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Cycle the Back Roads of Sri Lanka Trip Notes

Ways to Travel: Guided Group, Tailormade Adventures
Destinations: Sri Lanka
Programmes: Cycling

Trip Code:
MIR



15 Days Flight Inclusive
14 Days Land only
Min age: 16

Trip Overview

Although a compact island, Sri Lanka is incredibly diverse. Exploring on two wheels is the best way to see this rural country and to experience the way of life of its friendly people. We travel from ancient cities and the fortress at Sigiriya to the hill country towns of Kandy and Nuwara Eliya, where the cooler temperatures and lush scenery make for a relaxing ride. In the south we visit Yala National Park, where we go in search of leopard, before ending the trip on the beaches of the beautiful south coast. Most of the route is a continuous ride, and transfers are kept to a minimum.

In many regions of Sri Lanka the bicycle is the most common form of transport, so travelling by bike yourself is a great way to mix with the people and to gain access to their world. This trip covers a substantial part of the island, taking in as much as possible of the scenic and cultural variety that Sri Lanka has to offer. The combination of visits to the ancient cities, great rides through the beautiful hill country, the varied wildlife, and a chance to relax on one of the many wonderful beaches, will certainly give you a taste for serendipity.

At a Glance

- 10 days cycling (including 1 optional ride) with full vehicle support
- 95% tarmac, 5% unsurfaced road
- Routes mostly follow quiet back roads, with frequent climbs
- Group normally 5 to 16, plus leader and driver. Min age 16 years
- 11 nights hotels, 2 nights guesthouses, all en suite

Trip Highlights

- The magnificent cave temple at Dambulla
- Climb the rock fortress at Sigiriya for breathtaking views
- Explore the old ruined city of Polonnaruwa
- The fascinating town of Kandy
- Ride through tea estates to Nuwara Eliya
- Search for leopard in Yala National Park

Is This Trip for You?

Average daily distance: 65km / 40 miles

No. of days cycling: 10 (including 1 optional ride)

Vehicle Support: Fully supported

Terrain is hilly, particularly around Nuwara Eliya and the hill country, but the support vehicle available is if required. Routes mostly follow quiet backroads with occasional unsurfaced sections which may be rough in places. Rides are designed to run door-to-door without transfers. Keeping to the backroads means that there is less traffic but it will become busier when approaching towns.

Group

Our Sri Lankan team of leaders have proved very popular with their incredible knowledge, passion and hospitality adding greatly to the experience. There is no better way to experience Sri Lankan culture than letting a local leader show you around their country. Depending on group size, there may be two cycling leaders.

Adult min age: 16

Min group size: 5

Max group size: 16

Itinerary



Land Only Itinerary

Day 1

Start Sigiriya

The group flight from London typically arrives at Bandaranayake International Airport around lunchtime and we transfer to Sigiriya (approximately 4 hours) where we stay for the next 2 nights.

Hotel Sigiriya or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Lunch

Day 2

Ride to Dambulla cave temple; climb Sigiriya Rock

After breakfast we ride along gravel roads following an old irrigation canal to Dambulla, the 2nd Century BC Buddhist cave temple. It is well worth the walk to view the five caves, which contain many ancient Buddha statues, some carved from the solid rock. Returning via the busy market town we take another quiet back road riding through chilli and rice fields before cycling back at our hotel for lunch and a relaxing swim in the pool. In the late afternoon we climb the 5th Century rock fortress of Sigiriya to see the beautiful frescoes painted onto the rock face (not recommended for those who suffer from vertigo). The ruins of the palace on the summit are surpassed only by the magnificent aerial view of the surrounding jungle. Stay as long as you like, as it's only 10 minutes walk back to our hotel.

Hotel Sigiriya or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 52 km / 32 miles

Day 3

Ride to Polonnaruwa; cycle tour of ruins

A long morning ride along a quiet back road which is part of the Sigiriya nature reserve, before joining the highway travelling east towards Polonnaruwa, riding all the way to our lunch stop and overnight stay. For those who fancy a swim, the hotel also has a swimming pool, a pleasant place to spend the hot early afternoon. Later we tour the old ruined city of Polonnaruwa, which dates from the 10-13th centuries.

