



Sri Lankan
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Along the Path of the Guardian

13 Days / 12 Nights

Negombo – Wilpattu – Yapahuwa – Piduwangala – Trincomalee – Kalkuda – Gal Oya –
Kataragama – Hiriketiya - Colombo

The British newspaper The Guardian is known for their excellent tips and reviews of the most unique travel destinations in the world. What better way is there to explore Sri Lanka than to put all their recommendations into one grand tour programme around the country? This itinerary puts together beautiful small hotels with visits to pristine beaches, jungles and cities. It is one of our favourite tours to explore Sri Lanka in a unique way, for an unbeatable price.

To see where you will be going and get into the travelling mood, check these Guardian articles:

1. Don't do that, do this: dodging the crowds in Sri Lanka, [Read more](#)
2. Sri Lanka's best new hotels, hostels and cottages, [Read more](#)

Full itinerary of the tour

Day 1 Airport/ Negombo Beach

You will land at the Katunayake Airport situated next to a beautiful Lagoon and spend the night in Negombo. Use the rest of the day to rest and get adjusted to the tropical climate. In the evening our company representative will come to you for a complimentary tea to discuss the program ahead. He will present you the different options you can take, value added services you are given as well as the complimentary offers especially designed to make your trip memorable and worthwhile.

Airport arrival: Welcome to Sri Lanka by our concierge and transfer to the hotel

Accommodation: Paradise Beach Hotel or similar/ Meals included: Breakfast

Transport: 15 km by special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car

Day 2 Negombo Beach/ Willpattu wildlife safari/ Yapahuwa fortress city

After breakfast you will be driven to a place full of lush greenery and buzzing wildlife, Wilpattu National Park. On our way, we will take a break at the important and colourful Hindu temple Munneshwaram kovil, where you can see worshippers offering flowers to Hindu Gods and marvel at the many statues and images. After freshening up in your hotel in the important and ancient royal capital of Yapahuwa, we will take a special 4WD jeeps for our evening Wilpattu wildlife safari. For the rest of the day you will experience the most magical lake hopping time from one Villu (lake) to another. This wildlife paradise is home to the largest leopard population in Sri Lanka and offers unique bird-watching opportunities. Sporting leopards praying on herds of wild deers, loner samba deer and wild boars is not at all rare. In the evening, all the animals, including herds of elephants, Sri Lankan brown bears and crocodiles, head to the many beautiful lakes for their evening meal, offering you unforgettable photo opportunities. We have experienced drivers who won't rush you through, take you to the most beautiful and hard to get places and let you enjoy the magnificence of Wilpattu National Park.

Accommodation: Yapahuwa Paradise Hotel or similar/ Meals included: Breakfast

Transport: 230 km by special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car and safari jeep

Day 3 Yapahuwa ancient fortress city / Pidurangala forest monastery

After breakfast, you will visit the 13th century ruins of Yapahuwa kingdom left by invading armies of India. Enjoy climbing the regal steps of the old ruin entrance way and take countless pictures of the scenic view from the mountain top. 16th and 17th century frescos on the old temple walls are also an attraction you should watch out for.

In the afternoon, we will drive to Pidurangala, home to an ancient forest monastery that offers unique insights into Sri Lankan and Buddhist history and culture away from expensive and touristy Sigiriya rock fortress. On our way we will stop in Habarana, where you can receive a professional Ayurvedic herbal massage to relax your body and mind, which will make you feel blissful for the rest of your day. Enjoy the bliss of traditional medicine of Sri Lanka.

Accommodation: Kassapa Lions Rock Hotel in Pidurangala or similar/ Breakfast included

Transport: 90 km by special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car

Day 4 Pidurangala forest monastery

In the morning, we will climb up to the impressive Pidurangala forest monastery, looking at ancient frescoes, marveling at the views from the mountain and enjoying the view of the neighbouring Sigiriya rock fortress. Insiders call Pidurangala 'the better Sigiriya', as it offers the same views of the stunning landscape around, but without the high entrance fee and the hordes of tourists waiting in line to climb up. Enjoy watching how Sigiriya rock fortress and Pidurangala sit in the middle of paddy fields, jungles, lakes and more mountains. If you are watchful, you can also find caves with ancient frescos similar in style to the world famous Sigiriya frescos. You won't be able to stop thinking that The Guardian did a good job in recommending this place to us.

After climbing down, experience the authentic life of villagers with a special lunch in the Hiriwadunna village. Walk around the village and the lake watching birds and wildlife as well as traveling on bullock carts to a boat ride on the magical waters of the lake. In the late afternoon and evening, you can relax in the hotel, jump into the pool and enjoy a good night's sleep before a longer drive the following day.

