

BEST SELLER

Family Sri Lanka and Maldives Adventure

MALDIVES, SRI LANKA - TRIP CODE FSL

FAMILY

Why book this trip?

Combining an actioned packed ten day journey across Sri Lanka with a relaxing traditional Dhoni cruise in the Maldives is a winning combination! Explore jungles, discover Buddhist relics, take part in a cookery lesson and tour ancient temple sites on mountain bike, it's all part of the adventure in this tropical paradise known as Buddha's Island.

- **Wildlife** - search for groups of wild elephants, buffalo, wild boar and crocodile in Udawalawe National Park, returning to our comfortable tented camp in the evening
- **Pidurangala** - a magical experience staying in a jungle lodge on the footsteps of Sigiriya's Lion Rock. Experience sunset lake cruises, nature trails and cooking demonstrations and dinner under the stars.
- **Maldives** - cruise around the islands on a traditional Dhoni, snorkelling in crystal clear waters



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 14
Lunch: 7
Dinner: 7



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Boat Crew
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus
4WD
Bicycle
Boat
Flight
Rickshaw
Train
Tuk Tuk



ACCOMMODATION
4 nights simple boat
6 nights
comfortable hotel
1 nights premium
hotel
2 nights
comfortable hut
1 nights
comfortable tented
camp



TRIP PACE:
Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
12 - 18

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join trip in Colombo

Arrive in Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital city situated on the Indian Ocean.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 6pm for the welcome meeting and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner. There are no other activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Colombo at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Colombo's Bandaranaike International airport (airport code CMB), which is 26km, between 30 and 45 minutes from the hotel. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, relax after the flight at the hotel which features a swimming pool and gardens overlooking the Indian Ocean.



ACCOMMODATION:
Pegasus Reef Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Visit the fish markets of Negombo, drive to a secluded eco lodge near Sigiriya. Night time walking safari.

After breakfast depart for Pidurangala, driving along the old coastal road north, passing small fishing communities and the Old Dutch canal in Negombo and making a brief stop at the fish markets. We then head inland to the cultural capital around Sigiriya. Our destination is the Back of Beyond resort, a jungle lodge set amongst four acres of forest at the base of Pidurangala rock, just five minutes from the famous Lion rock of Sigiriya.

Our accommodation is a mixture of tree houses, bungalows and cottages. The lodge was founded with a philosophy of minimising energy use using solar power as much as possible. All \ rooms\ have an open format designed specifically for families, with a separate lounge area and bathrooms. In the case of the secluded treehouses an open air shower area, with hot and cold water for you to enjoy a long shower under the open skies. Please refer to the accommodation section for more details.

All meals are included for the next two days with fresh produce secured from the surrounding villages and a choice of local and western dishes with a 'sri Lankan touch\.

We aim to arrive early afternoon to allow plenty of time to check in and unpack. In the early evening we will set off for a guided walk to the summit of Pidurangala rock for breath taking views of the surrounding countryside at sunset. En route we learn of the fascinating rich history of Pidurangala and Sigiriya.

Returning to our lodge for dinner, for those that wish to there is the chance to head out on a guided walking safari at night along a carefully created path under the tree canopy where you will have a chance to spot one of the world's most rare nocturnal primate, the Grey Slender Loris.



ACCOMMODATION:

Back of Beyond, Pidurangala (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hut



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 3 - Nature walks, cooking demonstration and sunset boat cruise at our Jungle retreat. Dinner under the stars

We spend the whole day at the Back of Beyond lodge with the opportunity to participate in a range of

activities including bird watching before breakfast to view the large number of migratory and endemic birds that reside in the area.

The timings for the rest of the day's activities are flexible. We will visit a local \ weva\ also known as a tank, a body of water that varies in size from small ponds to large reservoirs; not only are these offer prolific wildlife viewing opportunities; it's also possible to take a refreshing dip.

Later in the day we will take part in a cooking demonstration. There is also ample time to relax in a hammock or enjoy the numerous nature trails that have been designed to explore the various different habitats in and around the surrounding area. One trail identifies the different species of trees and plants along the pathway and looks in more depth at the overall concept and landscaping on the area.

In the late afternoon, head out for a sunset boat cruise on a nearby lake lead by a naturalist. The lake offers fine views of the mighty Sigiriya & Pidurangala rocks. Dinner is served at a secret location under the jungle canopy under the stars, where we can reminisce about the day's events.



