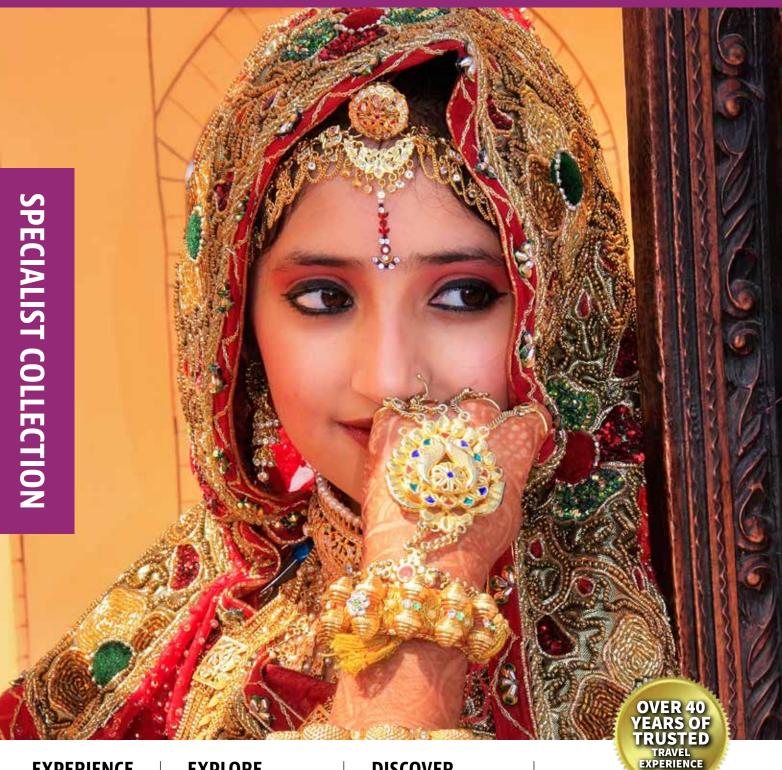


INDIA & SRI LANKA



EXPERIENCE A Potpourri of Delights

EXPLOREUNESCO World
Heritage Sites

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Ancient Ruins

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THOMPSONS HOLIDAYS

There are more than 1,500 languages spoken in India. The 6 major languages are Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil and Urdu, each spoken by more than 50 million people





INDIA

ne of the largest, most diverse and exotic holiday destinations in the world, India is an absolute delight to explore. It's also one of the world's most colourful countries, a tapestry of gaily decorated elephants, vibrant Hindu temples, rural life that has remained unchanged for centuries and sights, sounds and sensations that are both bewildering and fascinating. As it's so vast (one-sixth of the world's population lives here), it's home to numerous different cultures and traditions, yet the people live together harmoniously. This is not a country you only visit once - there's far too much to do and see - but a first trip should include the country's famous Golden Triangle, which includes bustling Delhi, the legendary Taj Mahal in Agra, and Jaipur, the Pink City, capital of Rajasthan. Tiger safaris, yoga retreats, Buddhist temples, beautiful beaches, sacred sites, Bollywood, tea plantations, hotels and dining experiences fit for Royalty... India has it all. And it's begging to be discovered.

WHY INDIA & SRI LANKA WITH **THOMPSONS?**

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With 40 years of travel experience you know you're in good hands. We offer expert advice for all your travel requirements. Thompsons Holidays is a division of Cullinan Holdings Group and a member of The Travel Corporation, a fourth-generation family-owned group.

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Our care line is there in an emergency.

Service charge is included in most restaurant bills. If it's not included, it's recommended to add 10% to the bill or at your discretion. The suggested tipping amount for drivers & guides per day is between USD 3-5.



SPORTING EVENTS

India is hosting a number of important sporting events in 2018 & 2019. If you're planning a trip to India, keep these dates in mind...

