

Places to visit

Bentota & Beruwala



The gently swaying palm trees lining the golden sandy beach invites you for a cool dip in the white foamy waves of the Indian Ocean, under the azure blue sky. Let the friendly winds carry you further away from the shore closer to the pods of whales and dolphins. Keep your camera ready to capture the giant whales as they glide past you and the sun smiles down upon the frolics of the mischievous dolphins.

Watch the baby turtles swimming around in their special tanks and join in the pleasure of releasing conserved turtles in to the sea with your own hands! Watch them crawl on the sea shore only to disappear among the welcoming waves of the ocean. Gaze as their tiny black heads emerge up from the salty mass of water as the sun disappears beyond the horizon. Lie on the pearly sands and soak under the warm sun as you get the perfect tan you always wanted.

Colombo



Visit the commercial capital of Sri Lanka, which in spite of the tall buildings towering over the streets, has its own share of greenery and wild life, much to the delight of many tourists. The Galle face premises which borders the sea guarding the lining of the star classed sophisticated range of hotels, offers the best coastal line in Colombo, where the sky is dotted with hundreds of multicolored kites, handled by well-practiced hands catching the wind and disappearing in to tiny dots. Watch as the nights come to life with its busy city roads and street light, while people are seen returning home after a heavy day of shopping.



Stroll around at the Arcade when its white walls are painted with the bright night lights. Arcade allows you to have a variety of pleasures at a single glance. Be it biting in to a burger or pizza, tasting the Lankan food, watching a newly released 3D movie, doing up your hair at a salon, name it and it's all yours at the Arcade. Ease yourself at the floating market, where you get to shop with a mass of water around you! A visit to the Viharamahadevi Park, Beira Lake and the National museum would no doubt make your

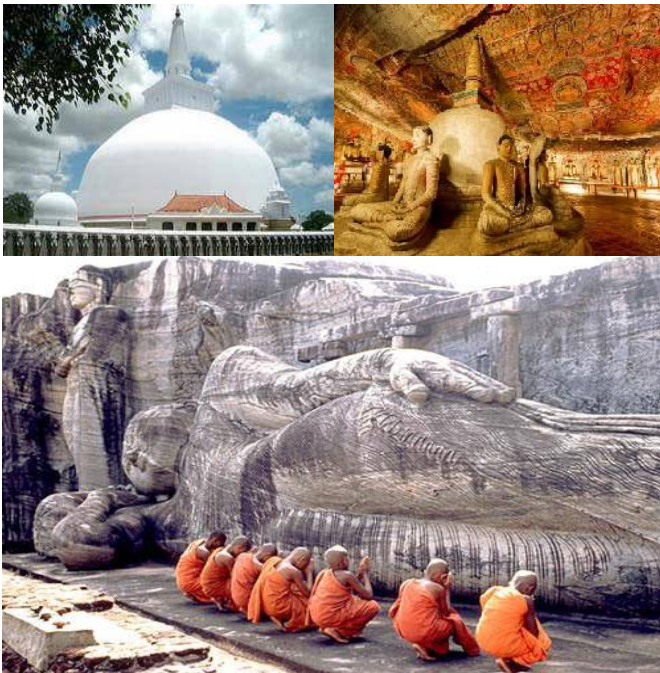
Chilaw



There is a saying in Sri Lanka that Chilaw is well known for its three "C"s – Crabs, coconuts and Coreas, the pioneers for Sri Lanka's independence movement.

If you are a sea food lover, you will find Chilaw a perfect haven! The lively fish market in Chilaw caters for all your sea food needs; Crabs, prawns, cuttle fish you name it, they have it! The deserted beach in this peaceful fishing village livens up during the month of August with the arrival of crowds of devout Hindus and Buddhists and gathering of Catholics and Muslims alike, for the colorful Munneswaram Festival. Don't miss the chance to visit the cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel which has a history of more than two centuries and legends about the miraculous discovery of the statue of Our Lady.

Cultural Triangle



The archeological sites at Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Dambulla, collectively known as the Cultural Triangle of Sri Lanka, are proud reminders of our country's golden history.

