

# Touring Holidays in Sri Lanka

*Expressions*



## Magical Gardens of Sri Lanka Touring Holiday



## Magical Gardens of Sri Lanka

9 NIGHTS / 10 DAYS

Sigiriya

Kandy

Ambewela

Bentota



Temple of the Tooth, Kandy

This is a delightful tour that offers you the chance to visit and explore the magical gardens of Sri Lanka. Alongside the historic and more contemporary gardens, you will explore the stunning rock fortresses and temples of the Cultural Triangle, the lake-side city of Kandy, the endless paddy fields and colonial plantations of the Tea Country, and finally a beachfront haven in the south. One of the highlights is a stay at Lunuganga, home to the late architect Geoffrey Bawa, and perfectly preserved since his death. This tour, while focusing on the beautiful landscapes and gardens in Sri Lanka, serves to capture the history and religious heritage of the island.

### ABOUT THIS TOUR

This tour takes you first from London to Bandaranaike International Airport. From here, your chauffeur-guide takes you to Jetwing Vil Uyana in Sigiriya. On Day Two, you visit the Cultural Triangle's most prominent landmark, the Sigiriya Rock Fortress, as well as the Rock Temples at Dambulla. On Day Three, travel to Kandy for the next two nights at the intimate and boutique Theva. On your fourth day, visit the Royal Botanical Gardens and the Temple of the Tooth. Then, on Day Five, continue on to the plains of Tea Country and spend two nights at Jetwing Warwick Gardens in Ambewela. This provides insight into the colonial influences on the island, and gives you a chance to visit more botanical gardens as well as English gardens. Day Seven sees you travel west to Bentota, where you will spend two nights at Lunuganga, the former home of Geoffrey Bawa. Visit Brief Garden, which was owned by Bawa's brother, and take in the atmosphere of the house. On Day Nine, enjoy a boat ride, and return home on Day Ten.

### PRICES

#### From £2,140 per person

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
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in Sigiriya
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in Kandy
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in Ambewela
- 2 night's bed and breakfast in Bentota

### WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

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

# DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Sigiriya - Kandy - Ambewela - Bentota

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## Day one: Arrive in Colombo and continue to Sigiriya

You will be met on arrival and driven by your English-speaking chauffeur guide who will accompany you throughout your tour of Sri Lanka. Drive into the Cultural Triangle, home to a wealth of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, alongside an abundance of wildlife and natural habitats (approximately 4 hours drive).

## Day two: Sigiriya

This morning make an early start to 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. Then visit the Dambulla Rock Temples which date back to the 5th Century BC. The walls of this World Heritage Site are covered with murals exceeding 21,000 square feet. The visit involves a 10-15 minute walk uphill with wonderful views at the top.

## Day three: Sigiriya to Kandy

This morning, head to Kandy (approximately 2.5 hours drive). A score of spectacular waterfalls tumble down over rocks and precipices throughout the cool high country of Sri Lanka. Among them is Hunas Falls, which derives its name from Hunnasgiriya peak, the forest covered mountain which overlooks this tranquil landscape.

## Day four: Kandy

Explore the Royal Botanical Garden at Peradeniya containing more than 5,000 species including over 150 palm trees. In the evening, join the crowds to visit Kandy's famous Temple of the Tooth. This is one of the most sacred sites for Buddhists, containing the tooth relic of Lord Buddha.

## Day five: Kandy to Tea Country

Journey from Kandy up into Tea Country (approximately 2.5 hours drive) which is a world apart from the rest of Sri Lanka. The misty landscape's cool, wet climate has fostered the growth of a unique ecosystem.

## Day six: Tea Country

Today, visit Hakgala Botanical Gardens. Highlights here are the mountain orchids (many of them endemic to Sri Lanka), the Fernery and the mature temperate zone trees and plants originally introduced by the British. The cool, temperate climate of the Hakgala area was conducive to the introduction of conifers and cedars, cypresses and pines, English oak and a rose garden.



Peradeniya Gardens, Kandy

## Day seven: Tea Country to Bentota

Leave Tea Country and head towards the south-west coast. Check-in to Lunuganga in Bentota for 3 nights (approximately 6 hours drive). This is no ordinary hotel. It's a blissful patchwork of earth, foliage, water and light which is worth exploring. Lunuganga was created in 1947 from a rubber and cinnamon plantation and launched the career of the renowned Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa. It offers the rare opportunity to stay in a living museum and is much more historic private house than hotel in feel.