November 28 - December 16, 2018 - Hockey Men's World Cup 2018, **Bhubaneswar**

March 29 to May 19, 2019 - Indian Premier League 12 Cricket

GREAT SIGHTSEEING



AGRA - FULL DAY

Departs from Delhi. Visit the Taj Mahal, one of the world's wonders, which took 22 years and 20,000 men to build. Its white marble was quarried 200 miles away and was transported to the site by a fleet of 1,000 elephants. It was built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as an expression of his love for his wife Mumtaz Mahal, in the mid 17th century (Note: Taj Mahal is closed on Fridays). Then visit Agra Fort, an outstanding example of Mughal architecture and the seat of Mughal rule, to see its Hall of Public Audience and Royal Pavilions. On to the deserted red stone city of Fatehpur Sikri, built in the late 16th century. It was abandoned soon after it was built when the wells went dry and it remains in much the same condition as it was more than 300 years ago. Complete with palaces and mosques, it used to be larger than London when it was originally built. Now it's an extraordinary place to explore.

CHENNAI CITY TOUR - HALF DAY

Visit Kapaleeswaarar Temple to find out about the ancient Hindu culture and get an understanding of India in ancient times. Then it's on to St Mary's Church, the Oldest Anglican Church In Asia. It's the first English church in Chennai and the oldest surviving British church in India. Then head for the National Art Gallery and Government Museum: the building originally belonged to a group of eminent British citizens known as the Pantheon Committee. The main building has an excellent archaeological section and houses a good ethnology collection as well as the Chola Bronze.

CITY TOUR OLD & NEW DELHI - HALF-DAY

Visit Raj Ghat, a simple memorial to Mahatma Gandhi; drive past the Red Fort and on to the Jama Masjid, one of Asia's largest mosques. See the magnificent Red Fort overlooking the river Jamuna, built between 1638 and 1948 when the Mughal Empire was at its peak. Tour continues to Jama Masjid, one of Asia's largest mosques, which is viewed from the outside. People stream in and out of the mosque continuously and the presence of a nearby bazaar means that the area is rarely quiet.

MUMBAI CITY TOUR - HALF DAY

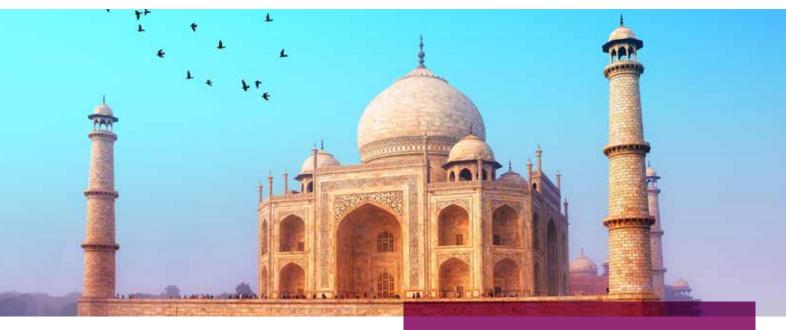
Explore Mani Bhavan, the house where Mahatma Gandhi used to stay during his visits to Bombay; it's now a museum displaying his photographs, letters and personal items. Visit the Prince of Wales Museum and the Jain Temple. Drive past the 'Towers of Silence', Kamla Nehru Park and Hanging Gardens, located on the slope of Malabar Hill with a panoramic view of Marine Drive and Chowpatty Beach. Drive through Crawford market, along Marine Drive and commemorate the visit of King George V.





NORTHERN INDIA

The Northern part of India is home to diverse topography, from the mountains of the Himalayas to the deserts of Rajashtan. It boasts some of the largest glaciers, sub-tropical forests, wildlife reserves and archaeological treasures in the country and is also home to one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world, Varanasi, not to mention India's vibrant capital, Delhi.



