

BUDDHIST ITINERARY 7 NIGHTS / 8 DAYS

DAY 01: AIRPORT - COLOMBO

Meet and assist on arrival at Airport by Aitken Spence Travels Representative & leave for Colombo

Overnight Stay at Colombo Hilton

DAY 02: COLOMBO - ANURADHAPURA - DAMBULLA - SIGIRIYA

Breakfast at Colombo Hilton

Proceed to Anuradhapura

Lunch at a local restaurant

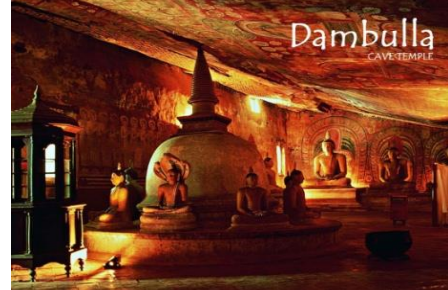
Afternoon, visit Anuradhapura.

Commanding a rich Sri Lankan heritage, Anuradhapura - one of the greatest and oldest civilizations in the world starring 113 kings & spanning over 1300 years in its peak - avows of being the greatest city of ancient Sri Lanka following its reign as the first capital. The sapphire of its crown is certainly the Sri Maha Bodhi - the sacred Bo sapling extracted from the tree under which Lord Buddha attained enlightenment - standing more than 2200 years in its pride. Stroll through the sacred trails of the venerated city to adore the legacy that interweaves Ruwanweliseya - the gigantic dagoba resting alongside the Basawakkulama Tank - shading the Samadhi Buddha Statue &



Isurumuniya Rock Temple that empower the culture, heritage and supremacy of arguably the strongest kingdom in Sri Lankan history.

Evening, visit Dambulla Rock Temple which lies a hub and has been treasured by many kings since the 1st century B.C. Today, an icon in the face of Sri Lanka, Dambulla Rock Temple houses some of the most unique drawings in magnificently constructed 5 cave temples flanking the golden temple of Dambulla. Observe how exquisitely cave paintings are done along walls that shelter 150 statues of Lord Buddha. As you enter the retreat, look straight up to the gigantic Buddha statue glittering in gold over a land, which today houses an important junction in the country's economic and cultural uplifting.



Dinner and Overnight Stay at Sigiriya Jungles

DAY 03: SIGIRIYA - POLONNARUWA - SIGIRIYA - KANDALAMA
Early Breakfast at Sigiriya Jungles

Climb 5th century rock citadel of King Kasyapa and World Heritage Site - Sigiriya - doesn't only boasts of ancient Sri Lankan engineering & urban planning supremacy but also acclaims to be one of the finest monuments



of art & culture. Step through the gigantic 'Lion Paws' - overlooking the symmetrical royal gardens below - to comprehend the absolute splendor that once dominated this rock fortress. Walk in the shade of an eminent 'mirror wall' embracing the Western face of Sigiriya representing an artistic hundred meters

laminated with graffiti. Wander into the well-fabricated museum downstairs for an epic journey of yesteryears to realize how the citadel floated above citizens with the castle, ponds and irrigation systems that pumped water right onto its summit with an ingenious hydraulic system describing a colossal masterpiece of the great king which remained a wonder in Asia for centuries.

Later leave for Polonnaruwa.

Lunch at a local restaurant

Visit Polonnaruwa.

Rising with the decline of Anuradhapura, the city of Polonnaruwa - medieval capital & crown jewel of King Parakramabahu I - remains superior proof of ancient culture & heritage blended with religious beliefs. Walk across its scattered walls of the World Heritage Site - blessed by stupas, resting Buddha statues, irrigation canals and fantastically carved Hindu sculptures - while observing the relic house - Watadage - which boasts of beautiful stone carvings. Or sit by the side of Galvihara and observe the absolute beauty gushing out of every bend of its huge Buddhist statues. Nissankamalla Council Chamber is however, a head-spinning beauty to just sit back and observe with its swaying pillars reminding the aesthetics of a powerful kingdom which rests beside Parakrama Samudraya - sea of Parakramabahu & masterpiece of irrigation!



