



FAST FACTS

Official Name

Democratic
Socialist Republic of
Sri Lanka

Capital City

Colombo

Currency

Sri Lanka Rupee

Official Language

Sinhala

Population

20,5 million

Total Area

65,610 km²

Boundaries:

India



SRI LANKA DESTINATION INFORMATION

Ayubowan and welcome to Sri Lanka!

Sri Lanka is a diverse destination with an amazing range of experiences for such a small island. The recorded history of the island dates back 2,500 years when an exiled prince from northern India drifted onto the shores of Sri Lanka to establish the first known civilization here. It boasts a varied range of landscapes from golden beaches to rolling hills, forests and lush tea plantations. Sri Lanka was formerly known as “Serendib” which means ‘wondrous surprise’. This beautiful island was once referred to as “the fairest isle...” by Marco Polo. Sri Lanka lies like a teardrop in the Indian Ocean. The country has a 90% literacy rate and a very friendly local population.

GEOGRAPHY

Sri Lanka is a Southern Asian island country in the Indian Ocean and is situated 31 km off the southern coast of India. Until 1972 Sri Lanka was known as Ceylon.

The Cultural Triangle comprises a succession of ancient capitals and Buddhist sites where intricate carvings and towering stone monuments are scattered throughout the forests. Huge man-made lakes (water tanks) have kept the area irrigated for millennia and continue to provide water for paddy fields and thirsty elephants that regularly leave the shelter of the jungle to come and drink.

The busy lakeside city of Kandy attracts thousands of devotees to the Temple of the Tooth, while the island's rich colonial legacy can be seen in Nuwara Eliya – the hill country where tea is grown. It is also home to a stunning golf course that has been challenging players for over a century. Meanwhile the fortified town of Galle is where the Portuguese walls defended Dutch churches and the former homes of British merchants.

PEOPLE

Today, the country is a mixture of religions and ethnicities with deeply rooted traditions influenced by Sri Lanka's past history. The majority of the population is Sinhalese, but there are also significant communities of Tamils, Muslims, Burghers (descendants of the Dutch), and Malays, all of whom contribute to make this a colorful and vibrant society.

Sri Lanka
is often known
as the
'Pearl of the
Indian Ocean'.

SRI LANKA DESTINATIONS

It would be our pleasure to provide you with information of the entire country, but that would make enough for a whole book. Therefore, we stuck to the most important and developed destinations in the country. If you wish to receive details on one of the other beautiful destinations in the country, please contact our office in Colombo.



Anuradhapura

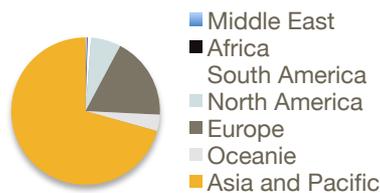
The greatest monastic city of the ancient world that dates from the middle of the 5th century B.C. remained the proud seat of the kingdom of Sri Lanka until the 11th century A.D. Today Anuradhapura, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is replete with renovated monuments, restored edifices, preserved ruins and historical sites where the archaeological excavations are still being continued. Anuradhapura was the cradle of glorious Sinhalese Buddhist civilization. The pride of Anuradhapura is the ancient stupas and ancient reservoirs. Towering stupas (dagobas) of stupendous domes - the marvels of ancient civil engineering - were built taking into account the effects of lightening on high-rise constructions, among numerous other engineering factors.

Among the other attractions at Anuradhapura are magnificent rock carvings of monumental richness and remarkable grace, colossal stone pillars that stand proud amidst the ruins of royal palaces, Buddhist monasteries and temples, and magnificent stone cut swimming pools of sophisticated hydrology.

Yes or No?

In most of the countries, nodding your head up and down means yes and moving it back and forth means no. It is the complete opposite in Sri Lanka.

Number of Visiting Tourists



Sigirya

Centered on a massive rock rising 200 meters above the surrounding plain, Sigiriya's location is one of considerable natural beauty and historical interest. An area of ancient settlement lying between the historic capitals of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, the Sigiriya plain still retains much of its forest cover, and many of its present village settlements and man-made village reservoirs date back to the first millennium B.C. In its

present form, Sigiriya itself is essentially a walled-and-moated royal capital of the fifth century A.D. It has a palace complex on top of the rock, elaborate pleasure gardens, extensive moats and ramparts, and well-known paintings on the western face of the rock.

Yala National Park

There are six national parks and three wildlife sanctuaries in the vicinity of Yala. The park is situated in the dry semi-arid climatic region and rain is received mainly during the northeast monsoon. Yala hosts a variety of ecosystems ranging from moist monsoon forests to freshwater and marine wetlands. It is one of the 70 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Sri Lanka. Yala harbors 215 bird species including six endemic species of Sri Lanka. The number of mammals that has been recorded from the park is 44, and it has one of the highest leopard densities in the world.



Tourism Arrivals
By All Ministry of Tourism

Year	Number of Tourism Arrivals
1984	317.734
1994	407.511
2004	566.202
2014	534.132



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Galle

Galle attracts many travellers due to its location in the Southern part of the island. Therefore, most who come to Galle never misses to enjoy the beauty of the sea and sand. Galle Dutch Fort is among the more popular sights for those who value archaeological reserves and heritage. It is known as the oldest fort in Asia, name as a world heritage city by UNESCO. Inside the fort, travellers can find other attractions such as the Dutch Museum, which contains paintings, pictures and furniture of the Dutch Reformed Church. The fort is built on a small peninsula that can be easily accessed from the Galle town center. It is the best place to visit during an evening when the picturesque scenery of the sunset can be witnessed at its best.

Polonnaruwa

Polonnaruwa consists of the remnants of the glorious kingdom of the Great King Parakramabahu. The richness and the glamor of this kingdom are still evident. Polonnaruwa is a World Heritage Site and is situated in north-central Sri Lanka. Polonnaruwa is known to be the ancient capital of Sri Lanka dating to the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries. Polonnaruwa is also widely known for its art, medieval architectural history, and great facilities. Polonnaruwa ancient kingdom gets the accreditation of being the best-planned archaeological relic site in Sri Lanka that stands witness to the tests of time.

Dambulla

Dambulla is located in Matale district. Dambulla is located 148 km northeast of Colombo and 72 km north of Kandy. Dambulla is mostly known for its Golden Dambulla rock temple – a World Heritage Site as well. Dambulla is best known for its wonderful cave temple complex that dates back to the 2nd century BC. This cave complex is renowned worldwide for its five caves and magnificent statues with varied scriptures. Dambulla is also known for its wood iron forest and the Rose Quartz mountains.

Nuwara Eliya

Nuwara Eliya, meaning "the city of dawn", is the town at the highest elevation (about 2,000m above sea level) in Sri Lanka and its tallest peak, Pidurutalagala (2,555m) could be seen from here. The city was established by the British in the nineteenth century, and is known as "Little England". Nuwara Eliya is a popular holiday resort for Sri Lankans and travelers due to its cool climate and quaint colonial feel with its little bungalows surrounded by hedgerows. Nuwara Eliya is also the heart of the tea country and you can visit a plantation and a factory en route here and witness how the famous "Ceylon tea" is being brewed.

INSIDER'S PICK

"Escaping the sizzling heat of the day after dinner, with not another tourist in sight, you'll explore the extended 12th century ruins with nothing but the dimmed light of your torches to light your path. As you approach the site next to your hotel you hear the sound of drums. Entering the ruins a conch shell is blown indicating the arrival of an important guest; you! Explore this site with your guide who explains the fascinating ancient history behind these ruins, and imagine that the kings of the past walked these very grounds at night, with the same shadows flickering in the light."