## Day eight: Brief Garden and Lunuganga

Today you visit Brief Garden which belonged to Geoffrey Bawa's elder brother Bevis. Cannonball trees and frangipani perfume a succession of green rooms in which inside and outside spaces are blurred into one and which is a feature of many of Bawa's houses. The sense is very much of structure and compartmentalised garden areas. Back at Lunuganga, you will have time to stroll amongst the gardens of one of the world's most magical retreats and have the privilege of wandering the gardens at will. The hallmarks of Lunuganga are its almost wild, English-style romanticism yet given a Sri Lankan feel with a mix of rubber, rice and cinnamon. By evening choose an idyllic spot from where to sip the hotel's signature cocktail - the Lunuganga Sour.

## Day nine: Bentota and Hikkaduwa

Drive to Hikkaduwa and hop onto a glass bottom boat which will offer you fantastic views of a different type of garden – the coral reefs just off shore. Return for the rest of the afternoon and your last evening at Lunuganga.

## Day ten: Departure from Colombo

Transfer to the airport for your departure (approximately 2.5 hours drive).

## OPTIONAL

It is possible to add extra nights in the south of Sri Lanka, perhaps Galle, Tangalle, or even Yala National Park.

## HOTELS

Our selection of hotels in Sigiriya, Kandy, Ambewela, and Bentota are described below.

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### SIGIRIYA

#### Jetwing Vil Uyana

Jetwing Vil Uyana near Sigiriya has been inspired by local and rural traditions, designed to enable guests to experience nature alongside the modern amenities of a luxury hotel in an atmosphere of total peace and calm. The 25 individual 'dwellings' at Jetwing Vil Uyana have been discreetly placed in and around a wetland system with reed beds, rice fields and lakes, specially reclaimed from disused land, making it a haven for wildlife and a place of tranquility for guests. Four different room types are offered at Jetwing Vil Uyana according to the setting: some 'dwellings' are built over the paddy fields or the marsh, others over the water and some are situated in the forest. All of the rooms make use of natural materials (predominantly wood) and draw upon local styles. Most have their own plunge pool and outdoor wooden deck. Guests at Jetwing Vil Uyana can choose to dine under the stars or in the privacy of their own room, or enjoy a meal in one of the two restaurants. The Island Spa provides calming surroundings in which to relax with a treatment and guests will also be able to make use of the yoga pavilion. Specialist ayurvedic treatments are administered in a separate pavilion in the grounds. An excellent range of excursions are possible to explore the local area, from the Sigiriya Rock Fortress, which can be seen in the distance from the hotel, to elephant safaris, Loris watching in the hotel grounds and visits to the local village. Jetwing Vil Uyana near Sigiriya in Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle combines luxurious surroundings with a real commitment to the local environment and its people. [read more](#)

### KANDY

#### Theva

Theva is a private and luxurious boutique hotel offering awe-inspiring views across mountains and valleys, just two kilometres from Sri Lanka's cultural capital of Kandy. The edgy contemporary design, home away from home atmosphere and exotic cuisine make Theva a unique place to stay. The ten crisp, white bedrooms are splashed with the



Jetwing Vil Uyana, Sigiriya

ceremonial perahera procession colours of red, yellow, blue or orange, whilst images of kandyan dancers dart around the walls. Large panoramic windows allow you to wake up to a bird's eye view of the world and if you stay in a suite you can connect with the landscape from the comfort of your jacuzzi. The service is discreet and thoughtful, the cuisine a delicate fusion of east and west. Only the freshest ingredients are used and the home-made breads and ice-cream are to die for. Located along the slopes of the Hantana range, the clear air and the panoramic skies make Theva a good place to study the stars. Theva is arranged on three floors, so there are plenty of steps. It can be windy up here during monsoon seasons. [read more](#)

