

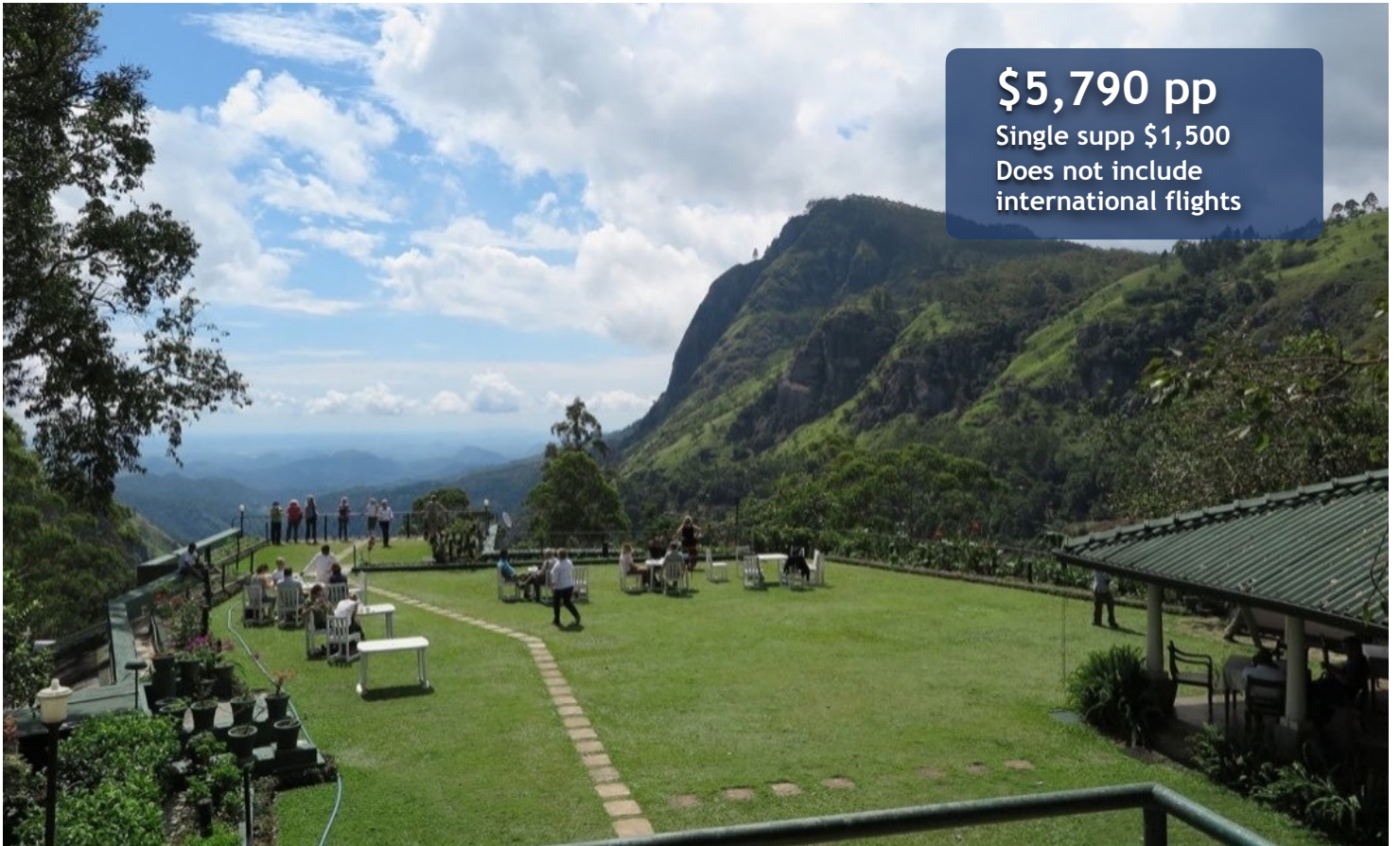
Stunning Sri Lanka

Departing
4th November 2024

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different





\$5,790 pp

Single supp \$1,500

Does not include
international flights

SRI LANKA – FOOD, SAFARIS AND HISTORY

