



SRI LANKA

GUIDE



Sri Lanka, a country steeped in history, breathtaking landscapes and heartwarming people. During my three-week group trip I discovered the charm of old Sri Lanka: ancient temples with impressive details, green tea fields that wave over the hills and golden beaches where the sun slowly sinks into the ocean. Despite traveling in a group, every experience felt personal and special. The smell of spices in the market, the smiles of the locals and the mystical atmosphere of ancient ruins – Sri Lanka has enchanted me. A country to never forget!

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History Of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, the enchanting island in the Indian Ocean, has a history that goes back thousands of years. According to ancient legends, the island was once inhabited by kings and mythological creatures. The famous Ramayana legend tells how King Ravana had his golden palace here and how the Hindu god Rama reached the island to save his beloved Sita.

Later, around the 3rd century BC, Buddhism arrived on the island, which had a profound effect on the culture and daily life. This can still be seen in the beautiful temples, such as the famous Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, where a sacred tooth of Buddha is kept. Sri Lanka also became a crossroads for traders: Arabs, Chinese, and Europeans came here for spices and gemstones. The Portuguese, Dutch, and British all left their mark, which explains the unique mix of cultures on the island.

Today, Sri Lanka still radiates its rich history. Whether you're wandering through the ancient royal cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, or enjoying the British colonial charm of Nuwara Eliya, you'll feel the echoes of the past everywhere. This island is not only a paradise for nature lovers, but also a treasure trove of stories from a fascinating past.



Hotels

- ✓ **Where to stay – Hotels, hostels, guesthouses and homestays.**
- ✓ **Best areas to stay – Colombo for city life, Ella for nature, Mirissa for beach.**
- ✓ **Recommended hotels & hostels (with short descriptions).**

Hotels:

The Secret Guesthouse (Mirissa): Centrally located in Mirissa, this property offers a peaceful setting with a green garden and a lovely swimming pool. The spacious rooms are equipped with air conditioning, a comfortable bed and a fridge. In addition, an extensive breakfast is served every morning on the waterfront terrace.

Negombo Boutique Villa (Negombo): This small-scale villa is located on the canal and features a swimming pool. The spacious rooms are equipped with air conditioning, a fridge and a comfortable bed. The property is within easy reach of restaurants, the beach and attractions.

Hostels:

Panana Pranks (Kandy): This new hostel offers beautiful interiors, a tropical garden and a swimming pool. It is located slightly outside the city centre, but is easily accessible by tuk-tuk. Please note that there are only two bathrooms for the two dormitories, and there is a curfew at 23:00.

JJ's Hostel (Mirissa): A friendly hostel with many activities, making it easy to meet other travellers. It features a swimming pool and offers yoga classes every morning during high season.

Hotels

Barefoot Backpackers Hostel (Hiriketiya): This Dutch-owned hostel offers both dorm beds and private rooms. Activities are organised regularly and breakfast is included in the price. A recommended activity is the group trip to the Tangalle Rice & Curry night.

Dots Bay House Hostel (Hiriketiya): A popular hostel with unique mini-rooms in the dorms as well as private rooms and bungalows. It offers an excellent breakfast, a swimming pool and organises yoga and surfing lessons.

2in1 Kandy Hostel (Kandy): This small, personal hostel is located just outside the city centre and offers great views of the sunrise from the balcony. It is very clean and has all the necessary facilities, including free coffee and tea. The staff are friendly and helpful with recommendations. Please note that availability and prices may vary, so it is advisable to book in advance and check for the most up-to-date information.

Activity in Sri Lanka

Climb the Sigiriya Rock (Lion Rock)

A UNESCO World Heritage Site with beautiful murals and breathtaking views.

I have asthma and I managed to do it on top of hieper ventilation but I managed it.



Kukuloya Waterfall

kukuloya waterfall is a good place to chill nice water.

Safari in Yala of Udawalawe National Park

Spot wild elephants, leopards and crocodiles.





Train journey from Kandy to Ella

One of the most beautiful train journeys in the world through tea plantations and mountains



Vediyarasan Fort

Vediyarasan Fort is a historic fort in Sri Lanka, believed to have been built by the local Tamil king Vediyarasa. The fort is located in the eastern part of the island and has had strategic significance in past conflicts. Today, only ruins remain, but it remains an interesting site for history buffs.



Visiting school

Visiting schools in Sri Lanka can be a unique experience. The education system consists of government schools, private schools and international schools. Visitors can often tour schools with permission, especially in rural areas where children enjoy interacting with foreigners.

Volunteering in schools is also popular, with travellers teaching English or helping with creative activities. It's a great way to experience local culture and contribute to the community. Want to visit a specific type of school?



Surfing in Arugam Bay or Weligama

Perfect waves for both beginners and advanced surfers.

The Temple of the Tooth (Kandy)

A sacred Buddhist site where a tooth of Buddha is said to be kept



Experience the Full Moon (Poya) Festival

Every full moon is celebrated in Sri Lanka with grand temple festivals and lanterns.



Dolphin and whale watching in Mirissa

A magical experience at sea.



What should you have done Have.

Nature & Adventure

- ✓ Climb Sigiriya Rock (Lion Rock) – A UNESCO World Heritage Site with stunning views.
- ✓ Hike to Ella Rock & Little Adam's Peak– Enjoy breathtaking landscapes.
- ✓ Take the famous train ride from Kandy to Ella – One of the most beautiful train routes in the world.
- ✓ Safari in Yala or Udawalawe National Park– Spot wild elephants, leopards and other animals.
- ✓ Surfing in Arugam Bay or Weligama – Ideal for beginners and advanced surfers.
- ✓ Whale and dolphin watching in Mirissa – A unique experience at sea.

