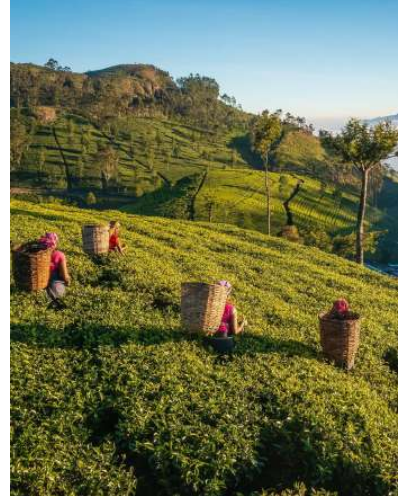




EXOTIC GLOBAL HOLIDAYS · DESTINATION MANAGEMENT
COMPANY · SRI LANKA

Discover Sri Lanka

Twelve days across one island — ancient cities and living temples, leopards and elephants in the wild, mist and tea gardens in the highlands, and a slow finish on the palm-fringed southern coast.

EXOTIC GLOBAL HOLIDAYS · CRAFTING AUTHENTIC
EXPERIENCES THROUGH SRI LANKA

EXOTICGLOBALHOLIDAYS.COM

02 · THE ROUTE

Your journey at a glance



Ayubowan

Thank you for choosing Exotic Global Holidays to shape your Sri Lankan journey. As the island's premier destination management company, we build authentic, unhurried travel around the people who take it — your interests, your pace, your comfort and your budget.

Twelve days are given to Sri Lanka's history, wildlife and landscapes. You begin among Colombo's restless streets, walk the ramparts of Galle Fort and let the South West Coast slow you down. Beyond that: leopard country in Yala, gathering elephant herds at Minneriya, mist and tea gardens above Nuwara Eliya, drums and dancers at a Kandyan cultural performance, and the climb to Sigiriya Rock Fortress.

On the pages that follow you will find the journey day by day — sights, suggested timings, our insider tips, accommodation and everything included. Optional add-ons are marked and guidance given throughout, but the rhythm of each day remains yours to set.

We look forward to welcoming you to the island. Until then, may you travel safely and with great anticipation.

03 · DAY BY DAY

The journey, day by day

DAY	ROUTE	OVERNIGHT	NIGHTS
01	Airport — Colombo	Colombo	1
02	Colombo — South Coast	South Coast	2
03	South Coast	South Coast	↳
04	South Coast — Yala	Yala / Tissamaharama	1
05	Yala — Ella — Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	2
06	Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	↳
07	Nuwara Eliya — Kandy	Kandy	2
08	Kandy	Kandy	↳
09	Kandy — Dambulla — Minneriya	Dambulla / Sigiriya	2
10	Sigiriya — Polonnaruwa	Dambulla / Sigiriya	↳
11	Sigiriya — Negombo	Negombo	1
12	Negombo — Airport	Departure	—

DAY 01 · ARRIVAL — COLOMBO

Ayubowan! On arrival at Bandaranaike International Airport, you are met by your Exotic Global Holidays chauffeur-guide and assisted with a smooth transfer to your hotel in nearby Colombo — just 40 minutes away. Check in to your hotel and spend the rest of the day at leisure. In the evening, explore the restaurants around Colombo.

TRAVEL TIP *Colombo can be humid on arrival — keep a change of light cotton clothing and a local SIM card in your hand luggage, and change a small amount of currency at the airport for tips and tuk-tuk fares.*

△ Overnight: Colombo

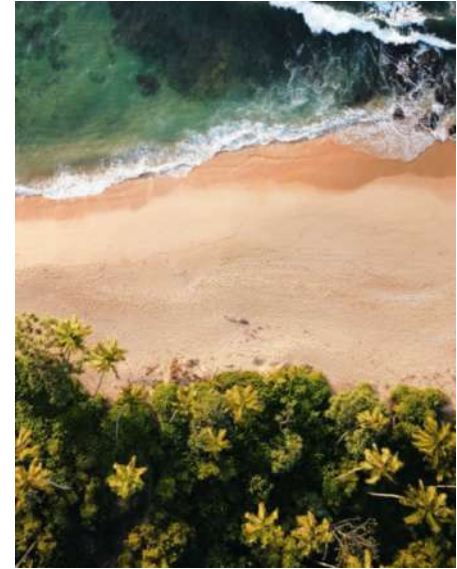


COLOMBO

DAY 02 · COLOMBO — BEACH STAY (SOUTH COAST)