JAIPUR

The capital of Rajasthan, the enthralling city of Jaipur offers the perfect mix of old and new, with many forts, palaces and religious temples just waiting to be explored. Known as the Pink City because of the pink colour of the buildings, it offers many highlights such as the Amber Fort, a 16th century palace on top of a cliff, and the monkeys at The Galta Temple. Other sites worth visiting include a magnificent fort and some fascinating mausoleums and tombs.

Reason to go: Amber Fort

DELHI

Delhi, India's capital, is basically two cities - the old and the new parts make up a huge metropolis. Old Delhi is great fun to explore, with its bazaars found in the maze of winding streets, ancient mosques and forts including the 15th century Red Fort and the sprawling Jama Masjid Mosque, with a courtyard that accommodates 25,000 people. New Delhi is another city entirely, much smaller than its older counterpart, with wide avenues, modern shops and buildings.

Reason to go: Old Delhi



AGRA

A popular tourist attraction because it's home to the magnificent Taj Mahal, Agra is located in India's Uttar Pradesh state. The iconic Taj Mahal was built in honour of Mughal ruler Shah Jahan's wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in childbirth in 1631. The main building boasts a massive dome and is made of intricately carved white marble that is inlaid with precious stones. The Taj Mahal is located behind a reflecting pool inside a courtyard defined by four minarets.

Reason to go: Taj Mahal

SOUTHERN INDIA

In complete contrast to the mountains and hills up north, the South of India offers lush landscapes, tea plantations, spice gardens, wild forests that are home to herds of elephants and tigers, and vibrant cities. Let's not forget the beaches in Goa, which are some of the most beautiful in the country and a plethora of temples and forts, modern restaurants and shops in the bustling cities.



CHENNAI

Chennai (Madras) was the first British trading post in the area. Here, the legacy of the Raj lives on in the museum that displays the city's roots. There's plenty of modernity, too, with luxurious hotels and boutiques, chic restaurants, bars and clubs. Religious sites worth visiting include the Kapaleeshwaraar Temple, which is decorated with carved and painted gods, and the 17th century Anglican church of St Mary's. Chennai is also known for popular Marina Beach.

Reason to go: Shopping in the district of T. Nagar



ALLEPPEY

Located in Kerala, Alleppey is an extremely relaxing place that features a network of tranquil canals and lagoons, and more than 1,000 houseboats that reside in these fascinating waterways. The further you venture in Alleppey, the more magical your experience will be, with numerous little villages on the water, lush rice paddies and charming rural life.

Reason to go: Backwaters



KOLKATA AND COCHIN

Colourful Kolkata (Calcutta) is full of crowded markets and temples adorned with flowers. It's the country's cultural centre, the heart of literature, music, cinema as well as spirituality. Located on the Kerala coast, Cochin is the most important port in Southern India. Colonised by the Portuguese in the 15th century, the city still retains a Portuguese influence, making it a fascinating destination to explore.

Reason to go: Kolkata's markets; Cochi in Cochin

GOA

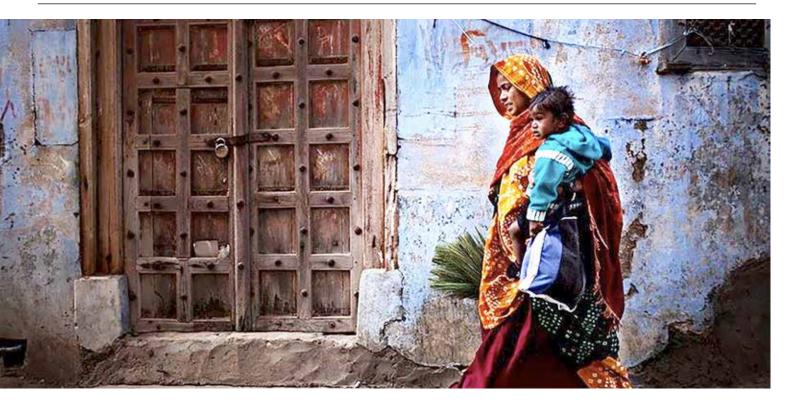
Goa's long history as a Portuguese colony has left a legacy, evident in the area's many 17th century churches and spice plantations. In addition, with its spectacular coastline stretching along the Arabian Sea, Goa is renowned for having some of the best beaches in the country. Popular beaches include Baga and Palolem, as well as those in charming fishing villages like Agonda.

