



The Very Best of Sri Lanka

17 days from only £3,195 per person

Sri Lanka is an irresistible destination. Known as the Pearl of the Indian Ocean, this tranquil, teardrop-shaped island boasts idyllic beaches, ancient ruins, verdant tea plantations and oodles of elephants. Added to this, Sri Lanka has an array of wildlife and birdlife, many unique to this country, which draws visitors from all over the world.

Distant Journeys' 17-day Very Best of Sri Lanka tour is a wonderful introduction to this beautiful country. Our adventure begins in Colombo, the nation's lively capital and ends in the historic former Dutch town of Galle. In between, we explore the cultural triangle of Sri Lanka's interior, packed full of ancient ruins and sacred sites – the cave frescoes of Dambulla, the ancient site of Sigiriya, and the sacred Temple of the Tooth. We travel into the hills and tea plantations, see elephants in Minneriya National Park and search for leopards in Yala, Sri Lanka's most famous National Park.

Explore the Very Best of Sri Lanka, a land where the warmth of the welcome is matched by the sunny skies and shimmering seas.



Your holiday includes

Small group touring

- Maximum only 24 passengers

Flights with leading scheduled airlines

- Return economy class flights with Qatar Airways from London Heathrow. Flights from Manchester Airport may be possible
- All airport charges, security charges and any applicable fuel surcharges
- UK Air Passenger Duty Flights

Carefully selected hotels

- Superior hotels in great locations
- All hotel portorage
- Applicable hotel taxes

Many meals worth £494 per person

- 14 breakfasts
- 1 lunch
- 1 high tea
- 14 dinners

Unforgettable experiences

- Sightseeing tours in Colombo, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya and Galle
- Visit a remarkable charity-funded school
- UNESCO World Heritage Site of Polonnaruwa
- Safari in Minneriya National Park
- Explore the ancient site of Sigiriya
- View the caves and frescos of Dambulla
- Witness the 'Temple of the Tooth' ceremony, Kandy
- Tour the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kandy
- Visit a tea plantation in Nuwara Eliya
- Search for leopards on safari in Yala National Park
- Explore the old Dutch Fort of Galle

On the ground

- Services of an experienced Tour Manager and local guides
- All overseas transfers
- Modern, air-conditioned coaches throughout

100% Confidence

- Your holiday is covered by our Price Promise*
- Your holiday is covered by our Covid Guarantee*
- Your holiday is fully ATOL protected

* For more information on our Price Promise and Covid Guarantee, please see our Terms & Conditions on pages 112-115.



Tea plantation, Nuwara Eliya



Sigiriya



Temple of the Tooth, Kandy

The Very Best of Sri Lanka

Days 1 to 12: UK - Colombo - Habarana - Polonnaruwa - Minneriya - Sigiriya - Kandy - Nuwara Eliya - Yala

Day 1: Depart UK

Depart with Qatar Airways from London Heathrow. Manchester flights may also be available. Please call for details. Please note, flight schedules and airline carriers are subject to change. **In-flight meals and drinks included**

Day 2: Colombo, 2 nights

All flights to Colombo travel via Doha. On arrival, we transfer to the iconic Kingsbury Hotel in Colombo, for our first two nights in Sri Lanka. Later, enjoy a welcome drink with our Tour Manager and fellow travellers, where we become better acquainted with our forthcoming adventures ahead. **In-flight meals and drinks and dinner included**

Day 3: Colombo

Following breakfast, we take a sightseeing tour of Colombo, with its fascinating mix of cultures, religions and colonial influences. Visits this morning include the stately New and Old Parliament and Independence Square. We also visit the Pettah, a neighbourhood famed for open-air bazaars and markets, and the captivating architecture of Gangaramaya Temple. The remainder of our day is free to spend as we please. **Breakfast and dinner included**

Day 4: Habarana, 3 nights

We travel inland to Habarana where, on arrival, we visit an inspiring school project, which was established using charitable donations, and engage with the local school children. Afterwards, we travel to the Cinnamon Lodge Hotel, our home for the next three nights. Our fabulous hotel is surrounded by over 2000 trees that provide a home to serpent eagles, kingfishers and monkeys. **Breakfast and dinner included**

Day 5: Polonnaruwa and Minneriya National Park

This morning, we explore the medieval city of Polonnaruwa, a UNESCO World Heritage site. See the grand Royal Palace complex, including the majestic Kings Palace and Audience Hall. We witness the spectacular Gal Vihare complex featuring four gigantic images of Buddha, cut from a single slab of granite - a dramatic highlight of ancient Sri Lankan rock carving. This afternoon, experience a game drive in either Minneriya or Kaudulla National Parks, both set in captivating Sri-Lankan countryside, where wild Asian elephants roam in abundance. **Breakfast and dinner included**