After breakfast, check out and set out on a half-day tour of Colombo — the colonial arcades and clock tower of the Fort quarter, the crowded lanes of Pettah bazaar, the serene shrine rooms of Gangaramaya Temple beside Beira Lake, and the open sweep of Galle Face Green facing the Indian Ocean. Later, join the Southern Expressway for the easy two-hour run to the south coast, where your beach hotel and a long stretch of palm-backed sand wait. The rest of the day is yours for the pool, the sea or nothing at all.

TRAVEL TIP *Temples ask for bare feet and covered shoulders and knees — a light scarf in your day bag saves you renting one at the gate. Time the drive south to leave Colombo before 4 pm and you will miss the worst of the evening traffic.*



THE SOUTH COAST

△ Overnight: South coast beach hotel · night 1 of 2

DAY 03 · BEACH STAY (SOUTH COAST)

A full day on the coast, shaped however you like it. Galle Fort is the obvious draw — a walled Dutch town of ramparts, coral-stone churches and shaded verandah cafes that is best walked in the cooler light of early morning or late afternoon, finishing at the lighthouse as the sea turns gold. Closer to the hotel, a boat safari on the Madu River threads mangrove tunnels and tiny island hermitages, and the stilt fishermen of Koggala still perch above the surf at dawn and dusk. Between November and April, an early boat from Mirissa gives you a strong chance of blue whales and spinner dolphins.



GALLE FORT

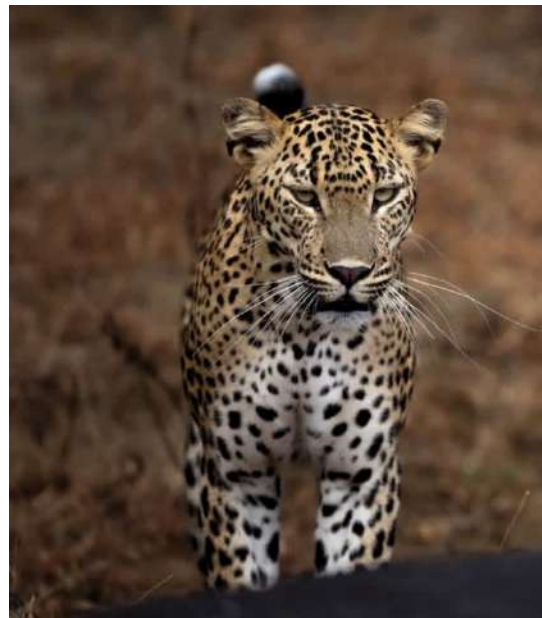
TRAVEL TIP *The Indian Ocean here has a real undertow — swim between the flags where lifeguards are posted, and ask your chauffeur-guide which beach is safest on the day, as it changes with the monsoon. Whale-watching boats leave around 6 am and sell out in season, so book the day before.*

△ Overnight: South coast beach hotel · night 2 of 2

DAY 04 · BEACH — YALA / TISSAMAHARAMA

After breakfast, check out and follow the coast road east, where the beaches grow wilder and the crowds thin out. There is time to stop at Hummanaya, the island's only natural blowhole, which throws spray high above the rocks on a strong swell, and at the rock temple of Mulkirigala, where cave shrines and reclining Buddhas are cut into a granite outcrop reached by a long stone stairway. You arrive at Tissamaharama, an ancient tank-and-dagoba town on the edge of leopard country, in time for an optional afternoon jeep safari into Yala National Park.

TRAVEL TIP *If you take the afternoon safari, carry a hat, sunglasses and a light windproof layer — open jeeps are dusty and surprisingly cold on the drive back. Leave the drone at home; they are prohibited in all national parks.*



YALA NATIONAL PARK

△ Overnight: Yala / Tissamaharama

DAY 05 · YALA — ELLA — NUWARA ELIYA

An early start for a morning jeep safari in Yala National Park, the island's best chance of a wild leopard and home to elephant, sloth bear, crocodile and a long list of birds across its scrub, lagoons and rock outcrops. Back for breakfast, you then climb out of the dry lowlands into hill country. Ella rewards the ascent — the photogenic stone span of the Nine Arch Bridge, the short and genuinely easy walk up Little Adam's Peak for a view straight down Ella Gap, and the cool spray of Ravana Falls beside the road. The last stretch to Nuwara Eliya winds past waterfalls and tea slopes into the highlands.