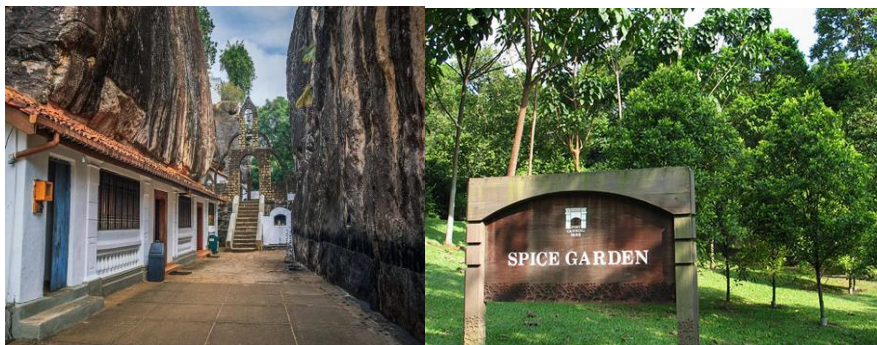
Dinner and Overnight Stay at Heritage Kandalama

DAY 04: KANDALAMA - MATALE - ALUVIHARA - KANDY
Breakfast at Heritage Kandalama

Leave for Kandy. En route visit Matale

An agricultural zone in the Central Province, Matale seldom drops off the maps due to its remarkable contribution through flagship crops of the island extending from tea, rubber & vegetables to spices. Spearheading the Rebellion back in 1848, Matale today takes immense pride in its story woven around spices. Stop by the side of a spice garden - into which you will be most welcome - and observe the therapeutic values of spices & processes over a refreshing cup of herbal tea! Or spend sometime idling on the hardened streets if you mean a real town adventure filled with voices and colors.

Lunch at a local restaurant



proceed to Kandy

Afternoon, visit Kandy city which was last ruled by King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe - before it was brought under the British rule in 1815, Kandy - the World Heritage Site & last royal capital of Sri Lankan kings - crafts an array of culture, history and heritage in the minds of visitors across the globe.

Experience an ancient Kandyan legacy engraved around its crown jewel, the temple of the sacred tooth relic of Lord Buddha.

A stroll across this small lakeside town - cradled among the misty hills - will feature the Kandy City Centre - bundled with latest and world class brands, bazaar, an arts & crafts centre, as well as a gem museum & lapidary. walk in color as you glide through fresh fruits and vegetables in the Kandy market. Fine tune your evening by stepping to the beat of traditional music & drumming amplified by a cultural show enhancing the rich and vibrant culture of the Wonder of Asia, Sri Lanka.

Dinner and Overnight Stay at Grand Kandyan

www.grandkandyan.com



DAY 05: KANDY - TEA PLANTATION - NUWARA ELIYA
Breakfast at Grand Kandyan.

Departure to Nuwara Eliya. En route Visit a Tea plantation & Factory.

Sri Lanka, Tea and Tourism are words which cannot be separated. Take a tour to the cold & misty hills that take pride of an ultimate tea tour, covering lush green blankets of tea plantations. Or just step into a tea factory processing the prestigious brand of Ceylon Tea, to observe a rich tradition kept alive up to date. As you observe the hissing and swishing of machines, inhaling the heavenly scent arising from these facilities, make sure to end your day in style over a perfectly blended cup of pure Ceylon Tea.



Lunch at a local restaurant

Continuation to Nuwara Eliya

Misty steep roads, twisting through lush green blankets of tea bushes in a cool climate, remind visitors that they are within the range of the

renowned British colonial retreat, Nuwara Eliya. Augmented by an English countryside atmosphere, the city of light - once governed by English & Scottish planters - is still studded with colonial bungalows, hedgerows & one of the finest 18-hole golf courses in the world. A hike through the green grass and red-brick walls should present breathtaking views of a buzzing countryside hamlet. Drive through green valleys of the hill country pierced by endless waterfalls & dotted by tea pluckers draped in bright-colored saris. Or rent a bike for a gentle ride along the banks splashed by the waters of Lake Gregory.

