



TRAVEL THE UNKNOWN

TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

HIDDEN SRI LANKA

14 days



What's included

- Arrival & departure transfers
- Ground transport with driver
- Accommodation
- Meals (refer to itinerary for meal plan)
- English-speaking guides
- Entrance fees to sites & parks

What's not included

- Meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Drinks
- Visa fees
- Tipping
- Camera / video camera fees
- Personal items (laundry, telephone, etc.)
- Medical expenses
- Any services not mentioned in itinerary

All accommodation subject to availability. Final accommodation choices will be confirmed after booking.

Your Itinerary Explained

Date	Place visited	Meals
	<p>The first part of the text in each day is the itinerary schedule and will explain what you will normally see/do during this day of your itinerary.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>The part of the day's text in italics (and comes after the three dashes "---") is background information on the places or sites on that day of your itinerary. It is not part of your itinerary and may mention places that will not be visited on your itinerary. If you have any questions please ask us. Travel times where noted are only meant as a guideline.</i></p>	<p>B: Breakfast</p> <p>L: Lunch</p> <p>D: Dinner</p>

Tour Itinerary

Day 1	Arrive in Colombo	Meals
 <p data-bbox="124 1272 248 1310">Colombo</p>	<p>Arrive at Colombo International airport, where you will be met by a Travel the Unknown representative and transferred to your hotel. Later, spend some time touring the city, including the streets of Slave Island. Overnight in Colombo.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>Colombo, the commercial capital of Sri Lanka, is a vibrant city with a rich and diverse history. Its landmark colonial and modern architecture take influence from its Portuguese, Dutch, British, Islamic, Indian and Buddhist dwellers; and is most visible in the city's Fort district. Other interesting sights in Colombo include the Galle Face Green, Viharamahadevi Park, Old Parliament Building and the Independence Hall.</i></p>	<p>D</p>
 <p data-bbox="124 1776 248 1803">Sigiriya</p>	<p>Depart Colombo for Sigiriya. On arrival, check in to your hotel, before spending the afternoon at Pidurangala. Overnight in Sigiriya.</p> <p>---</p> <p><i>Regarded as perhaps Sri Lanka's most dramatic sight, the UNESCO listed Sigiriya is an ancient rock fortress in the northern Matale District of Central Province. At nearly 200m high, Sigiriya is of great historical and archaeological importance. During King Kashyapa's reign (477-495 CE) he moved to Sigiriya from the traditional capital Anuradhapura to Sigiriya which he made into an impressive rock fortress. The climb up to Sigiriya consists of a series of vertiginous staircases, yet sights along the way such as the mirror wall, which used to be so well polished that King Kashyapa could see his reflection, the water gardens and the panoramic views at the top, make it a truly unforgettable and enjoyable experience.</i></p>	<p>B D</p>

***Pidurangala** is a large rock formation located opposite Sigiriya. It was once used as a meditative retreat for monks and contains many caves and cells purportedly used by them throughout history. Two highlights of Pidurangala are its large reclining Buddha statue and its unbeatable views across the landscape.*

Day 3

Sigiriya

Meals



Sigiriya Rock
Fortress

Rise early to climb Sigiriya Rock Fortress, where you will have the opportunity to look out across the ancient city ruins. Later, explore the Ritigala Monastery. Overnight in Sigiriya.

B D

*Forty-three kilometres away from the ancient city of Anuradhapura, sits the ruins of **Ritigala Monastery** dating back to the 1st century BCE. Tucked away on the Ritigala Mountain Range, the ruins cover 59 acres and sit close to the foot of the man-made reservoir Banda Pokuna; which historians believe was used for religious rituals. Ritigala was also discovered to have none of the traditional relics and icons found in Buddhist temples. It is believed that this was due to the extreme austerity and simplicity the Pansukulikas Buddhists, who resided in the area, adopted to achieve ultimate enlightenment.*

*The **Sigiriya Rock Fortress** is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the wonders of the ancient world. It is located in the middle of a plain and consists of a 200m-tall central rock and two rectangular precincts that stand on the east and the west. The fortress is surrounded by wide moats that used to be full of crocodiles. Sigiriya was built under the orders of King Kasyapa and was used as both a palace and a fortress.*

Day 4

Sigiriya - Trincomalee

Meals



Trincomalee

Travel on to Trincomalee. On arrival, the rest of the day will be free for you to spend at your leisure. Overnight in Trincomalee.