The Village Hotel or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 73 km / 45 miles

Day 4

Ride through foothills of spice growing region

We follow the local lake's man-made 6km dam and feeder canal to its source, the Amban Ganga River. The afternoon ride is flanked by the stunning Kalanduwa hills on one side and the borders of Wasgomuwa Wildlife Park on the other. As the jungle gives way to plantations, we enter the spice growing region of Sri Lanka. The night is spent in a family-run guest house with small cabanas dotted around the estate. It's basic but the home cooking in clay pots on wood fired stoves gives you the real flavour of Sri Lanka. If you would like to find out more about the spices used in the piquant Lankan curries, the owners can arrange a visit to one of the renowned spice gardens a short walk down the road.

Countryside Hotel or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 80 km / 49 miles

Day 5

Ride to Kandy

Today is tougher as we head for the hills and Kandy, the spiritual and cultural capital of the hill country. Those who feel like an easy day can jump onto the bus for the 50km trip to Kandy, while the rest of us pedal away, riding through the Moorish town of Matale. Its inhabitants, descendants from Arab spice traders, still control most of the spice market, which is a good place to pick up some freshly ground curry powder. As Kandy's roads are as old as the city itself, we may have to drive the last few kilometres to avoid the traffic. Surrounded by hills, the town is centred around a small lake and the Temple of the Tooth. The afternoon is free to wander through the streets and markets.

Hotel Thilanka or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 53 km / 32 miles

Day 6**Free day in Kandy**

A free day to explore the town. Kandy has many interesting attractions including the wonderful Botanical Gardens, the famous Temple of the Tooth, and streets lined with interesting curio shops. The surrounding hills are dotted with wonderful temples.

Hotel Thilanka or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 7**Challenging ride through tea estates to Nuwara Eliya**

For anyone who doesn't do hills, we strongly recommend the train ride to Nuwara Eliya. For those who feel like a challenge, it's 84km, climbing up to 2000m above sea level to reach this most favoured hill station. For the first part of the ride we take the old road, a far more pleasant route, and one of the few places where you see terraced paddy fields. Beyond the paddy fields is tea country and the area is reputed to produce the finest teas on the island. Tickets for the train journey are dependent on availability on the day (although usually available, there may be the chance that the bus will need to be used instead for those who don't fancy the hill).

Hill Club Hotel or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 84 km / 52 miles

Day 8**Hill country ride to Ella**

In the morning we visit a tea factory on the edge of the town, and then cycle through hilly country towards Ella, stopping for lunch at a local restaurant and later tea in Bandarawela, a trading centre where exotic fruits from the east coast are traded for hill-country vegetables. Arriving in the late afternoon, we watch the sunset from the famous view point, Ella Gap. On a clear day you can see the coast shimmering in the distance.

Hotel Country Comfort or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 66 km / 41 miles

Day 9**Descent of 1000m, stopping at the impressive rock-cut Buddha statues at Buduruvagala; to Tissamaharama**

Descending 1000m we leave the breathtaking scenery of Uva Province for the gentle rolling hills of the dry zone, stopping at the impressive rock-cut Buddha Statues at Buduruvagala. The giant 15m rock carving of Buddha is flanked by small figures depicting his helpers and a very rare image of Maitreya, the future Buddha, which dates from the 10th Century. The tranquillity of the place is enhanced by the lotus-covered lake where we will relax on the banks and enjoy some fresh fruit before riding on to lunch. Here we can retreat from the heat of the day, before the final 30km to Tissamaharama, the capital of the old Ruhuna Kingdom.

Chandrika Hotel or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 102 km / 63 miles

Day 10**Morning ride to Kataragama Temple; afternoon drive to Yala N.P. for safari**

In the morning we cycle to Kataragama temple, which lies 16km northeast of Tissa. People of all faiths come to seek favour with the god Skanda, who is reputed to restore people's health. The colourful and noisy pooja is always busy, with thousands of pilgrims during the festival season from July - August. Tissa is close to Yala National Park, the best park in Sri Lanka to see leopard. After lunch we have a safari in the park, when we may see elephant, deer, wild boar, sloth bear, asian jackal, lots of birdlife and if very lucky a leopard. We return to Tissa for the night (please note that the sanctuary may be closed for 4-6 weeks from September to October allowing the park authorities to check the animals. We therefore go to an alternative area close by, usually Lunugamvehera or Udawalawe National Park).

