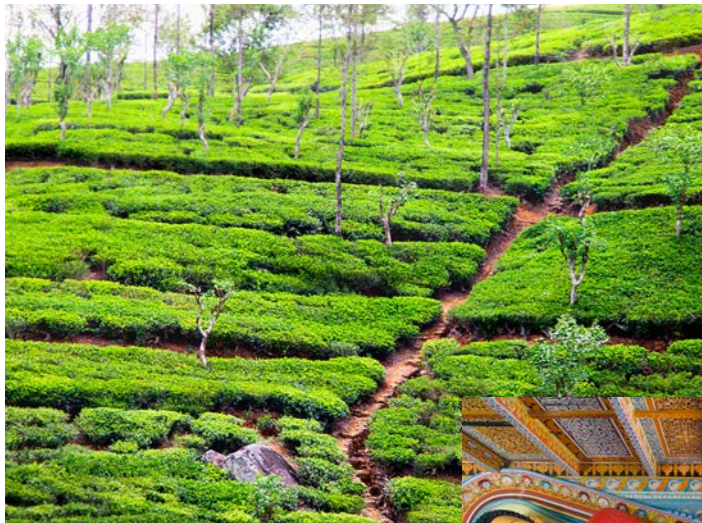


Touring Holidays in Sri Lanka

Expressions



Best of Sri Lanka Touring Holiday



www.expressionsholidays.co.uk
01392 441250

Best of Sri Lanka touring holiday

13 NIGHTS / 14 DAYS

Negombo

Sigiriya

Kandy

Nuwara Eliya

Yala

Galle

Colombo



Sigiriya

Gain an insight into the ancient culture, the contemporary folklore, the astounding scenery and the native wildlife of Sri Lanka with a luxury safari camp in a National Park. This tour gives you more than just a taste of the country but enough time to visit and explore in more depth.

This holiday can be undertaken staying in a range of hotels. To make things simple initially we are giving a Luxury option and a Value option. Each combination is based on tried and tested hotels within given price ranges but any other hotels we feature in the respective regions can be included instead and of course, Luxury and Value hotels can be mixed.

ABOUT THIS TOUR

This tour takes you first from London to Bandaranaike International Airport. From here, your private chauffeur-guide takes to the seafront port city of Negombo, rich in Dutch and Portuguese colonial history. Stay for one night and then head deep into the Cultural Triangle for three nights near Sigiriya. Visit the famous Rock Fortress, the ancient royal capital of Polonnaruwa, and a small authentic Sri Lankan village. Then, head into Kandy, the cultural capital of the island, so one night in the Hill Country. Explore Kandy, beside Kandy Lake, and pick up some souvenirs from the bustling market. Next, continue south to Nuwara Eliya, known as 'Little England,' for two nights immersed in the stunning landscape of Tea Country, where the hills are a patchwork of tea plantations and the magnificent Horton Plains offers sensational walking trails. Then, spend two nights seeking out the charming wildlife at Yala National park. Finish your tour with three nights in Galle, exploring the old Dutch fort and visiting the

many nearby beach resorts. Take in the views from the walls of this UNESCO World Heritage Site, before moving on for one last night just outside Colombo. On your fourteenth day, return to the UK by air.

PRICES

From £3,080 per person - value option
From £3,580 per person - luxury option

Based on double occupancy in hotels mentioned in the back of this document, with flights to and from Colombo, and private chauffeur-guide.

DATES

This holiday can be arranged throughout the year. Timings can vary depending on the month and day of the week.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Flights with Sri Lankan Airways from London Heathrow to Bandaranaike International Airport and back
- Entrance fees to the sites and monuments listed in the itinerary (optional excursions are charged at a supplement)
- Private English-speaking chauffeur-guide in an air-conditioned Japanese car for duration
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in Negombo
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in Sigiriya
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in Kandy
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in Nuwara Eliya
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in Yala
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in Galle or Koggala
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in Colombo

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Visa
- Meals and drinks, unless specified
- Personal travel insurance
- Additional nights in any destination

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Negombo - Sigiriya - Kandy - Nuwara Eliya - Yala - Galle - Colombo

