



HAWTHORN Travel & Cruise

The world as it should be seen

'SERENDIPITY DISCOVERED', SRI LANKA

September 2016



September 10 - welcome to Sri Lanka...

Late evening arrival into Sri Lanka. The team will be on hand to meet and greet everyone, then whisk you all to your lovely hotel the Wallawwa. Pre-check in will already have been done on your behalf, so after a welcome drink head to your room for a good night's sleep, ready for the first day of exploration!



IATA No. 02-3 0370 0
A.B.N. 99 006 230 244

60 Burwood Road, Hawthorn
VIC 3122 Australia

www.hawthorntravel.com.au



Telephone: +61 3 9819 2322
Toll free: 1800 679 365

info@hawthorntravel.com.au



Magellan
TRAVEL GROUP



September 11 - a little introduction and then off to The Cultural Triangle...

After breakfast there will be an introduction/briefing about the tour with Zoe, your gorgeous tour guide, and your Sri Lankan National guide who are with you the whole way through. The journey begins today with the exploration of some of Sri Lanka's most famous ancient cities and archaeological sites. This tour will cover 5 of the 7 UNESCO world heritage sites in the country. In the following days your imagination will come alive as we visit lost cities, ruined temples and sacred groves.

En-route to Kandalama, we will stop at the Selyn Textile workshops, a fair-trade certified hand loom company which manufactures and exports hand loom textile-based toys and handicrafts. This programme is of great benefit to the rural women and is a wonderful opportunity to observe the ladies working their looms, and also enjoy a refreshing cup of tea.

Lunch is at Sarruketta, a roadside diner next to some paddy fields. We then continue to Lake Lodge our beautiful home for the next three nights'. Check in, change into our walking gear and it is time to explore some more.

Zoe and your guide is going to lead you through ancient pleasure gardens to visit the fortress of Sigiriya, also known as Lion Rock, built on top of a huge boulder in the 5th century. Truly stunning this ancient rock fortress and palace ruin is surrounded by the remains of an extensive network of gardens, reservoirs and ruins. It is also renowned for its ancient frescoes. The history is incredible and we learn all about it as we climb the rock. Once we reach the top time for some refreshments to rehydrate and to take in the surrounding view.

Back to the hotel for unwind time followed by your welcome dinner by the pool.

Meals Included (Breakfast, Dinner)



September 12 - the medieval capital and a bike ride for those in the mood...

Start the day with breakfast and then we are off to explore the medieval capital and ruins of Polonnaruwa. For those in the mood there is a fun 13 kilometre easy bike ride we can do to explore the site and its environs (for those who would prefer it, the van is available). After the visit we enjoy lunch and a swim at the Lake Hotel Polonnaruwa.

Back to the hotel in the afternoon for a cheeky massage, and then dinner this evening where we enjoy a glass of bubbles to celebrate our day, a candlelit dinner on the verandah, and traditional dancers - bliss!

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Dinner)



September 13 - school time and a jeep safari...

Today we have quite the combination! This morning we drop into a local primary school where we spend time with the teachers and the students learning all about life in a Sri Lankan school. We will hand out some goodies, such as exercise books and other much needed materials to help out at a local level before heading back to the hotel for lunch.

This afternoon we head off to Minneriya National Park in 4x4 jeeps. The park's main feature is the former reservoir built by King Mahasen in the 3rd century AD. During the dry season from June to September this is a fantastic place to watch herds of elephants come to graze and bathe. It has recently been discovered that the park witnesses the largest elephant gathering in the world during these months. Back to the hotel and then this evening dinner is at leisure.

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Lunch)

September 14 - the spice route to Kandy...

Today after check out we travel to Kandy known for its mild climate and colonial architecture. It is also the home to the Temple of the Tooth, the most sacred site in Sri Lanka.

This morning we will visit the Dambulla Cave Temples, which have been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1991. The site dates back to 1st century BC when hermit monks established a monastery here and is one of the most impressive in Asia. Inside the caves the art work is breath taking!



We then head on for lunch at Ena De Silva's private estate. World famous for her incredible batiks, in 1982 she returned to her ancestral home from Colombo and founded a women's co-operative to make batiks and needlework, along with a brass foundry and wood-carving workshop. The co-operative has now existed for over a quarter of a century and continues to make modern fabrics and carvings, which are inspired by traditional Sri Lankan designs.