Discover a gallery of Buddhist sculptures and paintings at the largest well preserved rock temple, Dambulla built by king Walagambahu. Wander among the ruins of Anuradhapura, and pay homage to the sacred Bo tree. Gaze up at the white washed Ruwanweliseya and climb the Mihintale rock at the first kingdom, Anuradhapura. Look up the wondrous stone statues of the standing, seated and the reclining Buddha at Polonnaruwa Gal Viharaya. Be awestruck as the sunrises over the vast waters of the Parakrama samudraya, the ideal time to be enthralled by the nation's most valuable treasure trove.

Ella



Ella is a small village in the Southern edge of the hill country woven with beautiful scenery and folklore.

The Ravan ella and the Ravana Ella cave are said to be associated with the Indian epic, Ramayanaya. The village folk believe that when Ravana kidnapped Sita from Rama, she was brought here and hid in the cave behind a waterfall which is called the Ravana Ella today. The countryside of Ella provides perfect opportunity for the adventurous spirit to go trekking and discover waterfalls and cliffs dotted with streams of clear running water at every nook and corner. It is a soothing balm for the fatigued where peace and harmony is served by Mother Nature on a silver platter.

Galle



A living & breathing city of important historical significance, Galle will drown you in colonial charm and splendor from the 5th century Dutch era!

When it comes to fortified towns, nothing can compare to the majestically standing Galle Dutch Fort, recognized as a World Heritage Site, with the Lighthouse to guide ships ashore safely. There are several museums and antique shops that display curiosities from the island's colonial era and other shiny trinkets for you to carry away. Walking the circuit around the fort at dusk will be one of the most pleasant experiences of your stay in Sri Lanka. Enjoy the cool breeze hugging you, leaving you refreshed and feel the soft spray of the waves wet your face as you tread the soft golden sands of the beach.

Hikkaduwa



To the sun loving and fun crazy spirit, Hikkaduwa is just what the doctor prescribed!

The perfect soft sands of the palm fringed beach with the ocean breeze refreshing you and the Indian Ocean crashing waves beside you, the tranquility and beauty of the spotless seashore will strip you of the weariness and exhaustion. Hikkaduwa offers you the ideal surf for an adrenaline high ride on the waves making Hikkaduwa the second best spot for surfing in Sri Lanka!

The colorful stretch of coral reefs and ship wrecks hidden under the blue shiny waters offer the best views for the enthusiastic diver and marine life lover! If sun, sea, delicious food and leisure are what you are looking for, Hikkaduwa has it all covered!

Jaffna



Take a trip to the Northern peninsula of the island and experience the diversity of the culture in Sri Lanka as you are introduced to a predominantly Hindu civilization. Be awestruck with the colorful Hindu temples dotting the area among which the Koneswaram kovil is the most venerated. Join hundreds of pilgrims that usher in daily for the vibrant evening ceremonies in honor of the Hindu Gods. Follow the faithful believers to wash yourself in the holy waters of the Keerimalai spring, believed to miraculously cure any sickness.

Jaffna fort, the second largest fort in the island, stands majestically over the shimmering waters of the lagoon. Cherish the colonial charm of the Portuguese and the Dutch which still haunts the place.

Stroll along the coastal belt of the peninsula and discover the "Dambakola Patuna" a harbor with rich history, the most important being the landing of the Sanghamitta Therani with the sacred Bo sapling.

Kalpitiya



Kalpitiya is among the best sites for dolphin and whale watching. It is a unique marine sanctuary hosting many creatures of the sea such as pods of whales and dolphins, sea turtles and the occasional Dugong, the "sea cow". It is home to mangroves, salt marshes and vast sand dunes. The Bar reef at Kalpitiya is the largest coral reef in Sri Lanka. Ride a boat away from the shores and meet the gentle mammals of the ocean. Dive into the clear water of the sea and explore the marine life under water. Return to the beach and try wind surfing, a popular sport at Kalpitiya, soak the warm rays of sunlight under the shade of the thickly growing palm trees and in the evening ride on horseback along the sandy coast watching the sun set beyond the horizon leaving the sky painted in shades of red, orange and yellow.

