



## THE WEST COAST & SOUTH OF SRI LANKA 8N/9D

### TOUR SUMMARY

This **14N/15D** itinerary through the **West & South** of Sri Lanka offers a perfect blend of cultural richness, scenic beauty, and wildlife adventure. Beginning in the vibrant city of Colombo and weaving through the ancient wonders of Anuradhapura, Sigiriya, and Polonnaruwa, travellers will be immersed in the island's deep-rooted history. The journey continues into the lush hill country with visits to Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, and Ella, known for their breath taking landscapes and tea plantations.

From the thrilling safaris of Yala National Park to the sun-kissed beaches of Mirissa, this route captures the essence of a truly unforgettable Sri Lanka holiday. Ideal for those seeking a comprehensive Sri Lanka travel experience, this well-paced circuit highlights the island's diverse attractions while allowing time to relax and explore.

**Best time: December – March**

**Note:** While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, this itinerary is intended as a guide and may include unintentional errors or be subject to adjustments due to unforeseen circumstances.



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## THE WEST COAST & SOUTH OF SRI LANKA 8N/9D

### ***Detailed Itinerary***

#### **DAY 1: Arrival in Colombo – Transfer to Negombo | Beachside Welcome & Cultural Orientation**

Upon arrival at Bandaranaike International Airport (Colombo), you'll be warmly welcomed by our dedicated tour manager, who will accompany you throughout your Sri Lankan journey. After a smooth transfer to your hotel in the charming coastal town of Negombo, check in and take time to unwind after your travels.

Spend your afternoon relaxing by the beach, soaking in the laid-back tropical vibes, or sampling fresh lagoon seafood at a seaside café. As the sun sets, enjoy a gentle evening stroll through the historic Dutch Fort area or along the picturesque canal, offering your first glimpse into Sri Lanka's colonial past.

Later in the evening, join your tour manager for a welcome orientation and tour briefing, followed by a delightful Sri Lankan dinner.

Overnight stay at a beach hotel in Negombo.



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### DAY 2: Negombo to Anuradhapura | Explore Sri Lanka's Sacred Ancient Capital

After a hearty Sri Lankan breakfast at your hotel, embark on a scenic drive to Anuradhapura, the first ancient capital of Sri Lanka and a UNESCO World Heritage Site (approx. 4.5 hours).

Upon arrival, dive into the island's deep spiritual and architectural heritage as you explore the sacred city of Anuradhapura, renowned for its majestic stupas and ancient monasteries. Highlights include:

- The iconic **Ruwanwelisaya Stupa**, a gleaming white marvel of Buddhist devotion
- **Thuparamaya**, the oldest documented Buddhist dagoba in Sri Lanka
- The towering **Jetavanaramaya**, once one of the tallest structures in the ancient world
- A serene visit to the **Sri Maha Bodhi Tree**, believed to be the oldest historically documented tree on earth and a sacred pilgrimage site

Pause for lunch at a local restaurant, where you'll enjoy traditional Sri Lankan cuisine with regional flavours.

In the evening, check in to your hotel in Anuradhapura and unwind after your day of exploration.

Dinner and overnight stay in Anuradhapura.



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### **DAY 3: Anuradhapura to Sigiriya via Mihintale | Sacred Beginnings & Jungle Retreat**

After breakfast, begin your day with a short drive to Mihintale, the revered birthplace of Sri Lankan Buddhism. Nestled atop a serene hill, Mihintale offers both spiritual significance and breath taking panoramic views. Climb the ancient stone steps to explore sacred shrines, rock inscriptions, and the majestic stupa that marks the spot where Buddhism was first introduced to the island in the 3rd century BCE.

Following your visit, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, sampling authentic Sri Lankan flavours in a peaceful rural setting.

In the afternoon, continue your journey to Sigiriya, located in the heart of the island's Cultural Triangle (approx. 2 hours). Upon arrival, check in to your jungle lodge near Polonnaruwa, a tranquil hideaway surrounded by nature—perfect for unwinding after a culturally rich day.

Dinner and overnight stay at a nature lodge near Polonnaruwa.



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## **DAY 4: Sigiriya Rock Fortress & Ancient City of Polonnaruwa | UNESCO Wonders of Sri Lanka**

Rise early for a breath taking excursion for **sunrise climb to the Sigiriya Rock Fortress**, one of Sri Lanka's most iconic UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Often referred to as the "Lion Rock," this 5th-century royal citadel towers above the jungle and features ancient frescoes, landscaped water gardens, and panoramic views from the summit—making it a must-visit on any cultural tour of Sri Lanka.

After descending, return to your hotel for a well-earned breakfast and a short rest.

Late morning, set off on a guided tour of **Polonnaruwa**, another UNESCO-listed ancient capital renowned for its remarkably preserved ruins. Explore:

- The majestic **Gal Vihara** rock-cut Buddha statues
- Royal palaces, audience halls, and ancient temples
- Intricate stone carvings and irrigation marvels of the 11th–13th centuries

Pause for lunch at a local restaurant En route, where you can enjoy traditional Sri Lankan rice and curry in a relaxed setting. In the evening, return to your hotel in Sigiriya.