ACCOMMODATION:

Back of Beyond, Pidurangala (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hut



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 4 - Climb Sigiriya's sky fortress. Visit rural Habarana, travel by tuk tuk, bullock cart and canoe to a farm for a cooking lesson and lunch before travelling onto Giritale

After breakfast we bid farewell to our jungle retreat and drive five minutes to Sigiriya for a morning climb up to the Sky Fortress. Perched on a slab of rock, the ruins of this 5th century fortress are one of Sri Lanka's major attractions, a stupendous sight to behold and a feat of consummate engineering skill. A switchback series of steps (sometimes very steep) ascends to the top. Halfway up, tucked beneath a sheltering overhang of rock, are the famous frescoes - the Sigiriya Damsels, their colours still glowing. Magnificent views can be enjoyed from the summit of the rock palace (200m high).

On our descent we board the bus for a short drive to Habarana where we disembark and take three different types of transport (tuk-tuk, bullock cart and canoe across a small lake) to visit a local farm. Walking a short distance to a nearby village we have a cooking demonstration followed by lunch, all produced using local ingredients. Continue to Giritale by bus.



ACCOMMODATION:

Giritale Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

DAY 5 - In Giritale; explore the nearby ancient city of Polonnaruwa by bike.

In the morning we use the most common and versatile mode of transport used by the villagers of nearby farming communities, a 'Land Master' (a two wheeled tractor with a trailer). We visit a nearby village to experience the day to day life of a typical rural Sri Lankan. This afternoon, we explore the ancient city of Polonnaruwa by bike (with the option to travel in our bus). The site has many interesting and spectacular buildings and monuments including the Royal Palace Group with its audience hall, bathing pool and quadrangle which is a very compact collection of ruins. Close by is the Circular Relic House, a curious round structure with a beautifully preserved 'moonstone' carved at the foot of a flight of steps. Another famous feature of the deserted city is the group of carved images of the Buddha known as Galvihara. Here there are four colossal figures, all of which are hewn out of solid granite. The Reclining Buddha is no less than 14m long!



ACCOMMODATION:
Giritale Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Free morning. Afternoon jeep safari to spot wild elephant.

After a busy start to the trip, the pace eases today with a free morning to relax on the deck overlooking Giritale Wewa (lake), take a dip in the pool, visit the spa and wellness centre or explore the nearby town.

In the afternoon we visit nearby Minneriya or Kaudulla National park. Minneriya is a short distance from our hotel and is known for its large lake, the source of water for a host of animals including elephant, deer and monkey. The small national park is best known for its abundance of elephants, the months of July to September are the best to visit, we take a jeep safari on the look-out for wild elephants in their natural habitat.





ACCOMMODATION:

Giritale Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Drive to Kandy via the botanical gardens at Peradeniya. Walking tour of lake side town of Kandy

Leaving Giritale in the morning we drive to Kandy via Peradeniya which is located just outside the city. We wander through the lush Royal Botanical Gardens which boasts more than 4000 species of plants, including orchids, medicinal plants and palm trees. Afterwards, we travel by tuk tuk to the University complex before joining our tour leader for a walking tour of Kandy which will include visiting the town's narrow streets lined with old buildings and colourful and interesting markets. You may wish to continue shopping at the Kandyan Art Association's workshops, which has plenty of brassware, batik, lacquer work and other craft items which make excellent souvenirs or presents. The town was captured by the British in 1815, and is known more for its cultural and spiritual importance rather than its history. Buddhists from all over the world come to this delightful old highland town specifically to visit the Temple of the Tooth, the Dalada Maligawa.



ACCOMMODATION:

Mahaweli Reach Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Premium Hotel



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Visit a tea factory in Nuwara Eliya and catch a train to Ella

This morning we head off across the highlands visiting a working tea factory en-route to the hill station of Nuwara Eliya. We take a look around this little town, known as 'Little England', which is famous for its

lake, golf and race course and well-manicured gardens. We then take a train through the mountains and around green rolling hills covered in tea plantations arriving in the late afternoon at the hill town of Ella.



ACCOMMODATION:

Heaven's Edge (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Visit Elephant sanctuary and game drive in Udawalawe National Park

We journey to the lowlands, offering fantastic views of the plains and the mountains above us, to Belihuloya which is a picturesque hamlet situated about 160km east of Colombo. 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. We explore the surrounding villages on foot (a very easy walk), travelling through paddy fields and down to the nearby lake. On return to Belihuloya we may have time to bathe in the natural rock pool and have lunch. This is a unique place where the Belihuloya and Galagamaoya streams meet which creates a natural swimming area with clear unpolluted water. We leave in the early afternoon and drive to our camp on the Eastern border of the Udawalawe National Park stopping on the way to visit the orphaned elephants at the Elephant Transit Home.