Chandrika Hotel or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 32 km / 19 miles

Day 11**Ride through Bundala N.P. and the lagoon for spectacular birdlife; continue riding on coast to Hambantota; transfer to Ahangama**

Leaving early to avoid the heat of the dry zone, we ride along the boundary of Bundala Bird Sanctuary. During certain times of the year thousands of flamingos can be seen wading in the brackish shallows, eyed up by crocodiles, basking in the early morning sun. We hit the main road for the final 30km to Hambantota, a series of sandy bays fanning out from this typical coastal town. Transfer from Hambantota to Ahangama by coach. For the next 2 nights we stay in Ahangama.

Insight Resort or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 37 km / 22 miles

Day 12**Free day on beach; optional ride to Koggala**

Relax at the hotel or join a late morning ride along rural roads to the village of Wandurugama before returning via Koggala Lake and back to the hotel to end our riding. This afternoon is free to explore the beach area or swim and laze by the pool. In the late afternoon we can view the stilt fishermen climb their poles to catch a few bites for supper. From November to April we can also go whale watching off Dondra head, near Mirissa, which is one of the best places in the world for seeing Blue and Sperm whales. Huge pods of dolphins are also often seen accompanying the boats.

Insight Resort or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 13**Transfer to Colombo via Galle**

Leaving mid morning, we will stop to visit Galle. The Old Dutch fort was built in 1663 after the Dutch took the island from the Portuguese. The old ramparts and small back streets bring alive some of the history of the fight for colonial domination of this prized island. You're free to find your own lunch, meeting back at the bus at around 2.30pm for the 2 hour drive to Colombo. The rest of the day is free to relax by the pool or shop along the main street. For the last evening meal we can choose from one of the many restaurants in Colombo.

Hotel Mirage or alternative accommodation in the area

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 14**End Colombo**

If you are travelling on the group flight we will have a morning transfer to the airport for the daytime flight to London. The arrangements for those not flying with the group end after check out.

Meals included: Breakfast

All ascents, descents and distances listed above have been measured by our local partners or tour leaders. Please note that different GPS measuring devices can give differing results dependent on the barometric pressures at the time. Measurements stated throughout these trips notes are given to help you understand the types of terrain and distances you will encounter.

Post-trip Extensions**Maldives**

If you are keen to end your holiday on a very relaxed note we can arrange a visit to the Maldives for you.

The flight from Colombo is around 1 hour and upon arrival you will be transferred by speedboat (approximately 20mins) to the Paradise Island 4* resort. Paradise Island is a beautiful coral island with a total land area of 178,900 square metres, covered with lush tropical vegetation, numerous palm trees, surrounded by a wide sandy beach and the crystal clear waters of an azure lagoon.

You can choose to add on as many extra nights to your trip as you wish; your time on the island will be at leisure for you to do as you wish. The accommodation used has a swimming pool, restaurant, bar, room service and all rooms are air-conditioned and have en suite facilities. As well as the modern amenities of the resort there is also access to scuba diving and snorkelling or for the less active the chance to swim in these wonderful, calm waters. Either way it is a veritable paradise and a memorable end to the trip.

If you choose to take advantage of this opportunity then we can arrange flights for you to Malé as well as booking the hotel and speedboat transfer to the island.

Accommodation**Hotels & Guesthouses**

Accommodation on this trip is a mixture of tourist-class hotels, some with pools and some local guesthouses. Guesthouses are simple but in good locations along the cycle route giving a real flavour of the country. All rooms have en suite facilities. Wi-Fi is available at the majority of places, either in the rooms or the communal areas.

The hotel that we typically use in Nuwara Eliya has been selected for the character of the premises and the appearance of its grounds but the level of service is not always at the standard of the other hotels on this itinerary.

