

EXPLORE!



Tailormade Classic Sri Lanka
14 days

Sri Lanka - Trip code TMSL1

Tailormade Classic Sri Lanka

Temples, national parks and beaches

Discover Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle, old British hill stations and stunning beaches and on this two week journey through the country's highlights. Enjoy a spectacularly scenic train journey 'through the clouds' passing tea plantations and go in search of leopards in Wilpattu National Park before relaxing on the Indian Ocean coast.

Enriching tailormade journeys – for you

This bespoke journey features some of our favourite spots in Sri Lanka. You can choose to take our destination experts' recommendations and travel just as you see the itinerary here, or contact us to add your own special touches; head east to Trincomalee to see blue and sperm whales or maybe upgrade your accommodation to a luxury property or colonial fort. We're here to design your perfect holiday.

Call us on 01252 883 184.

Trip highlights

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Premium

Our premium accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

TRIP PACE:

Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Overnight flight to Sri Lanka

Depart the UK on your overnight flight to Colombo.

 None

DAY 2 - Arrive in Colombo and transfer to Negombo

On arrival in Sri Lanka's capital you travel just north to the beach resort and fishing village of Negombo for an overnight stay. Located along the coast, Negombo used to be an important port of entry and hence is heavily influenced by Portuguese, Dutch and British colonizers.



Accommodation: The Sanctuary at Tissawewa (or similar)



Premium Hotel

 None

DAY 3 - Game drive in Wilpattu National Park

Despite Wilpattu National Park's location in Sri Lanka's dry zone, it boasts nearly 60 lakes and is renowned for leopard, elephant and sambar deer sightings. Today you will go on a full day four-wheel drive safari in search of the elusive leopard amongst other mammals and birdlife. We choose to visit this park, rather than Yala National Park further south, because we believe it offers our customers a better experience. The same animals can be seen here as in Yala, however it is less crowded, making your visit more authentic, enjoyable and responsible. In the evening transfer to your hotel and enjoy a moonlit dinner (subject to weather).



Accommodation: The Sanctuary at Tissawewa (or similar)



Premium Hotel

 Breakfast Lunch Dinner

DAY 4 - Full day Anuradhapura and Mihintale tour

This morning, you'll explore the ancient capital of Anuradhapura. One of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world, it was founded around 500BC. Its golden age began around 260BC, when the King and his people converted to Buddhism. The city

became vast, spreading over many miles. There were hospitals for the sick, hostels for travellers and artificial reservoirs to ensure a good water supply. Of great interest are the 2200 year-old Sacred Bo-Tree; the Brazen Palace, once a nine storey residence for monks; the 4th century Smadhi Buddha masterpiece and the Ruvanvalisaya Dagoba - a 90m high dome-shaped shrine towering over the surrounding countryside. In the afternoon, you travel eight miles to the mountain peak of Mihintale. It is believed that this was the site of a momentous meeting between the monk Mahinda and King Devanampiyatissa, introducing Buddhism to the country. Exploring Mihintale involves climbing a flight of 1840 shallow stone steps leading to the summit of the Missaka Mountain, where there are excellent views from the top looking back to Anuradhapura.

After your tour, continue to your hotel in Anuradhapura for your overnight stay.



Accommodation: The Sanctuary at Tissawewa (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

DAY 5 - Visit Aukana Buddha, afternoon visit Minneriya National Park

Departing Anuradhapura this morning you journey to Sigiriya. You'll stop to view the magnificent Standing Buddha of Aukana, which stands 12m high. Sculptured in the fifth century by a master craftsman, it is still relatively isolated in its jungle setting. In the afternoon, you'll drive to either Minneriya or Kaudulla National Park (depending on the season), where you can enjoy a four-wheel drive safari to look for herds of wild elephant. These parks are also home to a large array of birdlife, including storks and pelicans.



Accommodation: Jetwing Lake (or similar)



Premium Hotel

Wi-Fi available



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

DAY 6 - Morning Sigiriya Fortress visit, afternoon visit Polonnaruwa

An early start this morning as you climb Sigiriya Rock ahead of the crowds and while it is still 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. Built in just seven years as a fortified palace to protect the reign of merciless King Kassapa, who had assassinated his father and deposed his brother, it is seen as one of the world's best preserved examples of ancient urban planning. A switchback series of steps and steel stairways ascend to the top. Halfway up, tucked beneath a sheltering overhang of rock, are the famous frescoes - the Sigiriya Damsels, their colours still glowing. Before reaching the summit you will see the famous lion paws carved out of the rock - which give Sigiriya its name of 'Lion Rock'. Once at the 200m summit, magnificent views can be enjoyed of the surrounding jungle and countryside.

