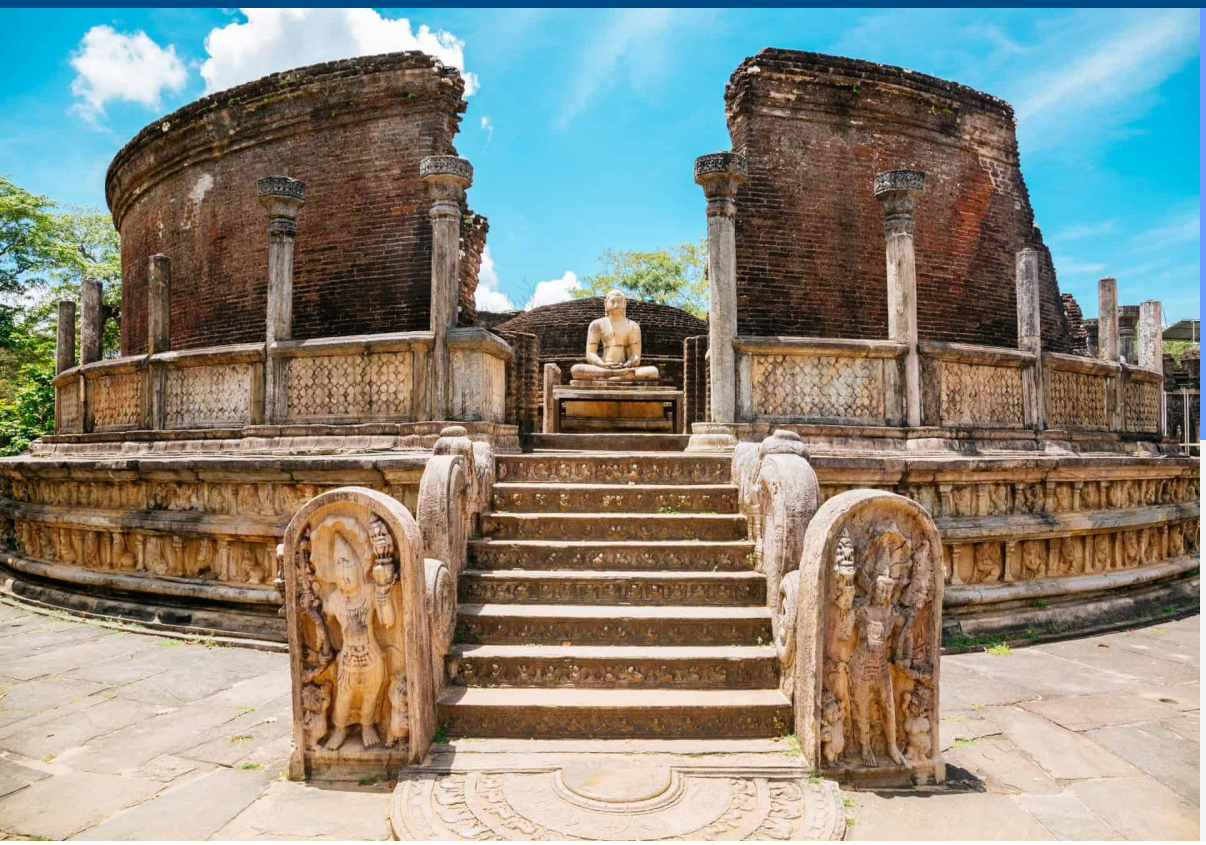
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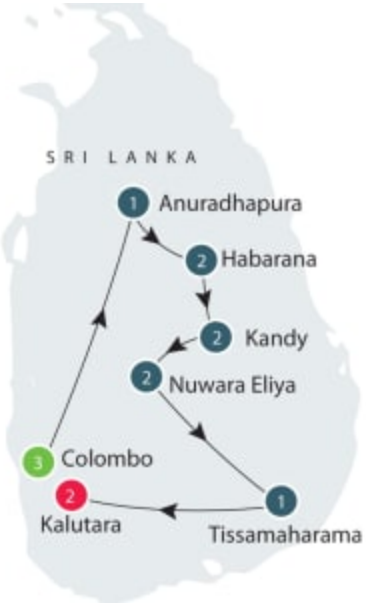
15 days
Duration

Sri Lanka
Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

Sri Lanka | Culture and History Small Group Tour

Mar 13 2025 to Mar 27 2025



Sri Lanka | Small Group Tour

Odyssey offers easy, convenient, and relaxed escorted small group tours across Asia include the charming Sri Lanka. We explore Sri Lanka's fairy-tale natural beauty, its ancient heritage, and the Portugese, Dutch and British history, its World Heritage Sites, and world famous places all with some truly spectacular scenery along the way. This and more is all waiting to be explored on one of Odyssey's small group tours of Sri Lanka, designed for the senior traveller, and led by experienced, and enthusiastic like minded people

.