The Hill Club in Nuwara Eliya was originally set up as a private members' club. Some traditions are still in place and so occasionally rooms are blocked off for a members' conference. It might be that in the months of April, November and December we are not able to secure rooms at the Hill Club. If this is the case we will accommodate your group in a similar standard hotel in Nuwara Eliya, though the hotel may not have the same kind of 'old style' character.

Single accommodation (available on request)

Please note paying the single supplement may not mean that you receive a double or twin room for sole use. The room you are allocated may differ from hotel to hotel, and on some nights a smaller room for 'one person' may well be allocated.

Where a single supplement is available, paying for a single only guarantees a room for single use. It does not always mean a twin or double room will be provided for sole occupancy.

Single supplement from \$717.50 AUD

Food & Transport**Eating & Drinking**

All breakfasts and 10 lunches included.

Sri Lankan cuisine is a fascinating reflection of the island's heritage; there is a unique fusion of fresh local produce with spices brought to the island over the centuries by Malays, Arabs, Indians as well as the Dutch, Portuguese and English. Despite, or perhaps because of, these influences Sri Lankan cuisine is often referred to simply as 'Rice and Curry'; this is the staple dish in most restaurants and is usually a serving of rice accompanied by assorted meat and vegetable curries as well as various pickles 'sambols' and a handful of tiny poppadum's - all using the contrasting flavours of coconut, chilli, curry leaves, cinnamon and garlic. The variety is constant and this along with the abundance of fresh seafood and fish ensures the cuisine is a constant highlight of the trip. Vegetarians are well catered for but please inform us before departure of any special dietary requests. Please note that in Sri Lanka the availability of certain products is minimal or non-existent (for example, wheat or dairy-free) so please be prepared for this as you may need to bring these from home. Spicier food can be avoided easily and lots of the hotels will serve Western options alongside traditional food. All lunch and tea stops are subject to change dependent on the cycling speed of the group as well as the weather conditions.

Transportation

Transfers to and from the airport are in a private bus. All your luggage and personal belongings will be carried by the support vehicles. Transfer sections will be done in the minicoach, which is air-conditioned. The support vehicle will follow the riders almost all of the time for those on the main route, allowing you to cycle as much or as little as you like.

Weather & Seasonality

When to go

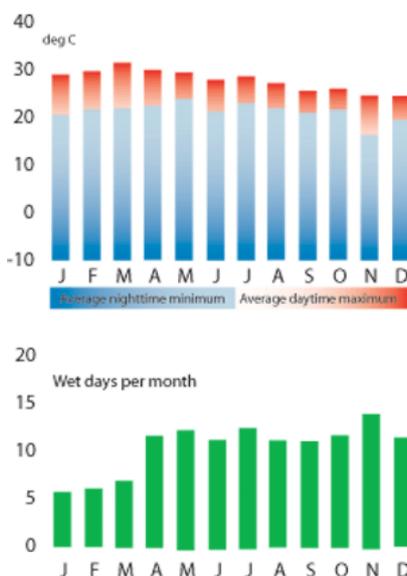
Rainfall is determined by seasonal and regional variations. The monsoon season in the south-west lasts from May to November, when the rainfall can be exceptionally heavy. In the northern dry zone, most of the annual precipitation, roughly 1,016 millimetres (about 40 inches) occurs during the monsoon season, which begins in the first week of November, though we do not really visit this region and so are largely unaffected by this monsoon. The hills and lowlands of the south-west section normally have some rainfall throughout the year, with the heaviest occurring in May and June and again in October and November.

Weather Information

Because of its location near the equator, Sri Lanka has a hot and humid climate. At the higher elevations, however, the climate is cool; the humidity is relatively lower in the northern and central parts of the country. The average annual temperature is 32°C (90°F) in the lowlands and 21°C (70°F) in the higher mountainous regions, though it can get chilly in the hill country at night.

Weather Charts

Galle



Joining Instructions

Travelling flight inclusive from London: 15 days

The group flight from London is an overnight flight departing the day before Day 1 of the itinerary.