Kalutara



A holiday in Kalutara will offer you a laid back and relaxed atmosphere with the combination of a generous helping of authentic Sri Lankan culture, not to mention a dash of old colonial charm!

Kalutara heralds its presence with nothing less than the immense white gleaming dagoba of the Gangatilaka Vihara, which is 3 storeys high is believed to be the only Buddha Stupa in the world which is entirely hollow. Bite into the juicy, delicious flesh of the purple shiny fruit, Mangoosteen, which even Queen Victoria craved to taste. Kalutara is home to the best Mangoosteen in the island! Watch the sun set at Calido beach, an untainted scenic beach with miles of golden sands stretching out to meet the Indian Ocean!

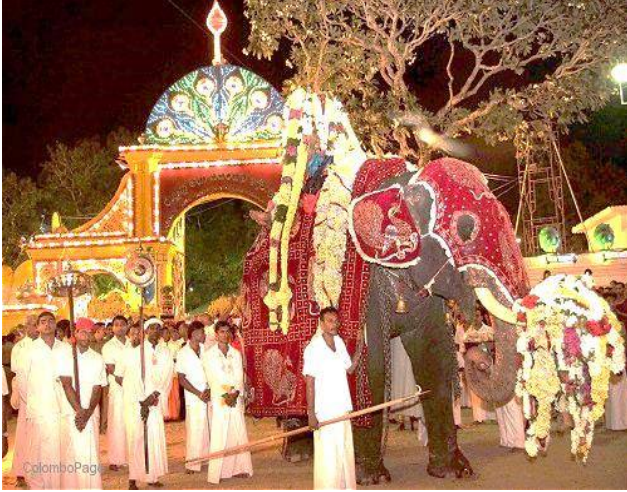
Kandy



Declared a world heritage by the UNESCO, Kandy which served as the last standing Sinhalese kingdom in Sri Lanka rests in the heart of the Island adding unlimited glamour to the nation by bearing some of the very important religious sites of the Buddhists from around the world. Scenic Kandy Lake set on a plateau surrounded by mountains, is a key attraction of the Hill capital, consuming a large portion of the land in its serenity as thousands of local and foreign travelers stop to admire the beauty of it which is enhanced by the street lamps that light up the lake at night.

home to the most priceless possession of the Buddhists, the temple of tooth relic at the center of the city houses the tooth relic Lord Buddha. the grandest and the most colorful pageant of Asia is hosted by the temple of the tooth relic in the month of July, parading the holy paragon through the streets of Kandy headed by richly decorated tuskers serenely treading the paths. The EselaPerehara features Kandyan dancers, acrobats, jugglers, musicians and fire-breathers much to the delight of both the young and the old alike. Feel the British charm at every corner as the friendly Lankans greet you with warm smiles.

Kataragama



Popularly known as one of the holiest cities in Sri Lanka, Kataragama is rich in legends and lore. The temple at Kataragama is unique as it draws in pilgrims from all over the country in spite their differences in religions, caste or creed. Kataragama temple is consecrated to Skanda-Murugan, a deity believed to have six heads and twelve hands! Join the mass of devotees in the evening to take part in the "Pooja" and the colorful ceremonies in honor of their deities.

Witness how a multitude of believers dip in the venerated Menik River, which is supposed to wash away the sins and purify anyone who bathes in the holy waters. Stay back to feast your eyes on the main event at Kataragama in the months of July and August; the vibrant Kataragama procession with many spectacular items lead by the serenely pacing giant tuskers carrying the Holy paragons!

Marawila



Marawila comes to life at dawn when hundreds of dark dots eventually turn in to fishing boats pulling ashore. Watch the fisherman hurl their night's labor, in spite of their exhaustion. The city becomes calmer towards mid-day as people carry on with their daily chores. The city lights up again when the boats are seen pulling away from the shore and disappearing among the sea waves, on another exciting mission to find their living and feed the population.