Expressions

Day one: Arrive in Colombo and continue to Negombo

You will be met on arrival and driven by your English-speaking chauffeur guide who will accompany you throughout your tour of Sri Lanka. Negombo, set amid lush groves of coconut palms, breathes the spirit of the sea and the town itself shows its interesting colonial past with many historical buildings. Negombo is an important fishing town with Portuguese and Dutch colonial heritage. The Dutch legacy is seen in the remains of the grand Dutch Fort and the Dutch canal (now called Hamilton Canal) which runs from Colombo to Chilaw via Negombo. Although large parts of the canal are in disrepair, it is being revived and you can see gaily-painted boats using it as a waterway. Spend the remainder of your day exploring this historic city.

Day two: Negombo to Sigiriya

Today, depart for the Cultural Triangle (approximately 4 hours). This area is considered to be the cradle of Sri Lanka's Buddhist civilisation and is home to a wealth of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, alongside an abundance of wildlife and natural habitats. In the afternoon, set off to climb the spectacular rock fortress of Sigiriya, with its rocky abode and water gardens. Sigiriya is famous for its rock of golden-hued granite. In the 5th century King Kashyapa 'tamed' the Lion's Rock, by building a palace atop its summit.

Day three: Visit Polonnaruwa

Today visit Polonnaruwa, an ancient royal capital, with its well-preserved 12th Century ruins and impressive stone sculptures recalling an inspired past and the story of Buddhism. This will give you the chance to experience the grandeur of this period and the artistry of the island's early craftsmen. Highlights are the Royal Palace and Council Chamber, and the four graceful Buddha statues of Gal Vihara (Stone Temple), the pinnacle of Sri Lankan rock carving.

Day four: Sigiriya

This morning you will take a short drive from Sigiriya to Hiriwaduna Village, where you will have the opportunity to meet with the local villagers. You can help in some of their daily tasks, such as farming and cooking, or even be taken on a bullock cart ride through a banana plantation, tasting the ripe bananas along the way! Afterwards, enjoy a typical Sri Lankan style rice and curry meal with the local villagers. This afternoon, visit the famous Dambulla cave temple dating back to the 5th Century BC. The walls of this World Heritage Site are covered with murals exceeding 21,000 square feet, and it really is one of the



Tea Country

most spectacular sights on the island. This visit involves a 10-15 minute walk uphill with wonderful views over the plains at the top.

Day five: Sigiriya to Kandy

Today drive to Kandy in the hill country, Sri Lanka's second city (approximately 2.5 hours drive). Kandy was the last capital of the Sinhalese kingdom and is today still an important cultural and spiritual centre. Explore this picturesque lake-side city with its wealth of antique and gemstone shops, a bustling market and numerous restaurants. British legacies still remain in central Kandy, in the form of grand old buildings and hotels, St Paul's Church and Royal Palace Park. It is also possible to walk most of the way around the lake besides which Kandy is built, where you can see the Royal Bathing Pavilion and the royal summerhouse which is on an island in the centre of the lake). There is a lively market and a plethora of shops, gem showrooms and arts & crafts workshops. There are also several nightly cultural shows that showcase traditional Kandyan drumming, music and dance and the city boasts a fine international cricket stadium.

Day six: Kandy to Tea Country

After breakfast, head south into the cooler mountains to the heart of the tea country. See the curious 'Little England' hill station of Nuwara Eliya, with its racecourse, golf course, lake and British colonial buildings. This 'Little England' of Sri Lanka sits against mountains, valleys, waterfalls and tea plantations, a

perfect place for nature lovers. Whilst in tea country, visit a tea factory on a working tea estate, following the process of tea production and enjoying a tea tasting.

Optional: Take the train with observation coach from Kandy to Tea Country. A leisurely way of experiencing the scenery is to take the train travelling in the first class observation coach from Peradeniya to Nanu Oya (for Nuwara Eliya). The train leaves at 12.30 and arrives at 15.50.

