

SRI LANKA: COLOURS & FLAVOURS

2 - 16 FEBRUARY 2025



FROM
£5,985
PER PERSON

Tour Leader: Chris Caldicott


The Ultimate
TRAVEL COMPANY

DISCOVER THE TEARDROP ISLAND OF SRI LANKA

Join Chris Caldicott on this off the beaten track journey to the teardrop island of Sri Lanka and discover the rich culinary traditions, cultural diversity and atmospheric historic towns of this lush tropical island with a backdrop of extraordinarily beautiful landscapes of misty hills, verdant forests and palm fringed beaches.

The journey begins in the dynamic Indian Ocean port of Colombo where we will stay in a charming colonial era villa and explore the thriving street markets, ancient Buddhist temples and the contemporary cool café and shopping scene. Travelling inland by rail, a feat of 19th century British imperial railway construction that offers a nostalgia packed train ride from the steamy jungles of the coast to the colonial era hill stations of tea country, we will explore the island's interior staying in a boutique plantation house of a working tea estate.

From an eco-jungle lodge in the wilderness of Gal Oya National Park, we will walk with indigenous Vedda people to a forest waterfall for sundowners and take a boat safari in search of swimming elephants. Sitting in God's Forest, stylish Koslanda will be our base for forest treks to find wild coffee, pepper vines and cinnamon and culinary adventures into local cuisine between visiting the largest rock cut Buddha statues on the island and the dizzy heights and spectacular views of Lipton's Seat.

Back on the coast, the Galle Fort is packed with remnants of a vibrant past that lured spice merchants from around the globe for centuries alongside chic café society in beautifully restored villas. Here, we will savour the famed seafood and biriyani cuisine before ending the trip relaxing at the idyllic Kumu Beach.



Gangaramaya Temple



Madulkelle Tea & Eco Lodge



Sri Lankan Elephants

15-DAY ITINERARY, DEPARTING 2 FEBRUARY 2025

2 February London, Colombo

Suggested flight (not included in the cost of the tour) Sri Lankan Airlines flight departing London Heathrow at 21.30 hrs.

3 February Colombo

Arrive Colombo at 12.45 hrs. Group transfer to Maniumpathy, a luxurious boutique hotel located in the heart of Colombo, where two nights are spent. Facilities include a pool, casual dining, fine dining and a personalised butler service.

Light lunch by the pool at the hotel followed by an afternoon at leisure. Early evening visit to Gangaramaya Temple, an eclectic mix of Sri Lankan, Thai, Indian, and Chinese architecture, and a sunset stroll on Galle Face Green, a kilometre-long stretch of lawn and promenade dating from 1864. Sundowners at the colonial Galle Face Hotel. Stop off at the illuminated Malakaya Meditation Centre on way back. Jaffna dinner at the hotel.

4 February Colombo

Morning private tour of Number 11, the former residence of one of Sri Lanka's most celebrated architects, the late Geoffrey Bawa.

Lunch at the famous Paradise Road and the Gallery Café, which used to be the office of architect Geoffrey Bawa. Visit the textile shop, 'Barefoot' which was started by the artist, writer and designer Barbara Sansoni 40

years ago. Optional afternoon walk around the colonial areas including the 17th-century Dutch hospital to learn about the days of colonisation in Ceylon and the spice route trade network. Dinner under own arrangements.

5 February Colombo / Kandy / Madulkelle

Early morning train to Kandy and then drive to Madulkelle Tea & Eco Lodge where two nights are spent. Nestled on a picturesque tea plantation, on the Knuckles Mountain Range 1,000 metres above sea level, the hotel has secluded lodges with comfortable amenities and magnificent views of mist covered mountains, lush green valleys and crystal-clear streams

Lunch under own arrangements on arrival at the hotel. Afternoon at leisure. Late afternoon walk through the forest and terraced paddy fields to Mini World's End Point and Hatale Waterfall. Dinner at the hotel.



Street Market, Colombo

6 February Madulkelle

Morning tour of the Madulkelle tea plantation and factory, following

the journey of the tea leaves from their plucking by the female estate workers through to their sorting and processing to make the famous Ceylon tea.