Dinner and Overnight Stay at Grand Hotel

**DAY 06: NUWARA ELIYA - BUDURUWAGALA - YALA - KATARAGAMA
Breakfast at Grand Hotel**

Proceed to Buduruwagala

Perfectly living up to its name, Buduruwagala - the rock with the statue of Buddha dating back to the 9th or 10th centuries - houses the tallest rock carving of Lord Buddha in the island standing at 16m. Take a close look at its long orange streak which provides strong evidence that the statue was once painted along with the carvings of the Buddhist mythological figures - Avalokitheshwara - standing on either side. Unfolding features of the Mahayana Buddhist School, Buduruwagala braces the historic and cultural treasure one might emprise in the island paradise.



Later leave for Yala

Lunch at a local restaurant

Afternoon, do the safari by Jeep. Spreading into a vast 1259 Km² Yala - with its glory spinning around vast grasslands, shrubs, tanks and dunes - rightfully is the heartland of wildlife in Sri Lanka. As your jeep rumbles through the giant gates of Yala, you are not only stepping into the most visited national park in the country, but also the lands of a civilization which thrived during the reign of Sri Lankan kings. You name it, and Yala has it! Its usual inmates cover herds of elephant, sloth bear, spotted deer, jackal, extensively populated birdlife as well as the



highest density of leopards in the world that garnish the park to be one of the finest destinations in the country.

Feel the rough track as your jeep thunders over rocks and swish passing narrow bends for an exhilarating experience blended with the cries of wilderness under the tropical sun.

Dinner and Overnight Stay at Mandara Rosen Kataragama

DAY 07: KATARAGAMA - WEWRUKANNALA- GALLE - COLOMBO
Breakfast at Mandara Rosen

Leave for Colombo.

En route Visit Wewrukannala Temple.



Lunch at a local restaurant

Afternoon, visit Galle, the epic Southern capital, is the intersection where classic Dutch architecture meets a tropical setting creating a vivid atmosphere in beauty. Walk the Dutch-haunted streets listening to the creaks of wooden saloon doors and observe how European architecture mingles with South Asian traditions today flooding cultural enthusiasts on a global scale. Walk clockwise within the fort to observe the 'old gate' carrying the British coat of arms.

Flanking the old gate is the Zwart bastion - the oldest of all - and the lighthouse standing 18 feet in its glory next to the Point Utrecht Bastion. This Dutch bliss is painted with streets that spread in a rectangular grid pattern pierced with houses carrying Dutch colonial style verandas. However,



its hallmark stands a reality where the Dutch fort remains a working community with its usual buzz of administrative offices, court complex, commercial buildings, churches and Southern folks frequenting its streets bracing the air of the Elysium of architecture, Galle!

Dinner & Overnight Stay at Colombo Hilton

DAY 08: COLOMBO - KELANIYA - AIRPORT

Breakfast at Colombo Hilton

Leave for a City tour of Colombo. Drive along the clean streets edging the crystal white Race Course - horse racing hub in 1893 & World War II airstrip - furnished today with lavish clothing, food & tea boutiques. Head along Bauddhaloka Mawatha towards 'Arcade' facing a historic waypost, the Independence Square. Every designer boutique, top-notch cuisine outlet and even the 'walk-over fish tank', have revamped this colonial masterpiece into one of the trendiest shopping and hangout zones in Sri Lanka. Smell the scent of incense while listening to the chiming bells of Gangarama temple. If you're lucky, head into an exhibition at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) before swaying your head to an opera or play at Nelum Pokuna that should just drive your day into perfection!



Lunch at a Chinese Restaurant

Proceed to Kelaniya

Kelaniya draws an illustrious significance towards the country along the channels of both, culture and religion. Blended with an absolute importance following the visit of Lord Buddha to Sri Lanka, the Kelaniya temple thrives today drawing thousands of heads from all corners of the world. Built during the 3rd century B.C. today, Kelaniya lights up the entire city with its annual pageant 'Duruthu Maha Perahera' held in the months of January studded with fire dancers, majestic elephants and drummers that add to the glory of the religious and cultural fortress.



Dinner at a Chinese Restaurant

Thereafter leave for Airport to take the return flight to Taipei.

END OF TOUR