Odyssey Traveller's Sri Lanka small group tour for mature and senior travellers whether travelling as a couple or as a solo traveler, explores the culture, history, and landscape of Sri Lanka. Our 14-day small group escorted journey to one of the original spice islands takes in many of the country's attractions, travelling from the mild Indian Ocean coastline to the cooler ranges of the tea country. On this tour, we also explore both ancient temples and English garden landscapes, meeting some of the most charming people to be found along the way.

The centre of the island offers rolling hills, year-round cool climate, and former British colonial hill stations. These stations are complete with Tudor hotels, rose gardens, and the oldest golf course in Asia. Sri Lanka also has many national parks filled with game. The Sri Lankan people set aside land for the world's first game reserves more than 2,000 years ago.

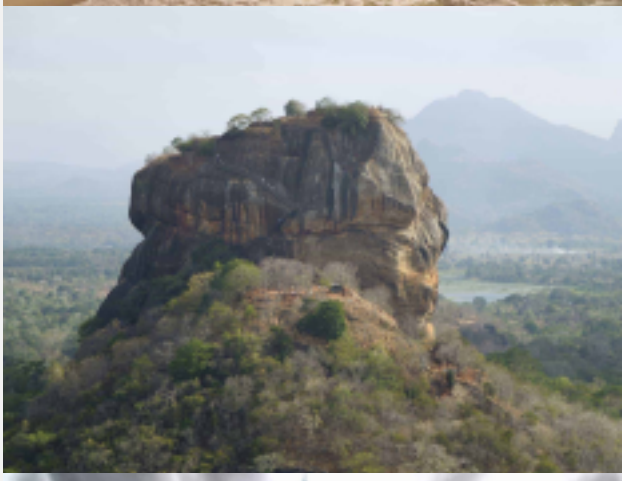
Colombo Sri Lanka: Destination Itinerary

Our cultural and history tour begins in the capital city, Colombo, where we enjoy a walking tour of the city and learn about its development and history. Like many capital cities in developing countries, Colombo is rapidly changing its face. Almost overnight, skyscrapers have emerged from where old buildings once stood. Yet in many parts, the city has retained its old world charm. For example, Colombo residents have kept a 100-year-old clock tower and several British-built colonial buildings in the centre of the city. While in Colombo, we explore the Pettah bazaar, Hindu and Buddhist temples, along with residential areas containing the stately homes of the affluent. In addition, we visit the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), a gift to Sri Lanka from the People's Republic of China.

Negombo, Tissam, and Kalutara

Our trip then heads to Negombo. The town has several buildings dating back to the Dutch and Portuguese colonial days, including the Dutch

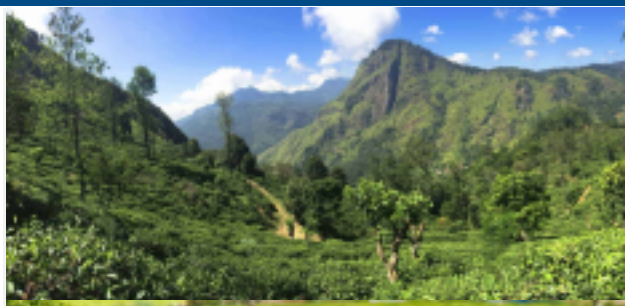




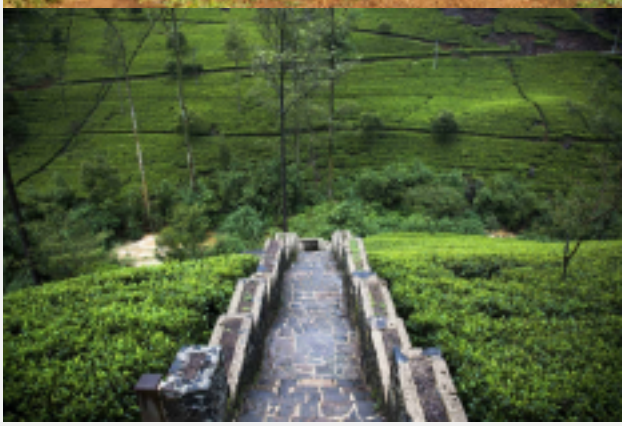


Fort and a historic Catholic church. Negombo is also home to several stunning beaches, which play host to regular fish auctions.