Reason to go: Beaches





GOLDEN TRIANGLE TOUR



GOLDEN TRIANGLE TOUR - 5 NIGHTS

Delhi | Agra | Jaipur | Delhi

Day 1 You will be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure to explore. Overnight Delhi

Day 2 Half day tour of Old & New Delhi including Raj Ghat, Red Fort, Jama Masjid, Qutub Minar, India Gate, Parliament Building and Rashtrapati Bhawan. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight Delhi

Day 3 Travel to Agra & check into hotel. Afternoon city tour to see the Taj

Mahal and Agra Fort. Overnight Agra

Day 4 Drive to Jaipur, check into your hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure. **Overnight Jaipur**

Day 5 Visit Amber Fort, enjoy an elephant or jeep ride to the fortress. Afternoon city tour of Jaipur to see the City Palace and the Astronomical Observatory. Overnight Jaipur

Day 6 After breakfast, you will have time to pack before travelling to Delhi for your flight home.

MUMBAI & GOA TOUR



MUMBAI & GOA TOUR - 7 NIGHTS

Mumbai | Goa | Mumbai

Day 1 Arrive in Mumbai, transfer to hotel. Overnight Mumbai

Day 2 Half day morning city tour of Mumbai to see Mani Bhavan, Prince of Wales Museum and Jain Temple. Enjoy panoramic views and sights en route. Afternoon at leisure to explore. Overnight Mumbai

Day 3 Transfer to the railway station for your train to Goa. Arrive in Goa and



transfer to your hotel. Overnight Goa

Day 4 After breakfast, enjoy a half day city tour of Goa to see the Pillar monastery, Margao City and Colva Beach. Overnight Goa

Day 5 & 6 Days at leisure. Overnight Goa

Day 7 Transfer to the railway station for your train to Mumbai. On arrival in Mumbai, transfer to your hotel. Overnight Mumbai

Day 8 Transfer to airport for your flight home.

EXPLORE INDIA

EXTEND YOUR INDIA EXPERIENCE

The fabulous 5-night Golden Triangle Tour, featured on the previous page, can be extended to 10 nights, stopping over in either Udaipur, Amritsar, Mumbai or Varanasi



AMRITSAR

Set in north-western India in Punjab, 455km from New Delhi and near Pakistan, Amritsar's Golden Temple is one of the Sikh faith's most spiritual sites. You will have time to explore at leisure and enjoy a half-day tour to visit the spectacular Golden Temple, made of white marble and copper gilt with a gold leaf dome. Inside is the Guru Granth Sahib, holy book of the Sikhs. Visit historic Jallianwala Bagh, which commemorates hundreds of Indians killed or wounded by the British in a massacre under their rule. Also explore the Ram Bagh gardens. Spend an evening watching the Wagah Border ceremony.

Reason to go: Golden Temple

MUMBAI

Also known as Bombay, Mumbai is India's economic powerhouse, its fastest moving, most affluent and most industrialised city. You'll find evidence of its fascinating history when you explore Mumbai at leisure and on a half-day sightseeing tour, visiting Mani Bhavan, the house where Mahatma Gandhi stayed, now a museum, as well as the Prince of Wales Museum and Jain Temple. Drive past the Towers of Silence, Kamla Nehru Park and the Hanging Gardens.

Reason to go: The city is the gateway of India

THIS IS JUST A TASTE OF THE ADVENTURES IN STORE FOR YOU!