B D

*The port city of **Trincomalee** is located on the east coast of Sri Lanka. Its history can be traced back over 2,500 years, making it one of the oldest cities in Asia. The city is home to the famous Koneswaram and Bhadrakali Amman Temples. In more recent history, Trincomalee fell under Portugese, Dutch, French and British rule. Evidence of this can be seen in the amalgamation of international and native architectural styles found within the city.*

Day 5

Trincomalee

Meals



Trincomalee

Spend the day exploring Trincomalee. This will include a visit to a famous local hair parlour, spice merchant and a walk along Commercial Street. Later, make a trip to Koneshwaram Temple, where you will also see Fort Frederik. Overnight in Trincomalee.

B D

***Koneshwaram Temple**, also known as **Dakshinakailasha**, is an ancient Hindu temple situated high above the scenic Gokarna Bay. The temple has become a significant pilgrim centre and stands as one of the five 'Pancha Ishwarams' that were built along the coasts of Sri Lanka in dedication to Lord Shiva. Although its date of origin is not known, it is believed to date back to around 205 BC. The temple's elaborate architectural design would have led it to be regarded as one of the grandest buildings of its age.*

Day 6

Trincomalee - Kandy

Meals



Kandy

In the morning, depart Trincomalee for Kandy, stopping en route to see the Aluvihare Temple. On arrival in Kandy, take a tour of the city and visit the Temple of the Tooth. Overnight stay in Kandy.

B D

*Founded by Devanampiyatissa, the first Buddhist king, **Aluvihare Temple** is one of the first temples of Sri Lanka. Spread across several levels throughout rock and greenery, it consists of thirteen caves which have been inhabited by monks for more than 2,300 years. The temple holds numerous relics dating back from the 3rd century to present day, including a giant reclining Buddha in the dark main rock cave and graphic paintings depicting Buddhist hell in another.*

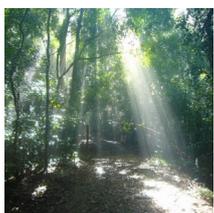
***Kandy** was the last capital of the ancient kings' era of Sri Lanka. Capital of the Central Province, Kandy is both a commercial and religious city; the latter being the predominant reason why the city is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Surrounded by mist clinging hills, Kandy is prone to soft drizzle and grey skies. However, its wet climate only illuminates the rich colours of its colonial houses and intricate silk saris worn by local women. The picturesque region of Kandy is also home to The Esala Perahera, one of the oldest and grandest Buddhist festivals in Sri Lanka to commemorate the first teaching given by the Buddha, and the longest river in the country, the Mahaweli River.*

***The Temple of the Tooth**, also known as Sri Dalada, is a Buddhist temple in the city of Kandy. Home to Sri Lanka's most important Buddhist relic – a tooth of the Buddha – it has played a central role in local politics. For centuries it has been believed that whoever held the tooth would also hold governance of the country, hence why Kandy is the country's sacred city.*

Day 7

Kandy

Meals

Udawatte Kele
Sanctuary

Spend the day in Kandy - visiting the local market, watching a Sri Lankan cooking demonstration and touring Udawatte Kele Sanctuary. Overnight in Kandy.

B L D

*The **Udawatte Kele Sanctuary** is a forest reserve set on the hillside behind the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy. It was formerly known as 'Uda Wasala Watta', which translates in Sinhalese to 'the garden above the royal palace' - in the days of the Kandyan kings (15th - 19th century), the forest was reserved for the use of the Royal family. The reserve is now open to the public, who can escape the bustle of the city by exploring and enjoying the natural surroundings of Udawatte Kele.*

Day 8

Kandy - Gal Oya

Meals

Travel to Gal Oya, where you will have the opportunity to experience authentic Veddha tribal culture. Overnight in Gal Oya.

B D



Gal Oya

The **Veddha** are a tribal community in Sri Lanka. The indigenous language of the Veddha tribe has almost become extinct, meaning that many now communicate in either Sinhali or Tamil. It is believed that the Veddha were the earliest inhabitants of Sri Lanka and the descendent of Prince Vijaya, who was the country's founding father. Veddha tribesmen largely follow Buddhist practices. A feature distinct to the Veddha religion is the worship of dead ancestors, called 'nae yaku', who they call upon in times of need.

