

## Sri Lanka on a Shoestring

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**Country(ies):**

**Tour type:** Small Group

**Transport:** A/C minivan/minibus, public transport inc. trains

**Group size:** Min: 4 | Max: 20

**Days:** 13 Days

**Start location:** Colombo, Sri Lanka

**End location:** Colombo, Sri Lanka

**Departs On:** Saturday

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 11, Lunches - 2, Dinners - 0

**Highlights:**

Colombo, Negombo, & Dambulla, Sigiriya, Knuckles, Kandy, Kitulgala, Ella, Unawatuna, Galle

**Places Visited:** Colombo, Negombo, & Dambulla, Sigiriya, Knuckles, Kandy, Kitulgala, Ella, Unawatuna, Galle



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Welcome to Colombo. Colombo evening walking tour

Kick off your Sri Lankan journey by meeting your Adventure Leader in the lobby of your Colombo hostel. Store your luggage and join the pre-departure briefing, where you'll go over the exciting itinerary and start getting to know your fellow adventurers.

Dive into Colombo's vibrant past! Embark on an evening walking tour through the historic old town, uncovering its rich history and unique culture.

**OVERNIGHT:** Colombo hostel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Arrival airport transfer in Colombo || Extra night in Colombo - pre-tour (dorm room) || Private Twin/Double Room Upgrade || Private Single Room Upgrade

## Day 2: Negombo fish market and the Dambulla Cave Temple complex

Start your day with a vibrant visit to Negombo's famous "Lellama" fish market. Mingle with local fishermen at this bustling beachside market and witness the lively daily fish auction. Afterward, journey to Dambulla and explore the ancient Dambulla Cave Temple complex, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Discover caves transformed into temples centuries ago and then relax at your hostel for the evening.

**OVERNIGHT:** Dambulla hostel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 3: Sigiriya fortress hike. Optional cycling excursion to Polonnaruwa

Discover Sri Lanka's rich history as you head northeast to Sigiriya, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Hike to the top of the ancient rock fortress, once the capital of King Kashyapa I (477-495 AD). Soak in the panoramic views and explore the captivating ruins.

The afternoon is yours to continue exploring Sigiriya, or embark on an optional excursion to Polonnaruwa, another UNESCO treasure. Cycle amidst the ruins of this medieval capital, admiring its monuments and palaces.

Cap off your day with a relaxing evening at your Dambulla guesthouse, perhaps enjoying a taste of traditional arrack.

**OVERNIGHT:** Dambulla hostel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 4: Hike the Manigala Trail in the Knuckles Mountain Range. Head to Kandy

Embark on a scenic journey to the Knuckles Mountain Range, known for its unusual peaks shaped like a clenched fist. Trek along the breathtaking Manigala Trail, surrounded by the rich biodiversity of the cloud forest. Enjoy a packed lunch with panoramic views.

Later, bid farewell to the mountains and head for Kandy, Sri Lanka's bustling hill capital where you'll have free time to discover its fascinating mix of historical and modern architecture and end your day in one of the vibrant pubs.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kandy hostel  
**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch  
**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 5: Exploring Kandy

Begin your day at the iconic Temple of the Tooth, once a royal palace and now Sri Lanka's holiest temple, enshrining the tooth relic of Lord Buddha.

This afternoon, explore Kandy at your own pace or escape to the tranquil Royal Botanical Gardens of Peradeniya. Admire its renowned orchids and lush greenery. As the sun sets, we'll witness the beauty of Kandy Lake, the city's heart, bathed in golden light. Enjoy a relaxing evening exploring Kandy before returning to your hostel.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kandy hostel  
**MEALS:** Breakfast  
**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 6: Discover the Sputnik Centre

Journey to Kurunegala and discover The Sputnik Centre, a hub of community engagement and youth empowerment. Immerse yourself in Sri Lanka's inspiring initiatives; witness language courses, community programs, and lively table tennis matches. Meet the dedicated volunteers who make a difference.

Afterward, return to Kandy and unwind with your fellow travelers, reflecting on the day's experiences.