Flights from London

We normally use the scheduled services of Sri Lankan Airlines (depending on availability). As flight timings and schedules change regularly we recommend you call one of our specialist sales staff or your agent to confirm up-to-date timings. Please note timings may change at a later date and cannot be confirmed until approximately two weeks before departure.

Travelling land only: 14 days starting in Sigiriya and ending in Colombo

Your trip normally starts at our accommodation in Sigiriya in the afternoon of Day 1 of the itinerary. Details of how to reach the start point are provided in the Final Joining Instructions - sent approximately two weeks before departure. Accommodation check-in times are normally from around 12 noon. If you wish to book a private transfer to the start or from the end point please contact your sales agent. Please note the cost of our private transfer is likely to be higher than a local taxi as our service is subject to local government tax. We only allocate vetted drivers.

Regional Flights

The Flight Inclusive price is based on a London departure, but we are happy to tailor this to your local or regional airport. **Please ask about flights from local or regional airports. (/au/regionaldepartures)**

If booking regional flights other than with Exodus, you must allow a minimum connecting time (in addition to the international check-in time) of 1 hour at Gatwick, and 1.5 hours at Heathrow; this is longer than the official minimum, but baggage handling is known to be subject to delays.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers will be sent to you as part of our Final Joining Instructions. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

Transfers Details

Airport transfers are included for those on the group flights. Please note that transfers are not included for clients arriving on any other flight, even if Exodus has booked it.

If you require airport transfers, you may (by prior arrangement only) be able to join the group transfer. Transfers are arranged to coincide with the arrival time of the group flight - please check the group flight details 2 weeks before departure. If you do not take this transfer, or miss it, you must make your own way to the joining point at your own expense.

Location start: Sigiriya

Location end: Colombo

What to Take

Essential Equipment

Daypack
 Cycling shorts and gloves
 Stiff-soled shoes (not running shoes)
 Lightweight waterproof jacket
 Sunglasses/eye protection
 Strong sun cream
 Water bottles
 Insect repellent
 Torch
 Light cotton trousers
 Lightweight long sleeved shirt
 Fleece or sweater
 Cycling helmet (compulsory on this trip)

There will be plenty of opportunities to get laundry done locally at a very affordable price so it's fine to pack light.

Water Included

Plastic bottles are a big issue in many countries where recycling isn't yet widely available; they often end up in landfill sites or get burnt, both processes are harmful to the environment and we would like to reduce our impact here. For your trip we provide an alternative to single-use plastic bottles in order to reduce the amount of plastic used. This means that safe drinking water will be available throughout so all you need to do is bring a bottle to re-fill along the way. Please add this to your packing list!

Optional Equipment

Pocket binoculars
 Electrolytes

Equipment Hire

Local Bike Details: Ghost Kato 3 AL mountain bikes with front suspension.

Discount for bringing your own bike: £150.

Ebikes: Electric bikes are available to hire for the week. This is on request only for £210 to cover the duration of the trip. Unfortunately at this stage only 17" frames are available however we hope to source more size options in the future.

A quality local hire bike is now included in the overall price of our cycling holidays. At the time of booking we will take your height in order to reserve equipment. There may on occasions be insufficient bikes available in the correct size; we will endeavour to find suitable alternative equipment but this cannot be guaranteed. We will tell you before you book whether suitably sized bikes are available.

Conditions

1. The equipment remains the property of the supplier and you may not sell, hire out or part possession with the equipment.
2. You must not misuse the equipment and must return it in the same condition as when received (ordinary wear and tear excepted). The supplier is entitled to charge for any damage caused to the equipment during the period of hire.
3. You must ensure that the equipment is adequately secured when not in use. In the event of the equipment being lost or stolen, you may be liable for the replacement value of the equipment
4. You must not use the equipment whilst under the influence of drink or drugs and should immediately notify the Supplier in the event of breakdown or loss.

Bringing Your Own Bike

If you prefer the familiarity of your own bike, you may of course bring it along. Please advise us at the time of booking and you will receive a discount off the price of the holiday, as specified above. You will be responsible for any extra baggage charges, please speak to our Sales team for individual airline fees. Any clients bringing their own bike should ensure they have adequate cover for loss, damage or theft under their travel, home contents or a specialist insurance policy. If Exodus is confident that we have taken all reasonable care to ensure the safety of your bike, in the rare event of loss, damage or theft you will need to claim under your own insurance policy.