Dinner and overnight stay in Polonnaruwa.



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### **DAY 5: Sigiriya to Kandy via Dambulla & Matale | Temples, Spices & Sacred Relics**

After breakfast, depart from Sigiriya and embark on a scenic journey to **Kandy**, Sri Lanka's cultural and spiritual heart, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage City.

En route, visit the magnificent Dambulla Cave Temple, the largest and best-preserved cave temple complex in Sri Lanka. Explore ancient Buddha statues, vibrant ceiling frescoes, and enjoy breath taking panoramic views from the summit—an essential cultural highlight.

Continue to the Matale Spice Garden for a guided tour through aromatic plantations of cinnamon, cardamom, clove, and nutmeg. Discover the island's historic spice trade and its deep ties to Ayurvedic healing traditions.

Arrive in Kandy by late afternoon and check in to your hotel overlooking serene Kandy Lake.

In the evening, visit the sacred Temple of the Tooth Relic (Sri Dalada Maligawa), one of the most revered Buddhist shrines worldwide. Cap your day with a captivating traditional Kandyan dance and drumming performance, immersing yourself in Sri Lanka's rich cultural heritage.

Enjoy dinner and overnight stay in Kandy.



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### **DAY 6: Kandy to Nuwara Eliya | Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage, Scenic Hill Country Drive & Tea Plantation Tour**

After a delicious breakfast, depart Kandy and head to the renowned **Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage**, located about 30 minutes from Kandy. Spend time observing and interacting with rescued elephants—watch them being fed and bathed in the nearby river—an unforgettable wildlife experience in Sri Lanka.

Continue your picturesque journey to the charming hill station of **Nuwara Eliya**, famously known as “Little England” for its colonial-era architecture and cool climate.

En route, stop at the spectacular **Ramboda Falls**, one of Sri Lanka’s most breath taking waterfalls, cascading through lush greenery—an ideal spot for photography and a refreshing break.

Visit a traditional **tea factory** to learn about the production of world-famous Ceylon tea, from leaf plucking to packaging. Enjoy a fresh cup of tea and a guided tea tasting session to appreciate the subtle flavours.

Stop for lunch at a local restaurant, savouring authentic hill country cuisine.

Upon arrival in Nuwara Eliya, explore this quaint town with visits to **Gregory Lake**, perfect for boating or a leisurely stroll, and the charming old post office, an architectural gem from the British colonial era.

Conclude your day with dinner and an overnight stay at your hotel in Nuwara Eliya, soaking in the cool mountain air and serene surroundings.



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### **DAY 7: Scenic Train Journey from Nuwara Eliya (Nanu Oya) to Ella | Relax and Explore**

This morning, board the iconic **Sri Lanka train from Nanu Oya to Ella**, a 3-hour journey renowned as one of the world's most scenic rail routes. As the train winds through lush tea plantations, misty mountains, and picturesque villages, be sure to have your camera ready for breath taking views.

The **9:05 AM** train offers scenic views and arrival around **12:05 PM**.

Upon arrival in Ella, unwind in charming **hill country cafés**, sampling local coffee and fresh baked treats. Don't miss a visit to the iconic **Nine Arches Bridge**, an architectural marvel set amid verdant jungle, perfect for leisurely walks and photos.

In the evening, enjoy dinner at your hotel with stunning **mountain views** and relax after your journey.

Overnight stay at a mountain-view hotel in Ella.



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### **DAY 8: Explore Ella | Sunrise Hike & Relaxation in Sri Lanka's Hill Country**

Start your day with an early breakfast, then embark on a memorable **sunrise hike to Little Adam's Peak or Ella Rock**. Both trails offer stunning panoramic views of the surrounding mountains, lush tea plantations, and misty valleys—a perfect way to experience the serene beauty of Sri Lanka's hill country.

For adventure seekers, opt for an **exciting ziplining experience** nearby, soaring above the forest canopy, or choose a **guided tour of a local tea estate** to learn about the traditional tea-making process and sample fresh Ceylon tea.

Spend the rest of your day relaxing in Ella's laid-back atmosphere, exploring quaint cafés, or simply soaking in the natural beauty.

Enjoy a peaceful dinner and overnight stay at your cozy mountain-view hotel in Ella.

### **DAY 9: Ella to Yala National Park | Safari Adventure in Sri Lanka's Wilderness**

After breakfast, embark on a scenic drive from Ella to **Yala National Park**, approximately 2.5 hours through beautiful landscapes. Upon arrival, enjoy a delicious lunch at a local restaurant near the park.

In the afternoon, experience an exhilarating jeep safari through Yala National Park, one of Sri Lanka's premier wildlife reserves. Spot elusive **leopards**, majestic **elephants**, rare **sloth bears**, and a variety of exotic bird species in their natural habitat.

Return to your comfortable accommodation near the park, in **Tissamaharama**, for dinner and an overnight stay surrounded by the tranquil wilderness.



