

Sri Lanka – Indian Ocean



Trip Summary

Don your Pith helmet and prepare for a safari of the senses in colorful Sri Lanka. From verdant jungles to palm-studded beaches, dilapidated palaces to lofty mountain tops, discover the far reaches of Sri Lanka's intriguing landscape. Venture into the wild on day, evening and even boat safaris to espy elusive leopards and swimming elephants that animate this mysterious land. Savor fireside barbecues, beachside picnics, sleep in a canvas tent and step back in time as you unearth the complicated history of one of the world's most strategic maritime locations. Swim in the shallow seas of the west coast and tip-toe through ancient fortresses and UNESCO World Heritage Sites before returning to Sri Lanka's cosmopolitan coastal cities. Surprises found around every corner and dripping tree branch, prepare to unwrap the unusual past and present of the Indian Ocean's crown jewel.

Itinerary

Day 1: Colombo Arrival / Kotugoda

Ayubowan! • Welcome to Sri Lanka! • On arrival to Colombo, clear immigration and customs • Meet your guide and experience your first impressions of this amazing island • Check in at your hotel and unwind • Plunge yourself into the refreshing pool and spend the afternoon relaxing with a good book and a cup of Ceylon tea • Get a good night's sleep in a seriously comfortable bed – you will think you are floating! • *Overnight The Wallawwa, Kotugoda (No meals)*

Day 2: Kotugoda / Anuradhapura / Kalu Diya Pokuna / Thirappane

Today is going to be an exciting travelling day. Prepare yourself for the drive to the Cultural Triangle (4.5 hours + stops) • The Cultural Triangle bears the nucleus of Sri Lanka's history and spans over the historically significant cities of Anuradhapura and Sigiriya, the enchanting sites within the triangle's boundaries that date back to 4th century BC • First, arrive and check-in at the wonderful Ulagalla Resort, one of our favorite properties in Sri Lanka • After settling down and resting, it is time to visit the ancient city of Anuradhapura, one of the oldest continually inhabited places in the world dating back 2000 years • Anuradhapura was found in the 4th century BC and is famous for its Dagabas (Temples), Reservoirs, and beautifully landscaped gardens, the ruins of which still remain to this day • Visit the sacred Bo Tree, which is the world's oldest tree on record, and has been guarded by monks for over 2000 years • Later visit Kalu Diya Pokuna, a beautiful man-made lake surrounded by big boulders is a site you won't find in a guide book • Sit on a rock, take a deep breath and soak in the beauty • *Overnight The Ulagalla Resort, Thirappane (B)*

Day 3: Thirappane / Ritigala

First things first: breakfast! • At Ulagalla, we suggest you try the Sri Lankan string hoppers: little spider-like dough circles that go great with pol sambol, a coconut chilly garnish • Today, we journey to Ritigala—think Indiana Jones • This place has that feel of being undiscovered, a world away from the most famous sights in Sri Lanka • Make sure you take time to explore in depth and walk all the way to the higher part of the complex • The archeological site bears a certain mysterious nature owing to the long meditational pathways that open into the thick jungle and large stone-lined reservoirs • Take time to sit down and connect with nature in this ancient meditation grounds • Later proceed to your hotel in Thirappane for an evening on your own • *Overnight The Ulagalla Resort, Thirappane (B)*



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Day 4: Thirappane / Madulkelle

With an early breakfast, proceed to the 8th wonder of the world as we Sri Lankans call it, the Sigiriya Rock Citadel • This morning leave the Cultural Triangle and journey to Madulkelle • Panoramic views of misty mountains, stunning valleys, ancient rock formations, lush forests, crystal clear streams, beautiful animal and plant life, paddy fields, traditional villages, and hospitable people make the Knuckles Mountains an amazing experience • *Overnight Madulkelle Tea & Eco Lodges, Madulkelle (B)*

Day 5: Madulkelle

Today, enjoy a nice trek through the lush green tea plantations surrounding the lodge and beyond • The Cambell Forest Hike is an absolute paradise for trekkers • Hike quaint little trails winding across crystal clear streams, to gorgeous waterfalls, and through dense forests and even terraced paddy fields while you enjoy the coolness and fresh air of the Sri Lankan countryside • *Overnight Madulkelle Tea & Eco Lodges, Madulkelle (B)*

Day 6: Madulkelle / Gal Oya National Park

After breakfast, proceed to Gal Oya National Park (approx. 4.5 hours + stops) • Gal Oya, a national park with some of the most unique ecosystems in Sri Lanka, is an unexplored treasure • Here we evade the crowds of nearby more popular parks like Yala and Udawalawe, creating a very special and intimate experience with this beautiful place and its elusive wildlife • Our accommodation for the next few nights is charmingly rustic, but wonderfully appointed • The lodge has an excellent team of local guides and some of the best food to be found in the country • One thing you won't find here is cell phone service, a real luxury in this modern age • *Overnight Gal Oya Lodge, Gal Oya (B)*