Our tours of Sri Lanka also take in Anuradhapura, the first capital and the grandest of Sri Lanka's ancient cities, home to the ruins of a Buddhist Monastery and the tree where the Buddha is said to have gained enlightenment. We also travel to Nuwara Eliya, a hill resort in the centre of Sri Lanka's tea plantations. Our guided tours also take in spectacular scenery with a visit to Yala National Park, home to an array of wild animals – and access to the pristine beaches of Sri Lanka's east coast.







Highlights of our small group tours Sri Lanka

Highlights of this small group tour include visiting the Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage during feeding time, where we see how locals are preserving this precious species. We also experience four World Heritage sites: Anuradhapura, Sigiriya, Kandy, and The Dutch Fort in Galle. In addition, we also spend time exploring Yala National Park. Here, we come face to face with elephants, leopards, spotted deer, sambhur, crocodiles, mongooses, and wild boars. Our local guide provides unique insight into the history and culture of Sri Lanka, covering both the island's ancient history and the impacts of Portugese, Dutch, and British colonisation.

For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

Odyssey Traveller Australia offers a diverse collection of small group tours for you to discover. While we only have the one tour of Sri Lanka, travellers interested in visiting South Asia might also be interested in our tours of India.

Tour Notes

- The climb to the top of Mt. Sigiriya is very demanding with hundreds of steep stairs and only for the physically fit.
- A visa is required to enter Sri Lanka and it can be obtained electronically prior to travelling.
- Group size limited to 18.







Highlights

1. Visit Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage during feeding time.
2. Visit 4 World Heritage sites: Anuradhapura, Sigiriya, Kandy, and The Dutch Fort in Galle.
3. Tour Kandy including the Botanical Gardens and the Temple of the Tooth relic.
4. Visit a spice garden, fish market, batik factory, and tea plantation.
5. Explore Yala National Park to discover its elephants, leopards, spotted deer, sambhur, crocodiles, mongooses, and wild boars.

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Airport Colombo

Overview:

Upon arrival in Colombo, we come individually to our overnight hotel in Colombo if not using flights suggested by Odyssey Travel.

Accommodation:

3 nights at Galle Face Hotel Colombo or similar.



Day 2

Locations: Colombo

Overview:

After breakfast we proceed to Colombo.

Like many capital cities in developing countries, Colombo is fast changing its face. Almost overnight, skyscrapers arise from where old buildings once stood. Yet in some parts, the old world charm is retained. For example, there is a 100-year-old clock tower and several British-built colonial buildings.

Accommodation:

Galle Face Hotel or similar.

Day 3

Locations: Colombo

Overview:

Colombo's places of interest include the Pettah bazaar where one can shop for bargain, a Hindu and a Buddhist temple, residential areas where you find stately homes of the affluent, and the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), an outright gift to Sri Lanka from the People's Republic of China.

Accommodation:

Galle Face Hotel or similar.

Day 4

Locations: Colombo - Negombo - Anuradhapura

Overview:

We transfer from Colombo to Negombo. The Negombo town has several buildings dating back to the Dutch and Portuguese colonial days. The sea and catamarans are the backdrop of the Negombo scenery. The lagoon is famous for its harvest of lobsters, crabs and prawns and the fish auctions on the beach are worth a look. We also visit the Dutch Fort and a Catholic Church. We transfer from Negombo

to Anuradhapura and enjoy lunch at Club Palm Bay.

Accommodation:

1 night at Heritage Hotel or similar.