Designated a national park in 1972, Udawalawe covers some 31,800 hectares and is surrounded by mountains, a mix of rolling grasslands, teak plantations, rainforest and scrub. Renowned for its large herd of elephants (this is in fact one of the best places in Sri Lanka to see them), the park is also home to deer, wild boar, buffalo, jackal and even the odd leopard. The resident bird population is also second to none, including a magnificent collection of birds of prey, chief amongst them being the impressive white bellied sea eagle. This afternoon we will drive into the National Park to take a game drive by jeep. Whilst it cannot be guaranteed, we hope to see some of the animals which can be found here including, of course, elephants. We finish off the day with a relaxing BBQ and campfire under the stars.



ACCOMMODATION:

Athgira River Camp (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Tented Camp





SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 10 - Visit Turtle Hatchery; drive to Hikkaduwa

Today we drive along the scenic southern coastal road until arriving at Galle. Here we explore an ancient Dutch Fort, which is a World Heritage site, complete with its well preserved ramparts that were built during the 1800s. We then proceed to Hikkaduwa where we stop for the night. In the evening we will visit a turtle hatchery in nearby Kosgoda to see the breeding process of the endangered sea turtles. It may be possible to even release some little baby turtles in to the sea. If you are lucky you might get a chance to see the mother turtles coming on to the beach to lay eggs later in the evening. Our hotel is located on the beach in Hikkaduwa, which is famous for it's marine sanctuary, and if we're lucky we may get to see turtles and other marine life just off the beach.



ACCOMMODATION:
Coral Rock by Bansai (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 11 - Fly to the Maldives and join our Dhoni cruise boat

Today we leave Sri Lanka and drive back to Negombo for an early afternoon flight to the Maldives. Transferring to our traditional Dhoni boat, we will travel along the remote atolls of the Maldives for the next four days. After settling into the cabins, the crew goes through the safety brief before cruising for a few hours to Gulhi, an island in the South Male Atoll. Dinner is served on-board.

There are normally two Dhoni cruise boats that travel together on this tour with a capacity of up to ten per boat. 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, many customers choose to enjoy the tranquillity of sleeping under the stars on deck for at least some of the nights. 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 boats 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.

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. There is a bar and dining room with a sundeck to relax and sunbath throughout the day plus a TV and DVD player on board. 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. Other provided equipment includes fishing equipment, various board games, life jackets and a first aid kit. No scuba diving equipment will be carried on board.

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.

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 in cash or by Credit Card.



ACCOMMODATION:
Aboard boat (or similar)



Grade: Simple Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

DAY 12 - Cruise to Kudhi Boli, tour of the island and snorkelling

The boat departs early in the morning to cruise for a few hours to Kudhi Boli with a traditional Maldivian breakfast being served on-board. Kudhi Boli literally means small shells and is famed for its very beautiful reef with a small strip of beach emerging with each low tide. We then take our first snorkelling lesson in the clear turquoise waters with the chance to view the marine life of the Maldives or you can sunbath and relax on the white sandy beaches of the island. The rest of the day is free to relax and enjoy with a light lunch being served on board. We visit the Island of Fulidhoo this afternoon where we have a tour of the idyllic island. Dinner is served on-board and we are entertained tonight by locals who perform on the famous Boduberu (traditional big drums).



ACCOMMODATION:
Aboard boat (or similar)



Grade: Simple Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 13 - Cruise to Rihiveli, cooking lesson and beach BBQ

After breakfast we cruise to Rihiveli with the chance to prepare a traditional Maldivian dish taught by the boat cook. Further snorkelling opportunities are available throughout the day over the beautiful coral reefs and we also have time on the beach. Lunch is on-board our boat with further time in the afternoon for more snorkelling, swimming, fishing or to become acquainted with some local board games. During the course of our Maldives cruise we have on occasions arranged a football match with local kids from the islands. The day will end with a wonderful beach barbecue if weather permits.



ACCOMMODATION:
Aboard boat (or similar)



Grade: Simple Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 14 - Cruise to Hulhu Male with visits to Male's markets

After breakfast will set sail for the South Male Atoll for a morning of snorkelling at Turtle Reef, near Rihiveli Boduveli. We have one final snorkelling opportunity at the Laguna sand bank (around 45 minutes away) with lunch served on board.