Day 7: Gal Oya National Park

After breakfast head out on a boat safari on Gal Oya Lake, the largest body of water in Sri Lanka • This is the only place in Sri Lanka to spot wildlife from the water and to truly immerse yourself in the animals' habitats from a safe distance • We'll keep a sharp eye out for crocodiles, water buffalo, deer, elephants, and many rare and endemic species of birds • You may be lucky enough to see elephants swimming between islands or bathing at the lake's edge • *Overnight Gal Oya Lodge, Gal Oya (B)*

Day 8: Gal Oya / Yala National Park

After breakfast, proceed to Yala National Park (approx. 4.5 hours + stops) • On the way we can visit some very seldom seen archeological sites like one of our favorites, Maligavila Vihara • Along our route, we have a high chance of running into the "elephant tollway:" Rajah, an elephant with the habit of standing right in the middle of the road! • Yala National Park and its magnificent sightings of majestic elephants, fine-feathered peacocks, great black bears, and agile leopards, is unparalleled to any of the national parks in the country • We'll spend the next several days exploring this gem of a national park with a knowledgeable guide • *Overnight Kulu Safari Tented Camp, Yala (B, L, D)*

Day 9: Yala National Park

Yala National Park is Sri Lanka's most famous National Park and with good reason; it is home to an amazing range of wildlife • We will avoid the huge crowds by entering Yala by jeep through the Kataragama entrance where you might see a few vehicles, but nothing like what you would witness at the main gate! • Yala is known for its leopard sightings but we'll be on the lookout for much more

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than this elusive cat • We'll be seeking out elephants, spotted deer, sambar, wild buffalo, sloth bear, jackal, mongoose, pangolins, pythons, and crocodiles • The 120 species of bird life is also incredible and ranges from Lesser Flamingos to Paradise Flycatchers, Crested Hawk Eagles, and Black Bitterns • *Overnight Kulu Safari Tented Camp, Yala (B, L, D)*

Day 10: Kataragama / Galle

This morning proceed to Galle, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, showcasing imposing Dutch-colonial buildings, ancient mosques and churches, grand mansions and museums (approx. 4 hours + stops) • Old Galle is a unique example of a preserved 17th century colonial Fortress • The Galle Fort itself is still a living monument with a bustling community • Explore by foot so you can peep through frangipani filled courtyards at houses, galleries or shops selling antiques, spices, pictures and hand-woven sarongs • *Overnight The Fort Bazaar, Galle (B)*

Day 11: Galle / Mirissa

Early this morning proceed to Mirissa for a whale watching excursion (approx. 45 minutes transfer) • From December to April spot swarms of sperm whales, fin whales and blue whales swimming freely in the sapphire waters (*optional activity / additional pricing supplement*) • Or experience a cooking class to make a dish that is loved by everyone called Biryani! • The rice and meat burst with flavor due to the spices such as clove and cardamom that are used in their preparation • The biryani is a session many who partake in this experience opt for, due to its still, mystical nature • Its local variant emerges from the Moor (Muslim) tradition of Sri Lanka and it is, now, widely enjoyed by the various Sri Lankan communities • *Overnight at The Fort Bazaar, Galle (B)*

Day 12: Galle / Colombo

Depart Galle and proceed to Colombo, Sri Lanka's biggest city and also its capital (approx. 2 hours + stops) • In the evening, Rashan awaits to take you on a tour of Colombo • When it comes to cities, you always find some interesting characters who know a place inside and out and delve deeper to find its true spirit and share it with others - Colombo has Rashan • A walk with Rashan will take you through the Galle Face green and to the inner roads of Slave Island • Come see it now before it all changes as Colombo is undergoing modernization and many of its architectural gems will be gone in a couple of years • Explore the streets of Slave Island where you will meet a lot of locals and can experience how their daily lifestyle is spent • No frills or scripts here, simply local life as it is! • Also, Rashan will take you to the street food scene where you can have a Kottu Rotti, an everyday Sri Lankan meal not to be missed and best enjoyed on the street • *Overnight Galle Face Hotel, Colombo (B)*

Day 13: Colombo Departure

Enjoy the morning free at leisure until your driver and guide meet and transfer you to the airport for your flight back home • We hope you had a great time in Sri Lanka! • *No overnight (B)*

***Trip itineraries are subject to change without notice due to road, weather and other factors outside of our control, for the safety and enjoyment of our guests, as deemed necessary and appropriate by Austin Adventures and Khiri Travel.*



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Activities

Walking – 1 to 4 hour guided walking excursions to view temples, city splendors, historical sites, ruins and UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Wildlife Safari – Morning, evening and/or full day safaris to seek out Sri Lanka's exotic creatures by boat or jeep in Gal Oya and Yala National Parks.