Culture & History

- ✓ Visit the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy – One of the holiest Buddhist sites.
- ✓ Explore the ancient royal cities of Anuradhapura & Polonnaruwa– Ancient ruins and temples.
- ✓ Visit a traditional tea plantation in Nuwara Eliya – Taste fresh Ceylon tea and learn about the production process.
- ✓ See the Golden Temple of Dambulla – An impressive cave temple complex.
- ✓ Experience a Sri Lankan dance performance in Kandy – Traditional music and dance.

What should you have done Have.



Relaxation & Unique Experiences

- ✓ Relax on the beaches of Mirissa, Unawatuna or Hiriketiya – White beaches and an azure blue sea.
- ✓ Visit a turtle sanctuary in Benloma or Mirissa – Help protect sea turtles.
- ✓ Enjoy an Ayurvedic massage or spa treatment – Perfect for relaxing.
- ✓ Take a Sri Lankan cooking class – Learn to make delicious curries and roti.
- ✓ Taste the local cuisine – Rice & curry, hoppers and fresh seafood are a must!
- ✓ Take a boat trip through the mangroves in Madu River – Spot exotic birds and animals.
- ✓ Visit the Dutch fortified city of Galle – Colonial architecture and cozy streets.

Other info



Suitcase or Backpack?

- ✓ Backpack – Ideal for travelling, easy to take with you on the train and bus.
- ✓ Suitcase – Handy if you stay in one place or travel with a private driver.



Essential documents

- ✓ Passport (valid for at least 6 months)
- ✓ Visa for Sri Lanka (apply for ETA online)
- ✓ Travel insurance (for emergencies or illness)
 - ✓ Vaccination booklet (yellow booklet)
(sometimes required for vaccinations)
- ✓ Credit card / bank card (activated worldwide)
- ✓ Copies of important documents (also digital)

Other info

- 👕 Clothing (light & airy, because of the tropical climate!)
 - ✓ Light shirts & shorts (for warm days)
 - ✓ Long pants & long-sleeved shirt (for temple visits and mosquito protection)
 - ✓ Sarong or scarf (for temples, where covered clothing is mandatory)
 - ✓ Raincoat or poncho (for unexpected tropical showers)
 - ✓ Good walking shoes or sneakers (for hikes such as Ella Rock)
 - ✓ Flip-flops or sandals (for the beach and relaxing days)
 - ✓ Swimwear / bikini (for beach and pool)
 - ✓ Hat / cap & sunglasses (against the bright sun)
- 🩹 Medical supplies
 - ✓ Sunscreen (high factor, 30+ or 50+)
 - ✓ DEET or other mosquito repellent
- ✓ Travel pharmacy (paracetamol, anti-diarrheals, ORS, plasters, antihistamine)
- ✓ Personal medication (+ doctor's note if necessary)

Other info



Electronics & gadgets

- ✓ World plug (Sri Lanka uses type D & G sockets)
- ✓ Power bank (useful for long train journeys)
- ✓ Camera or smartphone with sufficient storage
- ✓ E-reader or book (for relaxing on the beach)
- ✓ Earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones (for the train or plane)



Other useful items

- ✓ Quick-drying towel (for beach & hikes)
- ✓ Water bottle with filter (e.g. LifeStraw to safely drink tap water)
- ✓ Small backpack or day bag (for day trips)
- ✓ Locks for your luggage
- ✓ Snorkel set (optional, but useful if you go snorkeling)
- ✓ Small first aid kit

transport

✓ How to get to Sri Lanka? –
Fly to Colombo (Bandaranaike
International Airport)



✓ Domestic transport



Train (you really have to do it
once! Especially Kandy – Ella)



🚗 Tuk Tuks & Taxis (use
PickMe app for fair prices)



transport



🚗 Hire a private driver
(comfortable and convenient
if you have little time).

🚌 Buses (cheap, but often
crowded and chaotic)



✅ Rent a scooter or car or tuck tuck? – Rules
and whether you need an international driving
license.



Apps you can use

Useful apps & websites

- ✓ PickMe – Cheap taxi and tuk tuk app.
- ✓ Google Maps & Maps.me – For offline navigation.
- ✓ Booking.com & Agoda – For hotels.
- ✓ Rome2Rio – For travel routes and transportation options.
- ✓ XE Currency – Up-to-date exchange rate information.

Useful tips & do's & don'ts

✓ Do's:

- ✓ Respect temples: shoes off & appropriate clothing.
- ✓ Bargain at tuk tuks (or use PickMe app).
- ✓ Eat at small local eateries for the best flavours.

✓ Don'ts

- ✗ Don't point your finger (considered rude).
- ✗ Don't touch Buddha statues and definitely don't take a picture with your back to them.
- ✗ Don't expect everyone to be punctual – 'Sri Lanka time' is relaxed.

Food & Drink



Where to eat?

Street food
restaurants and
local markets.

Is tap water safe?

No, always drink
bottled or filtered
water.



Must-try dishes –

- 🍛 Rice & Curry (the national meal).
- 🥞 Hoppers (pancakes in a bowl, delicious for breakfast).
- 🥞 Kottu Roti (Sri Lankan street food specialty).
- 🥥 King Coconut (refreshing thirst quencher).



Natasja op reis.nl

What an amazing time I had in Sri Lanka! 🌴✨ This beautiful country surprised me with its breathtaking nature, ancient temples, delicious food and the warm hospitality of the people. From the green tea fields in Ella to the tropical beaches of Mirissa – every place had its own magic. I want to thank everyone who made this trip so special: the friendly locals, my fellow travelers and of course you, my followers, who experienced this journey with me. Sri Lanka is really recommended and I hope that my experiences inspire you to discover this beautiful country for yourself!

🌍 Until the next adventure! 🚀

Love, Natasja 💛