Late afternoon we return to the capital, Male for city tour of this thriving city with its mix of lively markets, old harbour and ornate architecture. We start with a tour of the Hukuru Miskiiy also known as the Friday Mosque, with its beautiful architecture and magnificent golden dome. The mosque can hold up to 5,000 worshippers and dominates the skyline of Male.

Our next stop is the fish market (via the Presidential Palace). The fish market is one the most exciting places to visit in Male, bursting into life in the afternoon when dhoni's or the local fishing boat start arriving with their catch.

A little further to west of the fish market is the aptly named Local Market, consisting of a series of stalls that stock the produce of islands from all over the Maldives, we have time to do some shopping for souvenirs before heading back to our boat.

This evening we will have a special farewell Maldivian dinner prepared for you by our chef, anchored at Hulhu Male Lagoon.



ACCOMMODATION:
Aboard Boat (or similar)



Grade: Simple Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 15 - Trip ends in Male

Sailing as close to Hulhule Island in the North Male Atoll as possible, we transfer to a smaller boat for the short transfer to Male's International airport (airport code MLE) where our trip ends. The earliest your flight can depart is 9am.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

Maldives

Climate

Day time temperatures are remarkably consistent throughout the year ranging from 30°C to 32°C dropping to between 25°C and 26°C at night. Although rain is heaviest in June, July and August, heavy rain can fall at any time of year - even in February and March when statistically only 50mm usually falls during those months combined. The south-west monsoon lasts from May to November and not only brings the rains but also stronger winds and storms, although the transitional periods of early May and late November are supposed to be calm with exceptionally clear water.

| Time difference to GMT | Plugs | Religion | Language |
|------------------------|------------|----------|------------------|
| +5 | 3 Pin Flat | Islam | Dhivehi, English |

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 | Plugs | Religion | Language |
|------------------------|-------------|----------|----------------|
| +6 | 3 Pin Round | Buddhism | 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.

A selection of optional activities are listed below to help you budget for your Family adventure. Whilst the basic tour price you pay before you travel includes a great selection of highlights, we have also built in free time to allow you the flexibility to choose from a carefully selected range of additional excursions and activities or take time to relax, the choice is yours. At certain destinations along the way there may be several options to choose from and it may not be possible to fit all the activities in; your Explore Leader will be able to give advice on which are the most suitable for your family.

Day 7: Kandy

Evening cultural show £5.00 per person

Days 11 to 13: Maldives

Diving can be available for around USD \$100 per person in Alimatha or Dhiggiri which is in the Vaavu Atoll, and in Fun Island, Rihivel or Fihalhohi resort in the South Male Atoll

Clothing

Select your clothes carefully, bearing in mind that the climate in Sri Lanka 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. Local people in Male and in villages on the islands find western styles of dress offensive. Brief shorts, tight fitting clothing etc. should be avoided by both men and women.

When visiting religious sites you will need to dress respectfully by covering your knees and shoulders, and taking off your shoes and hats. (You may benefit from taking along a pair of socks for temple visits as the ground can get very hot!). You will need to bring long trousers, or buy a sarong locally.

Footwear

Lightweight shoes and sandals

The Sri Lanka section includes several walks on rocky terrain where sturdy walking shoes are recommended with good ankle support.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

A water bottle and a torch. Whilst camping all bed linen is supplied on our overnight camp - there is no need to bring any extra equipment or sleeping bags. You may like to bring your own snorkel and mask although they will be provided on the Dhonis. Bring a torch. Also high factor sun protection and a hat. We recommend Factor 30 plus for snorkelling as the water intensifies the sun's strength. Both bath and beach towels are provided on the Dhoni.

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

In this region, tipping is a recognised part of life across the service industry. Local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided.

To assist with this your Explore Leader may organise a group tips kitty for included activities and meals, they will then account for kitty use throughout the tour.

For this we suggest £35 per family member (£20 in Sri Lanka, £15 in the Maldives).

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

Maldives

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 |
|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| £7.50 | £12.00 | £3.50 | £1.70 |

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Rufiyaa.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

US Dollars are widely accepted in the Maldives and are the best currency for exchange.

| ATM Availability | Credit Card Acceptance | Travellers Cheques |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| No Access | Not accepted | Not accepted |

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, Bicycle, Boat, Flight, Rickshaw, Train, Tuk Tuk

Accommodation notes

Comfortable - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

We spend two nights at a jungle lodge in Pidurangala. Due to the nature of its remote location the facilities are more basic compared to other night stops, but the benefit is its proximity with nature. The resort features a combination of bungalows, cottages and treehouses. We regret that it is not possible to allocate these in advance as the allocation will be based on the group size and make up of each family.