Discovery – Everlasting ruins, welcoming locals, boundless beaches, oodles of elephants, cheap prices, savory food and famous tea all describe Sri Lanka. Few countries have as many UNESCO World Heritage Sites in such a tiny area. Sri Lanka's 2000-plus years of history and culture can be revealed at ancient sites where renowned temples boast defining details. Across the island, that sound you heard in the middle of the night might have been an elephant heading to its favorite waterhole. Head out on safari in Sri Lanka's pleasantly laid-back national parks to encounter leopards, water buffalo, all manner of birds and a profusion of primates. When it's time to leave the tropical climate of the lowlands and coast, head for the hills, with their temperate, impossibly green charms. Fertile tea plantations and rainforest-covered mountains entice trekkers, sightseers and those who just want to see it from the patio of their comfortable hotel. And then there are the beaches. Often deserted and spectacularly white, they circle the island so that no matter where you go, you'll be close to a sandy jewel. Should you be able to leave your beach towel, you can swim and snorkel world class sites without world-class crowds. Come experience Sri Lanka with the leaders in adventure travel.

Your guides will take the time to explain the details of each activity, answer any questions, and demonstrate the use of all equipment. Each activity has been carefully planned to include options for all levels. Most importantly, your guides will help you select the distance that's right for you.

Meals

The hallmark of an Austin Adventures vacation is our exceptional dining. Meals are included as indicated in the daily itinerary. (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner). Alcoholic beverages and related gratuities are not included in the trip price.

Our Partner – Khiri Travel

Austin Adventures is proudly offering this trip in conjunction with Khiri Travel. Khiri Travel was founded in 1993 and now has offices and specialist teams in Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos). Khiri prides itself in authentic connections, adaptability, and innovation and offers intimate, personalized travel experiences for any budget from Family Travel and Regional Highlights to Community-based Tourism and Discovery Excursions. Khiri aims to maximize the positive effects of tourism on individuals and local communities, while minimizing negative social, environmental and economic impacts. The company strongly advocates that sustainability is no longer a luxury, but a must-do so we can leave behind a world that is livable for our children. You'll find responsible travel practices at the core of all product development and operations. Khiri travel wants you to rave about your Asia experience and will be certain to provide a trip you'll always remember.

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Distinctive Accommodations

Night 1: The Wallawwa, Kotugoda

Relax and decompress at The Wallawwa, an 18 bedroom beautifully renovated country house hotel set amongst tropical gardens and just 15 minutes from Colombo airport or 30 minutes from downtown Colombo. Listed by Conde Nast as one of the top 100 hotels of the world in 2015, it is the perfect start or end to any holiday in Sri Lanka.

Nights 2 & 3: The Ulagalla Resort, Thirappane

Once the ancestral estate of local Anuradhapura nobility; this hotel in Anuradhapura features a 150-year-old mansion at its center, with 20 private ecologically-built villas spread across 58 acres of lush greenery. As one of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, with its own solar farm generating half of its own energy requirements, Ulagalla is truly a unique boutique hotel.

Nights 4 & 5: Madulkelle Tea & Eco Lodges, Madulkelle

Nestled on a picturesque tea plantation, on the Knuckles Mountain Range 1000 meters above sea level, Madulkelle Tea and Eco Lodge will treat travelers to magnificent views, top class facilities, friendly and courteous service and plenty of things to see and do.

Nights 6 & 7: Gal Oya Lodge, Gal Oya National Park

Gal Oya Lodge is a unique Sri Lanka ecolodge spread across 20 acres of private forest. Each of the ten spacious bungalows has been created in harmony with the natural features of the landscape. The large 800 sq. ft. bedrooms include a king sized bed and an airy outdoor bathroom. A private living area with floor to ceiling windows and a garden veranda completes your secluded space in which to relax and unwind in a truly natural environment.

Nights 8 & 9: Kulu Safari, Yala National Park

The spirit of Kulu is to tread lightly, leaving a minimal footprint on the natural ecology of the wilds. All tents have been custom-made in South Africa by one of the world's leading safari outfitters. The base camp in Yala offers large tents (each tent is over 200 sq. ft.) that are secured on raised wooden platforms. Each tent includes a small deck for some private space to sip an evening drink, or to relax with a good book. The tents have en-suite bathrooms with hot and cold showers. The fly screens support excellent ventilation while keeping out unwanted critters.

Nights 10 & 11: The Fort Bazaar, Galle

Located in the heart of Galle Fort, the Fort Bazaar is perfect for guests that are looking to soak up the Fort's legendary atmosphere, a spot of gem shopping or walking the walls of the Fort's 300 year old walls. Once occupied by spice, tea and gem traders, the Fort Bazaar has undergone an incredible 9 year renovation and is now Galle Fort's newest and certainly hippest boutique hotel, restaurant and bar.