Our journey today finishes when we check in at the Cinnamon Citadel, followed by dinner at leisure.

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



September 15 - eclectic Kandy...

This morning we are in for a treat! We start the day with a guided visit to the stunningly beautiful Royal Botanical Gardens, which if it wasn't for the heat and the tropical plants, may make you think you were in the middle of England! First conceived as a Queen's pleasure garden in the 14th century, and a Kandyan Prince's residence in the 18th century the gardens were formally opened under their current guise in 1821. Our guide this morning is the very knowledgeable Bandara Palipana, a Botanist from the Peradeniya University.

Enjoy a light lunch and then we visit Kandy town and the Temple of the Tooth.

We head into the Temple of the Tooth, Sri Lanka's most sacred site. Tradition says that a sacred tooth relic of the Lord Buddha was brought to Sri Lanka in the 4th century AD and was enshrined in the temple. This is a magnificent shrine with decorative walls, a golden roof and beautiful woodwork.

Then a walk around Kandy's central market which is a favourite for the locals...

Dinner this evening at 'Slightly Chilled'.

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Dinner)



September 16 - high tea...

Today is all about the tea, one of Sri Lanka's famous industries. We take the train from Kandy to Hatton at 8.30 am, so an early start to maximise the day. The train meanders through dense jungle and opens into cloud forest, with undulating vistas of immaculate tea bush carpets in between. Enjoy a picnic lunch on board as you drink in the surrounding countryside including dramatic ravines, thundering waterfalls and glass lakes that reflect the astonishing scenery. We then reach the hill capital Nuwara Eliya.

We transfer to the Grand Hotel, and why not enjoy a traditional high tea before taking time out to explore the surrounds, watch the sun go down over the mountains and the lakes from the splendid verandah and gardens of the hotel whilst indulging in a G&T.

Dinner is at leisure this evening.

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Lunch)

September 17 - it's all about the tea...

This morning enjoy a guided walking tour of Nuwara Eliya town, originally built as a British hill station.

Soak up the atmosphere of the town whilst browsing the markets, trying out local eateries and wondering around the old British buildings.

We then stop for lunch at the tea factory before a guided visit of a tea plantation. Sri Lanka is still the world's largest exporter of tea and the industry is booming. Guided tours of the factory, built in 1885, and

still packed with 19th century engineering are fascinating and will be followed by a chance to try out some tea plucking. For those who really want to experience the real deal there are saris available for you to dress up in!

Dinner and some music tonight at the Grand Hotel.

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Dinner)



September 18 - spot the leopard...

We head off early this morning as we leave tea country and head to leopard country, Yala National Park. Sri Lanka is known for the highest leopard density in the world and Yala, the most eco-friendly, attracts more visitors than any other park for this reason. We arrive at the campsite in time for an alfresco lunch.

This afternoon enjoy a game drive with your experienced and hand-on trackers and naturalists. You could photograph leopard, wild bears, elephants and an abundance of wildlife. We enjoy some luxury camping tonight, in tastefully equipped tents that have been created to blend into the environs. Dinner is under the stars!

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)



September 19 - an early morning trip to Galle...

Enjoy a delicious breakfast and we then head to Thalpe. We enjoy a morning tour/drive to the Why House near Galle for a divine farewell lunch, then a tour and free time to discover this beautiful city at leisure. Explore the fort on foot and the divine shops where you will discover local artists and gorgeous gifts to take home for you or someone you love! We depart late afternoon for Colombo and your hotel to enjoy a leisurely dinner and a very late checkout to connect with flights home in the early hours of tomorrow morning.

Dinner this evening is at leisure. Zoe will be there and you can choose where to dine - hotel restaurant or rooms service, and for those departing early a.m. a nap and a refresh before departure. For those staying on, zzzz away into the night.

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Lunch)

September 20 - bye bye in the wee small hours...

Flights depart very early (around 1-2am depending on airline) so you will check in to your flight and depart. Transfer time from the hotel will be advised and facilitated by Zoe to ensure a smooth departure.

Those staying on, you will check out this morning and make your own way to your next port of call!

Meals Included: (Breakfast)