

Touring Holidays in Sri Lanka

Expressions



Southern Sri Lanka Luxury Touring Holiday



www.expressionsholidays.co.uk
01392 441224

Southern Sri Lanka

14 NIGHTS / 15 DAYS

Colombo

Tea Country

Yala

Tangalle

Galle

Bentota



South Coast

Explore the magic of Sri Lanka's tea plantations, camp in luxury under the stars, swim in your private plunge pool, and stroll along Indian Ocean's finest beaches. This luxury tour is perfect for a honeymoon or pure indulgence and is a superb way of getting to know the southern part of the country with its varied landscape and wildlife. With fifteen days in Sri Lanka, you are at your leisure to relax on the beach, explore the country's colonial heritage in the form of forts and subtle architecture, and enjoy the spicy Sri Lankan delicacies.

ABOUT THIS TOUR

This tour takes you first from London to Bandaranaike International Airport. Spend your first night in Colombo at the Uga Residence, before your private chauffeur-guide takes you south-east into Tea Country. Spend three nights amongst the stunning rolling plantations at Ceylon Tea Trails, and then continue on to the Yala National Park on Day Five. Seek out the elusive Sri Lankan leopards at Leopard Trails, and then continue west to Amanwella Tangalle, a beautiful beachfront resort that provides you with sun, sand, and peaceful seclusion. Then, on Day Ten, move on to the historic Dutch Fort of Galle, and spend two nights at Amangalla. Explore the area's history, and then move on to the popular south-west beach resort of Bentota, final home of architect Geoffrey Bawa. After a final three nights here, return home on Day Fifteen.

PRICES

From £5,320 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
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in Colombo
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in Tea Country
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in Yala National Park
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in Tangalle
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in Galle
- 3 nights' 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

Colombo - Tea Country - Yala - Tangalle - Galle - Bentota

Expressions

Day one: Arrive in Colombo

On arrival in Colombo, you will be met by your English-speaking chauffeur guide who will accompany you throughout your tour of Sri Lanka in an air-conditioned vehicle. You will be transferred to your hotel (approximately 1 hour) and spend the rest of the day exploring the island's commercial capital. Colombo is the mecca for smart shopping malls and Sri Lankan designer shops, and Sri Lanka's thriving garment industry means you can find international designs at very reasonable prices.

Day two: Colombo to Tea Country

Head east from Colombo into the cooler mountains to the heart of Tea Country (approximately 5 hours drive). This area is wonderfully scenic with stunning mountain and valley vistas at every turn, carpeted with emerald green tea bushes. See the curious 'Little England' hill station of Nuwara Eliya, with its racecourse, golf course, lake and British colonial buildings. Continue on to stay for three nights in one or more of the beautifully furnished, colonial-era Ceylon Tea Trails bungalows. Dinner and drinks are included during your stay here.

Days three and four: Tea Country

Follow the trails of the planters of old Ceylon and watch the tea pluckers. The staff at Ceylon Tea Trails will recommend circular routes from 2kms upwards or you can follow a trail one way and arrange to be transported back. For a few days of pleasant hill walking, follow the Tea Trail from one bungalow to the next, staying a night or two at each place. A visit to a tea factory reveals how the leaves are dried and processed. Tea Trails' resident Tea Planter will show you first hand the tea-making process, ending with a tasting of different grades of the great brew.

Day five: Tea Country to Yala National Park

Today you will depart for Yala National Park, Sri Lanka's most visited national park. Enjoy the mountain scenery on your journey and witness these mountains dramatically drop down to the plains off the south, continuing to the south east coast. En route you can visit Uda Walawe National Park (approximately 4 to 5 hours drive). Uda Walawe is best known for its elephants and with a population of around 400, you are virtually guaranteed to see them in the wild. This is mostly hot, dry terrain where the watering holes are a magnet for wildlife. There is an Elephant Transit Home near the entrance to the national park (separate fee), where you can see young elephants roaming free in a large field, and flocking into the feeding enclosure for meal times.