UDAIPUR

Known as the city of Sunrise, Udaipur is an extraordinary city. Explore the City Palace overlooking Lake Pichola. Built in 1725 with filigreed balconies, ornate windows and exquisite glass decorations, it stretches for over a mile. Inside is a maze of courtyards, apartments and decorated halls. Rooms are covered with frescoes, glass mosaics, painted windows and ornamental doors. The Sun Window is the divine symbol of the house of Wewar. In complete contrast, the bustling old market is a maze of spice shops, jewellery stores, silver goods and local produce. Enjoy a boat ride on Lake Pichola to see the city from a different perspective.

Reason to go: City Palace

VARANASI

Located in Northern India, this 11th century city is India's spiritual capital. Hindu pilgrims flock here to bathe in the Ganges' sacred waters and visit some of the 2,000 temples. One of these, the magnificent Kashi Vishvnath Temple, or Golden Temple, is dedicated to the Hindu god, Shiva. Another holy spot is the Bharat Mata Temple, dedicated to Mother India, home to a relief map of the country carved out of marble. Mahatma Gandhi officially opened this unique temple. Other temples include the Jateshwar Mahadev Temple, with a black stone statue of Shiva, the Bhairav Nath temple and 9 other Bhairav temples in the city.

Reason to go: Aarti at River Ganges

KERALA TOUR



KERALA TOUR - 10 NIGHTS

Cochin | Munnar | Periyar | Kumarakom | Alleppey | Kovalam | Trivandrum

Day 1 Arrive in Cochin. Transfer to hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure. **Overnight Cochin**

Day 2 Enjoy a tour of Cochin to visit the Dutch Palace, Jewish Synagogue, Chinese Fishing Nets and St Francis Church. Overnight Cochin

Day 3 Drive to Munnar and check into your hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure to explore. Overnight Munnar

Day 4 After breakfast, enjoy a half-day tour of a tea plantation. Afternoon is at leisure to explore on your own. Overnight Munnar

Day 5 After breakfast, travel to Periyar, check into your hotel. Enjoy Spice

Plantation tour this afternoon. Overnight Periyar

Day 6 Visit Periyar National Park to view wildlife by boat. Then travel to Kumarakom. Check into your hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure to explore.

Overnight Kumarakom

Day 7 Full day at leisure. Overnight Kumarakom

Day 8 Visit Periyar National Park to view wildlife by boat. Then travel to Kumarakom. You have the rest of the day at leisure to explore this fascinating village. Overnight Kumarakom

Day 9 Breakfast on houseboat, then travel to Kovalam by road. Check into your hotel with the rest of day at leisure. Overnight Kovalam

Day 10 Full day at leisure. Overnight Kovalam

Day 11 Transfer to the airport for your homeward flight.

PALACE ON WHEELS TOUR



PALACE ON WHEELS TOUR - 7 NIGHTS

Day 1 Arrive in Delhi before your luxurious Palace on Wheels embarks on its journey through Rajasthan.

Day 2 Visit Jaipur to see the Palace of Winds, City Palace and Astronomical Observatory. On to Amber Fort, Chamber of Mirrors and Hall of Victory. Lunch at Amber Fortress. Tour the fort in a jeep. Return to the train for dinner and overnight.

Day 3 Enjoy an early morning game drive in Sawai Madhopur. After breakfast, travel on to Chittourgarh with lunch on board. Enjoy an afternoon tour of Chittorgarh Fort. Evening tea and Light and Sound Show at the Fort before returning to the train for overnight.

Day 4 After breakfast, enjoy a sightseeing tour of Udaipur to see the City



Palace. Lunch at a 5 star hotel, visit Crystal Gallery at Fateh Prakash Palace Hotel. Enjoy a boat ride across Lake Pichola. Return to train for overnight. Day 5 Arrive in Jaisalmer and visit this city of sandstone 'havelis' in an

ancient fort. Enjoy a camel ride on the sand dunes, then return to Jaisalmer for dinner and entertainment at a local hotel. Overnight on the train.