**OVERNIGHT:** Kandy hostel  
**MEALS:** Breakfast  
**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 7: Kitulgala white water rafting. Sri Lankan Lunch and scenic train journey to Ella

Say goodbye to the hill capital and embark on an unforgettable journey to Ella! Hold on tight for adrenaline-pumping thrills: white water rafting through the Kitulgala rainforest followed by a delicious Sri Lankan lunch.

Then, board a train for a breathtaking ride to Ella. This world-renowned route winds through lush tea plantations, forests, and villages, offering stunning views of Sri Lanka's central hills.

Explore charming Ella in the evening, discovering its shops, pubs, and restaurants.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ella hostel  
**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch  
**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 8: Sunrise trek around Ella Rock. Optional cooking class or yoga session

Day 8 of your Sri Lanka adventure begins with a sunrise trek! Conquer the 4-hour round hike to Ella Rock for

brehtaking views. Watch the sun paint a sea of rolling mountains and valleys in golden light – a truly unforgettable sight. After, cool off at Ravana Falls, a stunning cascade with refreshing pools perfect for a swim (weather permitting).

This afternoon, relax and explore Ella at your leisure or opt for a Sri Lankan cooking class or a rejuvenating yoga session.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ella hostel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 9: 'Mini World' hike, Buduruvagala temple and jeep safari in Udawalawe NP**

Prepare for another breathtaking sunrise adventure as you hike to Mini World! This thrilling viewpoint boasts panoramic vistas and a dramatic 1192-meter drop.

After freshening up at the hostel, we'll journey to Udawalawe, Sri Lanka's wildlife haven. En-route, we'll immerse ourselves in the serenity of Buduruvagala Ancient Temple, famed for its 10th-century rock-carved Buddha statues. Then get ready for an exhilarating jeep safari in Udawalawe National Park – keep watch for majestic elephants, crocodiles, vibrant birdlife, and more!

**OVERNIGHT:** Udawalawe campsite

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 10: Head to Handunugoda Tea Estate before unwinding on Unawatuna beach**

Experience the heart of Sri Lanka's renowned tea culture! After breakfast, journey to the Handunugoda Tea Estate and delve into the fascinating process of tea-making, from the fields to your cup. Explore the historic factory and museum, then savor a freshly brewed cup of tea.

Continue along the scenic southern coast to Unawatuna, a world-class beach destination. Unwind in the evening, exploring this vibrant surf town and relaxing at your hostel.

**OVERNIGHT:** Unawatuna hostel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 11: Surfing lesson. Afternoon traditional mask painting workshop**

Embrace a day of sun, sand, and surf! Relax on the beach before catching some waves in your exciting surf lesson. Note: Sri Lanka's ideal surf season is December to April. If conditions aren't suitable, you'll receive a full refund in local currency for this activity.

Unleash your creativity this afternoon with traditional Sri Lankan mask painting. Ancient beliefs state that once created, these masks possess healing and protective qualities.

**OVERNIGHT:** Unawatuna hostel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 12: Tuk-tuk to Galle to explore Galle Fort City

Hop into a tuk-tuk and journey to Galle, Sri Lanka's bustling southern city! Discover Galle Fort City, a UNESCO World Heritage site showcasing a fascinating blend of architectural styles. Built by the Portuguese in the 16th century, the fort stands as a testament to history. Explore well-preserved ramparts, a lighthouse, clock tower, and buildings transformed into charming restaurants, villas, and boutiques. Immerse yourself in the city, then witness a breathtaking sunset from the fort's ramparts before returning to Unawatuna.

**OVERNIGHT:** Unawatuna hostel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 13: Partake in a Pooja Blessing Ritual and return to Colombo where our tour ends

Your Sri Lanka adventure comes to an end today. As you journey back to Colombo, a stop at a temple offers a chance to meet a Buddhist priest and experience a traditional pooja (blessing ritual) before departing Sri Lanka. Bid farewell to your newfound friends and prepare for your journey home.

