



13 Days

Sri Lanka

Pearl in the Ocean

Join us on the Emerald Island of Sri Lanka for a journey to experience many of the highlights of this remarkable island. With influences from Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, European traders and colonial powers, ancient kingdoms and, of course, cricket, Sri Lanka offers a warm welcome, dramatic scenery, and a laid back easy-going nature that means we'll quickly feel at home. On this itinerary, we have the chance to climb Sigiriya rock, take a cooking lesson as well as white water rafting and wildlife safaris. What better way to get to know the true Sri Lanka?



Recommended expedition itinerary

Day
1-2

Arrive Sri Lanka & transfer to Dambulla—cave temple tour

Overnight flight to Sri Lanka. We arrive at Bandaranayake International Airport and are met before being transferred to Dambulla. In the late afternoon, we'll enjoy a tour of the amazing Cave Temple, a fascinating way to start our journey in the Emerald Isle. During the temple tour, we make our way through five caves, containing over 150 images of Buddha going back to 1st century BC when king Valagambahu took refuge here. The second cave, the most elaborate and most spectacular of the five, is the largest - 170ft long, 75ft broad and 21ft high. There is a large reclining Buddha statue and statues of two kings.

Day
3

Early morning climb Sigiriya / afternoon transfer to Kandy / evening tour of temples

Rising nearly 700 feet above one of Asia's most well-preserved ancient landscaped gardens, the rock fortress of Sigiriya, a giant granite monolith, is an unforgettable site. First thing this morning we take the dramatic footpath which zig-zags its way up, past the famous Mirror Wall and to the top of the rock fortress. At the top, we spend time with the local monkeys enjoying the vast panoramic views and exploring the fortress, including the swimming pool that the King would relax by with his concubines. After lunch we journey to Kandy, Sri Lanka's famous hill station and another UNESCO World Heritage site. We check into our accommodation in Kandy and then set out on an evening tour of the city including a visit to the Sacred Temple of the Tooth Relic. It is located in the royal palace complex of the former Kingdom of Kandy. Since ancient times, the relic has played an important role in local politics because it is believed that whoever holds the relic holds the governance of the country.

Day
4

Cooking lesson in Digana / transfer to Kitulgala

After an early morning breakfast, we travel to the Tamarind Gardens for a cooking session with the local staff, followed by lunch. We'll be eating what we cook, so make sure you pay attention to the instructions! We head off on a village trail in the afternoon to experience local life before continuing our journey on to Kitulgala.

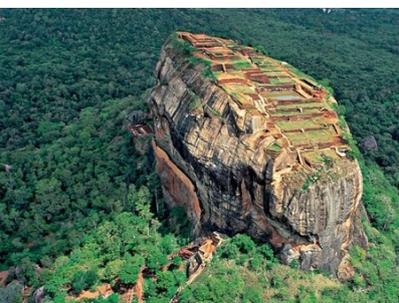
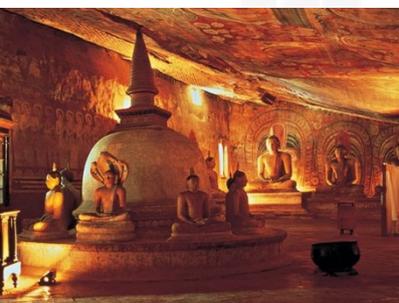
Day
5

Kitulgala white water rafting / transfer to Udawalawe / evening safari

This morning we will enjoy a thrilling adventure on the white-water sections of the Kelani River. As the river widens, we pass the scenic location used for the film "Bridge over the river Kwai", which is also a great place for a refreshing swim. During this slightly less hectic section of the river the raft guides will have us playing games and cooling off in the river before our journey ends close to Kitulgala town for a local lunch. After lunch, we will journey across the country (around 4-5 hours) to Udawalawe where we will spend the next two nights. If there is time, we will go out on an evening safari (if not, we have plenty of time tomorrow).

The Udawalawe National Park is in the southern dry zone of Sri Lanka and spans approximately 31,000 hectares. It is not unusual to see herds gather to feed and bathe at the waterholes in the park. With approximately 400 elephants residing within the park's boundaries, it is an amazing and unforgettable experience to witness these elephants, both adults and young in their natural habitat.