Night 12: Galle Face Hotel, Colombo

Sri Lanka's iconic landmark, The Galle Face Hotel, is situated in the heart of Colombo, along the seafront and facing the famous Galle Face Green. One of the oldest hotels east of the Suez, The Galle Face Hotel embraces its rich history and legendary traditions, utilizing them to create engaging, immersive experiences that resonate with old and new generations of travelers alike. No visit to Sri Lanka is complete without staying at this majestic hotel, built in 1864 and recently restored back to its former glory.



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Arrival & Departures

An Austin Adventures representative will meet you upon arrival at the Colombo's Bandaranaike International Airport. Upon clearing customs, transportation to the The Wallawwa Hotel will be provided. On Day 13 you will be transferred from the Galle Face Hotel to the Colombo Airport in accordance with your morning or afternoon flight schedule.

Trip Price

Call for pricing.

Trip Length

13 days / 12 nights

2020 Dates

Departs weekly, call for availability.

Host City

Colombo, Sri Lanka
Airport Code: CMB

Reservations & Availability

1-800-575-1540

*From verdant jungles to palm-studded beaches,
dilapidated palaces to lofty mountain tops,
discover the far reaches of Sri Lanka's
intriguing landscape*

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Trip Reservations

Reservations, Deposits and Balances Due

To make a reservation, contact Austin Adventures with your choice of trip and dates. A \$750 per person deposit is required to confirm your reservation. **Some Custom and International programs may require additional deposits.** Full payment is required at the time of booking if your trip departs within 90 days. Choose one of the following contact methods:

Toll free: 800-575-1540

Phone: 406-655-4591

Online: austinadventures.com

Email: reservations@austinadventures.com

Mail: Austin Adventures, P.O. Box 81025, Billings, MT 59108

* You may also book your Austin Adventure with your preferred travel professional.

** We accept most major credit cards and personal checks (U.S. funds made payable to Austin Adventures). Please do not send cash.

Included in the Trip Price

- Double occupancy rooms with private baths.
- All meals as listed in detailed daily itinerary (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner).
- Fully trained, English-speaking professional guides and knowledgeable local partners.
- Any necessary equipment – all safe and well maintained.
- Vehicle support and land transportation during the trip.
- Austin Adventures T-shirt, luggage tags and luggage service.
- Pre-departure and packing information.
- All entrance fees and boat fees as mentioned.

Not Included in the Trip Price

- Gratuities.
- All drinks and related gratuities.
- Meals as not designated in daily itinerary.
- Visa fees and/or visa authorization.
- Pre-and post-trip accommodations and associated expenses.
- Air and land transportation to/from host cities.
- All types of personal insurance.
- Personal expenses.

Pre-departure Information

After receiving your reservation and deposit, we'll send you a pre-trip planner with general information about the area you'll be visiting, a packing list, exercise guidelines, a guest information questionnaire and a liability release agreement for you to sign and return within 10 days.



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Private Custom Trips

Maybe your vacation schedule doesn't fit our list of trips and dates. Or perhaps you'd prefer a slightly different itinerary or level of luxury and activity. A Custom Adventure is the perfect answer. You pick the date and destination and brief us on the size of your group, what activities you want, your "must haves" and just how you like to relax and unwind. No detail is too small, no idea too outrageous. Our staff of experts will help create a tailor-made vacation that's just right for you and your group. In short, if you can dream it, we can make it happen.

Room Occupancy, Single Supplements, and Shared Room Assignments

All trip prices are based on double occupancy. Single rooms are available for an additional charge, referred to as a "single supplement." If you're traveling alone and wish to share a room, make the request at the time of booking. Austin Adventures will attempt to find a suitable roommate for you.

Minimum Age

The minimum age on our non-family designated adult and teen adventures is sixteen years old.

Cancellations and Refunds

The following cancellation policies and cancellation fees are in effect:

***As with deposits on some international and custom programs, refund schedule may vary, speak with your Adventure Consultant for details.

Cancellation 91 days or more before trip departure – Full trip payment refunded less a \$300 per person administration fee

Cancellation 61-90 days before trip departure – Full trip payment less 25% per person is refunded

Cancellation 31-60 days before trip departure – 50% of the trip payment is refunded

Cancellation 0-30 days before trip departure – No refund is given

Our Guarantee

Exceeding your expectations is our number one priority. In the unlikely event that you are dissatisfied with something during your trip, immediately notify your guide(s). If he or she is unable to resolve the issue, call our main office and give us the details of the problem, and a chance to correct it. We will do our best to find a resolution. If we are unable to do so during your trip, we will work with you upon your return home to arrive at a fair and equitable solution, including up to a full refund.