Your tour comes to an end after arriving back into Colombo. Extra nights can be arranged.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Departure airport transfer in Colombo || Extra night in Colombo - post-tour (dorm room)

## Included

- All accommodation (including hostels and guesthouses)
- All transport whilst in Sri Lanka (excludes airport transfers)
- Evening walking tour of the old town of Colombo (Colombo)
- Negombo to visit the fish market (Negombo)
- Dambulla Cave Complex (Dambulla)
- Sigiriya Rock Fortress hike (Sigiriya)
- A glass Sri Lanka's favourite alcohol, Arrack (Dambulla)
- Hike along the scenic Manigala Trail (Knuckles)
- Visit to Dalada Maligawa a.k.a. The Temple of the Tooth (Kandy)
- Sunset visit to Kandy Lake (Kandy)
- The Sputnik Centre (Kurunegala, Kandy)
- White Water rafting (Kitulgala)
- Train from Hatton to Ella (Ella)
- Ella Rock hike at sunrise (Ella)
- Visit Rawana Falls (Ella)
- Hike to Mini-worlds end at sunrise (Ella)
- Visit the Buduruvagala Ancient Temple (Ella to Udawalawe)
- Jeep safari into Udawalawe National Park (Udawalawe)
- Visit to Handunugoda Tea Estate (Handunugoda)
- Surf lesson (Unawatuna)
- Tuk-tuk ride to Galle, for Galle Fort City (Galle)
- Visit temple to meet a Buddhist priest and take part in a pooja (blessing ritual) (Unawatuna - Colombo)
- A bilingual, epic Adventure Leader throughout the entire trip
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

## Excluded

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Arrival & Departure Airport Transfers
- Any activities during free time in Sigiriya, Kandy, Ella, Unawatuna
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for driver and/or tour guide
- Any other items not mentioned above

## Notes

### Similar tours:

The following tours also feature this trip as part of an extended itinerary:

- [Temples & Tigers](#) - follows the same itinerary but includes an additional extension to see tigers in Ranthambore NP.
- [Best of India](#) - follows the same itinerary but includes an additional extension to explore tropical Kerala in the south of India
- [Taj to Varanasi](#) - follows the same itinerary but includes an additional extension to the holy city of Varanasi

# Options

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Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

## Arrival airport transfer in Colombo

**Min numbers:** 1

This option adds an arrival airport transfer in Colombo to your tour with us. Note: We subcontract our airport transfers, so your transfer representative will not have any information about your tour with us, or be able to assist you beyond the transfer itself. Note: Pricing for this option is quoted on a per person basis, based on 2 passenger sharing 1 vehicle. If you are travelling alone, single person rates will apply for this transfer.

**Price:** Starting from - \$50

## Departure airport transfer in Colombo

**Min numbers:** 1

This option adds a departure airport transfer in Colombo to your tour with us. Note: We subcontract our airport transfers, so your transfer representative will not have any information about your tour with us, or be able to assist you beyond the transfer itself. Note: Pricing for this option is quoted on a per person basis, based on 2 passenger sharing 1 vehicle. If you are travelling alone, single person rates will apply for this transfer.

**Price:** Starting from - \$40

## Extra night in Colombo - post-tour (dorm room)

**Min numbers:** 1

This option adds an extra night in the Colombo hostel to the end of your tour, staying in the same hostel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Prices shown are per person and based on a dorm space.

**Price:** Starting from - \$25

## Private Single Room Upgrade

**Min numbers:** 1

This option provides an upgrade from the shared hostel-type rooms used on the tour to a private single room. We recommend adding this early as space is subject to availability in the accommodations used. Note - this upgrade does not cover the night spent camping which remain as shared accommodation.

**Price:** Starting from - \$275

## Private Twin/Double Room Upgrade

**Min numbers:** 2

This option provides an upgrade from the shared hostel-type rooms used on the tour to a private twin or double room. We recommend adding this early as space is subject to availability in the accommodations used. Note - this upgrade does not cover the night spent camping which remain as shared accommodation.

**Price:** Starting from - \$75

## **Extra night in Colombo - pre-tour (dorm room)**

**Min numbers:** 1

This option adds an extra night in the Colombo hostel to the start of your tour, staying in the same hostel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Prices shown are per person and based on a dorm space.