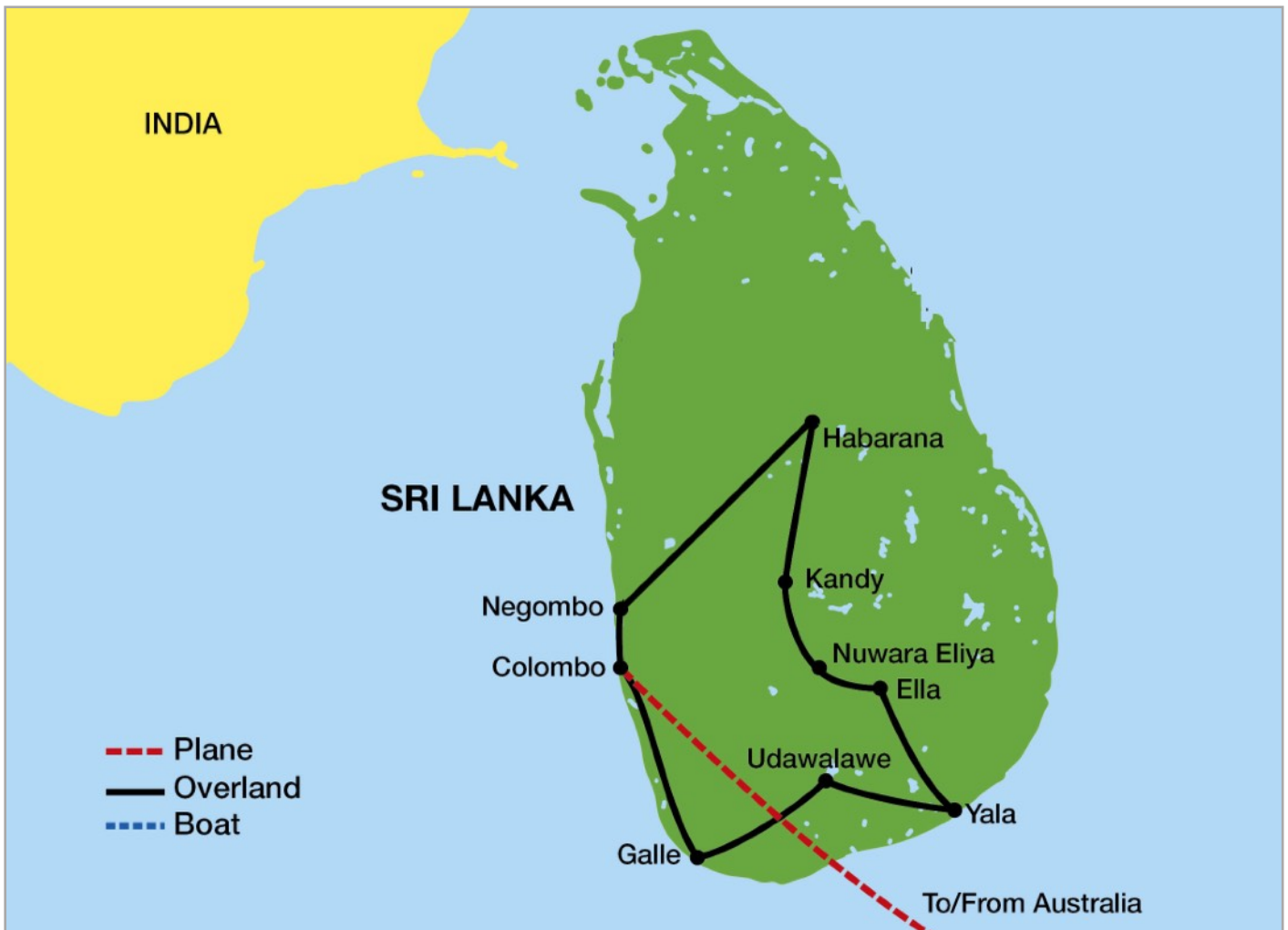
Sri Lanka is an island-nation in the Indian Ocean separated from India by the Palk Strait. It is “almost” linked to India by a mostly underwater atoll called Adam’s Bridge. It is a very lush, tropical island sitting just north of the equator.