### AMBEWELA

#### Jetwing Warwick Gardens

Jetwing Warwick Gardens lies 5,782 feet above sea level amidst simply stunning majestic mountains and tea-clad slopes. Set in 29 acres of grounds, with its own organic farm and tea estate, this unique Edwardian style Estate 'bungalow' (actually with an upstairs and downstairs) was once the dwelling of a Scottish tea planter. Beautifully restored a few years ago to reflect its original charm, Warwick Gardens has five bedrooms, a library, TV snugery, dining room, kitchen and a magnificent drawing room/lounge, leading out into the garden and perfectly manicured lawn. Rich interiors are filled with silky soft rugs and chandeliers, wooden floorboards, old oak furniture and wood-burning fireplaces; there is even a baby grand piano in the lounge. All the bedrooms are spacious and have luxuriously fitted en-suite bathrooms, the Master bedroom offering extra space and an amazing view to Uva Gap. The staff make full use of the wholesome, organic foods that they



Jetwing Vil Uyana, Sigiriya



Theva, Kandy



Theva, Kandy

## HOTELS

Our selection of hotels in Sigiriya, Kandy, Ambewela, and Bentota are described below.

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produce on the estate and fresh milk comes daily from Daisy, the bungalow cow. Culinary experiences range from a romantic Garden BBQ for a couple or small group to a typical English breakfast in bed or on the lawn with fresh eggs from the farm and delicious fresh guava jam. In the peaceful haven of Warwick Gardens, you can play croquet on the lawn and take a walk around the estate, pick your own vegetables for dinner and relax with a pot of fine high grown tea on the terrace. Spend your day exploring this beautiful mountainous region, with its tea estates and tea factories, hilltop villages, waterfalls, monasteries, the unique Horton Plains or Hakgala Botanical Gardens, returning to flop into a sumptuous sofa by the warm open fire in the Warwick Gardens lounge, back 'home'. In this micro-climate, expect daytime temperatures up to 26 degrees Celsius, dropping in the night time to 14-16 degrees, early morning mists and frequent afternoon rains. [read more](#)

### BENTOTA

#### Lunuganga

Lunuganga is a beautiful country estate set in picturesque landscaped gardens, a short distance inland from Bentota and the south-west coast. Created in 1947 from a rubber and cinnamon plantation by Geoffrey Bawa, Lunuganga proved to be the catalyst that launched Bawa's long and distinguished architectural career. This country retreat became Bawa's lifetime architectural experiment and he continued to muse with its spaces and structures until shortly before his death in 2003. Now administered by The Geoffrey Bawa Trust, Lunuganga is open for the public to enjoy, either by staying in one of the bedrooms on the estate, or by visiting the magnificent gardens during the daytime (so if you stay, be prepared to have people wandering around the grounds). Offering a rare opportunity to stay in a living museum, you may wallow in the artistic surroundings of the Guest Room of the main house where Bawa lived, in the romantic Glass Room, the split-level Studio, The Gate House or Cinnamon Hill House - each one quirky and totally unique. Sri Lankan and western-style meals are enjoyed at the terrace or dining room of the main



Lunuganga, Bentota

house (or at Cinnamon Hill House if you are staying there). Days can be spent wandering around the gardens and discovering the beauties of Dedduwa lake and the tranquil ponds, natural habitats for colourful birds and damselflies, lizards and frogs. Wonderful views will appear at every turn as you meander past rice paddies, rubber, areca, ficus and frangipani trees along the intricate paths. Due to the unusual architecture and layout of the buildings, the profusion of artefacts and antique furniture and the natural environment that surrounds, visitors need to take personal care when staying at Lunuganga Estate. The Trust makes every effort to preserve Lunuganga exactly as Geoffrey Bawa left it, so potentially hazardous designs, such as the open ledge with a 6 ft drop in the Studio and the slippery, mossy paths, have been left as they are. Lunuganga should be seen as a living art gallery and a study in architecture and landscape design, certainly not as a hotel. There is no liquor licence but clients can bring alcoholic beverages with them to be served at table at no corkage charge. [read more](#)



Jetwing Warwick Gardens, Ambewela



Jetwing Warwick Gardens, Ambewela



Lunuganga, Bentota

# MAP OF MAGICAL GARDENS 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 cursive 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.

## PRICE INFORMATION IN MORE DETAIL

Scheduled return flights from London Heathrow to Bandaranaike International Airport with Sri Lanka Airways and accommodation at Jetwing Vil Uyana, Theva, Jetwing Warwick Gardens, and Lunuganga.  
**From £2,140 per person.**

## 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) and ABTA.



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## HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

**01392 441224**

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. No handling fee is charged on deposits up to £1000. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking and will depend on the ticketing deadlines involved in your booking.