Mt. Lavinia



Step in to Mt.Lavinia, where the city and the beach is seen at a single glance. Bring your cheerful spirits to life while frolicking about in the foamy sea waves crashing on the sides of the massive rocks, which appear to be guarding the sea. Sit on the huge black rocks dangling your feet over the sea waves, enjoying the salty cold water droplets sprinkling over you. Watch the red ball of fire disappearing at the horizon and pave the way to moonlight. If you want to wade in the sea up to your hips or build your own sand castle, Mt. Lavinia beach is just what you are looking for!

Mt. Lavinia is a sea food heaven. Be it prawns, lobster or fish, Say your wish out loud and it'll be all yours, cooked in your style, on a lavishly decorated plate. Enjoy your sea food dinner on a candle lit table under millions of twinkling stars.

Negombo



Relax on the sea shore tasting a new flavor of ice cream, allowing the sun rays to work on your tan! Negombo, a fishing town greatly related with the deep blue sea, situated in the western coastal line, offers a vast golden strip of the beach commonly used for sun bathing purposes. The overnight hard work of the fishermen who battles the rough sea waves from dusk until dawn is displayed at the fish market where an array of fish of the Indian Ocean had offered our little Island, is sold at considerable prices.

Ease your mind at the St. Mary's church whose high pillars and roof are painted with images of the holy family and angels, making you feel for a moment as though you were at Rome. The town dotted with a number of churches surely stands up to its honorary name, 'Little Rome'.

The Angurukaramulla temple which speaks of the Buddhist culture, the Dutch fort, Dutch canal and the Dutch clock tower built during foreign dominance will no doubt give you a sense of curiosity about the historical aspects of the Island.

Nuwara Eliya



Nuwara Eliya, beautified in its magnificent green hills is a whole new world as it lives up to its name which means the 'city on the plain'. The city is proudly overlooked by Pidurutalagala, the tallest mountain in Sri Lanka, while she herself is draped in a range of winding mountains

Feel the British charm wrapping you in its old appeal as the green carpeted hills of Ceylon tea beckons you to stroll along the richly growing bushes to join the tea pluckers deftly plucking "two leaves and a bud" to throw them over their heads into the baskets behind them. Enjoy a cup of freshly brewed Ceylon tea after witnessing the procedure of the plucked leaves becoming the world's best tea!

Pasikudah



Spend your holiday in leisure under the sun smiling down on the clashing sea waves. Be one with the free minded spirits, frolicking about in the shallowest beach of the Island. Pasikuda offers the safest beach holiday spot, where the beauty of the setting sun is captured at the horizon, much to the delight of many photographers. The unique, coastal belt is one of the Island's unspoilt beaches opened up to the tourists.

Those who are in for a dive can explore the ship wrecks from centuries ago. Up for an adventure? Try discovering the hidden treasures buried deep under the sea hidden from the world and forgotten for centuries!!!

Pinnawala

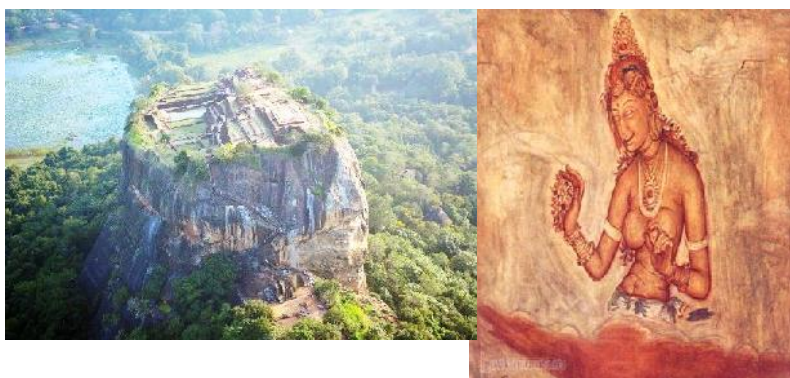


Are you an animal lover? Or to be more precise are you an elephant lover? Then Pinnawala elephant orphanage is exactly what you're looking for to quench your love for these creatures by spending one solid day with the 88 captive elephants who call Pinnawala their home after being found either isolated or injured around the forest premises. Join with the elephants of three generations in making your day truly a memorable one by bathing them in the river and scrubbing them while they spray a fountain of water on you, drenching you in return. Those scared by the appearance of these gentle creatures can look on from the broad river bank where you will see the baby elephants, being bathed by the older elephants, it will no doubt be a moment of emotion. Bottle feed the little giants as they tug at the pacifier playfully drinking the milk greedily.

