

8 Days | 4 Star Essential Sri Lanka | 2025

Colombo - Wilpattu National Park - Anuradhapura - Sigiriya - Polonnaruwa -
Minneriya National Park - Dambulla - Kandy - Nuwara Eliya - and more...

From **\$1,299** Typically \$2,399 pp twin share



Includes 7 nights accommodation in 4 & 5 Star hotels

Spot elephants, leopards and sloth bears on 3 wildlife safaris

Cycling tour around the Ancient Kingdom of Polonnaruwa

Visit tea plantations, bustling markets, temples and more

Description



Blend cultural marvels, wildlife safaris and the natural world on this **8 Day Sri Lanka Essentials** discovery tour, perfect for those who want to learn more about life in the Central Highlands and Cultural Triangle

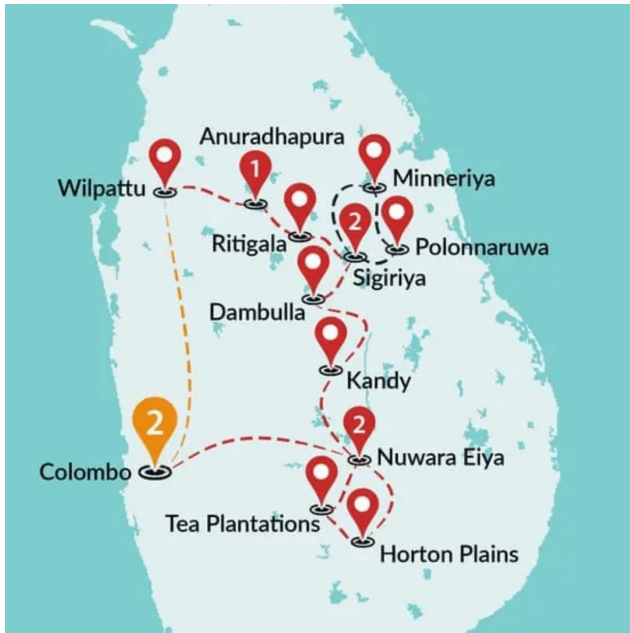
Finding a cheap Sri Lanka tour doesn't mean skimping on quality, and this eight day package does anything but that. Start your adventure in Colombo, the bustling capital of Sri Lanka. Explore the city's vibrant mix of colonial architecture, modern developments, and cultural landmarks like the Gangaramaya Temple. Colombo offers a glimpse into the island's history and contemporary life, with bustling markets, seaside promenades, and a dynamic food scene. After taking in the sights and sounds of the capital, travellers head north to Wilpattu National Park, known for its dense jungle, wildlife-rich lakes, and leopards. This national park is one of the oldest and largest in Sri Lanka, offering opportunities for game drives where elephants, sloth bears, and a variety of bird species can be spotted in their natural habitats.

Next, the journey continues to Anuradhapura, the ancient capital and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This city is famous for its well-preserved ruins of ancient Lankan civilization, including stupas, temples, and monasteries, surrounded by picturesque lakes and serene landscapes. From here, move on to Sigiriya, where you can hike to the top of the famed Lion Rock. The climb up Sigiriya, an ancient rock fortress, is rewarded with breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside and the remains of the royal palace that once stood atop the rock. Nearby Polonnaruwa, another historical site, offers an insight into medieval Sri Lanka, with its well-preserved statues, temples, and royal baths.

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Minneriya National Park provides a change of pace with a safari to see Sri Lanka's largest gathering of wild elephants, especially during the dry season between December and March. This park is a key spot for nature lovers and wildlife photographers. Afterwards, travellers head to Dambulla, home to the Golden Temple, a series of ancient cave temples that feature intricate Buddhist art and statues. The journey continues to Kandy, a cultural hub nestled in the hills. Here, the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites, awaits exploration, along with the serene Kandy Lake and the beautiful Royal Botanical Gardens.

Finally, a scenic drive through tea plantations and misty mountains leads to Nuwara Eliya, a town reminiscent of an English country village, complete with colonial-style buildings, cool climate, and lush gardens. This is the heart of Sri Lanka's tea-growing region, where guests can visit tea factories and enjoy the picturesque surroundings. After experiencing the natural beauty and tranquillity of the hill country, the journey loops back to Colombo, concluding a trip rich with history, wildlife, and diverse landscapes.



Itinerary

Day 1

Colombo

Welcome to Sri Lanka! If you're flying in today, look out for the sign at Colombo International Airport for the private arrival shuttle to your hotel. Meet in the hotel lobby around 7:00pm for an informal welcome meeting with your group and guide, so feel free to explore Colombo on your own pace until then. After the meeting, head out to a local restaurant for an optional tour group dinner and get to know your new travel mates.