Yala National Park

Day six: Yala National Park

Begin early this morning for a wildlife safari by jeep. A variety of wild animals are seen in the grounds, such 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. 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 seven: Yala to Tangalle

In the morning, depart for Tangalle (approximately 2 hours drive). The coastline here is made up of long stretches of sand and hidden coves, bordering dense coconut plantations and tropical forest. Southern Sri Lanka uncovers a world of historic Dutch forts, magnificent beaches and sleep villages, hidden away in the palms behind the wide sandy bays and sheltered coves.

Days eight and nine: Tangalle

The coastline around Tangalle is one of long stretches of sand and hidden coves, bordering dense coconut plantations and tropical forest. Tangalle is a quaint little town, with lovely views out over the coast. Here spend lazy days in the pool or spa or stroll along the beach and sample delicious cuisine. Sri Lankan's prepare innumerable curries, delicately flavoured with spices such as saffron, chillies and the indigenous cinnamon and cloves. While you are on the coast, make sure you try some of Sri Lanka's famous fish dishes, with multi cultural influences bringing an array of mouth watering dishes.

Day ten: Tangalle to Galle

Today you will head along the coast to historic Galle, approximately 2 hours drive. Galle, on the south-west corner of the island, is a reminder of the Dutch presence on Sri Lanka. The new town may have the usual urban bustle, but the Dutch Fort, built in 1663, retains a timeless air. The Galle Fort is a UNESCO world heritage site; sections of the wall offer the best free view of the delightful cricket ground (where Sri Lanka rarely lose) during Test Matches. You can walk along part of the ramparts with views out to sea and restoration work is underway to make the underground tunnels open to visitors. Check-in to the beautiful, colonial Amangalla for two nights. This hotel offers an oasis of calm and offers a lovely spa, the perfect place to unwind.

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

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Expressions

Day eleven: Galle

Today you will have time at your leisure to explore Galle. A must is the fascinating Galle Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Galle also has a cultural museum in a Dutch colonial warehouse and a newly-opened Maritime Museum. The small streets within the Fort are fascinating for the architecture and there are now some stylish small boutiques; the restaurants at Amangalla (previously the colonial New Oriental hotel), Galle Fort Hotel and The Fort Printers offer lovely settings in which to enjoy mouthwatering international and Sri Lankan dishes. The National Crafts Council handicrafts centre and an intriguing row of brightly painted fishing boats and market sellers lie between the old entrance to the Fort and the sea. In the newer town outside the ramparts, there is a lively market area with a whole pavilion dedicated to fish. It is also worth venturing inland from Galle, maybe encountering water monitors on a boat trip along a river or on Koggala lake, or driving through lush tropical scenery to one of the nature reserves, such as Hiyare or Kottawe. The villages around Galle are full of artisans – lace makers, jewellers, woodcarvers, painters and people making things out of coir, rush and reed. Those interested in organic farming will find a visit to Samakanda fascinating, set up and run by British journalist and environmentalist Rory Spowers. You can go for walks around the valley and learn about organic farming practices. They also serve delicious, organic, Sri Lankan lunches, cooked on a traditional stove.



Galle

Days twelve to fourteen: Galle to Bentota

Depart Galle and head north along the coast to Bentota (approximately 1 hour's drive) and check-in to the elegant Saman Villas for three nights. Whilst here you may wish to take optional trips to Bentota for water sports or visiting the Brief Garden.

Day fifteen: Departure from Colombo

Transfer to the airport (approximately 1.5 hours drive) for your departure.

OPTIONAL

It is possible to add extra nights in the any of the destinations featured in your itinerary, as well as those further north, including the Cultural Triangle.

HOTELS

Our selection of hotels in Colombo, Tea Country, Yala, Tangalle, Galle, and Bentota are described below.