Day 9

Gal Oya

Meals



Gal Oya

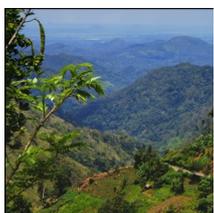
Spend the day exploring the wilderness of Gal Oya. You will enjoy a tour with a local guide, who will introduce you to native species, along with views of surrounding mountains. Overnight in Gal Oya.

B D

Day 10

Gal Oya - Ella

Meals



Ella

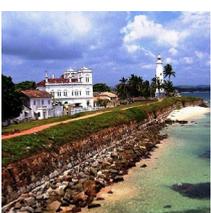
Begin the day with a trek up Monkey Mountain. Before continuing your journey on to Ella, stopping en route at Badulla. Here, you will see Dunhida Waterfall. On arrival in Ella, check in to your hotel and spend the rest of the day at your leisure. Overnight in Ella.

B D

The remote village of **Ella** is renowned for its beautiful landscape, including impressive panoramic views across the surrounding forested valleys, known as 'Ella's Gap'. On a clear night, it is said that you can see as far as the Great Basses lighthouse on Sri Lanka's southern coastline. Ella is the perfect place to explore Sri Lanka's rich wildlife, whilst its rural setting provides tourists with an authentic experience of traditional and rural Sri Lankan living.

The city of **Badulla** can be found in the lower hills of central Sri Lanka, surrounded by tea plantations and almost encircled by the Badulla Oya River. Badulla is one of Sri Lanka's oldest towns. It was briefly occupied by the Portuguese, before later becoming a regional hub for British rulers during the 20th century. Evidence of this history can still be seen in the colonial style buildings around the city. A famous example of this is the Badulla railway station, which was formerly used by the British to send tea from Badulla to Colombo.

Dunhida Waterfall is one of Sri Lanka's most scenic falls, which can be found along the Badulu Oya River. 'Dun' in Dunhia translates to 'mist' or 'smoke', which describes the haze of spray that is created at the base of the 64 metre waterfall. Visitors can walk up to a viewing platform, where they can watch the dramatic falls and enjoy panoramic views across surrounding forests.

Day 11	Ella - Yala	Meals
	<p>Rise early for a hike up Little Adam's Peak, before a visit to the iconic Nine Arch Bridge. Later, proceed to Yala National Park, stopping en route for a visit to Buduruwagala. Overnight in Yala.</p> <p>---</p>	B D
<p>Nine Arch Bridge</p> <p><i>The iconic Nine Arch Bridge is a viaduct that was built between the railway stations of Ella and Demodara. Its was constructed during the British colonial period (early 1900s) in order to allow for more efficient trading between the towns and cities in Sri Lanka. It is named 'Ahas namaye palama' in Sinhala, which translates to 'nine skies bridge'. It is named so, because if you stand underneath the bridge and look up, you can see 'nine skies' through each of the viaduct archways.</i></p>		
Day 12	Yala - Galle	Meals
	<p>Embark on a morning safari, searching for native species in Yala National Park. Later, depart Yala and travel on to Galle. Overnight in Galle.</p> <p>---</p>	B D
<p>Galle</p> <p><i>Yala National Park is one of the most impressive national parks in Sri Lanka. The park spans 979 sq. km. and consists of five blocks, two of which are open to the public. It is famous for having the highest leopard density in the world, as well as for the conservation of elephants and aquatic birds. It is one of the 70 Important Bird Areas of the country, being home to over 200 different bird species. Yala's ecosystems range from moist monsoon forests to freshwater and marine wetlands. Two important pilgrim sites are also located within the park, Sithulpahuwa and Magul Vihara.</i></p>		
Day 13	Galle	Meals
	<p>Spend the day exploring Galle Fort. Overnight in Galle.</p> <p>---</p>	B D
<p>Galle</p> <p><i>From 1505 to 1640 the Portuguese governed Galle, ruling for 135 years before being defeated by the Dutch, who constructed the UNESCO-listed Galle Fort. When the British acquired the city in 1796 they turned the fort and city into their administrative centre. However, after the country became a formal British colony in 1815, Galle declined in importance as the British developed Colombo as their capital and main port. Despite being heavily damaged in the 2004 Indonesian tsunami, the city operates a booming tourist trade and local economy; complete with schools and colleges, administrative offices and courts.</i></p>		
Day 14	Departure	Meals
	<p>Transfer to Colombo International airport for your departure flight.</p> <p>---</p>	B



Flight