Day 6 Wake up in Jodhpur. Visit its main sights before travelling on to Jaswant Thada for lunch at the local Palace Hotel. Return to the train for dinner and overnight.

Day 7 Arrive in Agra and head for Keola Deo National Park to the Ghana Bird Sanctuary. After breakfast on the train, enjoy a sightseeing tour of Agra Fort. Lunch is at the local Palace Hotel before visiting the Taj Mahal.

Day 8 Arrive at Delhi's Safdarjung Railway station. After breakfast, disembark.

SRI LANKA

ri Lanka is the perfect blend of beautiful beaches, ancient ruins, tropical rainforests and Buddhist charm. An excellent introduction to the Indian subcontinent, this island/country, originally called Ceylon, offers a microcosm of what India represents. With numerous Buddhist temples and ancient ruins emerging from the jungle, the island's historical tapestry includes British, Dutch and Portuguese settlements. In fact, there are 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in this small area, one of which is the ruins of the country's ancient capital, Anuradhapura, that dates back over 2,000 years. Sri Lanka is famous for its Ceylon tea, golden beaches and national parks full of elephants, leopards and other wildlife. The people are cricketcrazy, smiling, spice-addicted people with huge smiles and even bigger hearts. A visit here is a potpourri of delights, with plenty of activities, cultural sights and seaside resorts all vying for attention.





CITIES



KANDY

Located on the Kandy Plateau, 135km from Colombo, the town of Kandy is capital of Central Province, a mountain resort and market centre for the production of tea, rubber, rice and cacao. It was historically the capital of the Sinhalese Kandyan kingdom. Today it overlooks a scenic artificial lake built by the last king in 1806. Nearby one finds the Temple of the Tooth, which apparently houses one of Buddha's teeth. This sacred relic was brought to Sri Lanka in the 4th century, but it could have been destroyed in 1560 by the Portuguese. However, it has made Kandy both a pilgrimage site and a tourist attraction. See remnants of the city's royal period such as the art museum, palace and library. The town is also home to the University of Sri Lanka and the famous Botanical Gardens.

Reason to go: Nature visit



COLOMBO

The island's capital is a frenetic metropolis located on Sri Lanka's west coast. It's relatively easy to get around to access its various shopping malls, banks, restaurants and hotels. The city is located by the sea; the main Galle Road starts from the Fort and runs all the way down the coast to the town of Galle on the south coast. In the evenings, Colombo is more tranquil and pretty, and the sunset views are spectacular.

Reason to go: National Museum

THE HILLS

This spectacular part of the island is known as Hill Country. Step back to the colonial era with trains chugging through verdant tea plantations and lush rice fields. Then it's back to the present on the scenic coast, with modern beach resorts full of tanned holidaymakers, vibrant bars and upmarket boutiques. The area is also full of tropical rainforests, making it a delight to explore on walks, treks, or on a scenic train ride.

Reason to go: Hills Station

EAST COAST



TRINCOMALEE

The Mahaweli River meets the ocean at Koddiyar Bay on Sri Lanka's east coast. To the north of this land-locked bay one finds the old town of Trincomalee, 257km from Colombo, and 182km from Kandy. Known for its beautiful natural harbour, which is one of the safest, largest and most picturesque in the world. Trincomalee features calm shallow waters that lap wide white sand beaches. With year-round sunshine and over a dozen sheltered bays, Trinco, as it's called, is a haven of delights and a paradise for sunbathing, swimming and snorkelling.

Reason to go: Sports and water activities



PASIKUDA

One of Sri Lanka's most magnificent beaches, with azure sea and soft white sand. Located 295km from Colombo, this picturesque fishing village has once again become a popular holiday resort. The beach was destroyed during the Tsunami, but has since been restored to its former glory. Pasikuda means 'green algae bay'; it's located on Sri Lanka's east coast between Kalkuda and the Indian Ocean and boasts turquoise water and a long stretch of sandy beach fringed with coconut palms, offering a variety of water sports including kite surfing, boogie boarding, surfing, canoeing and more.