Lunch at the hotel. Afternoon at leisure to enjoy the hotel's pool and spa or walking trails. Dinner at the hotel.

7 February Madulkelle / Gal Oya

Drive to Gal Oya Lodge in Gal Oya National Park where two nights are spent. The small wildlife lodge is constructed from natural materials that have all been locally sourced and is set against a backdrop of low-lying mountains in 20 acres of private forest and close to the country's largest lake.

Lunch at the hotel. Afternoon to relax at the lodge followed by early evening sundowners and a swim at a waterfall. Dinner at the hotel.

8 February Gal Oya

Early morning boat safari on the lake which is the best way to spot the wildlife. With a little luck you will see elephants swimming between islands or bathing at the lake's edge.

Lunch at the hotel. Late afternoon walk with a chief from the neighbouring Vedda tribe, one of the last remaining communities of the forest-dwelling, indigenous people of central Sri Lanka. He will explain his tribe's use of medicinal plants, the location of their ancient hunting



Nine Arch Bridge



Buduruwagala Rock Temple



Galle Fort

grounds and cave dwellings, as well as how hunter-gatherers sustained themselves in the ancient jungles of Gal Oya. Dinner at the hotel.

9 February Gal Oya / Koslanda

Optional dawn walk with a resident naturalist, through the trees and around the lake enjoying the abundant birdlife such as kingfishers, eagles, kites and many aquatic birds. Return to the hotel for breakfast. Drive to visit the magnificent Buduruwagala rock temple, a group of seven carvings on the site of an ancient Buddhist temple. The rock cut Buddhas are the largest standing Buddhas in Sri Lanka and date back to the 9th and 10th centuries. Continue to Living Heritage Koslanda where three nights are spent. This unique boutique hotel is set in the heart of Sri Lanka's hill country, surrounded by the magical forests on its own estate, with tea plantations beyond. Traditional architecture and design are fused with modern facilities and the experienced chefs deliver mouth-watering Sri Lankan cuisine.

Light lunch at the hotel. Take a guided nature walk through the protected forest trails of the hotel's estate along the Nahavila Oya River. See flora and fauna such as pepper vines and wild coffee bushes, jack fruit and kumbuk trees, giant squirrel, toque macaques, butterflies and birds. Swim and have

tea at a stunning private waterfall. Return to the hotel for a cooking class learning to make string hopper, one of Sri Lanka's favourite roadside snacks. Dinner at the hotel.

10 February Koslanda

This morning, take a scenic journey by train from Haputale to Demodara through fields of tea as far as the eye can see, passing the Nine Arch Bridge. Walking tour of the hill town of Demodara known for its spiral railway line, popularly known as the 'Demodara Loop'. The railway line passes under itself, going around the loop and emerging from a tunnel, which runs directly beneath the Demodara railway station.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Drive back to Koslanda with stop at the Ella Gap with its stunning views. Remainder of the day at leisure to enjoy the hotel's spectacular hilltop infinity pool. Dinner at the hotel.

11 February Koslanda

Morning tuk tuk ride up to Lipton's Seat. One of Sri Lanka's most impressive viewpoints, the Scottish tea baron Sir Thomas Lipton used to survey his land from here.

Tea and picnic lunch at Lipton's Seat. Afternoon walk to see the local villages and Buddhist sites or a spice plantation. Dinner at the hotel.

12 February Koslanda / Galle

Drive to Galle and check in at the Fort Bazaar in Galle Fort. Set amidst ageing coral walls on historic Church Street, this stunning hotel is fresh and contemporary and its chic, understated interiors feel distinctly Moroccan, as does its fabulous cuisine, both of which richly reflect the fort's Moorish history. Facilities include a spa.

Lunch at a local restaurant on route. Walking tour with Chris of Galle Fort which covers some 90 acres and was originally built by the Portuguese, though later extended by the Dutch in 1663. Dinner at the hotel.



13 February Galle

Optional dawn photo safari around the fort and fish market. Return to the hotel for breakfast. Visit the colourful vegetable market.