Day 6: Sigiriya

Tour Highlight

We take an early breakfast before visiting the famous site of Sigiriya to discover its fascinating history. Surrounded by the remains of an extensive network of gardens, the most celebrated site is Sigiriya Rock with its flat-topped summit, some 200 metres above sea level, that contains the ruins of an ancient civilisation. The more adventurous and energetic amongst us will have the opportunity to climb to the summit, passing remarkable frescos and the famous 'Lion's Paws' along the way. On our free afternoon, we have the option to visit the ancient, Buddhist Mihintale Temple and monastery, and the Isurumuniya Temple; visit a local village and community; or simply relax in the surroundings of our hotel. **Breakfast and dinner included**

Day 7: Kandy, 3 nights

This morning, we embark on our journey to the Last Kingdom of Sri Lanka, Kandy. En route we visit the Cave Temple of Dambulla, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This amazing complex of magnificent caves dates back to the 1st century BC. Later, we stop at the Sri Lankan Garden in the rural village of Matala, a working spice and fruit farm, to learn about the local trees and crops in the company of our host. Enjoy a traditionally-prepared rice and curry lunch, then continue to Kandy and the charming Cinnamon Citadel Hotel for our next three nights. **Breakfast, lunch and dinner included**

Day 8: Kandy

We begin our day with a visit to the sacred Temple of the Tooth, commonly known as "Sri Dalada Maligawa". A significant shrine for Buddhists worldwide, the temple holds the blessed tooth relic of the Lord Buddha himself. We arrive for the morning ceremony and have time to explore the temple grounds. Later, we journey to the elegant Royal Botanical Gardens. With origins dating back to 1371, and once reserved exclusively for Kandyan royalty, these stunning gardens boast some 150 acres of graceful trees, lawns and flowering shrubs. This evening, a cultural show awaits – a fascinating performance of traditional Sri Lankan dances. **Breakfast and dinner included**

Day 9: Kandy Freedom Day

Enjoy a full day at leisure. Relax by the hotel pool, or perhaps hop on a tuk tuk and navigate the rural setting of Gampola to explore three lesser-known temples with a knowledgeable guide. Alternatively, trek through a nearby rainforest, rich in many species of birdlife, including Layard's Parakeet, Gold-Fronted, Blue-Winged leafbirds, and Spotted and Emerald Doves. You may prefer to visit Bhikkhuni Monastery, where you will learn the history of Buddhist nuns and meet a bhikkuni who will describe the ordained life. **Breakfast and dinner included**

Day 10: Nuwara Eliya, 2 nights

Today, we journey towards the cooler climates of Sri Lanka's hill country. For those of us who wish to experience the journey by rail, there is an opportunity (at a small extra cost and subject to availability) to join a local

train and travel through an idyllic panorama of forests, villages, tea estates and waterfalls. We arrive into Nuwara Eliya, which retains a colonial ambiance with its gentlemen's clubs and mock-Tudor buildings. Enjoy a brief city tour, before arriving at the Jetwing St Andrew's Hotel, offering scenic views of the surrounding countryside. **Breakfast and dinner included**

Day 11: Nuwara Eliya

Sri Lanka is recognised as one of the finest tea producers in the world, and today we learn about the region's tea plantations. During our tour, we explore a vibrant tea plantation and discover the leaf-picking process. We visit the plantation's factory and learn about rolling and drying the tea, as well as the art of tea tasting. Later, we conclude our day dedicated to Sri Lanka's tea production in the best possible way, with a fabulous high tea. **Breakfast, high tea and dinner included**

We recommend

Kandy to Nuwara Eliya by train

Described as one of the most scenic train rides in the world.



Day 12: Yala, 2 nights

After breakfast, we leave the hill country behind. As we descend, we travel through local villages dotted on the mountainside. Marvel at the vistas of tea plantations, forests and waterfalls in an area blessed with some of the most beautiful views in Sri Lanka. This afternoon, we visit the Elephant Transit Home, a wonderful facility which rehabilitates orphaned baby elephants with a view to releasing them back into the wild. Later, we arrive at the stunning Jetwing Yala Hotel, our home for the next two nights. **Breakfast and dinner included**

Safari camp experience

2 nights from £595 per person



For those wanting to get closer to nature, there is the opportunity to spend two nights in one of Sri Lanka's amazing safari camps. Set in remarkable locations, enjoy two safari drives into lesser known areas of Yala and all meals, along with alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are included. Please call for details.