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### DAY 10: Yala to Mirissa | Coastal Drive & Beachside Leisure

After breakfast, enjoy a scenic **drive along Sri Lanka's stunning south coast** from Yala to the idyllic beach town of **Mirissa** (approx. 3.5 hours). Upon arrival, savour a delicious **lunch at a local seaside restaurant**, featuring fresh seafood and authentic Sri Lankan flavours.

In the afternoon, unwind with a **relaxing walk on Mirissa Beach**, known for its golden sands and calm turquoise waters—perfect for swimming and soaking up the sun. For those seeking adventure, consider a **surfing lesson** at Mirissa's gentle waves or explore the vibrant marine life with **snorkeling** near the nearby coral reefs.

Alternatively, visit the scenic **Coconut Tree Hill**, a famous viewpoint offering breathtaking vistas of the coastline dotted with swaying palms—a perfect spot for photography and sunset watching.

In the evening, enjoy a laid-back dinner by the beach, immersing yourself in the tranquil coastal atmosphere.



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### DAY 11: Mirissa | Whale Watching & Coastal Exploration

Start your day early with an unforgettable **whale watching tour** (available December to April), where you can witness majestic blue whales, sperm whales, dolphins, and other marine life in their natural habitat. This exhilarating experience is a highlight of any trip to Sri Lanka's south coast.

After your morning adventure, visit the iconic **Coconut Tree Hill**, a picturesque vantage point renowned for its towering palm trees and stunning ocean views—ideal for photos and peaceful moments.

Next, explore the tranquil **Secret Beach**, a hidden gem known for its pristine sands and calm waters, perfect for relaxing away from the crowds.

In the afternoon, choose to **take a surf lesson** on Mirissa's gentle waves or indulge in a soothing **Ayurvedic massage** to rejuvenate your body and mind. Alternatively, simply unwind on the beach, soaking in the serene coastal atmosphere.

Dinner & Overnight stay in Mirissa.



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### **DAY 12: Mirissa to Galle | Explore Historic Galle Fort & Coastal Charm**

After breakfast, embark on a short scenic drive from Mirissa to **Galle** (approximately 45 minutes), a UNESCO World Heritage Site famed for its well-preserved **Galle Fort**.

Spend the day exploring the **historic cobblestone streets** of Galle Fort, soaking in the colonial architecture and vibrant atmosphere. Visit iconic landmarks like the **Galle Lighthouse** and the **Dutch Reformed Church**, and browse through charming **boutique shops**, art galleries, and cozy **cafés** nestled within the fort walls.

In the evening, enjoy a delicious dinner at one of Galle's renowned restaurants before settling in for an overnight stay in this enchanting coastal town.



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### **DAY 13: Galle to Colombo | City Tour & Cultural Highlights**

After breakfast, enjoy a scenic drive from Galle to Colombo, approximately **2 to 2.5 hours**. Upon arrival, savour lunch at a local restaurant in Colombo, tasting authentic Sri Lankan cuisine.

Spend the afternoon exploring key Colombo attractions including the vibrant **Galle Face Green**—a popular oceanfront promenade perfect for relaxing walks and street food sampling. Visit the historic **Gangaramaya Temple**, a beautiful blend of modern and traditional Buddhist architecture.

Also, explore **Independence Square**, a significant landmark commemorating Sri Lanka's independence with elegant colonial-era architecture and lush gardens.

End your day with dinner at one of Colombo's fine restaurants and overnight at your hotel in Colombo.



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### **DAY 14: Colombo Cultural Highlights | National Museum, Dutch Museum & Gangaramaya Temple**

**Morning:** Begin at the **National Museum of Colombo**, Sri Lanka's largest museum showcasing an extensive collection of artefacts, royal regalia, and historical exhibits. Allocate about 1.5 to 2 hours here.

**Mid-Morning:** Head to the **Colombo Dutch Museum** in Pettah to explore Dutch colonial history. A 1-hour visit is usually sufficient.

**Late Morning:** Visit the **Gangaramaya Temple**, admire its unique architecture and museum. Spend around 1 to 1.5 hours here.

**Lunch:** Enjoy authentic Sri Lankan cuisine at a nearby local restaurant. **Afternoon:** Explore **Pettah Market** for a vibrant shopping experience and cultural immersion.

**Evening:** Relax and shop at **Dutch Hospital Shopping Precinct** and **Odel Mall**, perfect for souvenirs, crafts, and fashion.

**Dinner & Overnight:** Finish with a delicious dinner and overnight stay at your hotel.



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### **DAY 15: Departure from Colombo | Leisurely Check-out & Optional Beach Extensions**

After breakfast, enjoy a leisurely check-out from your hotel and transfer to Bandaranaike International Airport, Colombo for your onward flights to your respective destinations.

For travellers wishing to extend their stay, optional beachside retreats are available in the nearby **Hikkaduwa** or **Bentota** coastal towns—both renowned for their pristine beaches, water sports, and relaxed vibes. Both beaches are about 2.5 hours drive from Colombo

Thank you for traveling with us—**your unforgettable Sri Lanka journey ends here.**

**TOUR ENDS**



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