Day 5

Locations: Anuradhapura - Habarana

Overview:

Anuradhapura was the first capital and undoubtedly the grandest city of the ancient Ceylon. It is the home of 2 world heritage sites. Many places of historical and archaeological interest can be visited. Sri Maha Bodhi (Sacred Bo-Tree) was brought as a sapling of the tree under which Prince Siddhartha attained to enlightenment and it is over 2,200 years old, making it the oldest historically documented tree in the world.

We will visit the Brazen Palace (2nd century BC). The 1,600 stone columns are all that is left of a magnificent multi-storied residence for monks. Ruwanweliseya (2nd century BC) is the most famous of all the dagobas. It originally depicted the perfect “bubble shape” that modern restoration has not been able to accurately reproduce. “Samadhi” Buddha statue (4th century AD) is one of the most famous statues, depicting the Buddha in a state of “Samadhi” or deep meditation. Isurumuniya rock temple (3rd century BC) is well known for its rock carvings. We transfer from Anuradhapura to Habarana.

Accommodation:

2 nights at Cinnamon Lodge or similar.

Day 6

Locations: Habarana - Sigiriya - Polonnaruwa - Habarana

Overview:

We have breakfast at Cinnamon Lodge, then transfer from Habarana to Sigiriya. We climb the 5th-century Sigiriya rock fortress, which is a world heritage site built by King Kashyapa (477-495 AD). The “Lion Rock” is a citadel of unusual beauty rising 200 metres from the scrub jungle. The rock was the innermost stronghold of the 70-hectare fortified town. A moat, rampart, and extensive gardens including the renowned water

gardens ring the base of the rock. We visit the world-renowned frescoes of the “Heavenly Maidens” of Sigiriya, which are in a sheltered pocket of the rock approached by a spiral stairway. These frescoes are painted in earth pigments on plaster.

We transfer from Sigiriya to Polonnaruwa and enjoy lunch at Sigiriya Rest House. The island’s medieval capital (built in the 11th and 12th century AD) rose to fame after the decline of Anuradhapura and it is a world heritage site. Many of the ruins are in excellent condition. Its great artificial lake, the Parakrama Samudra, covers an area of 6,000 acres, feeding a network of irrigation canals and minor tanks. We visit the ruins of the Royal Palace, the Gal Viharaya which has 4 splendid statues of the Buddha in “Upright,” “Sedentary,” and “Recumbent” postures carved out of rock, the Audience Hall, the Lotus Bath, and the statue of King Parakramabahu. There are also monuments of famous places of worship such as the Shiva Temple, the Lankathilake, the Watadage, the Galpotha, the Kiri Vehera, and the remains of a former Temple of the Tooth Relic. We transfer from Polonnaruwa to Habarana.

Accommodation:

Cinnamon Lodge or similar.

Day 7

Locations: Habarana - Dambulla - Matale - Kandy

Overview:

We transfer from Habarana to Dambulla. The Dambulla rock temple was built by King Walagambahu in the 1st century BC and it is a World Heritage Site. It is the most impressive of Sri Lanka’s cave temples. The complex of 5 caves with over 2,000 square metres of painted walls and ceilings is the largest area of paintings found in the world. It contains over 150 images of the Buddha of which the largest is the colossal figure of the Buddha carved out of rock spanning 14 metres. We transfer from Dambulla to Matale and visit a spice garden in Matale to see different spices for which Sri Lanka is famous for. We will be introduced to different spices and shown how some of these spices are grown and processed. We also witness a cookery demonstration and enjoy lunch at

Ranweli Spice Garden.

We will transfer from Matale to Kandy.

Accommodation:

2 nights at Mahaweli Reach or similar.

Day 8

Locations: Kandy - Pinnawala - Peradeniya - Kandy

Overview:

After breakfast at our hotel, we transfer from Kandy to Pinnawala. The Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage provides visitors with the best chance of seeing a large number of elephants at close quarters. The orphanage was established in 1975 and commenced with 7 orphaned elephants. Today some of these orphans enjoy the fortune of seeing their grandchildren born in the same location. Assisted by local and foreign elephant experts, Pinnawala commenced a successful captive breeding tour and the first baby elephant was born in 1984. It is most interesting to visit at feeding time to see the baby elephants being bottle fed and the entire herd taken for a bath afterward to the river nearby.