Reason to go: Beach destination

SOUTH COAST

WASKADUWA

This small coastal town is located on the island's south coast, 52km from Colombo (1 hour 45 minutes by car). It boasts one of Sri Lanka's best beaches and is ideal for a relaxing beach break. It's located 5.2km from the bustling resort of Kalutara, the start of a stretch of fine sand beaches that boast some of the top beach resorts on the island.

Reason to go: Beach destination



HIKKADUWA

Located on the South Coast, this very popular resort is 120km from Colombo. It's famous for its exquisite coral reef just offshore, unique beach culture and variety of water sports activities. The resort has incorporated a number of villages to the south, and now boasts a 4km strip of hotels, bars, restaurants, shops and guesthouses. Beaches are wide and swimming is safe. Glass bottom boats are available to view the exotic fish and sea turtles in the reef.

Reason to go: Beach resort

BENTOTA

This 100-acre resort complex is 80km from Colombo. It is one of the most popular beach resort areas in Sri Lanka and offers a variety of activities including surfing and many other water sports. The Bentota River, which forms the boundary between the island's western and southern provinces, is ideal for boating excursions. There's also a well-equipped water sports centre with deep sea diving opportunities. Nature lovers can watch the turtles swim up to lay their eggs on the sand. Another interesting site is the 12th century Galapata Viharaya.

Reason to go: Beach destination

SRI LANKA TOUR - 7 NIGHTS

For such a small island, Sri Lanka offers an incredible range of experiences. With a history dating back to the birth of time and a variety of spectacular landscapes, there is plenty to see and do here. Laze in the sun on a choice of golden beaches on 1,330km of coastline, experience the island's captivating cultural heritage in 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, go on safari in a choice of 15 national parks, explore nearly 500,000 acres of lush tea plantations, 250 acres of botanical gardens and 350 waterfalls.



SRI LANKA TOUR - 7 NIGHTS

Colombo | Pinnawala | Dambulla | Sigiriya | Matale | Kandy | Nuwara Eliya | Waskaduwa

Day 1 Arrive and transfer to Colombo. Enjoy a tour to see the city's historical, religious and commercial sites including the Fort and Pettah, Cinnamon Gardens, Galle face Green, Viharamahadevi Park and more. Overnight Colombo

Day 2 Travel to Pinnawala to visit the Elephant Orphanage for wounded and abandoned elephants. If you're lucky you will get there at feeding and bathing time and will be able to interact with the animals. Overnight Pinnawala

Day 3 Drive to Sigiriya today to climb to the rock fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site also known as Lion Rock because of the vast lion that used to stand at the entrance to this ancient palace on the summit of the plateau 600 feet up. Then head for Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka's second most ancient kingdom that dates back to the 12th century. Visit the Archaeological Museum, the massive Royal Palace with its well-preserved audience hall and the exquisitely adorned Sacred Quadrangle. Overnight Dambulla

Day 4 After breakfast, drive to Kandy, visiting a spice garden en route. Enjoy a tour of Kandy, a World Heritage Site, home to the country's last independent kingdom. Visit the Temple of the Tooth, the Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya University campus and then enjoy a panoramic view of the town from Upper Lake Drive. Explore Kandy Gem Museum, then enjoy a Kandyan dance performance in the evening. Overnight Kandy

Day 5 Visit Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka's 'Little England', with its idyllic setting against the backdrop of mountains, valleys, waterfalls and tea plantations. Explore the area with its British influences evident in the houses. Enjoy a stroll or a picnic. Overnight Nuwara Eliya

Day 6 After breakfast, travel to Waskaduwa where you check into the hotel. Overnight Waskaduwa

Day 7 Day at leisure in Waskaduwa. Overnight Waskaduwa Day 8 After breakfast, head for the airport for your departure flight.







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