TRAVEL TIP *Yala's gates open at 6 am and the leopards are most active in the first two hours, so accept the early alarm. Pack a fleece or jacket in your day bag rather than the boot — Nuwara Eliya sits above 1,800 metres and drops to single digits after dark.*

△ Overnight: Nuwara Eliya · night 1 of 2



NINE ARCH BRIDGE, ELLA

DAY 06 · NUWARA ELIYA

A full day in the highlands, in the town the British built to feel like home — hedged gardens, a racecourse, a golf course and mock-Tudor bungalows in the mist. Visit a working tea factory and plantation to follow the leaf from plucking through withering, rolling and firing to the cup, then taste the difference between grades in the tasting room. Add a stroll or a pedal boat on Gregory Lake, the cool terraces of Hakgala Botanical Gardens, and Seetha Amman Temple with its painted gopuram above the stream. Those willing to rise very early can drive up to Horton Plains for the cloud-forest walk to World's End, a sheer 880-metre drop that clears only in the first hours after dawn.

TRAVEL TIP *If you go to Horton Plains, leave by 5.30 am — after about 9.30 am the escarpment is usually swallowed by cloud and the view is gone. Bring warm layers and closed shoes; the nine-kilometre loop is easy but often wet underfoot.*

△ Overnight: Nuwara Eliya · night 2 of 2



TEA COUNTRY

DAY 07 · NUWARA ELIYA — KANDY

After breakfast, descend from the tea country towards the old royal capital. The road is the attraction for much of the morning: Ramboda Falls dropping in two tiers beside the highway, viewpoints over the Kothmale valley, and a stop at a Matale-area spice garden where cinnamon, cardamom, pepper and vanilla grow within a few paces of each other. Nearer Kandy, the Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya spread over sixty hectares of avenue palms, an orchid house and a giant Javan fig, held in a loop of the Mahaweli River. Arrive in Kandy in the late afternoon with time to walk the lake path.

TRAVEL TIP For a highlight rather than a transfer, ask us to put you on the hill-country train from Nanu Oya to Peradeniya and have your vehicle meet you at the station — reserved seats sell out weeks ahead, so tell us early. Sit on the right-hand side going down for the tea-garden views.



△ Overnight: Kandy · night 1 of 2

PERADENIYA

DAY 08 · KANDY

A day given to the last capital of the Sinhalese kings, ringed by hills around its lake. The Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic is the spiritual centre of the island and of the Buddhist world beyond it; time your visit for one of the daily pooja ceremonies, when drummers and horn players lead the opening of the shrine and pilgrims press forward with lotus flowers. Add the covered market and craft workshops of the old town, the white Bahirawakanda Buddha looking down over the rooftops, a gem museum and lapidary, and the shaded forest paths of Udawattakele behind the temple. In the evening, a Kandyan cultural performance brings drummers, masked dancers and fire-walkers to the stage.

TEMPLE OF THE SACRED TOOTH RELIC



TRAVEL TIP *The tooth relic temple enforces its dress code strictly – or light clothing, shoulders and knees covered, shoes and hats left at the Pooja times are roughly 5.30 am, 9.30 am and 6.30 pm, and the evening is the most atmospheric; arrive thirty minutes early for the cultural show seat near the front.*

△ Overnight: Kandy · night 2 of 2

DAY 09 · KANDY — DAMBULLA — MINNERIYA — SIGIRIYA

Check out after breakfast and head north into the dry-zone plains of the Cultural Triangle. At Dambulla, a stairway climbs a granite outcrop to the Royal Rock Temple, five linked caves holding more than 150 Buddha images and ceilings painted with murals that follow every contour of the living rock — a place of worship without a break for more than two thousand years. In the afternoon, a jeep safari into Minneriya National Park, where herds drawn to the receding reservoir make up what is known as The Gathering, one of the largest concentrations of wild Asian elephants anywhere.