Mark your presence at this once in a life time experience where you will get to see the world

Declared a world heritage site and considered as the eighth wonder of the world, Sigiriya is said to have been the hideaway palace of King Kashyapa, who after walling his father to death fled from his brother prince Mugallan, the rightful heir of the throne. Be one of the many who climbs the stone stairway leading from the base to the top of the mountain where the sight of the ruins of various chambers, stairways and pools used by the king and his men 1600 years back will surely make you feel like a modern explorer. Walk through the open mouth of the giant lion head that served loyally to the king as the entrance to the palace a few hundred years ago but now lies low with only its huge paws. The graffiti done on the walls of the rock makes it appear as a gigantic picture gallery while leaving all artists from around the world open mouthed. Once at the top make sure to come in close encounter with the mirror wall which makes Sigiriya one of the most important urban sites of the first millennium.

Sigiriya





Southwest Coast

Palm fringed beaches of pearl white sand and calm blue waters reflecting the warmth of the sun above are the ideal combination to laze around and feel at leisure.

Dip in the gently lapping waves to cool off and try some water sports such as diving, snorkeling and surfing if you are up to an adrenaline dose.

Swim with the critters of underwater exploring new depths and discovering more colorful marine life

Watch the Galle fort with its sides being hugged recklessly by the clashing sea waves with the backdrop of the setting sun. Let your feet feel the warmth of the salty water as you stand in the midst of the foamy waves.

Feel the Sun, Sea and Sand add joy to your life here at the best beaches of the Island!



Tangalle



Stroll along the snaking palm fringed beach at Tangalle with soft pearly sands under your feet! Feel the cool breeze from the Indian Ocean sweeping around you and dip into the warm clear waters of the sea for a swim.

Tangalle is the perfect place for all the water sport enthusiasts ranging from diving to surfing, snorkeling and wind surfing. Spend your leisure while sipping a cold beer and feeling the warmth of the sun setting in the horizon.

Trincomalee



The gently lapping waters at Trincomalee invites you on a spectacular holiday! Trincomalee, generally called "Trinco", is the capital of the Eastern country and home to the fifth natural harbor in the world, a harbor which had many European powers vying for it and has a history running back to the beginning of the island's civilization.

The 'Marble beach' decorating the Eastern coast is famous for its waters resembling a white marble on a calm sunny day. Ride a boat to the Pigeon Island and dive under water to see some of the best remaining coral reefs of Sri Lanka and be smitten with the aquatic kingdom! Visit the lover's leap with your special one and gaze upon the legendary rocks facing the sea famous for the tragic end of a broken hearted damsel. The 7 hot water springs will refresh you before you climb the rocky path to the Koneswaram temple which offers you a splendid view of the majestic sunrise at

Udawalawe



Udawalawe is home to the largest herd of free Asian elephant population in the island roaming around the premises capturing the hearts of all tourists, making it almost as good as an African savanna. Make this an opportunity to see the baby elephants and the young elephants being kept under guard but freely roaming in the elephant transit home, near the national park, until they are released to the forests. Keep your camera ready for a click to capture the occasional visit of a leopard as it charges after a prey. Try to spot it resting on a tree top, with its tail hanging from the tree branch as if enjoying the orchestra played by the colorful birds. You will surely be awe struck at the sight of a sloth bear or a golden jackal silently making its way among the sparsely grown trees.

Yala



Hop aboard to experience the leopards, strolling among the sparsely growing trees at the Yala national park, the second largest national park proudly owned by Sri Lanka. Situated in the southern province of the Island, it will let you experience the diversity of animal species Sri Lanka offers as the safari jeep finds its way through Yala, which is home to the highest recorded number of leopards in the world. Don't miss the opportunity of photographing the giant members of the animal kingdom; namely the Asian wild elephants as they walk slowly but heavily along the jungle paths. Watch them enjoy their water bath in the rivers flowing by, while the crocodiles lie quietly on the river bank after a hearty meal.