**Price:** Starting from - \$25



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## 1. Accommodation

The accommodation used on the tour is a mix of simple stays in hostels (dorms) simple guesthouses and one night camping. Each have their own charm, and at the same time are safe, clean, and hygienic. All have good showers, internet, and some have washing machines. The price is based on same-sex shared rooms in these hostels and accommodations. All bedding is provided - you do not need to bring a sleeping bag. Luggage is tagged and stored securely while we are out exploring during the day. The majority of other people staying in the hostels will be young people aged 18 to 35 and travelling on a budget. It's easy to make new friends and have fun meeting in the lounge areas. You can also upgrade to a private or twin room subject to availability at the time of booking. This may not extend to all the accommodation throughout the trip. Please contact us if you would like more information.

Additional nights are available on request in the hostels used at the start and finish of the tour - please contact us for prices and to book.

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## 2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. On this tour, the majority of transport is in private vehicles, however some sections may be operated using local public transport such as buses and trains.

### What time are the driving durations?

Colombo – Negombo: 30 minutes

Negombo – Dambulla: 3.5 hours

Dambulla – Knuckles Mountain Range: 1.5 hours

Knuckles Mountain Range – Kandy: 2 hours

Kandy – Kitulgala: 2 hours

Kitulgala – Hatton – Ella: 1.5 hours by road, 3 hrs by train

Ella – Udawalawe: 1.5 hours

Udawalawe – Handunugoda: 2 hours

Handunugoda – Unawatuna: 30 mins

Unawatuna – Colombo: 2 hours

### What is it like on public transport?

Throughout your time in Sri Lanka, you'll be using private transfers. However, transfer between Hatton to Ella will be completed by train.

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## 3. Transfers

Arrival and Departure airport transfers are not included in the cost of this tour, but can be added as additional options. Please check the options section of the tour page for further details.

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## 4. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

This tour is accompanied by English speaking tour leaders. These all have the knowledge and passion to help make sure you have a great time in all the places visited during the tour. We may sometimes use more than one leader for different sections of the tour but often the same person will accompany you throughout. Where they do not travel with you between locations, they will help you board and see you off, and you'll be met on your arrival at the next destination.

Each tour leader is an expert in all things Sri Lanka. However, they are not licensed tour guides.

Specialist tour guides are available at many of the sites we visit along the way if you would like some more in depth information about particular sites.

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## **5. Group Size & Operation**

The minimum number of travellers required for the tour to run is 4, with a maximum group size of 20.

This is an active, backpacking style tour, and there is a lot of walking and physical activity involved. We therefore set a minimum age of 16 and maximum age limit of 55. Children aged 15 or under may be accepted in some circumstances.

This tour is operated in conjunction with one of our tour operator partners specialising in this region so you may join with travellers booking through different companies and from different countries. This can make for some really interesting groups and new people to meet.

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## **6. Meals**

### **What kind of restaurants will we go to?**

Your Adventure Leader will take you to small local cafes/shops serving Sri Lankan food.

### **I'm a vegetarian/have allergies – will I be able to get the right food?**

Yes! Vegetarian food is a part of the Sri Lankan diet, and with so many food choices available, even individuals with allergies and/or special dietary needs can get food. Just tell your Adventure Leader and they can help you find something suitable. You will probably discover a new dish that you love!

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## **7. Entrance Fees**

The cost of entrance fees to the sites included on this tour are included in the tour price. If you decide to visit anything during your free time, the cost of these entrance fees are not included.

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## **8. Tipping and Haggling**

Haggling is a traditional necessity, so it's wise not to pay too much regard to initial prices. Instead fix an item's value in your mind then negotiate towards it unhurriedly and don't be afraid to simply walk away if the price isn't right. Once you have offered a price though, you should be prepared to pay it as you may cause offence if you then back out.

While an accepted part of the culture and customs in India, tipping is always optional, and the amounts paid should reflect excellent service. We are often asked for advice on common amounts, and for assistance with tipping. Some suggested guidelines are given below.

**Restaurants and taxis:** Local markets and basic restaurants - leave the loose change. More up-market restaurants we suggest 5% to 10% of your bill.

**Local guides:** Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your tour guide. We suggest USD 5-10 per person per day for local guides.