In the afternoon you will proceed to the ancient city of Polonnaruwa, which reached its height of 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. Visit all of the neighbouring sites including the audience hall, the bathing pool and the Circular Relic House which contains a beautifully preserved moonstone carved at the foot of a flight of steps. 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 14m long.

Continue to your overnight accommodation in Dambulla.



Accommodation: Jetwing Lake (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Wi-Fi available



Swimming pool available



Breakfast

DAY 7 - Journey to Kandy via Dambulla Cave. Visit Temple of the Tooth relic

The next stop on your journey is Dambulla, where a great series of caves have been turned into temples dating from the 1st century BC. This UNESCO World Heritage Site still attracts scores of worshippers and here you will visit separate caves containing a large number of Buddha images and a few sculptures of Hindu Gods.

Afterwards you'll continue to Kandy. Sitting on a plateau 500m above sea level and 112km north-east of Colombo, it is, in climatic and cultural terms, a world apart from Colombo. Serving as the capital of the last Sinhalese kingdom until falling to the British in 1815, it is a place of cultural and spiritual importance. Buddhists from all over the world come here specifically to visit the Temple of the Tooth, the Dalada Maligawa. The costly jewelled shrine of the Holy Tooth, said to be Buddha's left canine, is kept in the upper floor of the original building. You will have a brief city tour taking in Kandy Lake and a viewpoint over the city before heading to the Temple of the Tooth in time for evening puja, where devout Buddhists lay offerings of flowers in front of the tooth chamber while prayers and music fill the air. Afterwards, you'll see a performance by the famous Kandyan dancers, admiring their impressive costumes and graceful dances, accompanied by a thundering drum beat.

Overnight in Kandy.



Accommodation: Mahaweli Reach Hotel (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Wi-Fi available



Swimming pool available

DAY 8 - Visit Kandy Botanical Gardens and a tea plantation en route Nuwara Eliya

From Kandy you'll drive a short distance to the Royal Botanical Gardens, 147 acres of Sri Lankan and international florals adorn this beautiful garden, once reserved only for Kandyan royalty. The avenue of royal palms and the huge Javan fig tree are the highlights for most visitors.

Leaving Kandy behind, you continue to Nuwara Eliya. Known as 'Little England', here you will find red telephone boxes, Victorian colonial architecture and pretty rose gardens - legacies from its era as a hill country retreat for any homesick Brits. The cool climate provided a sanctuary in which to immerse themselves in familiar pastimes, such as polo, golf, cricket and fox hunting. This part of Sri Lanka is also an important tea growing area and plantations stretch over rolling hills for as far as the eye can see, interspersed with the occasional tea-making factory. En route to Nuwara Eliya you'll stop at a tea plantation to learn about the history of the tea growers and pickers, and it is also a chance to taste some brews.



Accommodation: Hill Club, Nuwara Eliya (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

DAY 9 - Walk on Hortons Plains

Today you have a trek on Horton Plains. This unique and beautiful plateau of wild grassland and thick forest is famous for its biodiversity, with many plant and bird species exclusive to this area. You will trek World's End - an awe-inspiring escarpment dropping a vertical distance of 880m, providing incredible views over the plains below. The rest of the day is free to explore at your leisure or relax at your hotel.



Accommodation: Hill Club, Nuwara Eliya (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

DAY 10 - Train journey to Ella, a journey through the clouds

Today you journey by rail from Nuwara Eliya to Ella. Established in the 1860's for transporting tea and coffee from the plantations to Colombo, the journey is possibly one of the most scenic rail journeys ever and a great way to interact with the locals. Taking around three to four hours, the railway weaves around mountains, through a number of tunnels, passing tea plantations, forests, waterfalls and small villages along the way. On arrival in Ella you'll have a free afternoon to relax in the grounds of your hotel or explore the local area, perhaps on foot or by bike. Alternatively arrange a cookery class and learn how to make a traditional Sri Lankan meal.

Please note the train journey is subject to availability and therefore may need to be undertaken by vehicle. We recommend you book in advance.



Accommodation: 98 Acres Resort (or similar)



Premium Hotel

Wi-Fi available



Swimming pool available




Breakfast

DAY 11 - Drive to Unawatuna via Elephant Transit Home


Departing Ella today you'll journey to the Elephant Transit Home. Located in a scenic area just outside Udawalawe National Park, the Elephant Transit Home is a refuge for orphaned and sick elephants, where they are fed and cared for until strong enough to be released back into the wild, usually around the age of four years old. Supported by the Born Free Foundation, the home offers care and medical attention the elephants need at this young age. Depending on the time of your arrival you may be able to see the calves being fed, they drink around 40 pints of milk a day! After your visit, the journey continues to Unawatuna where the rest of the day is free for you to relax on the stunning beaches.