Day seven: Visit Horton Plains

Start early to drive through the early morning mist to Horton Plains National Park, Sri Lanka's highest plateau. This is a world apart from the rest of Sri Lanka, a landscape with a unique climate and ecosystem. The circular walk in Horton Plains National Park will take you to the spectacular World's End - a sheer drop of nearly 1,000 metres into the valley below, as well as to a view of the picturesque Bakers Waterfalls. More than 70% of Sri Lanka's endemic birds can be found here. In the afternoon, relax back at your hotel or enjoy a walk through the tea plantations.

Day eight: Tea Country to Yala

This morning, enjoy more mountain scenery on the way to Ella Gap, where the mountains dramatically drop down to the plains of the south, continuing to the south-east coast of the island. This nature resort is located in ten acres of jungle bordering the entrance of Yala National Park and the Indian Ocean. A variety of wild animals are seen in the grounds, such

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Negombo - Dambulla - Bandarawela - Tangalle - Galle - Bentota - Colombo

Expressions

as monkeys, wild boar and the occasional elephant. Yala is most famous for its leopards and has one of the highest densities of leopards in the world, offering the best chance to see them in the wild. This is a very dry terrain with little shade, bordered by a beautiful coastline and interspersed with watering holes. Daytime temperatures reach around 30c, so it is a dry heat with little rainfall.

Day nine: Yala National Park

Begin early this morning for a wildlife safari by jeep. Elephants, sloth bear, sambhur and buffaloes are amongst the animals also seen in the park. You will see that Sri Lanka is blessed to have the opportunity to showcase a huge amount of fascinating wildlife, all of which you will experience during your safaris. Because of the high density of leopards in Yala, the lack of other carnivores means that the leopard is the top predator, so adults and cubs can be remarkably relaxed during the day. Young males in particular seem to have no fear of the jeep which can lead to some excellent photographic opportunities. On an afternoon safari, watch out for crocodiles basking in the evening sun.

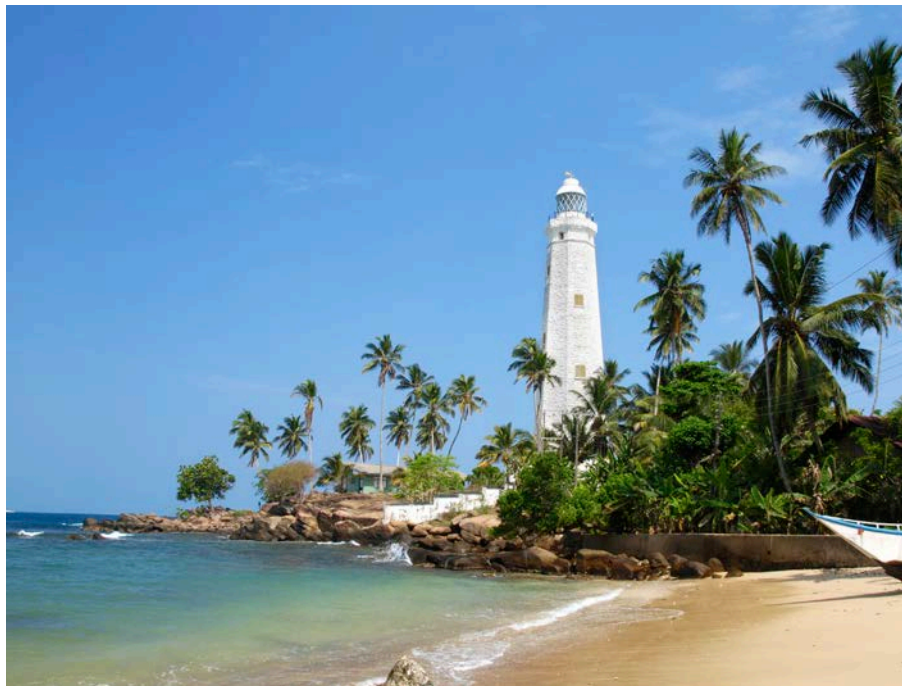
Day ten: Yala to Galle

After an early breakfast, drive to Koggala near Galle, passing through Hambantota, Tangalle and Matara on the coast road. You will then spend the afternoon exploring Galle at your leisure. Southern Sri Lanka uncovers a world of historic Dutch forts, beautiful beaches and stilt fishermen, where sleepy villages lie hidden in palms behind the wide sandy bays and sheltered coves.

