest of the group, we walk to our hotel close to the harbour in Male. The circumference of the island is little more than 5 kilometres so it's very easy to explore on foot. After freshening up at the hotel we will walk down to the Mosque, to the fish market and along the waters edge to watch the ferries coming and going.



Accommodation: Mookai Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 16 - Sail to Vavuu Atoll and explore Kuda Anbaraa Island

This morning we walk to the waterfront to meet our moored dhoni and crew. We take our breakfast on the boat and then begin cruising south for two to three hours, passing through the Vaadhoo Canal to the South Male Atoll - a smaller and quieter neighbour to the more developed North Male Atoll. Here, many of the islands are inhabited simply by vegetation and white sand, surrounded by clear turquoise water and reef. Heading further south we cruise to the Vavuu Atoll, where we spend time exploring the uninhabited and picturesque islands of Kudiboli and Kuda Anbaraa. When exploring this and other islands in the itinerary, it isn't necessary to bring special footwear. Most customers seem to manage well in flip-flops, and these have the obvious advantage of being quick to get on and off - ideal for walking through sand. Our afternoon is spent snorkelling or relaxing on board. Over the course of the week, underwater fauna we are likely to see include green turtles, reef sharks and gigantic manta rays, as well as smaller sting rays and eagle rays. At each stop, we will also swim among a rainbow of small, colourful fish, including the famous Clown Fish. Our knowledgeable Explore representative will be able to help identify many of the underwater species that we come across.

Today, and each day, afternoon tea with freshly baked cake will be served by our talented chef.

Every meal is included on the dhoni. Menus are likely to include freshly-caught fish each day, as well curries and pasta. Drinking water, tea and coffee are readily available, with alcoholic and soft drinks available for purchase on-board. US Dollars are accepted on the Dhoni and you can pay your bill for drinks at the end of your cruise.

Our cabins are compact, but with plenty of room for two people and luggage. However, many customers choose to enjoy the tranquillity of sleeping under the stars on deck for at least some of the nights.



Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni (or similar)



Simple Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 17 - Snorkel in the clear waters of the Meemu Atoll

Today we sail south for a further two to three hours, crossing to Meemu Atoll - home to one of the longest stretches of reef in the Maldives. On this or other crossings, we may be lucky enough to be chased by spinner dolphins, who like jumping in our wake. We are also likely to see flying fish, sometimes leaping right over the deck of our dhoni. Meemu Atoll is made up of 34 islands, of which 25 are uninhabited. Some of the inhabited ones grow yams, and all of them are largely dependent on fishing. Here more than anywhere, we are likely to experience the true Maldivian way of life. Shortly after entering the atoll, we arrive at Fenboa Finolhu - another beautiful uninhabited island where we aim to base ourselves for the night. We will have plenty of time to enjoy the white-sand beach and to snorkel on the reef. This evening, we can look forward to a barbeque beach banquet in an idyllic spot on the island, laid on by the dhoni crew.



Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni (or similar)



Simple Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 18 - Cruise to Dhiggaru Island for a Bodu Beru display

After a relaxed start, we head east to the inhabited island of Dhiggaru. Here, we drop our anchor by a particularly good snorkelling reef. Later in the afternoon, when it has cooled down a bit, we plan to go ashore to meet the island's inhabitants. We may be struck by the traditional, yet relaxed, way of life in the island's lively village. Very few tourist groups visit and we must remember to dress and act respectfully, removing our shoes when visiting a house or a mosque. In the evening, we hope to be invited to a performance of Bodu Beru (Big Drum) - the traditional folk music of the country.



Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni (or similar)



Simple Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 19 - Visit the traditional village of Felidhoo

Today, we head back to Felidhoo Atoll and its administrative centre, Felidhoo. With a population of about 400, this is the least populated of all the country's administrative centres. Again, we take time to visit the village and have the opportunity to enjoy another Bodu Beru performance.



Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni (or similar)



Simple Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 20 - Discover Hulhidhoo reef before sailing to Fulidhoo

By now, we are likely to be feeling completely relaxed, as our routine of reading, sunbathing and napping between island stops and snorkelling spots has become second nature. With a subtly different name to our previous day's stop-off, we break today's journey with a visit to Fulidhoo Island. Once again, we meet the locals and gain more of an appreciation of their life in this tropical paradise. After a further visit to the island of Hulhidhoo, we anchor by a large reef, where we can spend time snorkelling.



Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni (or similar)



Simple Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 21 - Sail to Male stopping to snorkel at Embudhoo Reef

Our last full day on the boat sees us cruising back towards Male. We take the opportunity for some final snorkelling and swimming, before enjoying a farewell meal with our boat crew.



Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni (or similar)



Simple Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 22 - Trip ends in Male

Our trip ends this morning after breakfast. Once we have said our goodbyes to the crew, we disembark the dhoni and are transferred to Male International Airport.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

Walking grade

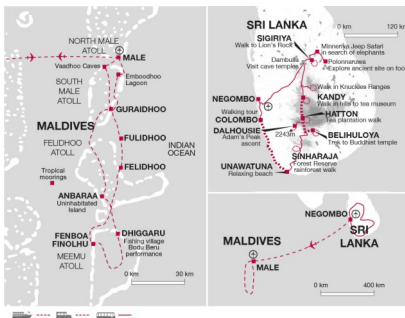
Moderate

Trek details

We walk on 9 days for between 3 to 8 hours. Some of the walks include sightseeing which is included within the timings. Terrain varies from village footpaths and back roads to plantation and mountain trails. The 1000m Adam's Peak ascent is graded Challenging, it is mainly on steps and is made during the night during the pilgrimage season (December to May's full moon), in the early morning at other times.

Max walking altitude (m)

2243



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 21
Lunch: 11
Dinner: 12



Transport

Bus
4WD
Boat
Flight
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Boat Crew
Camp Crew
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

6 nights simple boat
1 nights standard camping
2 nights simple guesthouse
7 nights standard hotel
2 nights premium hotel
1 nights simple hotel
1 nights simple lodge
1 nights simple monastery

Trip information

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.

Clothing

Due to the diversity of altitude encountered on tour, you will need to bring a range of comfortable lightweight clothing that can be layered according to the fluctuating temperature. On the coast and at lower altitudes, you can expect both days and nights to be warm and humid and lightweight clothing is all that is needed. In the Central Highlands and especially on the pre-dawn Adam's Peak ascent, nights can be chilly.

We recommend walking trousers and shorts, breathable T-shirtshirts, walking socks, fleece jacket, waterproof jacket, warm hat and gloves and sunhat. When it has rained there may be leeches in the jungle and we highly recommend bringing your own leech socks which can be bought through outdoor equipment providers or online through retailers such as Amazon.

When visiting religious sites you will need to dress respectfully by covering you knees and shoulders plus taking off your shoes and hats.

Footwear

We recommend you bring lightweight walking boots with ankle support, make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear.

We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack, 30-35 litres recommended.

Equipment

Bring a 2 litre water bottle, sun cream, sunglasses and head torch.

Bring your walking poles if you usually use them.

An umbrella is useful for both rain and as a sun shade.

Although mosquito nets or screens are provided at most nightstops and in spite of fewer mosquitoes due to higher elevation, you may choose to bring your own (attachable with nails and tape) for use here. Alternatively, please bring mosquito coils.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore 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, your Leader 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 approximately £40.

Country Information

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

£6.00

Dinner price

£9.00

Beer price

£3.50

Water price

£1.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Sri Lankan Rupee.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

US\$ and UK£ are equally good

Where To Exchange

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, Boat, Flight, Train

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Sri Lanka

The tents we use at the Belihuloya camp and at the Kumbalgama Temple are large walk-in pre-erected tents with camp beds and all bedding provided. A mess tent, table, chairs and all cutlery and utensils are also provided. A field toilet tent serves the camp and at Belihuloya there are cold water camp showers.

On day six we stay in simple bungalow style accommodation with basic bathroom facilities. Day seven and eight you stay at Punsisi Guesthouse. The rooms are quite basic, however clean and spacious and feature mosquito nets and en-suite bathrooms. On day 10 we will stay at a monastery in either the simple dormitory accommodation of the temple or in tents pre-erected by the camp crew in the grounds of the temple. On day 11 you stay at Rock View Motel this is a family run holiday-home which offers eight clean and comfortable rooms with private balconies overlooking a mountain which borders the Sinharaja Rain Forest. The toilets are modern and clean.

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 that 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 will be carried on board. 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

FCO 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 and Commonwealth 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.

To obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) you must visit <http://www.eta.gov.lk> to 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 six months after departure from Sri Lanka.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying 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 now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. 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.

Maximum altitude (m)

2243

Sri Lanka

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A plus Polio and diptheria. 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.