Extra Bike Bits

You may like to bring your own pedals and saddle (excluding the seat post) or gel saddle cover to fit to the hire bikes. We encourage this, if it is your preference. However, please note that you are responsible for your own equipment, and removing your saddle/pedals at the end of the trip. We cannot guarantee the return of any bike parts left behind.

Exodus Policy on Cycling Helmets

Wearing a helmet is mandatory for anyone taking part in any guided Exodus cycling holiday. Group members must bring their own helmets, as they are not available for hire, even if they are hiring a bike from Exodus.

For self-guided cycling holidays wearing a helmet is highly recommended. Customers who choose to ignore our advice do so entirely at their own risk and on the understanding that it may affect the validity of their travel insurance. It should also be noted that in some countries we travel to wearing a helmet is already a legal requirement.

Cycling of all kinds has its dangers and accidents can happen from time to time. Please ensure that you are properly prepared for the riding you are going to undertake.

Recommended Cycling Clothing

Padded cycling shorts (with loose 'over-shorts' where recommended), breathable clothing, and a lightweight waterproof/windproof top. Shoes with relatively stiff soles are better for biking, but are not essential unless you are cycling long distances. Most people want to carry certain items with them during the day while cycling, for this we recommend a large bum-bag or small close-fitting daysack.

Please be aware that you will be passing through some remote villages where the locals are unaccustomed to seeing people in tight lycra - we recommend you wear baggy shorts or loose 'over shorts' so as not to cause offence.



Practical Information

Passport

Sri Lanka

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for UK passport holders, and other nationalities should check with their travel agent or the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Visa

Sri Lanka

A visa (Electronic Travel Authorisation) is required if you are British and for most other nationalities. If you do not hold a British passport, please check the visa requirements with your local Sri Lankan Embassy or the ETA website www.eta.gov.lk (<http://www.eta.gov.lk>). Passengers should also be aware of local laws and customs in Sri Lanka (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/sri-lanka/local-laws-and-customs> (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/sri-lanka/local-laws-and-customs>)). The mistreatment of Buddhist images and artefacts is an offence; please note that people have been refused entry to Sri Lanka because of visible tattoos of Buddha.

Visa regulations can change without notice: please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

Vaccination

Sri Lanka

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements.

Recommended vaccinations are: Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A.

The risk of malaria is slight but you may wish to consult your GP or travel health clinic for further advice.

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available for Dengue, and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health we strongly recommend you contact your Medical Professional or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up-to-date information. Please note: vaccinations that are routinely recommended to residents of the UK, North America or Australasia are not considered to form part of the travel health advice, and you should ensure these are kept up to date where necessary.

For additional information please visit: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries> (<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>)

Insurance - are you adequately covered?

It is a condition of joining any of our holidays that you must be fully insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services where appropriate). On arrival in destination for your trip, you will be asked to present details to your leader or local representative of your policy.

If you are resident in the UK we strongly recommend the **Exodus travel insurance policy (/au/insurance)**, this is specifically designed to cover all activities on your trip. If arranging your own policy please ensure that you are covered for all activities that are part of the trip, optional activities that you intend to take part in and/or on high altitude itineraries, that you are covered up to the maximum altitude of the trip.

Local Time

Sri Lanka's Timezone: Asia/Colombo +0530 (GMT +05:30)

Electricity

Sri Lanka's Electricity: 220/230 volts AC, 50 Hz. The electricity supply is not 100% reliable but it is usually only off for short periods of time.

Money

Sri Lanka's Currency

The national currency of Sri Lanka is the Sri Lanka Rupee (LKR), with an exchange rate at the time of publication of approximately 210 to the UK£ and 130 to the US\$.

Exchange rates are correct at the time of publication.

It is advisable to bring your money in cash (Sterling, Euros or US dollars); travellers cheques are very difficult to change. We advise you to change money on arrival at Colombo airport. The hotels will be able to change money as well but the rates will probably not be favourable. There are banks at the airport open 24 hours a day.