Days eleven and twelve: Galle

Explore the city of Galle at leisure, taking in the rich heritage, culture and architecture of this vibrant coastal city. This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and has become the perfect time-warp for the inquisitive traveller with its myriad narrow streets within the city walls. There are some lovely small shops to browse selling crafts, jewellery and antiques. Galle and the surrounding villages are full of artisans such as lace makers, jewelers, woodcarvers and painters. Small shops sell crafts, jewellery and antiques, as well as a few designer boutiques. The surrounding region is incredibly beautiful with its rainforest reserves, low-lying tea estates, ancient temples, coconut plantations, rice paddies, fishing villages and palm-fringed coves. Later, relax by the ocean or maybe indulge yourselves with a spa treatment.

Optional: Carve your own traditional mask
Today, have a go at creating your own traditional Sri Lankan mask, using Sri Lankan



Galle

methods of carving with traditional tools. You'll begin with an introduction into the history of Sri Lankan masks, their spiritual and historical meaning and how they have been influenced over time. Under the guidance of some fantastic traditional carvers, you will create your own mask which will reflect both traditional artistry and your own interpretations. Your mask is then yours to take home!

Optional: Merchant of the Fort with Juliet Coombe

Take a walking tour of the Galle Fort with local resident and author, Juliet Coombe. The focus is on the history of this huge, living coral fort and the merchant families of this thriving trading spot. You will meet some of the descendants of the original merchant families, experience the spice trade and learn how life was during the colonial period.

Optional: Karuna's cooking class in Unawatuna
This is a highly recommended day-long cookery course which teaches you the finer points of Sri Lankan cuisine and aims to have you mixing your own curry powder in no time. The course is led by Karuna and a trip to Galle market is included.

Day thirteen: Galle to Colombo

Your journey back to Colombo takes you along the coast road (approximately 4 hours drive). Depending on your interests, you may wish to make stops to see mask-making in Ambalangoda, Buddhist temples, the beautifully landscaped Brief Garden or the beach resort of Bentota along the way. In Colombo, you have time in the afternoon to visit the sights of the city and indulge in some

shopping.

Optional: Colombo City Walk

Once you have arrived in Colombo, you will have the chance to go on a guided personalised city walk through Colombo. This evening you will spend 3-4 hours exploring this fine city at dusk. You will be shown all the lesser known parts of Colombo; the secret alcoves, the historical landmarks, the fantastic architecture and Colombo's beginnings as a tiny trading port.

Day fourteen: Departure from Colombo

After breakfast, you are transferred to the airport (approximately 1 hour drive) for your flight home.

OPTIONAL

It is possible to add extra nights in the south of Sri Lanka, perhaps in Galle.

HOTEL LIST FOR THIS HOLIDAY

This holiday can be undertaken staying in a range of hotels. To make things simple initially we are giving a Luxury option and a Value option. Each combination is based on tried and tested hotels within given price ranges but any other hotels we feature in the respective regions can be included instead and of course, Luxury and Value hotels can be mixed.

Luxury option

Negombo: Jetwing Beach, the cool, contemporary architecture complements a charming stretch of beach. There is a lovely spa, great restaurant and a choice of water sports (Deluxe room on bed and breakfast) or Jetwing Lagoon, the first hotel built by Geoffrey Bawa, its architecture is simple, yet manages a cool elegance, its low-lying buildings strung along the lagoon's shore (Deluxe Room, bed and breakfast board).

Sigiriya: Jetwing Vil Uyana, this eco-luxury hotel has 25 individual 'dwellings' most with own plunge pool and private deck. There is a spa, yoga pavilion and two great restaurants (Paddy or Marsh Dwelling on bed and breakfast)

Kandy: Theva House, a private and luxurious boutique hotel, complete with awe inspiring views across mountains and valleys and just 2km from Sri Lanka's cultural capital of Kandy (Deluxe room on bed and breakfast).