Yala National Park



Tuk Tuk



Galle

The Very Best of Sri Lanka

Days 13 to 17: Yala - Galle - UK

Day 13: Yala

We have an early start this morning as we venture into the scenic Yala National Park, the second largest national park in Sri Lanka. Yala is home to an eclectic array of wildlife including elephants, bears, crocodiles and wild boars. Whilst elusive, the park also boasts the world's highest concentration of leopards per square kilometre and provides the best opportunity to spot this majestic animal. Our afternoon has been left at leisure to enjoy our hotel, or should we wish, maybe further explore Yala National Park, during an optional afternoon safari. **Breakfast and dinner included**

Day 14: Galle, 2 nights

Following breakfast, we say goodbye to Yala and travel towards Galle, a striking and historic city on the southwest coast of Sri Lanka. The main maritime port for the country for more than 200 years, Galle is famous for its Dutch fort with its colonial buildings, stylish cafés and quirky boutique shops. We take a brief sightseeing tour before arriving at the Jetwing Lighthouse Hotel, sat impressively atop a hillock, overlooking the sapphire waters of the Indian Ocean. This unique hotel was built by the renowned architect Geoffrey Bawa, and inspired by Dutch colonial design. **Breakfast and dinner included**

Day 15: Galle Freedom Day

Today is free to explore this fascinating region in a way that suits you. For those happy with an early start, there is the option to take a whale watching cruise, in search of the magnificent blue whale. Alternatively, you can learn how to paint traditional Sri Lankan masks with help from a local artist or learn to cook like a local. For a more relaxing day, be sure to take advantage of the many facilities our hotel has to offer, including spa treatments and two outdoor swimming pools. **Breakfast and dinner included**

Day 16: Depart Galle

All good things must come to an end. Nevertheless, we have our final day at leisure including complimentary late check-out, allowing us to explore Galle further, or relax by the poolside and freshen up before our evening flight. **Breakfast and in-flight meals and drinks included**

Day 17: Arrive UK

All flights travel via Doha. This morning, we arrive into the United Kingdom, as our Sri Lankan adventure comes to an end. **In-flight meals and drinks included**

Sri Lankan Beach Stay 4 Days from £425 per person

Why not extend your Very Best of Sri Lanka holiday with a three-night stay on one of Sri Lanka's renowned beaches.



Sri Lanka's south-west coast is renowned for its stretches of golden sandy beaches, and is the perfect place to unwind after an incredible tour of Sri Lanka.

Spend three nights at the Occidental Eden Beruwala a beachfront hotel on the shores of the Indian Ocean where white sand beaches and stunning sunsets await.

Your beach extension includes:

Three nights accommodation at the Occidental Eden Beruwala on a half-board basis and all transfers.

Please see page 61 for more details.

Departure Dates & Prices

2024 Departures

26 January 2024	SOLD OUT
05 February 2024	£3,195 per person
09 February 2024	SOLD OUT
26 February 2024	£3,195 per person
04 March 2024	SOLD OUT
08 April 2024	£3,195 per person

Private Touring Supplements

2 guests	£395 per person
3-4 guests	£295 per person
5-9 guests	£195 per person
10-14 guests	£95 per person
15+ guests	No extra charge

Prices

Prices are per person based on two people sharing a twin or double room.

Single occupancy supplement

£895.

Deposit

£500 per person if travelling Economy Class and £1,500 per person for Business Class.

Flight upgrades

Qatar Airways upgrade to Business Class from £2,795 per person return.

Private touring

Guests choosing a private tour may select their own departure date. Please note, alternative airlines may be considered or further supplements may apply in certain periods when international flight prices are higher.

Visa information

An e-Tourist visa is required for travel to Sri Lanka. For more information on applying for your visa and the associated costs, please refer to our Important Information on pages 108-111.

Important Information

Prices and flight upgrades are subject to fuel surcharges and the availability of flights. The correct price will be confirmed before you book.

Full Terms & Conditions are available on pages 112-115.

Call to book

Our award-winning travel experts are happy to answer any questions you may have, and to help you book your holiday with Distant Journeys.

Call FREE on 0800 141 3731

Monday - Friday 9.00am - 5.30pm **Saturday** 9.00am - 5.00pm
Sunday Open in peak season. See website for details.

Should you prefer, please feel free to email us with your enquiry.
Email: enquiries@distantjourneys.co.uk