Accommodation: 4-Star Fairway Colombo or similar

Day 2

Colombo 🚗 Wilpattu National Park 🚗 Anuradhapura

Grab yourself a window seat and get ready to head off the beaten track as we head north towards one of Sri Lanka's biggest nature reserves, Wilpattu National Park! Wilpattu has earned its name 'Land of Lakes' thanks to the serene natural bodies of water that cover the vast park. Jump in our Jeep and keep your eyes peeled for a healthy population of Sri Lankan leopards, elephants, sloth bears, spotted deer, mongoose, and water buffalo throughout an included safari. You might even get the chance to watch on while predators and prey make the ultimate fight for survival, and mother nature takes its course. After an action-packed day of safari, put your feet up at your hotel in Anuradhapura.

Optional Activities & Entrance Fees

Wilpattu National Park Entrance Fee - 36 USD

Accommodation: 4-Star Palm Garden Village or similar

Meals: Breakfast

Day 3

Anuradhapura 🚗 Ritigala 🚗 Sigiriya

After breakfast, follow your guide to the ancient city of Anuradhapura to learn of one of the greatest and oldest civilisations in the world. Once home to 113 kings over a 1300-year period, the ancient capital city showcases some of Sri Lanka's richest and most fascinating history. Hear stories of the sacred Sri Maha Bodhi tree and visit the Uwanwelisaya stupa, Samadhi Buddha statue and Isurumuniya Rock Temple with your guide. In the afternoon, put on your hiking shoes for a trek up to the Ancient Ritigala Monastery (1.5 to 2 hours return). Nestled within the dense and lush forest of northern Sri Lanka's highest mountain, Mount Ritigala, lays the ruins of the forest monastery dating back thousands of years. Get your camera ready because the views from the summit are some of Sri Lanka's best! Finish up a big day in the north at your beautiful hotel, or take a dip in the pool.

Optional Activities & Entrance Fees

Ritigala Monastery Entrance Fee - 5 USD

Anuradhapura Sacred Area Entrance Fee - 25 USD

Accommodation: 5-Star Amaara Forest Hotel or similar

Meals: Breakfast

Day 4

Sigiriya 🚗 Polonnaruwa 🚗 Minneriya National Park 🚗 Sigiriya

Fill up on breakfast, as we have a big day ahead! First up, a visit to the Ancient Kingdom of Polonnaruwa for an included bicycle tour with your local guide. The sheer size of Polonnaruwa is enormous, making a bicycle the best way to explore. Visit its UNESCO World Heritage-listed sites, including Gal Viharaya or "Rock Temple" where you will see four colossal statues of the Buddha cut into the stone, plus plenty of ancient palaces and royal baths. In the evening, visit the Minneriya National Park to witness the incredible migration of over 300 elephants! We'll park up on the bank of the reservoir in our Jeeps, switch off the engine and watch carefully as herds of elephants – one by one – roll on to the grass-covered banks to feed. The park is famed for hosting some of the largest elephant gatherings in the world on a regular basis, and is truly a magnet for wildlife enthusiasts across the globe.

Optional Activities & Entrance Fees

Polonnaruwa Ancient City Entrance Fee - 25 USD

Minneriya National Park Entrance Fee - 36 USD

Accommodation: 5-Star Amaara Forest Hotel or similar

Meals: Breakfast

Day 5

Sigiriya 🚗 Dambulla 🚗 Kandy 🚗 Nuwara Eliya

This morning we'll make our way to Dambulla, a city treasured by many kings since the 1st century BC to visit the iconic Royal Cave Temple and Golden Temple of Dambulla. These unique cave structures host magnificent drawings and cave paintings, each with fascinating stories that shape Sri Lankan history - so listen carefully as your guide explains. Next up, we'll transfer to the city of Kandy to visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth. Last ruled by King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe - before it was brought under British rule in 1815, Kandy crafts an array of culture, history and heritage in the minds of visitors worldwide. Take a stroll through the small lakeside town - cradled among the misty hills - and shop the bazaars, an arts and crafts centre, and fresh fruit and vegetable markets. Tonight we'll sleep in 5-star comfort at our hotel in Nuwara Eliya.

Optional Activities & Entrance Fees

Temple Of The Tooth Entrance Fee - 5 USD

Dambulla Rock Temple Entrance Fee - 10 USD

Accommodation: 5-Star Araliya Red Hotel or similar

Meals: Breakfast

Day 6

Nuwara Eliya 🚗 Horton Plains National Park 🚗 Nuwara Eliya

Prepare for plenty of "oh, wow!" moments in the central highlands of Sri Lanka. Today, we'll head towards the Horton Plains National Park to trek the endless stretches of green pastures at this eco-tourism hideout. Sitting at an altitude of 7000 feet (2.13 km), the plateau is covered in flora and fauna varieties that may be found nowhere else on Earth. Along the trek, watch out for the thundering Bakers Falls, and catch a glimpse of the famous "World's End" lookout. Then make the most of an included Jeep safari across the plains - watch out for Sambar deer, wild boar, otters and the beloved Sri Lankan leopard. In the late afternoon, enjoy free time back in Nuwara Eliya to wander through the countryside.