Expressions

COLOMBO

Uga Residence

The Uga Residence is a former prominent Moslem family's residence on a leafy street in the heart of Colombo, boasting a colourful history dating back over 250 years. Restored and opened as a luxury boutique hotel in 2007, The Uga Residence now offers a combination of old-world charm and modern, stylish design. The restaurant, terrace and bedrooms are arranged around a pleasant courtyard garden where an inviting swimming pool takes pride of place. The eleven suites are airy and spacious with striking modern art adorning the white walls. The two plush suites are resplendent with original teak floors and antique furniture, each having their own sitting room and patio garden. The restaurant is popular with Colombo residents for its al fresco dining and its delicious modern continental and Asian cuisine. A stay at the Uga Residence offers a taste of Colombo's vibrant culture and lifestyle, both past and present. The atmosphere here is intimate and personal and a charming alternative to Colombo's larger hotels. [read more](#)

DICKOYA, TEA COUNTRY

Ceylon Tea Trails

Ceylon Tea Trails lies at an elevation of 4,000 feet in the Golden Valley of tea. The four classic colonial bungalows were built for British tea estate managers and have been sympathetically restored to offer the unique experience of life on a tea estate. Each Tea Trail estate bungalow is set in beautifully landscaped gardens filled with colourful, fragrant flowers and carefully manicured lawns. The bungalows are elegantly furnished with the finest cloth, soft Chinese rugs, and weathered teak floors. Living rooms warmed by roaring log fires house old books, antique maps, and soft armchairs. The bedrooms are spacious, with comfy chairs and beds, and a discreet butler is at your beck and call. Afternoon tea is served on the lawns in fine weather with a unique and devoted tea menu. The chef discusses all meals and mealtimes individually with guests, and you can enjoy your meal in the dining room, garden terrace, or your own room. Exquisitely presented,



Ceylon Tea Trails, Tea Country

mouth-watering dishes flow seamlessly throughout the day, giving you plenty of opportunities to try the local specialities. A menu of relaxing and rejuvenating in-room spa treatments and aromatic baths has also been introduced. [read more](#)

YALA NATIONAL PARK

Noel Rodrigo's Leopard Safaris

With two campsites in Sri Lanka, one in Wilpattu National Park and one in Yala, Noel Rodrigo's Leopard Safaris offers guests the choice between the well-trodden plains of Yala and the lesser-visited park of Wilpattu. Each camp is comprised of semi-permanent tents, each with a great sense of privacy and the welcome additions of modern amenities and electricity. These campsites are recommended for those looking to enjoy the 'wild' setting of a traditional safari, but with the comforts of excellent accommodation. Sturdy four-poster beds, curtained windows, classic en-suites, and peaceful verandas act as attractive finishing touches. Sheltered sitting areas provide respite at the end of a day's game drives, and flavoursome Sri Lankan

cuisine is served around the camp table, creating a vibrant feeling of community. Other activities at the campsites include star-gazing and a photography class, and guided nature walks, and visits to nearby temples can also be arranged. To complete your stay in Yala or Wilpattu, enjoy a refreshing drink around the campfire, or relax with a book in one of the hammocks.

TANGALLE

Amanwella

Amanwella is a first-class resort situated beside a glorious golden beach scattered with coconut trees. The awe-inspiring entrance is set around one pebbled and two grassy courtyards divided by the library and a pool. Discreetly positioned around the hillside, there are 30 suites built in a contemporary style using local materials of terracotta tiles and hand-hewn stone. Linked by pathways, each one boasts its own private pool and terrace with stunning views of the coconut grove, beach, or ocean. The main restaurant sits high above sea level with spectacular views across the pool towards the coconut grove and