We will enjoy lunch at Pinnalanda Restaurant, then transfer from Pinnawala to Peradeniya. This beautiful garden is located 4 miles off Kandy. It was first built as a pleasure garden by a Sinhala king and was expanded by the British. It covers approximately 147 acres and is a walkers paradise with extensive well-kept lawns, pavilions, an octagon conservatory, fernery, a giant Javan fig tree, and numerous flower beds. The best attraction is the orchid house. We transfer from Peradeniya to Kandy.

Accommodation:

Mahaweli Reach or similar.

Day 9

Locations: Kandy - Nuwara Eliya

Overview:

After breakfast at our hotel, we transfer from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya. Upon arrival we will have lunch at Ramboda Falls Hotel. Because of its invigorating mountain climate and scenery, Nuwara Eliyais is Sri Lanka's most popular hill resort. Nuwara Eliya is also the heart of Sri Lanka's tea country, producing a significant share of the world's best tea. Sri Lanka's highest mountain Pidurutalagala (8282 feet) is located here. Nuwara Eliya also has one of the finest 18-hole golf courses in South Asia.

Accommodation:

2 nights at Grand Hotel or similar.

Day 10

Locations: Nuwara Eliya - Horton Plains - Nuwara Eliya

Overview:

We enjoy breakfast at our hotel, then transfer from Nuwara Eliya to Horton Plains. Horton Plains is located on a high windswept saddle at about 2,300 metres (7,500 ft) above the sea level. The plains are an expanse of misty grassland with scraggy trees and ice-cold rivulets. The unique feature of Horton Plains is "World's End." It is considered to be the finest view in all of Sri Lanka. The awesome escarpment drops vertically for about 4,000 feet, hence its name. We can also see the beautiful Bakers falls. (Walk is about 14 km). The park shelters mammals such as samburs, leopards, bears, monkeys, and endemic lizards. This area is also home for over 20 endemic bird species including the Sri Lankan whistling thrush, orange-billed babbler, and yellow-eared bulbul.

We will enjoy lunch at the Grand Hotel and transfer from Horton Plains to Nuwara Eliya.

Accommodation:

Grand Hotel or similar.

Day 11

Locations: Nuwara Eliya - Ella - Tissamaharama - Yala - Tissamaharama

Overview:

After breakfast at our hotel, we will transfer from Nuwara Eliya to Ella and enjoy lunch at Grand Ella Motel. We will travel to Yala and visit the Yala National Park which is approximately 1,259 square kilometres, making it the largest national park in Sri Lanka. It is located in the southeastern corner of the island and it has the added bonus of a scenic ocean frontage. The park is home to wild elephants, wild boars, wild buffaloes, leopards, bears, deer, and crocodiles. Large flocks of migratory and indigenous birds are also found here. We will transfer from Yala to Tissamaharama.

Accommodation:

1 night at Elephant Reach or similar.

Day 12

Locations: Tissamaharama - Kataragama - Galle - Kalutara

Overview:

We will enjoy breakfast at Elephant Reach, then travel to Galle, which was once the chief port of Ceylon and is a town rich in history. It was the center of the Dutch regime in the 17th century and the majestic Galle Fort (spanning 90 acres) bears testimony to this fact. The city of Galle is one of many well-preserved colonial-era cities in Southeast Asia and has been declared a “World Heritage Site.” The Dutch museum and the Dutch church are 2 famous tourist attractions in Galle. The city is also known for its delicate handmade lace and ebony carvings.

We will transfer from Galle to Kalutara and enjoy lunch at Closenberg Hotel.

Accommodation:

2 nights at Avani Kalutara Resort or similar.

Day 13

Locations: Kalutara

Overview:

A vehicle will be at our disposal today for local sightseeing.

Accommodation:

Avani Kalutara Resort or similar.

Day 14

Locations: Kalutara - Airport

Overview:

We will enjoy breakfast at the hotel and some free time before ourtransfer from Kalutara to Colombo Airport if taking flights suggested by Odyssey Travel.

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 13 nights of hotel accommodation.
- 13 breakfasts, 12 lunches, and 12 dinners.
- Comprehensive sightseeing with an English speaking guide.
- Odyssey Tour Leader for the duration of the tour.
- All sightseeing including entrance fees.
- Transport in comfortable and modern coaches.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

What's not included in our Tour

- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Visa fees
- Excess baggage charges and items of a personal nature.

- International airfares and departure taxes.

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.