There are normally two Dhoni cruise boats that travel together on this tour with a capacity of up to ten per boat. The cabins have either double or bunk beds and there are a number of toilets with showers on

board. There is a bar and dining room with a sundeck to relax and sunbath throughout the day plus a TV and DVD player on board. Provided equipment includes; snorkelling gear, fishing equipment, various board games, life jackets and first aid kit.

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.

Family swimming

Most of the hotels have pools, we also visit a local 'weva' also known as a tank, a body of water that varies in size from small ponds to large reservoirs; not only are these offer prolific wildlife viewing opportunities; it's also possible to take a refreshing dip.

There are plenty of opportunities when on the dhoni sailing boat in the Maldives

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 citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any time.

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. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

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.

Ability to swim

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

Maldives

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis & polio. Travellers may wish to immunise themselves against meningitis. Please consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. 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.

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.

Family Information



Elephant transit camp

Natural wonders of Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka is a compact country of amazing diversity, making it an ideal destination for children of all ages. Add in a four day cruise around the Maldives in a traditional dhoni boat and you have a winning combination.

Visit the immense rock at Sigiriya that soars dramatically up from the flat central plains to form an impressive summit fortress, take the train to the highlands to tour the tea plantations, walking amongst the lush green tea estates, stay in a eco lodge 'mud hut' where we canoe, cycle and take nature walks in the countryside and visit an elephant transit home en-route to Udawalawe National Park in search of Asian Elephant, Wild Boar, Spotted Deer and Sambar. Finally we head to the idyllic palm-fringed beaches of

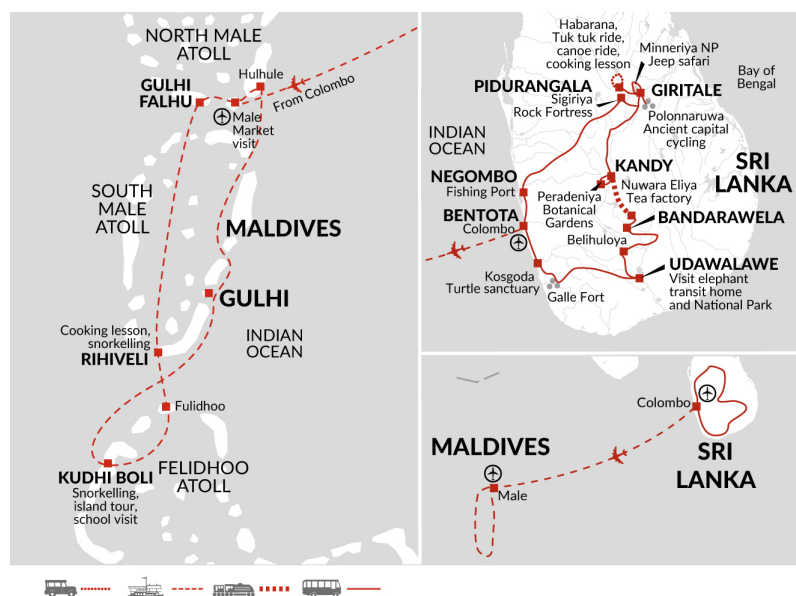
the south coast, before jetting off to the Maldives for a four day cruise.

Triple Rooms: This trip allows the option for triple rooms to be included within the booking on a selected number of night stops within the holiday in Sri Lanka (but not on the cruise). If you would like this option, a discount may be applicable on the cost of the trip - please ask our Sales team for further information.

Average Age: As a guide we have identified the actual average age of the children who have travelled on this trip over the last 5 years, to help you decide whether it's the right one for your family. The average age on this trip is 13 years old, this trip is suitable for children of all ages.

Minimum age: This trip is suitable for children of all ages from 7 upwards. On certain trips there may be some flexibility to accept children from the age of 5 if travelling with older siblings, please speak to our reservations team for details.

Additional Information



Why book this trip

This holiday is for families who want to enjoy cultural highlights of a country and sail around another! Our time in Sri Lanka includes staying in a jungle lodge, exploring ancient cities on bikes, climbing Lions Rock in Sigiriya and spending a night under canvas with fantastic wildlife viewing opportunities in Udawalawe National Park all complemented by a four day cruise around the Maldives filled with swimming and snorkelling. This is one of our bestselling family adventures and with good reason, it's a wonderful and exciting adventure, filled to the brim with activities for all the family.

Reviews



AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE



AIRPORT
TRANSFERS