ATM Availability

You can change money in Polonnaruwa, Kandy (Sterling, Euro and US Dollars are readily accepted) and there are now ATM machines in many of the main towns in Sri Lanka. Please inform your bank before departure that you are travelling to Sri Lanka and carry the relevant telephone number with you in case they put a block on your card. You should keep all exchange receipts as these will be needed if you want to change any excess rupees back into hard currency. It is useful to bring a credit card for more expensive purchases in the better souvenir shops. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are widely accepted.

It is advisable to bring your money in cash (Sterling, Euros or US Dollars); travellers cheques are very difficult to change. We advise you to change money on arrival at Colombo airport. The hotels will be able to change money as well but the rates will probably not be favourable. There are banks at the airport open 24 hours a day.

Extra Expenses & Spending Money

For meals not included we recommend allowing around £150 (approx. US\$200).

All entrance fees and activities described above are included except for the optional activities mentioned on some days. It is recommended that you allow at least £5 (US\$7) per day for personal expenditure such as stamps, postcards and soft drinks. Shopping opportunities throughout this tour are endless and we suggest that you take money for souvenirs - even if you are generally not a keen shopper we have found that most people succumb to some of the wide variety of handicrafts on offer.

Optional Excursions (approximate costs, depending on group sizes)

Whale Watching - please note if you choose to enjoy this excursion on your free day we strongly advise booking a private charter boat through your leader. The more members of the group who wish to join the charter the more cost effective it will be. We do not recommend the larger, commercial boats, they may be cheaper but they do not always respect the welfare of the animals or operate in an environmentally responsible way. We have also had reports of overcrowding on the boats. Please ask your leader for further details on how to book a private charter. Whale watching is only possible between November - April.

If the full group choose to join the trip prices will be approximately £40 (US\$51) per person inclusive of transport to Mirissa. If you are a smaller group or not all wish to do the excursion this price will increase - your leader will be able to give you further information.

Tipping

Tipping is a way of life in Sri Lanka, and to simplify tipping of hotel staff, toilet attendants, porters and bus drivers etc, your tour leader may, with the approval of the group, collect a kitty to cover this and also to pay for snacks and drinks bought along the way. Tipping of the leaders is at your discretion: if you are happy with the leaders we suggest about £3 (US\$4) per day for tips to split between them.



Responsible Tourism

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment. Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism, covering everything from the way we plan and operate our trips to the practices of Exodus as a company.

All of the hotels on this trip are locally staffed and uses freshly sourced produce wherever possible, providing employment opportunities and income alternatives for the local community. Whilst staying in the guest house, clients get to try a home cooked clay pot meal and visit the spice gardens where some of the ingredients came from.

Our entry fees to culturally important sites will provide a vital contribution to their upkeep whilst also celebrating Sri Lankan history. There are plenty of opportunities to engage with local culture on our visits to the various towns and villages as well as places to buy handcrafted souvenirs along the way. Furthermore, cycling trips have very little detrimental impact on the environment and local residents as it is a quiet, low impact activity requiring comparatively little resources to support.

We financially co-sponsored a local Tsunami relief project, which enabled 25 families to be rehoused and for two schools to be equipped with toilets, running water and outdoor swings. In collaboration with a German partner and the village temple, we have helped towards providing 10 large water tanks and an eye clinic in a remote village with a donation of 200 pairs of glasses. We also assisted in the development of a day care and education of school children in the hill country.