Accommodation: Calamander Unawatuna Beach Resort (or similar)

 Premium Hotel

 Wi-Fi available

 Swimming pool available


 Breakfast

DAY 12 - Free day in Unawatuna


Today is free for you to enjoy the many activities and attractions of Unawatuna and the surrounding area. You may choose to hire snorkelling equipment and explore the beautiful corals, or take a boat trip around the coast or upriver, past small largely uninhabited islands. Perhaps you could visit the neighbouring Galle, and its historic fort. 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. There is a lot to explore in the town and it is a lovely place to wander around the streets, soaking up its unique atmosphere.



Accommodation: Calamander Unawatuna Beach Resort (or similar)

 Premium Hotel

 Wi-Fi available

 Swimming pool available

 Breakfast

DAY 13 - Free day in Unawatuna


Today is free to relax on the beaches of Unawatuna, or explore more of nearby Galle. For those seeking pure relaxation, local Ayurvedic massages with natural, aromatic herbal oils are highly recommended. Alternatively, between the months of December and April, you might prefer to go on a whale watching trip in the hope of spotting humpback and blue whales – Please speak to your Tailormade regional specialist to arrange a whale watching trip.




Accommodation: Calamander Unawatuna Beach Resort (or similar)

 Premium Hotel


 Wi-Fi available

 Swimming pool available

 Breakfast

DAY 14 - Journey to Colombo in time for your flight

Leaving the Indian Ocean coast behind, you'll travel north to Colombo in time for your departure flight back to the UK.

 Breakfast

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 13



Transport

Private car
4WD
Train



Trip staff

Driver guide



Accommodation

3 nights premium hotel
12 nights premium hotel

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

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

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.

Premium

On premium level tailor-made holidays you will stay at comfortable mid-range hotels, chosen for their location, ambiance or local character. Your rooms will be clean and well-appointed, with en suite bathrooms and air-conditioning or heating as necessary. Premium level hotels normally have restaurants, bars and often other amenities such as a swimming pool and gardens, offering a good level of comfort at a reasonable price.

The Sanctuary at Tissawewa

The Sanctuary at Tissawewa is a colonial property which opened in 1907 and has played host to many important guests including Prime Ministers, Presidents and even Queen Elizabeth II. While the property is comfortable, offering a large verandah, spacious rooms and 11 acres of landscaped gardens, there is an element of faded grandeur which adds to the hotel's charm. The hotel also a spa and restaurant available.

Jetwing Lake

Jetwing Lake is set amid beautiful gardens, with rooms spaced out over the grounds and views of Kandalama Lake. There is a relaxed

and peaceful atmosphere and each room has its own private terrace. The comfortable rooms have contemporary furnishings with a taste of Sri Lanka in the design. There is a choice of restaurants and bars, a large pool with plenty of sunloungers and a spa.

Mahaweli Reach Hotel

The Mahaweli Reach Hotel is a large yet elegant hotel located in a scenic location on the banks of the Mahaweli River. The hotel has a range of facilities available including a swimming pool, gym, Ayurvedic spa and a host of dining options including dinner by the river. The rooms are spacious and modern with balconies overlooking the garden, pool or river. The restaurant serves wonderful Sri Lankan dishes.

Hill Club, Nuwara Eliya

The Hill Club was built in 1876 as a private club for British gentlemen. A grand colonial building, set in beautiful gardens overlooking tea estates, the design includes large wooden staircases, high ceilings and dramatic fireplaces and is furnished with antiques to retain the traditional feeling. The hotel has a large library stocked with books detailing Sri Lanka's colonial past, as well as a gymnasium, games room and a restaurant serving vegetables from the hotel's kitchen garden. There is a dress code for the formal dining room, requiring men to wear a shirt and tie, women to wear smart clothing. However, there is also a casual dining room with no dress code for a more relaxed feel.

98 Acres Resort

This charming resort is set within 98 acres of scenic tea plantations, offering comfortable chalets perched on the hillside, and to make the most of the stunning views over the countryside all rooms have balconies. There is a bar and restaurant where guests can enjoy Sri Lankan and international cuisine. There is also a pool, gym, games room, bicycles for rent and Wi-Fi connection.

Calamander Unawatuna Beach Resort

Calamander Unawatuna Beach Resort is a light, bright and modern property located right on the beach. It is a large resort with a number of rooms, a range of bars and restaurants, and three pools, including the glass-fronted Blu Pool which overlooks the beach and sea. Rooms have a balcony or terrace, and Wi-Fi is available too. There are free kayaks and paddleboards which can be borrowed from the resort, or you could arrange yoga lessons, snorkelling or diving trips, or whale watching excursions.

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](#)

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.

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.