TRAVEL TIP *Dambulla's steps are open stone and fiercely hot by midday — go early or late and carry socks, as shoes come off at the top. Depending on water levels, your guide may switch the safari to neighbouring Kandulla or Eco Park; trust the call, as the elephants move between all three.*

△ Overnight: Dambulla / Sigiriya · night 1 of 2



THE GATHERING, MINNERIYA

DAY 10 · SIGIRIYA — POLONNARUWA

An early climb up Sigiriya Rock Fortress, the fifth-century citadel King Kasyapa raised on a 200-metre column of rock — water gardens and boulder gardens at the base, the mirror wall and the celebrated frescoes of the Sigiriya maidens halfway up, the giant lion's paws at the final stairway, and the palace foundations and cisterns on the summit with the plains laid out in every direction. Afterwards, drive east to Polonnaruwa, the island's medieval capital and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, best seen by bicycle or vehicle: the royal palace and council chamber, the Quadrangle's cluster of shrines, the vast brick Lankatilaka, and the serene rock-cut Buddhas of Gal Vihara.

TRAVEL TIP *Start Sigiriya at 7 am — by mid-morning the 1,200 steps are hot, crowded and slow, and the metal spiral stair to the frescoes becomes a queue. Wasps nest on the rock face, so keep voices low and movements calm on the upper terraces, and skip the climb if you are unsteady on open stairways; Pidurangala opposite gives the better photograph of Sigiriya itself.*

△ Overnight: Dambulla / Sigiriya · night 2 of 2



SIGIRIYA ROCK FORTRESS

DAY 11 · SIGIRIYA — NEGOMBO

A relaxed final transfer south-west through the coconut triangle to Negombo, the fishing town on the coast a short drive from the airport. There is time on the way for a village experience — a bullock-cart ride, a catamaran crossing of a tank and a rice-and-curry lunch cooked over firewood in a clay pot. In Negombo itself, the Dutch canal still runs behind the beach, the hundred-year-old St Mary's Church holds a painted ceiling worth stepping in for, and the lagoon fills with outrigger canoes at first light. The rest of the day is free for the beach and a last seafood dinner.

NEGOMBO LAGOON



TRAVEL TIP *The Lellama fish market is at its best between 6 am and 8 am, when the night's catch is auctioned on the sand — worth the early walk, and wear shoes you do not mind getting wet. This is also the place to buy Ceylon tea and spices at fair prices rather than at the airport.*

△ Overnight: Negombo

DAY 12 · NEGOMBO — BANDARANAIKE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Breakfast at leisure, and depending on your flight time perhaps a last swim or a stroll along the beach. Your chauffeur-guide then transfers you the short distance to Bandaranaike International Airport for your onward flight, with assistance at check-in. We hope you leave with a sense of the island rather than a checklist of it — and we would be glad to welcome you back.

TRAVEL TIP *Allow three hours before an international departure, and remember that the airport is only about twenty minutes from Negombo, so there is no need for a very early start. Buffalo-curd, cinnamon and any wooden or antique-looking item should be declared or checked before you pack it; export of genuine antiques is prohibited.*

△ Overnight: — Departure

Where you will stay

The hotels below are offered at two comfort levels for the same itinerary. Please confirm which category you would like us to quote.

DESTINATION	NTS	4-STAR OPTION	5-STAR OPTION
Colombo	1	Radisson Hotel Colombo	Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo
South Coast (Beach)	2	Turyaa Kalutara	Cinnamon Bey Beruwala
Yala / Tissamaharama	1	Chaarya Resort & Spa	Jetwing Yala
Nuwara Eliya	2	Araliya Green Hills	Araliya Green City
Kandy	2	Cinnamon Citadel Kandy	Earl's Regency
Dambulla / Habarana	2	Habarana Village by Cinnamon	Cinnamon Lodge Habarana
Negombo	1	Goldi Sands Hotel	Jetwing Blue

The itinerary comprises 11 nights and 12 days. All hotels are subject to availability at the time of confirmation; should a listed property be unavailable, we will do our very best to secure a similar alternative of the same category at the same cost; where that is not possible, an alternative will be offered with any supplement advised to you in advance. See The Fine Print for full hotel terms.

Pricing & terms

Please contact us for pricing and terms and conditions.

READY WHEN YOU ARE

Ayubowan — and safe travels

Tell us what you would like changed and we will rework the journey around it. Nothing here is fixed until you say so.