For over 2,000 years the island was ruled by a monarchy which only ceased in 1972 with the appointment of a president. Sri Lanka’s population of around 22 million - similar to our own – is multi ethnic with four main groups. Singhalese (mostly Buddhist) is the largest, followed by Tamils (mostly Hindu), Moors (with Arab origins) and Burghers – a mixed group of Portuguese and Dutch origin who are mainly Christians. Generally speaking, it is a poor country but tourism is helping to change that. Apart from the tourist industry, its core source of income comes from tea exportations, spices, rubber textiles and petroleum refining. About 30% of the island is covered by forest and about 10% of this is national park.

There are so many reasons to visit this country – there is much to see and do. Even though it is a relatively small country, each region is quite different. The indigenous and colonial history is fascinating. The food is wonderful. The scenery is spectacular. Plus, the abundance of wildlife — one of the draw-cards for travellers — will take you by surprise. Visiting the national parks — and sometimes in the wild — you may spot sambar deer, Sri Lankan elephants, leopards, sloth bears, crocodiles, water buffalo and hundreds of birds species.

It’s no wonder that a few years back, Lonely Planet rated this wonderful country as the “hottest travel destination on the planet”, and they didn’t mean the weather!

Grab your camera and join us on this fabulous trip.



**Day 1, Monday 4th November
TRANSFER AND ARRIVAL**

Depart Australia and arrive at Colombo International Airport around midnight (flights to be confirmed, not included in tour cost). Our guide will meet the group and transfer us to the hotel in Negombo, which is around 25 minutes from the airport. Accommodation at Jetwing Blu (or similar).

Meals in flight



**Day 2, Tuesday
5th November
NEGOMBO**

Given the late arrival of the flight, today is a late start. Sleep in and have a hearty breakfast (try the egg

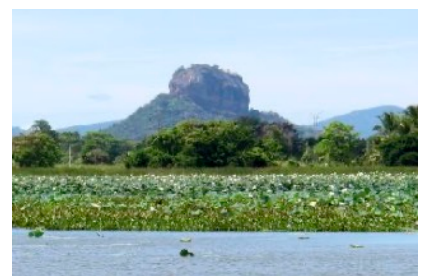
hopper) before heading off on a tour to the famous Negombo Fish Markets late in the morning. Called Lellama, the place of bargain, buying and selling is done rhythmically and is a unique aspect of Sri Lankan markets. Afterwards, drive to Colombo for some to visit some of the capital's sights. Your

guide will help you exchange Aussie dollars for local currency during the day. *B/D*

**Day 3,
Wednesday 6th
November
NEGOMBO —
HABARANA**

After breakfast, depart for Habarana. We'll embark on a 4WD

jeep safari through Minneriya and Kaudulla National Park to watch the elephants gathering. Minneriya National Park is relatively small, making it easy to spot wildlife, large animal species, and birds in their natural habitat. Located in the north-central area of the island, Habarana is a part of Sri Lanka's dry zone. Thanks to the genius of the ancient kings dating as far back as the 5th Century AD, the Sri Lankan dry zone is anything but, with hundreds of lakes and reservoirs connected by an elaborate network of canals. The region has breathtakingly beautiful scenery. Dinner at Cinnamon Lodge Habarana (or similar), where we will stay for 3 nights. *B/D*





 **Day 4,
Thursday
7th November
HABARANA
REGION**

This morning we'll visit one of the main icons of the country, the Rock Fortress of

Sigiriya, a must-see. A mighty 200m high fortress of a 5th century King, Sigiriya is famous for entrancingly beautiful frescoes found in a sheltered pocket of the rock. The old stairway to the top once lead through the mouth of a huge crouching lion carved into the rock — today, only the paws remain. The ruins of the royal citadel are on the summit. After lunch, see the UNESCO-listed Polonnaruwa, which rose to fame as the country's capital after the decline of the previous capital Anuradhapura. The monuments of this medieval city are relatively well preserved and give clear evidence of the glory of Sri Lanka's past. Dinner is back at Cinnamon Lodge. *B/L/D*