Lunch under own arrangements.



Cormorant in Gal Oya National Park

Afternoon at leisure. Enjoy a cooking session hosted by Mrs Shahira Mahuroof, a renowned force in Southern Sri Lankan fare, to learn the intricate methods involved in the preparation of a few of these local staples and delicacies. Enjoy dinner at Shahira's home.

14 February Galle / Balapitiya

Optional dawn photo safari. Return to the hotel for breakfast. Late morning drive to Balapitiya. Stop en route to visit the fishing port and market at Ambalongoda, famous for its devil masks. Travel by tuk tuk to visit Galagoda Shailatharama Temple which houses the longest Reclining Buddha in South East Asia. Check into Kumu Beach hotel in Balapitiya where two nights are spent. The contemporary boutique beach hotel has chic living and dining areas basking in the open air, a generous lawn with infinity swimming pool and a spa. Balapitiya's powder-soft beach is footsteps away.

Lunch under own arrangements. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner at the hotel.

15 February Balapitiya

Morning boat trip on the Maduganga Estuary, an area of wildlife filled wetlands, edged by mangrove forests, to a cinnamon plantation or to Kothduwa Island. Here visit the serene Koth Duwa Raja Maha Temple which is believed to have once sheltered the sacred relic of the tooth of Buddha.



Kumu Beach

Lunch under own arrangements. Remainder of the afternoon at leisure. Dinner at the hotel.

16 February Balapitiya / Colombo / London

Morning at leisure. Group transfer to Colombo International Airport.

Lunch under own arrangements. Suggested flight (not included in the cost of the tour Sri Lankan Airlines flight UL 503 departing Colombo at 13.05 hrs arriving London Heathrow at 20.00 hrs.

N.B. Please note that this trip does involve a substantial amount of walking and a certain level of fitness is required.

TOUR PRICES PER PERSON

Tour Price	£5,985
Single Supplement	£1,645

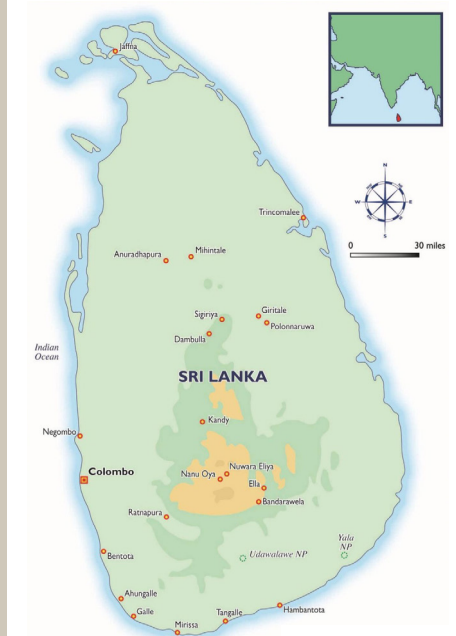
Please note we have not included the cost of the flights in the tour price. Please contact us for prices should you wish to book them through us.

PRICE INCLUDES

- Accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- Breakfast daily; 9 lunches; 12 dinners
- Mineral water at meals included in the itinerary
- All entrance fees, visits and excursions
- Group transportation as per the itinerary
- Gratuities in restaurants for included meals
- Gratuities to guide/s; gratuities to driver/s
- Porterage
- Local English-speaking guide/s
- The services of your tour leader throughout

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights
- Visa fees (currently \$35 per person)
- Alcoholic drinks at meals
- Travel insurance
- Items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- Government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 22/01/24





YOUR TOUR LEADER



CHRIS CALDICOTT

Since travelling to some of the most remote parts of the world as Photographer-in-Residence to the Royal Geographical Society, Chris Caldicott has continued his globetrotting lifestyle as a freelance photographer, writer and lecturer specialising in food and travel. He has had several books published about food, travel and the spice trade and visited 118 countries on assignments to capture evocative images and write about memorable experiences for publications such as Vanity Fair, Condé Nast Traveller, The Sunday Times, Harpers Bazaar, Tatler, House and Garden and The Telegraph.



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