Tea country - Nuwara Eliya: Heritage Tea Factory, nestled among endless hillsides and tea plantations, here is a luxury haven in the central region of Nuwara Eliya. Enjoy a welcoming cup of hot spiced tea and then relax in the luxury spa, perfect for when the mists descend over the hillside (Superior room on bed and breakfast) or Jetwing Warwick Gardens, over 5,000ft above sea level and amidst stunning majestic mountains, this unique Edwardian style lodge has been beautiful restored to reflect its original charm (Deluxe room on bed and breakfast).

Yala: Jetwing Yala, set just on the outskirts of Yala National Park, this resort is a fantastic stay for those who want to get unclose and personal with local wildlife. Take a dip in the huge outdoor swimming pool and relax in the scenic surroundings (Superior room on bed and breakfast) or Leopard Trails, this is luxury camping at its finest. If it's a true wilderness experience you're after, Leopard Trails ticks all the boxes while practising responsible tourism. (Tent on all-inclusive).

Koggala: Fortress Hotel, this deluxe and



The Fortress

elegant hotel has superb ocean views, an infinity pool, a wonderful spa and a choice of indoor and outdoor restaurants. It is very handy for visiting the city of Galle (Fortress room on bed and breakfast).

Colombo: The Regency at the Galle Face Hotel, its position facing the Indian Ocean on one side and Galle Face Green Park on the other, gives this magnificent colonial hotel an airy, resort feel, despite being in the heart of Colombo (Regency deluxe room on bed and breakfast) or Tintagel, a luxury small hotel in an exclusive neighbourhood (Executive suite on bed and breakfast).

Value option

Negombo: Jetwing Sea, overlooking the glorious stretch of golden sand of Negombo Beach, this hotel boasts simple, contemporary architecture to match the beachside lifestyle (Standard room on bed and breakfast).

Habarana: Chaaya Village, a comfortable, rurally located hotel set in harmony with its natural surroundings. Your time here can be spent not just sight-seeing, but enjoying nature walks, Ayurvedic spa treatments, elephant riding and joining local fisherman (Superior room on bed and breakfast).

Kandy: Cinnamon Citadel, offering peace and tranquillity from beside the Mahaweli River, this hotel is perfectly placed for exploring the city's most important cultural attractions (Superior room on bed and breakfast)

Tea country - Nuwara Eliya: Jetwing St Andrew's, set in the hill station of Nuwara Eliya with a 100 year old stately mansion at the heart of the building, this hotel offers authentic old world charm (Superior room on bed and breakfast).

Yala: Cinnamon Wild Yala, offers eco-friendly facilities and 61 comfortable, air-conditioned chalets in ten acres of jungle bordering the National Park, which is just five minutes' drive away (Jungle chalet on bed and breakfast).