 **Day 5, Friday 8th November
HABARANA REGION**

Today we'll embark on a nature walk to Hiriwadunne Village, just 10 minutes from our hotel. Take in an easy walk across the undulating landscape (or a bullock ride if you prefer) through the surrounding scrub, jungle, and marshland to visit a local village - a hive of early morning activity. The amazing birdlife, butterflies and possible sightings of crocodile only add to the charm of seeing the villagers as they go about their early morning tasks. There's a quick cookery lesson and then lunch at the village. Dinner at the hotel. *B/D*



 **Day 6,
Saturday
9th November
HABARANA —
KANDY**

After breakfast, depart for Kandy. En route, visit the UNESCO-listed

Dambulla Cave

Temple with a tour and lunch at the Spice Garden Matale. The climb to the Cave Temple is steep but well worth the effort. Watch out for the monkeys; they can be very curious! The spice gardens tour is very interesting and good for lunch (take your mozzly repellent). Later, check in to your hotel in Kandy and then transfer to the city for an evening service at the Sacred Temple of the Tooth of Buddha. Dinner and two nights at the Radisson, Kandy (or similar). *B/L/D*

**Day 7, Sunday 10th November
KANDY**

Today you'll walk through the bustling city of Kandy. UNESCO inscribed the Sacred City of Kandy is Sri Lanka's fifth and the world's 450th World Heritage site, cited for its religious and historical significance as an internationally renowned Buddhist pilgrimage site and as Sri Lanka's last royal capital. The markets, old colonial buildings and shops in the old slum area are fascinating. In the afternoon, the vehicle will take you to Arthur's seat viewpoint (high above the city), and the botanical gardens. Later, watch the local cultural show with singing and dancing. Subject to time, there may be an option in the afternoon to visit a local gem factory. You've been warned — this is a medium to hard-sell shopping destination! Laze around the pool or visit town if this is not for you. Dinner is at the hotel. *B/D*

**Day 8, Monday
11th November
KANDY —
NUWARA ELIYA**

Today we'll take the train to the tea-growing region of Sri Lanka – Nuwara



Eliya. The trip will take about 4 hours through stunning deep green terraced farms and villages. On arrival, check in to the "very British" Grand Hotel, where the stay is 2 nights. In the afternoon, a sightseeing tour of the town and a visit to a tea plantation before returning to the hotel for dinner. *B/L/D*

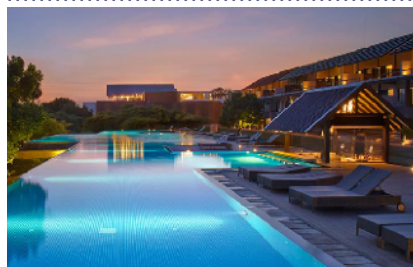
 **Day 9, Tuesday 12th November
HORTAIN PLAINS**

Those up for a trek will take an early morning excursion The Hortain Plains National Park and World's Ends. The trek to Worlds End and the beautiful Baker's Falls is around 2.5 -3 hours (7 km). This scenic region has an astounding variety of landscapes, from mountains to grasslands and marshes to trout-filled streams. The trek could be considered medium-level; however, there are a few short, hard sections. It will depart at about 5.30 am and return around midday. We'll then be driven through the famous Pekoe trails of British tea cultivations and on to the stunning Tea Factory Hotel for lunch, which is included. This is an old tea factory in the most beautiful of settings you could imagine. Drive back to the Grand Hotel late in the afternoon. *B/L/D*

**Day 10, Wednesday 13th November
NUWARA ELIYA — ELLA**

Today, drive about 90 minutes to the very pretty township of Ella. The views from certain lookouts in this region are stunning. Check in to the gorgeous