Ceylon Tea Trails, Tea Country



Uga Residence, Colombo



Leopard Trails, Yala National Park

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beach. An array of Asian and Mediterranean cuisine with an emphasis on local seafood is served here. For a more informal atmosphere guests can dine al fresco at the Terrace, which serves light lunches and fresh, colourful local fruit in the day and delicious antipasti in the evening. Steps lead down to a magnificent, 47-metre, infinity pool where there are two large sun terraces with loungers ideal for relaxing and soaking up the sun. Just back from the beach is the Beach Club with an open pavilion and wooden deck, a perfect spot for enjoying a lunch of Asian salads or local seafood cooked over a coconut charcoal barbecue. Days at Amanwella can be spent snorkelling in the sea or enjoying a spa treatment and yoga in the 'far pavilions.' [read more](#)

GALLE

Amangalla

Dating back over 400 years, the luxurious Amangalla hotel sits within the rampart walls of historic Galle Fort. This glorious colonial building became the New Oriental Hotel in 1863 and has remained at the hub of life in Galle since. Having been beautifully restored, the hotel re-opened in 2004, offering 29 bedrooms, fine dining, and the excellent service of all Aman hotels. At the entrance lies a long white veranda, a favoured place for watching the world go by over afternoon tea. This leads through to the Zaal, a great hall with high ceilings, a grand piano, and magnificent chandeliers. Splendid international, Sri Lankan and fusion cuisine is served in the adjacent Dining Room, replete with crisp white linen and antique silverware. All of the 29 rooms are appointed with four-poster beds, polished teak or jack wood floors, planters chairs, and pettagama chests. Some rooms have a balcony or French windows opening onto the garden, whilst the Suites have their own separate living rooms. Guests can relax in the pretty, peaceful gardens and by the swimming pool, sleeping in the shaded 'ambalama,' or lounging in the sun. 'The Baths' Spa provides a perfect place to unwind in between your forays around Galle, offering a hydrotherapy pool, sauna, steam and cold plunge pools as well as Ayurvedic treatments. [read more](#)



Saman Villas, Bentota

BENTOTA

Saman Villas

Saman Villas in Bentota is a small luxury resort with just 27 suites, offering high standards of comfort and cuisine. Occupying a striking position on a headland overlooking a magnificent stretch of beach, Saman Villas has been designed according to the traditions of ancient Sri Lankan architecture. Buildings are open-plan, and in the terraced garden the swimming pool appears to merge with the Indian Ocean. The spacious suites face the sea on either side of the main hotel buildings. Their large glass doors afford uninterrupted views of the ocean as well as access to a private veranda or balcony; all suites at Saman Villas have a lounge area with a day bed and dining table, raised sleeping deck, dressing room and luxurious bathroom with open-air shower and courtyard. Days at Saman Villas can be spent basking in the peace of the hotel, swimming in the large pool, enjoying a massage or strolling along the sandy beach that stretches from the hotel's doorstep. Dining is a thoughtfully crafted fusion of western and

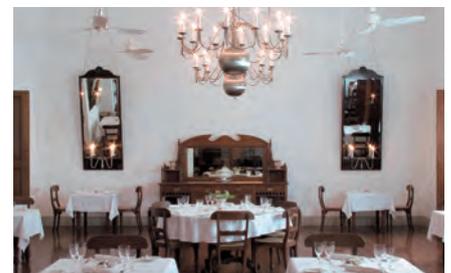
eastern cuisine with spicy Sri Lankan flavours. Guests at Saman Villas can choose to eat in a number of romantic dining locations including on the beautiful sandy beach. Set in beautiful landscaped gardens is the Sahana Spa, where guests can relax in luxurious treatment suites endowed with aromatic saunas, elegant dining pavilions, and the sound of soothing music and flowing water. After extensive refurbishment, Saman Villas in Bentota now offers ever-more luxurious fixtures and fittings and innovative design. [read more](#)



Amanwella, Tangalle



Amangalla, Galle



Amangalla, Galle

MAP OF SOUTHERN 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 the Uga Residence, Ceylon Tea Trails Bungalows, Leopard Trails, Amanwella, Amangalla, and the Saman Villas.
From £5,320 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 441217

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.