Optional Activities & Entrance Fees

Horton Plains National Park Entrance Fee - 36 USD

Accommodation: 5-Star Araliya Red Hotel or similar

Meals: Breakfast

Day 7

Nuwara Eliya 🚗 Tea Plantation 🚗 Colombo

A trip to Sri Lanka wouldn't be complete without a visit to its famed tea plantations! Take a tour to the cold and misty hills that are blanketed with lush green tea plants, before getting a look inside the factories as they process the prestigious brand of Ceylon Tea. Inhale the heavenly scent arising from these facilities, and then try the perfect blend of pure Ceylon tea. Next, we make our way back to the commercial capital of Sri Lanka, Colombo. This afternoon, you'll enjoy a guided city tour through the clean streets edging the crystal white racecourse, then visit the neighbourhood of Pettah – famous for its open-air floating markets and bazaars. Check out the city's Independence Square, before we finish up in Sri Lanka's trendiest part of town, with time for a quick shop for last-minute souvenirs and designer goods. The rest of the afternoon and evening are yours to explore the bustling metropolitan city!

Accommodation: 4-Star Fairway Colombo or similar

Meals: Breakfast

Day 8

Colombo

All great things must come to an end! Today, we say our farewells to new travel mates over one last breakfast at the hotel. Check-out of the hotel by 11:00am, and feel free to explore the city at your own pace until the airport departure shuttle at 3:00pm.

Meals: Breakfast

Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions

- 7 nights in 4 & 5 Star hotel accommodation on twin share basis
- 7 Breakfasts
- Modern air-conditioned private minibus and 4WD transport
- 4WD wildlife safari in Wilpattu National Park
- 4WD wildlife safari in Minneriya National Park
- Ceylon Tea plantation visit in the Central Highlands
- Cycling tour around the ancient kingdom of Polonnaruwa
- Guided city tour in Colombo
- Services of your English speaking tour leader, who will be on hand with advice and tips to ensure that you get the most from your trip, as well as expert local guides
- Ideal blend of free time, multi night destinations, optional activities and guided experiences

FAIRWAY COLOMBO HOTEL – COLOMBO – 4 STAR

Fairway Colombo is a modern and stylish hotel located in the heart of the capital city Colombo, only 700 metres away from the Khan Clock Tower

PALM GARDEN VILLAGE – ANURADHAPURA – 4 STAR

Conveniently located in Anuradhapura, the stylish accommodation extends over 50 acres of land with a swimming pool and beautiful garden surroundings

AMAARA FOREST HOTEL – SIGIRIYA – 5 STAR

This 5-star luxury property is located in the Sigiriya jungle, surrounded by wildlife and features an outdoor pool and views of the garden

ARALIYA RED HOTEL – NUWARA ELIYA – 5 STAR

Situated in Nuwara Eliya, the hotel is close to Gregory Lake and has an amazing view of the surrounding mountains and various facilities such as a restaurant and a gym

Want to add flights, pre or post tour accommodation in Colombo, or even a few days at one of the many beach resorts? Get in touch via info@traveldream.com.au to **bundle a travel package** and save

Exclusions

on your holiday to Sri Lanka

- Visa fees (if applicable)
- Some entrance fees (please refer to itinerary)
- Travel insurance (strongly recommended)
- Any meals and drinks not mentioned
- Any additional requests
- Tipping

Group Size: The typical group size on this program is between 13-35 guests

Single Supplement: Travelling solo? The solo supplement price for this package is available for \$900 to have your own room. If you wish to be paired in a room with someone of the same gender, please enquire with us via info@traveldream.com.au

Child Policy: Please note that this is an adults only package, and no children under 18 are permitted on this tour

Health & Fitness: This tour is available for travellers from 18 to 80 years, providing that all guests are



reasonably fit and active to be able to keep up with the group on hikes and walks

Visas: To enter Sri Lanka for a period of 30 days or less, Australian passport holders need a visa in the form of an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA). You should do this before you travel, as there are limited facilities to obtain an ETA on arrival at Colombo Bandaranaike International Airport

Entrance Fees: Some local payments apply, please refer to the itinerary for further details

Optional Tours: Designed to be flexible, there are a range of optional day tours and activities available on this package - please refer to the itinerary for further details and pricing

Airport Transfers: Airport transfers are included if your flight lands in Colombo on the first day of the tour between 5:00am and 11:30am. In addition, departure airport transfers are available on the last day of the tour between 05:00am and 5:00pm

Travel Insurance: We recommend Covermore travel insurance. To quote and book, please click [HERE](#)