

15 Days

# Sri Lanka

## Sigiriya safari & surf

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. On this itinerary, we have the chance to cycle through magnificent national parks, climb Sigiriya rock, take in many of the famous tourist attractions, trek through the Knuckles Mountain Range, raft down a river, visit Elephants both in the wild and in a home, relax on the paradise beaches of the south west coastline, surf world-class waves in a group surf lesson, explore the historic town of Galle, contribute to our on-going sustainable and responsible community projects with the potential for a night time turtle watch (season depending). What better way to get to know the true Sri Lanka?



# Recommended expedition itinerary

Day  
1-2

## Arrive Sri Lanka & transfer to Negombo

Overnight flight to Sri Lanka. We are welcomed by our expedition leader upon arrival and transferred to a hotel in the coastal town of Negombo (20 mins drive), before spending the rest of the day at leisure.

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Day  
3

## Morning cycle & afternoon elephant safari

After breakfast we travel to Habarana. For part of this journey we will enjoy cycling on small backroads, gravel roads and through forests, interacting with the locals and taking in this amazing new country as we go. After lunch and arrival, we have the chance to see Elephants in the wild when we take part in an afternoon safari in Minneriya or Kaudulla National Parks (depending on where the elephant herds are). The two parks are located close to each other and is home to large herds of wild elephants and a variety of bird life.

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Day  
4

## Sigiriya climb & ancient city exploration

This morning we are up fairly early to climb the Sigiriya Rock fortress before the heat of the mid-day sun hits. This UNESCO world heritage site, is an astonishing feat of engineering and construction. A series of moats, ramparts and water gardens, remnants of an ancient city, spread out on two sides of the rock with the remains of a pair of giant stone lion's paws still guarding the staircase that leads to the summit, once, a royal palace.

In the afternoon, we get on the bikes for the second time on this trip and cycle to Polonnaruwa where we explore the ancient city. Polonnaruwa was an ancient medieval Capital of Sri Lanka. A city which reached its height of glory in the 12th century, it still retains the beauty of its monuments, giant statues, dagobas, royal palaces, temples and other structures built by the kings of ancient Sri Lanka.

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Day  
5

## Knuckles mountain range hike

After breakfast we travel by bus to Matale (2 ½ hour drive) where we will meet our local hiking guide. We'll be briefed on the days adventure before we proceed on a hike through the forests and grasslands of the Knuckles mountain range. After enjoying a packed lunch in the mountains and meeting our bus at the finish, we drive to Oruthota Chalets on the banks of the Victoria Reservoir near Kandy. An Eco-friendly resort perfect for those tired legs.

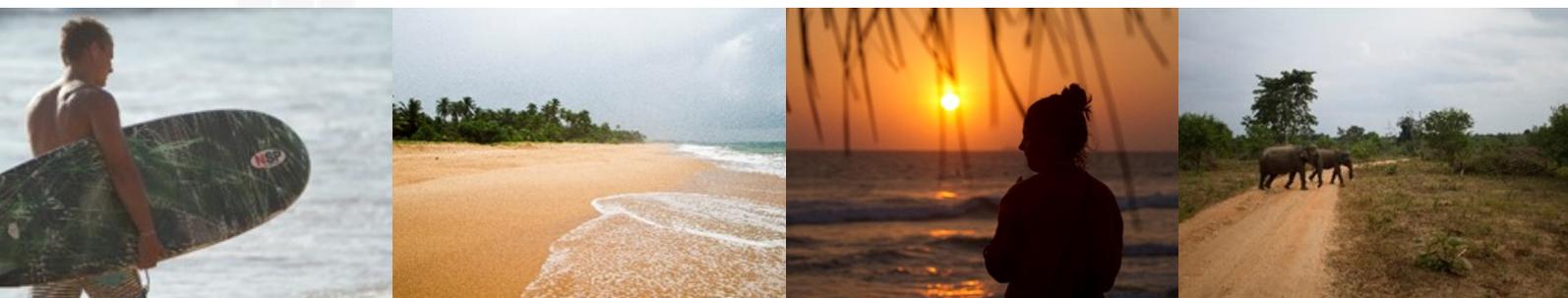
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Day  
6

## Kandy & Temple of the Tooth

After breakfast, we take the short drive to the beautiful Hill Capital of Sri Lanka, Kandy. The city of Kandy is built around a lake and is home to the most sacred Buddhist temple on the island, the Temple of the Tooth, and the islands biggest botanical gardens, the Peradeniya Royal Botanical Gardens. We spend the day sightseeing in Kandy including a visit to the sacred Temple of the Tooth in the evening. The Temple of the Tooth, locally known as the "Sri Dalada Maligawa", houses the tooth relic of Lord Buddha. It is located in the royal palace complex of the former Kingdom of Kandy. Visitors are required to be covered up from shoulders to feet when entering these sacred premises.

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Day  
7

## White water rafting

This morning, after a filling breakfast, we drive to Kitulgala (2-hour drive) for the 'get in'. Kitulgala marks the start of the white-water rafting location. Here we will meet our local raft guides, get all our kit sorted, organise ourselves into groups and head downstream. Apart from tackling challenging rapids, the raft experts will have us playing games all the way to our lunch spot and night's accommodation at the Rafter's Retreat in Kitulgala. Kitulgala is a village located along the Kelani River, an area well known for its rafting, trekking and birdwatching.