Accommodation: Kassapa Lions Rock Hotel in Pidurangala or similar/ Breakfast included

Transport: 30 km by special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car

Day 5 Pidurangala forest monastery/ Trincomalee

After breakfast, we will drive to the Eastern coast of Sri Lanka, to the important port city Trincomalee. On the way we will stop at stunning hot water wells and visit the ancient Welgam Vehera Buddhist monastery from 300 BC. The temple was the target of several attacks of the Tamil Tigers, and you can still see the remnants of now harmless bomb shells and craters in the temple grounds. In Trincomalee, you can enjoy a leisurely walk along the beach in the evening, savouring fresh seafood and delicious fruit juices with the breeze of the sea. Maybe you can even walk to the top of the natural harbour of Trincomalee and let yourself be blown away by the magnificent beauty of the sunset in Trincomalee.

Accommodation: Anilana Nilaweli Hotel in Trincomalee or similar/ Breakfast included

Transport: 105 km by special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car

Day 6 Trincomalee, wonder of nature

Take time to visit the Koneswaram temple and enjoy the scenery of what historically was one of the most important temples in the Buddhist world and then became a Hindu temple during the tense years of the Sri Lankan civil war. Enjoy the colours of the Hindu architecture and decorations as well as the thrilling view of the sea from the edge of the rock face. Feel free to walk under a giant colorful cart that carries magnificent statues of different gods.

Feel free to walk on the road leading to the mountain top and you will find whatever left of the ancient Buddhist temple that once occupied the area. It is common to walk alongside wild deer roaming freely on your way back. A ruined Dutch fortress provides a mystic postcard view around you. Then retire to your beach hotel for a short break, before visiting one of the best attractions in Trincomalee, Pigeon Island. Run around the island and explore every bit of this beautiful small place in the middle of the sea of blue water and white wave bubbles.

Accommodation: Anilana Nilaweli Hotel in Trincomalee or similar/ Breakfast included

Transport: 30 km by special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car

Day 7 Trincomalee/ Kalkudah sand and sea heaven

After breakfast, we will head south along the coast to Kalkudah, where beautiful sandy beaches are waiting just for you. Still a rural village, Kalkudah preserved its pristine nature as no one could visit for decades due to the civil war. It is a must see before it gets flooded with tourists in few years' time.

The beaches here are very serene, without big hotel complexes, a paradise to relax. You can spend the day on the beach, sunbathing, swimming, watching the fishing boats and simple way of life of the villagers and simply enjoying life under the tropical sun. The Guardian newspaper travel section did a great job in visiting and recommending this beautiful beach paradise.

Accommodation: Anilana Pasikudah Hotel in Kalkudah or similar/ Meals included: Breakfast

Transport: 120 km by special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car

Day 8 Kalkudah beach /Gal-Oya national park

After a last jump to the blue sea of Kalkudah, we will proceed to Gal Oya National Park, home to a huge water reservoir built in the 50s which is named literally as the sea. You will experience a unique boat safari with the park rangers, watching elephants swimming from one island to another, spotting monkeys, leopards, bears, wild boars and water buffalos on the shores of the lake.

Bird watchers will get excited by the prospect of seeing 150 different species of birds, including Sri Lankan eagles circling above your heads. We will start the tour in the late afternoon, when the sun is not burning too much anymore. Enjoy a stunning sunset over the lake Senanayake Samudraya.

Feel free to pick any of the following optional tours for no extra cost:

Bird walks and hikes through the local area (1-3 hours)

Join a resident naturalist for a walk around the lodge, enjoying the abundant birdlife and beautiful surroundings. The walk offers a number of possible routes through the trees and around the nearby lake, to observe a wide range of bird species such as king fishers, eagles, kites and many aquatic birds. *Please feel free to discuss your interests with the naturalist for a tailored trip to suit your preferences.*

Morning trek to the top of Monkey Mountain (2-4 hours)

For the adventurous early risers, a 1.5 hour uphill trek first thing in the morning is a must. Up top, dramatic 180 degree views over the large forested valley await. An early start allows you to watch the sun rise over the hills in the distance, observing the never ending jungle canopy below. After you've finished, return for a well-earned breakfast and enjoy the rest of your day.

Bicycle Tour (1-3 hours)

Join one of our naturalists on a leisurely bicycle ride during your stay at the lodge. You may choose to ride on a shorter off-track trail to the small Kiri Oruwa Lake, which is teeming with bird species. Alternatively, you may ride on the longer main road, which cuts through the national park to the beautiful Namal Oya Reservoir. Helmets are provided.

Accommodation: Gal-Oya Forest Lodge hotel or similar/ Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner included

Transport: 150 km by special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car, boat and 4x4 jeep

Day 9 Kataragama, city of culture

Enjoy your last meal in the wild paradise of Gal Oya before we proceed to Kataragama. Kataragama temple is one of the most important Hindu temples in the world, and has a huge significance to the Sri Lankan heritage for resisting invading armies from India. Around the temple there are number of interesting ancient Buddhist monasteries and temples.

Enjoy a visit to Kirivehera Buddhist Temple and Kataragama Hindu Temple's evening pooja ceremony. Wonder how the ancient Sri Lankans continued their traditions for almost 3000 years. Maybe you can make a wish at the Kataragama Temple to be part of the local culture and enjoy doing that as well.