Engulf in the true spirit of adventure while capturing your delighted moments in a snap shot of bears, monkeys, langurs and many more animal species. Enjoy your tour with the constant accompaniment of the musical notes sung by the birds while breathing in the wonders of the wild life around you.

...Some activities to do...

Camping



Grab your back pack and get ready to camp out in the wilderness, surrounded by the greeneries of the jungle and the silent calls of the wildlife.

Spend your day watching the freely roaming creatures of the wild and rest at night in a luxury tent within the jungle. Have your dinner outside the tent, under a star lit sky and savor the village cooked meal which would tantalize your taste buds!

Sri Lanka offers top of the range wildlife camping experiences set in private and exclusive wilderness locations at the door steps of Sri Lanka's major national parks. Most popular camping sites are the Yala, Wilpattu and Udawalawe National Parks .

As you lay down at night, be hypnotized by a leopard's soft growling in the dark, listen to the evocative hoot of a tropical owl, embrace the sights and sounds of nature and you will truly experience a state of natural bliss and utmost comfort the wilderness has to offer

Safari



Sri Lanka is a land of tremendous natural beauty offering a plethora of unique landscapes and a stunning variety of both endemic and migratory wildlife.

Yala, Udawalawe, Kumana , Wasgamuwa are few of the National Parks, sanctuaries and nature reserves abound on this compact little island nation brimming with wild fauna and flora.

While leopards, elephants and sloth bears, Grey Langhurs, spotted & barking deer, wild boar and golden jackals are some of the frequent large terrestrial creatures freely roaming the grounds of the sanctuaries, both migrant and resident species of birds such as Crested serpent eagle, changeable hawk eagle, white-bellied sea eagle & grey-headed fishing eagle and Painted stork frequent the sky and tree tops.

Hot Air Ballooning



Chase the dawn at the speed of the wind and greet the sunrise, glide above the forests, an endless green carpet. Feel the initial adrenaline rush at the take off and soon after be lulled into a serene and tranquil experience of breathtaking views.

Watch the herd of elephants at Udawalawe splashing in water early in the morning oblivious to your presence above them and see the deer grazing the grass, raising their heads now and then to look at you gliding past. Feast your eyes as a flock of birds fly past you in perfect harmony.

Find yourself amidst the white clouds and look below to see the rocky boulders at Sigiriya and Dambulla standing proud. Float past the ranges of mountains wrapped in mist and watch the sky been painted several shades of red, orange and purple as the sun sets in. What more could you ask for? This is your

Turtle Watching



Marine turtles have been roaming the world's oceans for about 190 million years since the time of Dinosaurs. There are only seven species of marine turtles that inhabit the oceans of this world. Of these, five come to nest in Sri Lanka making it an ideal country to for Turtle Watching. These are the Green Turtle, Olive Ridley Turtle, Leatherback Turtle, Hawksbill Turtle and the Loggerhead Turtle. The largest of them is the Green Turtle.

From April to September, green, hawksbill and occasionally even leatherback turtles struggle ashore at night to lay their eggs. The nesting process exhibited by the female turtles is a delicate one and she takes all necessary steps to cover her tracks and protect her unborn under t sand until they are ready. Nesting done at night.

Whale and Dolphin watching



The calm waters of the Indian Ocean stirs with the arrival of pods of Dolphins and whales in the months of December, January and April, which is the peak period for whale and dolphin sightings. The best whale and dolphin watching sites in the coast of Sri Lanka are Kalpitiya, Dondra point, Mirissa and Trincomalee too offers its own sightings of the giant mammals of the sea.

The clear blue waters will be specked with the ever present chattering friendly dolphins breaking the water surface to put on a show and the calm and serene whales gliding past your luxury boats.

Sri Lanka is recognized worldwide as the best site for Blue whale and Sperm whale sightings. The Humpback whale and the Spinner dolphins, together with the Bottle nosed dolphins is a familiar sight in the mornings of the peak period.