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Day  
8

## Day trek & canvas camp out

After breakfast, we take the amazing scenic drive across the Peak Wilderness Sanctuary to Belihuloya. After arriving at the Rivergarden Resort, we have lunch and prepare for our afternoon trekking experience in the wilderness surrounding Belihuloya. The area we trek through has nothing but beauty and serenity. Surrounding mountain ranges, intermittent patches of forests and paddy fields and the famous Belihuloya River are all sections to look forward to. Soon after completing the trek, we drive to the picturesque Kinchigune Camp Site for our first night under canvas amongst nature's night time forest melodies.

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Day  
9

## Udawalawe elephant home & Temple ritual

Today we travel to Udawalawe (3 ½ hour drive) to visit the Elephant Transit Home, in time for the 12-noon feeding. The Elephant Transit Home is a facility within Udawalawe National Park that was established in 1995. Its primary objective is to rehabilitate orphaned elephant calves for release back into the wild. They are looked after until they are about 5 years old before being released. During feeding time, visitors can watch from the viewing platform for about twenty minutes while the elephant calves are given milk. A truly comical experience!

Afterwards we proceed to the northern boundary of Yala National Park (near the sacred city of Kataragama) for a few hours of relaxation before going to experience the famous ritual at the Kataragama Maha Dewalaya (Temple) for the evening ceremony. Tonight, is our second night under canvas as we stay in a tented safari camp on the border of Yala National Park. BBQ dinner by candlelight I hear you say!

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Day  
10

## Safari & beach transfer

We start the day off with an early morning safari at Yala National Park (approx. 6-9am). Yala National Park is the most visited and second largest national park in Sri Lanka. The park affords visitors the opportunities to sight Sri Lanka's broad variety of wildlife from colorful painted storks, to crocodiles, lovely fantailed peacocks, monkeys, elephants, sloth bears and the star attraction; the leopard. Leaving early means we have a better chance of seeing these amazing animals before the heat of the day scares them away. Following the safari, we take the 4-hour journey to Ahangama on the south west coast of the island. Here we check into the hotel where we will spend the rest of our nights in Sri Lanka, allowing us to really get comfy and settle in.

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Day  
11

## Full day on project

Through its partners in Sri Lanka, The STC, is committed to running ethical and responsible projects, identified by need. There are numerous issues with the education/government system and therefore through Volunteering Sri Lanka, we have a list of small scale projects that strive to improve the quality of education and the lives of those in the local communities in Sri Lanka. All our projects are manageable interventions and in the context of sustainable development are long term investments. They are all overseen by a local project manager. We are totally transparent with our funding and therefore the project cost is separate from the trip cost and can be paid directly to the charity responsible for delivering the project. We have found this approach to be very successful for project specific trips and is far more in line with supporting sustainable development. We have never worked and do not work with orphanages nor do we encourage the students to teach in schools.

Past projects in Sri Lanka have involved working on repairing school buildings, home and garden improvements within underprivileged communities. The amount of money we think is an achievable and realistic amount is around £100 per student. After booking the trip and confirming numbers, we are able to plan and calculate this more comprehensively, but please use this as a rough guide.

After our first day on project, we have the evening to ourselves to relax on the beach or by the pool in preparation for tomorrow's continued efforts at the project site.

Day  
12

## Full day on project & surf lesson

Full day on Project. This late afternoon/evening we will take part in a surfing lesson. After meeting our local surf instructor, we will be taught all the basics of popping up and riding the 'green' waves Ahangama has to offer. Sri Lankan waves are world class and surfers from all around the globe travel here all year round.

Day  
13

## Full Day on project & Galle Fort City Exploration

Full day on Project. After our last day on project and saying farewell to those in the communities we have helped, we visit Galle Fort City in the evening for some sightseeing and to watch the sunset. The fort city of Galle was ruled by the Dutch during the 17th and 18th centuries and is a UNESCO world heritage site. The city still boasts a well-preserved fort, ramparts, museums, churches and other Dutch influenced architecture, in addition to the chic restaurants and boutiques that have set up more recently.

Day  
14

## R&R beach / free day

Today is totally free and you may decide on the day what you plan. The beautiful coastal town of Mirissa is only a short transfer and offers great markets and golden beaches. As it is your last day on the island, take time to relax and reflect on the amazing trip you have been on.

Day  
15

## Departure and arrival back in the UK (possibly on DAY 16, flights TBC)

Transfer to the airport in time for departure flight. (3 ½ hour drive).

# 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:



Moderate physical activities are included in Grade 3 trips. Good health and reasonable fitness are important to get the most out of the trip. Trips of this grading are likely to include some walking at moderate altitude (up to 2,500m) and occasional longer/harder days may be involved, with between five and seven hours of walking on certain days. The trip may contain other activities such as cycling or rafting which also require physical effort and a reasonable level of fitness. Some steady preparation and an increase if your underlying fitness levels would help you get the most from this grade trip

## 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.



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