Accommodation: Mandara Rosen Hotel in Kataragama or similar/ Breakfast included

Transport: 150 km by special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car

Day 10 Mulkirigala/ Hiriketiya Beach paradise

Finish your breakfast early as you will be visiting Mulkirigala and Hiriketiya beach for leisure for the rest of the day. Mulkirigala is also home to an ancient temple. But the real marvel is the beach which is like no other. Blue water and golden sand will mesmerize you, so be ready to be blown away. We will move on to Hiriketiya beach, a true surfers' paradise. Perfect waves and the seclusion of this area are legendary. Be amazed and enjoy paradise on these beaches.

Accommodation: W 15 Weligama Hotel in Hiriketiya or similar/ Meals included: Breakfast

Transport: 120 km by special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car and surfboard

Day 11 Hiriketiya beach paradise/ Colombo

Enjoy your last meal in Hiriketiya beach paradise before you are driven to Colombo. Countless coconut trees, waves crashing onto sandy beaches and fishing boats going out to sea will fill your window view throughout your drive to Colombo.

In Colombo you can take an insight into the busy Pettah market streets and shop in stylish shopping malls with world class products. Enjoy legendary architect Geofry Bawa's masterpiece design in Gangarama Temple's Seema Malakaya in the middle of a beautiful lake. Savour ou favourite ginger beer or a pot of mackwood tea and shop for Babara Sansoni's designer items at Barefoot Gallery and Cafe in Bambalapitiya. Its beautiful courtyard is a unique place to escape from the hot and busy capital for a little while. Feel free to explore the great places to eat Colombo has to offer. We recommend you to try the Cafe on the 5th, prices are low, and still they offer our favourite food in the city.

End the day by wandering along the beach at bustling Galle Face, explore the trendy nightlife in Colombo or visit the legendary Galle Face Hotel and sip a glass of lemon juice, listening to the sound of waves crashing the rocks a few meters away.

Accommodation: Pearl Grand Hotel in Colombo or similar/ Meals included: Breakfast

Transport: 220 km by walking, special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car

Day 12 Colombo garden city/ Airport

Take a good rest on the last leg of your tour until we drive you back to the airport for your departure, filled with sweet memories of this beautiful island. As a complimentary service we can drop you off in Negombo as well. You can even spend a few more days in the garden city of Colombo, and explore how modernism meets tradition in this exciting capital.

Airport Departure

Transport: 50 km by special tourist coach, mini bus, van, car

Meals included: Breakfast

Price includes:

- J We cover all costs included in your itinerary description inside Sri Lanka (no air fare)
- J Best reviewed and ranked boutique luxury hotels
- J Accommodation in shared double rooms on bed and breakfast basis in specified luxury hotels (can be upgraded on customer request)
- J Private luxury van, mini bus or car with an experienced driver and/ or guide with special tourist insurance
- J All government charges and taxes
- J Meals on bed and breakfast basis (Can be upgraded on customer request)
- J Safaris with specialist jeeps and wildlife expert drivers; meals included during safaris
- J Free complementary excursions and herbal treatments, massages and lunches
- J Extras on the way such as traditional delicacies and traditional handcraft souvenirs
- J Water and snacks on the way

Price excludes:

- J Medical/ travel insurance
- J Optional tours and activities that are not part of the complimentary offers that come with your package
- J Special permits including camera and video permits to designated sights
- J Tips and other expenses of personal nature
- J Entrance fees to national monuments, wildlife parks and other attractions that are not covered in your offer (can be upgraded on customer request)

Special notes to all travelers

1. All rates are subject to change in case of sudden government charges on fuel and transport, hotel rates, entrance fees and taxes.
2. Above rates are calculated at the latest available conversion rate. You will be informed about any major differences and the final tour price may be reduced or increased.
3. Our cancellation policy will be applicable for any reduction of rooms after the release period.
4. We keep our costs to absolute minimum by picking nonrefundable reservations. Therefore, all tour reservations are subject to a 100% non-cancellation policy. However we may help you to change the dates or change the tour program depending on costs and availability.
5. All reservations are subject to availability at time of booking.
6. Reservation confirmation shall be subject to availability after your consent to confirm the room /round tour package.
7. The official check-in time at all hotels is 14:00. The official check-out time at all hotels is 11:00.
8. Alcohol will not be served by any hotel on Poya Days (full moon) and other days prohibited by the government. Guests are advised to abide by the law at all times.
9. Optional excursions and additional services outside our large number of complimentary options can be provided at additional charge.
10. Visits to wildlife parks will be at client's own risk.
11. Safari vehicles have very basic insurance cover (not as comprehensive as in the case of vehicles used for tours).
12. By booking a tour or request a booking you agree to the following terms:
 - a. Please visit our Terms and Conditions page. [click here](#)
 - b. Please visit our Important travel information and disclaimers. [Click here](#)