**Drivers:** You may have a range of private drivers on your trip. Some may be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for several days. We would suggest a higher tip for those more involved with the group, for example if you don't have an extra accompanying guide. However USD 3-6 per person per day is generally appropriate.

**Tour Guides:** To answer your next question. . . as a guideline for tour guides who accompany you on the entire tour, we suggest you allow around USD 5-10 per person per day, but ultimately, as with all the tipping described above, its up to your satisfaction with their service and your personal budget. You should not feel pressured to tip any particular amount.

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## 9. Time

The time in India and Sri Lanka is GMT plus 5 1/2 hours.

The time in Nepal is GMT plus 5 3/4 hours.

The time in Bhutan is GMT plus 6 hours.

The time in Tibet is GMT plus 8 hours.

Daylight saving adjustments are not applied.

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## 10. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour (this excludes our Sri Lanka on a Shoestring tour where transfers are optional). Most of our Sri Lanka tours start and finish at Colombo airport (CMB).

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

### Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you

can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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## 11. Money

Sri Lankan Rupee (LKR; symbol Rp) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of Rp 2000, 1000, 500, 200, 100, 50 and 10. Coins are in denominations of Rs 10, 5, 2 and 1, and 50, 25, 20, 10 and 5 cents. Sometimes smaller vendors will not take bills larger than Rs 500. It is best to carry a range of rupee notes if you are shopping at bazaars and local markets.

Note: You must present your passport whenever you change currency or travellers cheques. Commission for foreign exchange is becoming increasingly rare; if it is charged, the fee is nominal.

Credit cards: In major cities, the full cadre of banks cards are generally accepted including debit cards, American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa. However, in smaller towns and villages, choice is generally narrowed to cash or MasterCard and Visa.

ATM: 24 hour ATM machines can be found in all the major cities and most large towns. Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus, Maestro and Plus are amongst the most commonly accepted cards.

Travellers cheques: These are gradually getting less accepted but may still be changed at larger banks and some larger hotels. The most widely accepted currencies include US Dollars and Pounds Sterling. Some banks may refuse to change certain brands of traveller's cheques whilst others may exchange quite happily.

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## 12. Health and Vaccinations - Sri Lanka

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

**Sri Lanka:** Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an endemic country.

**Malaria:** Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting. In general though is generally considered low enough risk that anti-malarial tablets are not necessary for most travellers doing relatively short tours of Sri Lanka.

**Yellow Fever:** This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination may be required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can

view this [US CDC information](#) about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate with you and to hand if necessary.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.

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### **13. Passports and Visas - Sri Lanka**

Your passport expiry date must be at least 6 months after your time in Sri Lanka finishes. Do not bring a full or almost expired passport. You must also have a machine-readable passport or you may be denied entry. If you have an old-style manually issued passport you will need to replace this with a new machine-readable passport before you travel.

Most nationalities (including UK, USA, European, Australian, Canadian) will need to arrange their Sri Lankan tourist visa in advance. A new online e-visa system is available which makes the process more straightforward than before. You can make your application online here... <http://www.eta.gov.lk/slvisa/>

Visa requirements for Sri Lanka can and do change regularly and we suggest that you arrange your Indian visa early and re-check your specific visa requirements prior to travel for any changes.

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### **14. Dates & Prices**

We run departures on our Indian tours throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 4 travellers. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website (please check the website for up-to-date prices and special offers).

Private and tailor-made tours are available on any dates and may be adjusted to fit your personal requirements, available time and budget.

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### **15. Booking & Payment**

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

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### **16. Travel Insurance**

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

*IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.*

## **Covid-19**

**Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable. Details about our own policies cover levels are given [on our website](#).**

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## **17. Responsible Tourism**

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your

experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).

- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

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## **18. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles**

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

### **How Water-to-Go Technology works:**

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

### **The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:**

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

### **Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide**

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

### **Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!**

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.

- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

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## 19. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

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## 20. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

[www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](http://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

[www.twitter.com/encounterstravl](https://twitter.com/encounterstravl) (yes, without the 'e')

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## 21. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a



backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.



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**Note:** Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.

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