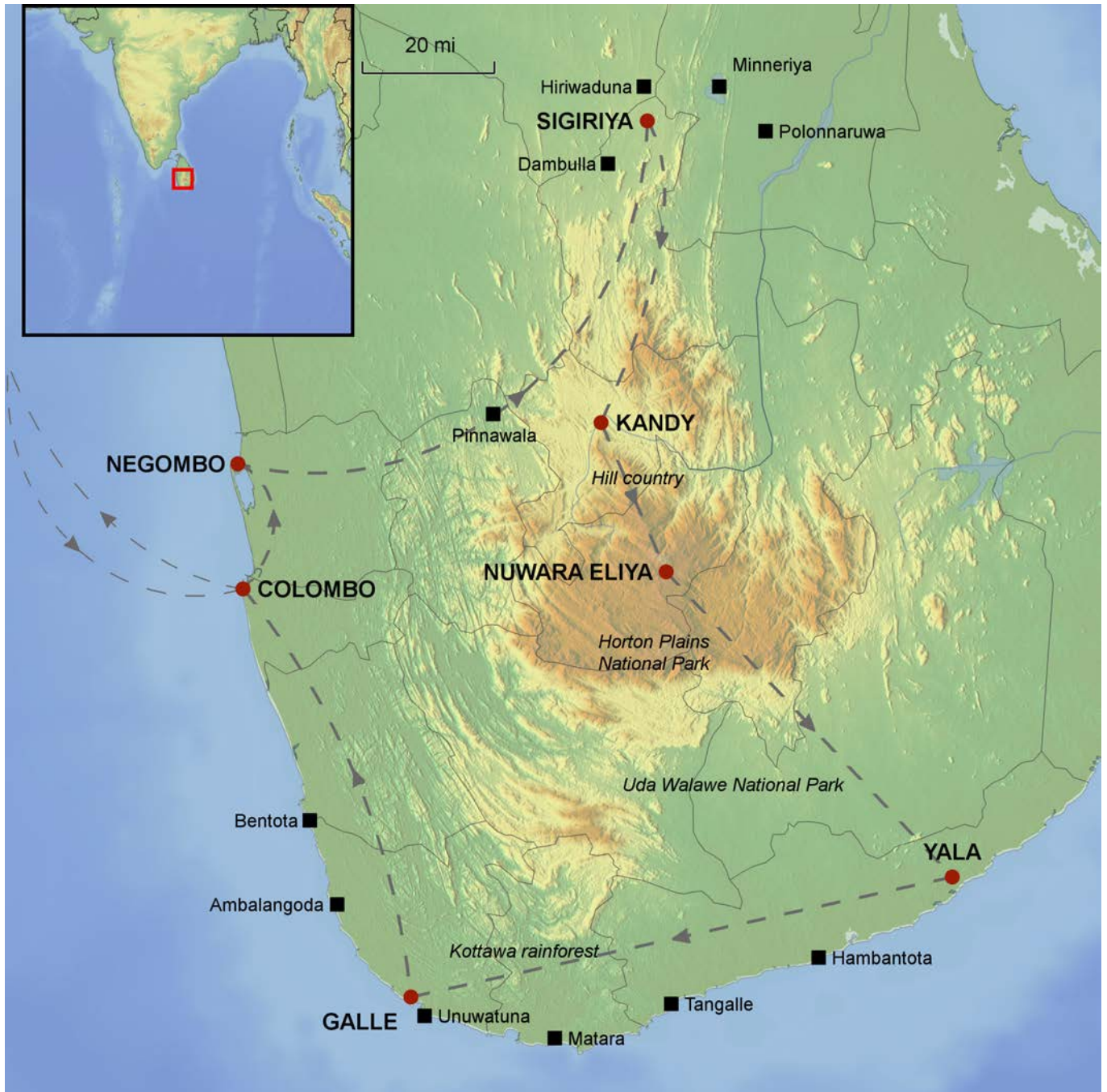
Galle: The Fort Printers, an 18th Century mansion, recently restored into a small boutique hotel in the heart of the historic Galle Fort. The mansion itself traces its origins to the Dutch period although Moslem traders and English colonialists, and spells as a printing house and a school, have also contributed to its unique character (Double room on bed and breakfast).

Colombo: Mount Lavinia Hotel, with a rich 200 year heritage as a British Governor's residence and fashionable beach resort, the Mount Lavinia is an impressive resort (Direct ocean view room Bay wing on bed and breakfast).

MAP OF THE BEST OF SRI LANKA TOURING HOLIDAY



The map below illustrates the route outlined in this touring itinerary, with overnight stops and places of interest highlighted.



GENERAL INFORMATION

This touring holiday is one of several suggested holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want, including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one location too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

The logo for Expressions Holidays, featuring the word "Expressions" in a white, elegant script font on a dark blue rectangular background.

OUR TOURS

Our touring holidays are for individuals travelling on their own or in their own family group. You do not join a group, but are escorted by your own private English-speaking chauffeur-guide.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of flights and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

Sri Lankan Airways operates daily flights to Colombo from London Heathrow. Most flights leave London in the afternoon or evening. Flight time is about 11 hours. There is economy and a business class cabin. In recent years, the business class cabins have been upgraded to fully reclining flat-beds. From Colombo you can also take the Sri Lankan air taxi to regional centres throughout the country. Sri Lankan Airways also operates flights to the Maldives via Colombo, making Sri Lanka and the Maldives a perfect two-centre combination.