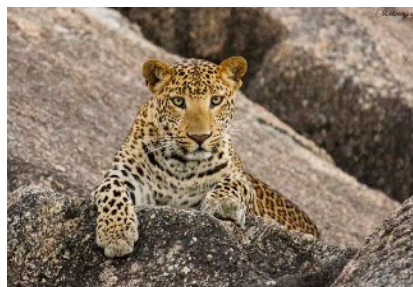
98 Acre Resort for the night. In the afternoon, we will visit the wonderful creation of British Colonials named "Nine Arch Bridge". This is one of the most visited and photographed bridges in Asia. Wander the streets of the little mountain town of Ella for some shopping at the arts and crafts stores. **B/L/D**



**Day 11, Thursday
14th November
ELLA TO YALA**

Before breakfast, there's an opportunity to walk to Little Adam's Peak to watch the

sunrise. After breakfast, check out of the hotel for transfer by coach to Yala on the south east of the island. The national park in Yala is the second biggest in the country. On our way, we stop at Rawana Water Falls for photos and visit the Elephant Transit Home in Udawalawe where around 30 motherless baby elephants are fed milk. On arrival, check in to the lovely Jetwing Yala for two nights. The stunning resort is the perfect place to relax and take a swim in what could be the best pool in Sri Lanka! Dinner at the hotel. Warning... you may never want to leave. **B/D**



**Day 12, Friday
15th November
YALA**

Today is for relaxation and to enjoy the beautiful grounds of the resort. At around 2.00 pm, you'll take a jeep

safari to spot wildlife (returning about 6.30 pm). Yala National Park is known for its abundant elephants plus leopards, bears, crocodiles, wild boars and many species of birdlife. Its open undulating terrain made it famous for elephants for many years. Still, the park has also received much recognition through National Geographic and the Discovery channels, which documented the leopard research conservation and identification program. Several salt and freshwater lagoons are a haven for many resident and migrant birds. Dinner at the hotel. **B/D**

**Day 13, Saturday 16th November
YALA — GALLE**

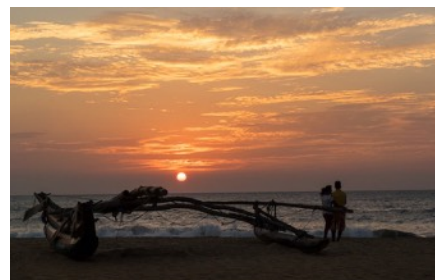
After breakfast, depart for the UNESCO-listed Galle on the Southwest coast to experience the style, architecture and cuisine. The south of Sri Lanka has evolved a distinctly unique culture. En route, we'll visit a local family village home for lunch, where you will join in preparing a few typically

southern dishes. Learn how to prepare fish ambul thiyal and a curry made of young jackfruit, which, correctly prepared, makes a great meat substitute. It's a favourite amongst Sri Lanka's vegetarians! The curry powder used for this dish is a unique mix of powdered coriander, cumin, cinnamon, cardamom, and cloves. We'll arrive at the hotel in the afternoon with some spare time before exploring the Dutch city of Galle on foot. A photo of the lighthouse with the sun setting is quite special. Dinner and overnight stay at Radisson Blu, Galle (or similar). **B/D**



**Day 14, Sunday 17th November
GALLE AND DEPARTURE**

This morning spend some free time strolling Galle at your leisure (great for shopping). Then, after lunch, the group will take a Madu River boat trip to see the local fisherman go about their day. The mangroves are amazingly beautiful, and there's birdlife to be spotted.



(Note, the South Coast around Galle is where the famous stilt pole fishermen used to fish. Sadly, nowadays, they'll do it only for a few dollars so the tourists can take photos). On the way home, the group will stop for a farewell dinner at the highly-rated "Lords Restaurant - Negombo". Then, transfer to Colombo International Airport for your flight home early on the 20th. **B/D**

**Day 15, Monday 18th November
ARRIVE HOME**

Your flight home will likely be very early in the morning. You'll need to be at the airport a few hours before departure. **Meals in flight**



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.