The August 2011 census of Asian elephants in Sri Lanka stated that there were approximately 5800 of these animals living on the island's shores. In addition to the main attraction, the Park is home to many water buffalo, water monitor lizards, sambar deer, monkeys and the occasional leopard. It is also an exciting location for bird enthusiasts; an incredible variety of bird species inhabit the park and many others pass through on their migratory routes. A four-wheel open-top safari is the best way to experience the natural wonders that this protected reserve has to offer.





Day
6

Morning safari / elephant transit home / visit local farm

Early this morning we'll take a second safari before heading off to the Elephant Transit Home - a sanctuary for up to 35 baby orphan elephants who have become separated from their mothers. The centre provides a home for these baby elephants, ensuring that they receive food and medical care and, when strong enough, they are released back into their natural environment. We will have the chance to watch the elephants' feeding hour, when the small elephants rush to drink milk and play with their mates – a beautiful and entertaining sight!

In the afternoon, we will head off to a local farm to learn about farming in this magical country. We'll spend some time with the farmer and hopefully help him out for the afternoon. There is the opportunity to re-visit the farmer in the morning and continue with any unfinished work. If we didn't manage the evening safari yesterday, we will be able to head out this evening.

Day
7

Visit local farm / transfer to beach resort / evening visit to turtle conservation

Today we drive south to our beach resort (around 2 hours) where we will spend the rest of the afternoon relaxing and enjoying the beach before visiting the turtle conservation project. Since its inception in 1988 the turtle conservation project has been hugely successful. The project has worked with volunteers and local ex-poachers who are now employed to monitor sea turtle activity and conserve local nesting sites - quite a dramatic change. There is also a hatchery program that is designed to ensure as many hatchlings as possible reach the sea and survive through the critical stages of early life. We maximize our chances of seeing some turtle activity as we plan to head out onto the beach for the next 2 evenings. A lot of patience and the ability to see in the dark will come in handy as torches and light pollution on the shores at night can disturb and confuse the turtles.

Day
8

Day at beach / evening visit to turtle conservation

After a late night on the beach with the turtle conservation visit, we enjoy a beach day for some well-earned rest and relaxation. Tonight we are out again for our second night with the turtle conservation project.

Day
9

Galle / city tour / free evening

Making our way back up north we stay at the ancient port of Galle, also known as being Sri Lanka's first international commerce and trade centre. Today Galle is the bustling provincial capital and administrative centre of the south. It is famous for its beautiful Unawatuna Bay, where the sea is protected by the reef, making swimming safe. After a city tour, we have a free afternoon and evening to explore and perhaps pick up some gifts for our family at home.

Day
10-12

Sponsor school / time with school

We will take the short transfer from Galle to Uragasmanhandiya where we will spend the next two days working with Galpoththa School.

Day
13

Transfer to airport for flight home

After breakfast, you'll be transferred to the airport for your flight back to London.

Further information

Look what's included!

- International flights
- All accommodation
- All food
- All transportation and activities
- Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local expedition leader
- Parent and student expedition launch evening
- Comprehensive pre-expedition training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Carbon offsetting of all flights
- Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

What's excluded?

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Cancellation and personal effects insurance

Your expedition timeline



Physical expedition rating:



Some low level physical activities included in your trip, including walking on uneven terrain, maybe a morning/afternoon trek of two to four hours. That said, no physical preparation is required to make the most of the tour. High humidity and temperatures can occur at certain times of the year.

Culture shock rating:



Students should expect some culture shock. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty. The food will be quite different to home and English, whilst still spoken, will be less prevalent. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and get the most out of your trip. We're likely to visit remoter locations on this tour where access to western style services may be sporadic. Often on trips of this grading there are parts of the itinerary which are more remote, interspersed with sections which are more 'comfortable'.



A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your expedition journey



1 Get your tailor-made proposal and further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your expedition itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your pre-booking information pack too.

3 Arrange an expedition launch evening at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the expedition with a comprehensive information evening with opportunity for questions.



t: 01392 660056 | e: schools@thestc.co.uk | w: www.thestc.co.uk