TRAVEL WITHIN SRI LANKA

We include private transfers with all our holidays to Sri Lanka, and a personal chauffeur with all our touring holidays. Your English-speaking chauffeur-guide will meet you on arrival at Colombo airport, then accompany you on your journey around the island. All our holidays are for individuals, so you travel as your own party and do not join a group. It is also possible to hire a car in Sri Lanka, which can be arranged locally or in advance. A more popular option is to hire a car with driver for day trips or excursions, which, again, can be arranged by us in advance or by the hotel locally.

TOURING HOLIDAYS

A touring holiday of Sri Lanka is at the heart of what many of our clients want to experience from this fascinating country, and it is where we excel at using our personal knowledge and experience to tailor a holiday that is a perfect match for you. Stay in several different locations around Sri Lanka, allowing time to explore and relax in each. Combine a few nights on the beach with stays in the Kandy Hills, in the Cultural Triangle, on a high tea estate or in a national wildlife park, in Galle, Negombo, or Colombo. It makes sense to factor in a night or two in Colombo, Negombo, Wadduwa, or at the Wallawwa near the airport, at the beginning and/or end of your holiday to coincide with flight times.

REGIONS OF SRI LANKA

Roughly only half the size of England, yet packed with a whole continent's worth of temples, ruins, wildlife reserves, and luxury beach resorts, Sri Lanka is a beautiful, bite-sized slice of paradise offering a whole world of diverse escapes. Littered with elegant colonial hotels and enchanting boutique lodges, Sri Lanka also offers luxury at a relative snip. Young or old, family or couple, beach-bound or culture-vulture – a visit to Sri Lanka satisfies everyone. Formerly an Arab trading port, the commercial capital Colombo is a bustling, colourful town, with a fabulous bazaar, colonial churches, and craft markets. To the north of Colombo lies Negombo and the beaches of the west coast, whilst to the south Wadduwa is the start of a string of fabulous beaches running all the way down and around Sri Lanka's southwest coast, with a collection of intimate, exquisite beach resorts. Further southward lies historic Galle, a reminder of the Dutch presence on the island. Inviting as Sri Lanka's coastline is, however, the island's interior is worth the airfare alone, with forest parks sheltering leopards and wild Asian elephants, a verdant hill country carpeted in tea plantations with lovely boutique planter's house hotels, and no visitor to Sri Lanka should be allowed to miss the Cultural Triangle, boasting five UNESCO World Heritage Sites in an area no bigger than Kent. New to tourism is the north and north east of Sri Lanka, strewn with Hindu temples, colonial gems and long white beaches offering spectacular snorkelling.

THINGS TO SEE IN SRI LANKA

Cricket is a national sport, played on every dusty maidan and patch of grass from Jaffna to Galle. A real highlight of any trip to the south is Galle Fort, where you can wander round the ancient ramparts at sunset, watching cricket games below, or stroll along the narrow streets in search of antiques in tiny, friendly shops. Local festivals such as Vesak full moon in May and Poson full moon in July, as well as the famous Esala Festival in Kandy in July and August, when Buddha's tooth is taken out from the temple and paraded through the streets. Visiting national parks, sheltering an abundance of wildlife including leopards, elephants, bears and hundreds of species of birds. Buying tea, gems, jewellery, spices for a local bazaar. Fantastic spicy local cuisine, specialising in fish dishes, and delicious 'egg hoppers.' Tea-tasting in the hill country. Sigiriya Rock Fortress. The Cave temples of Dambulla. The medieval capital and ruins of Polonnaruwa. The sacred city of Anuradhapura. The west coast beaches flanked by palm trees, including Negombo, Beruwela, Bentota and Galle. The elephant orphanage at Pinnawela. The tea plantations near Nuwara Eliya, a region known locally as Little England. Ayurvedic massage. A warm welcome wherever you go.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, flight and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators).

Expressions Holidays
Lynx House, Pynes Hill, Exeter EX2 5JL



HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441250

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking and will depend on the ticketing deadlines involved in your booking.