In March 2019, Exodus Travels launched the **Exodus Travels Foundation** ([https://www.exodus.co.uk/foundation?](https://www.exodus.co.uk/foundation?__hstc=173457148.f2ba21d2ccabb491f5924f600f1a2876.1547513532465.1555315592215.1555567432708.16&__hssc=173457148.7.1555567432708&__hsfp=185531430)

[__hstc=173457148.f2ba21d2ccabb491f5924f600f1a2876.1547513532465.1555315592215.1555567432708.16&__hssc=173457148.7.1555567432708&__hsfp=185531430](https://www.exodus.co.uk/foundation?__hstc=173457148.f2ba21d2ccabb491f5924f600f1a2876.1547513532465.1555315592215.1555567432708.16&__hssc=173457148.7.1555567432708&__hsfp=185531430) we support initiatives all around the world. But it cannot exist without travellers who care. Get involved or learn more about what Responsible Travel means to Exodus [here](https://www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel?__hstc=173457148.f2ba21d2ccabb491f5924f600f1a2876.1547513532465.1555315592215.1555567432708.16&__hssc=173457148.7.1555567432708&__hsfp=185531430)

https://www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel?__hstc=173457148.f2ba21d2ccabb491f5924f600f1a2876.1547513532465.1555315592215.1555567432708.16&__hssc=173457148.7.1555567432708&__hsfp=185531430

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Exodus Community

Join the Exodus online community

Don't forget to visit the Community area on our website. You can view the range of Exodus videos and podcasts, read trip write-ups which have featured in the national media and take advantage of some special deals on travel gear and equipment.

In the Community Travel Forum you'll find the Departure Lounge where you can discuss your trip with fellow travellers before you depart. When you get back from your holiday remember to upload your images to the relevant trip page on our website. This helps other people see what our holidays are really like and you'll be entered automatically into our monthly photo competition.

To make full use of the **Community (/au/community)** you'll need to join My Exodus. It's free, registration is simple and easy, so what are you waiting for?

Important Information

On all guided trips

Although our leaders are well trained to deal with different capabilities, if they have any concerns about someone's ability to safely partake in an activity, or their impact on other people's enjoyment, we authorise them to take necessary action which, in some circumstances, may involve asking someone to miss that activity.

Although rarely enforced, by booking this trip you agree to section 16 of our Booking Conditions which clearly states that our leaders have the authority to do this. In these circumstances we will ensure anyone sitting out is safely provided for and offered alternative options where possible. Refunds will not be provided for activities missed and customers may be liable for additional costs incurred.

On all trips

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call the Exodus office and ask to speak to one of the experts on this itinerary.

In an emergency, please contact our 24 hour out of hours service on +44 (0) 844 326 7041.

Every time that you travel abroad you should take the time to read the warnings in the **essential information (/au/about-exodus/essential-information)** in the brochure.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers, and details of how to reach the start point, will be sent to you approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to departure. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure or website, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure and website. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary. Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

As fuel prices, airport taxes and exchange rates fluctuate, and airlines manage their rates to match demand, it is proving harder than ever to guarantee our Flight Inclusive prices. Although we endeavour to keep our website as accurate as possible, daily fluctuations mean that our Flight Inclusive price may be out of date. For accurate prices we recommend that you contact one of our Travel Experts, or your Travel Agent.

TRAVEL AWARE -STAY SAFE & HEALTHY ABROAD

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the NHS have up-to-date advice on staying safe and healthy abroad. For more on security, local laws, plus passport and visa information, see <https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk/> (<https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk/>)

Keep informed of current travel health news by visiting <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/> (<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/>)

Advice can change so check regularly for updates.

For all latest travel information about your holiday, please visit our **Travel Safety Advice (/au/travel-safety-advice)** page.



How to Book

1. Check availability

Go online to check availability, or contact us by phone or email.

2. Secure your place

You can provisionally hold a place on this trip, usually for between three and seven days.

3. Complete your booking and payment

When you're ready to book, go to www.exodus.co.uk ([/au/homepage](#)) for online booking, book over the phone or you can complete a booking form (available online or on request by calling us). We accept all major credit and debit cards, or you can pay by cheque. Book with confidence: Exodus is fully licensed and bonded as a tour operator. We hold Air Traffic Organisers Licence (ATOL) number 2582 issued and bonded with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). We are also bonded to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and we are members of the Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) and ABTA - The Travel Association. This means you can book your Exodus holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid from the "Current as" date on page one. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure; if there are any updates that significantly impact the inclusions or itinerary bookers will be written to separately. All customers will also receive a link to the most up-to-date version of the Trip Notes with their Final Joining Instructions pre-travel.

Version 1