Diving & Snorkeling



One.... Two....Three.... Take off in to the deep blue ocean allowing the waves hug you while you dive in to the very heart of the Indian ocean only to meet a world of surprises. Watch the schools of colorful fish swim rhythmically around you, welcoming you to the world hidden by the blue waters. Watch the giant turtles swim about flapping their flippers lazily. The lavishly decorated coral reefs found in the sea bed with a variety of colors and sizes will no doubt capture you in awe.

Explore the fascinating ship wrecks that lie at the very bottom, forgotten by the world and hidden from the hustle of life. Dive around these large processions that were once the beauties of the ocean. The multitude of sea creatures that you meet during this visit to the underworld will make this adventure truly an ultimate under water experience.

Trekking



Begin your climb at night when the world sleeps, only to arrive at the top of the Adams peak in time to witness a magical sunrise. See the mystical shadows cast across the morning sky, giving way to light and life.

Make this an opportunity to cross a number of rivers stepping on large black rocks while the fish swim swiftly about you. Mingle with the culture of our Island as you try to balance your steps when crossing the local paddy fields among the tall paddy waving at you. The grasslands and mighty forests which you cross while trekking will be a long lived memory in your book of adventure. Refresh yourself at the waterfalls crashing down with a loud roar, making Sri Lanka truly a nature's heaven. Watch the sun setting behind the horizon as you conclude your day, putting up your tent camps to be lulled in to sleep by the soft calls

White water rafting



Are you ready for an adventure? Then put on your safety jacket on and hop aboard for some fun and frolicking. Row your raft in rhythm with the flow of the water carrying you despite the current, reminding you of your nursery rhymes only with much more adrenaline and stamina involved! Glide along, brushing your fingertips against the black rocks dotting the Kithulgala River as the silvery water rushes out from the sides of the raft pushing you forward. Feel the water droplets wash your face as the raft rocks from side to side making you squeal with delight

Cycling



Cycle from the coastal line where palm trees sway in the wind to the misty high hills passing many of the Islands significant sceneries. The dense forests where the birds chirp relaxing your mind and the collection of Buddhist and Hindu temples with its natural quietness will make you want to stop for a few minutes to engulf in its calmness. Ride across the colonial sites, passing the splendid botanical gardens where the aroma from the colorful flowers carry you to a world of fantasy. Climb the winding path up the mountains amidst the tea plantations and feast your eyes on the breath taking scenery of the village below while the chilly mountain air hugs you.

Info Sheet

Area	65,610 km ²
Population	20,277,597
Capital	Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte
Commercial Capital	Colombo
Official Languages	Sinhala & Tamil
Recognized Languages	English
Currency	Sri Lankan Rupees (LKR)
Time Zone	GMT +05.30
Calling Code	+94
Electricity	230 - 240 volts, 50Hz AC
Legislature	Parliament
President	Hon. Maithripala Sirisena
Prime Minister	Hon. Ranil Wickramasinghe
Temperature	Dry Zone 30-35°C. Central Hills -5-20°C
Rain Seasons	North-East monsoon (October to January) South-West monsoon (May to July)

Sunrise	Around 06.00am in Colombo
Sunset	Around 06.00pm in Colombo
Main Religion	Buddhism 70%
Other Religions	Hinduism 13%
	Catholicism 7%
	Islam 10%
	Other 0.04%
Ethnic Composition	Sinhalese 74.88%
	Sri Lankan Tamils 11.2%
	Sri Lankan Moors 9.2%
	Small Percentage of Burghers, Malays and Veddas
Attire	Cotton clothes are recommended throughout the year
	Sun Screen Cream Recommended
	Light woolen clothes and waterproof clothing recommended for the hill country.
	Modest dress for women is recommended especially off the beach and when visiting religious sites.
	Comfortable shoes, sandals or trainers and cotton socks recommended

Emergency numbers

Police	119
Tourist Police	011-242 1451
Government Information Center	1919
Tourist Information Center	011-2 437571 011-2 437059 011-2 437060
Report Crimes	011-2691500
Ambulance / Fire & rescue	110
Fire & Ambulance Service	011-2422222
Accident Service-General Hospital, Colombo	011-2691111
Visa (Department of Immigration and Emigration)	011-5329000 011-5329316/20/21/25