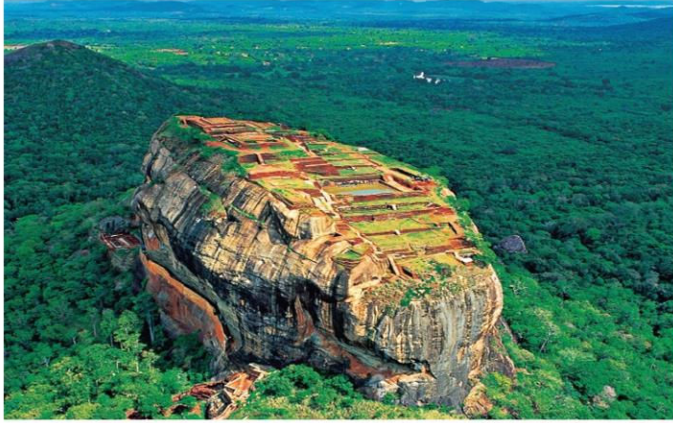


TOGETHER WE TRAVEL!



solo connections



- Sri Lankan Surprise -



Sri Lankan Surprise
14 Days
Fully Escorted
Departs 16 - 29 April 2025

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Colombo
- Sigiriya Rock Fortress
- Polonnaruwa Ancient Kingdom
- Minneriya National Park
- Matale Spice Garden
- Temple of Tooth
- Scenic Train Trip
- Yala National Park Wildlife Safari
- Galle
- Kosgodia Turtle Hatchery

INCLUDES:

- Economy class airfares with Singapore Airlines including taxes*
- **Private single rooms** in quality accommodation
- **Meals** as per itinerary - 12 Breakfasts, 1 Lunches, 11 Dinners
- **Sightseeing** tours and airport transfers by private A/C vehicle
- **Tour Host** - travels with group from/to Brisbane
- Local English speaking escort guide and driver
- Tipping (Guides, Drivers, Meals)

EXCLUDES:

- Any flights, transfers, meals, sightseeing, tipping or gratuities other than mentioned above
- Items of a personal nature i.e. laundry, drinks, phone calls, etc
- Travel Insurance
- Visas

From \$8,946* per person

Terms and Conditions apply. Price is per person, sole use, with flights* departing Brisbane Melbourne, Perth or Sydney and is subject to availability. Air taxes included to the value of \$270. Price is correct as at 05/08/2024. Tour requires minimum number of passengers to depart. Prices may fluctuate if surcharges, fees, taxes or currencies change. Solo Connections is constantly striving to improve our itineraries and inclusions. If such improvements can be made, or unforeseen circumstances beyond our control make changes necessary, we reserve the right at any time to vary itineraries and to substitute inclusions of equal value. Beverages, additional meals, hotel mini bars, laundry, phone calls, any items of personal nature not included. Further booking conditions apply, please check all prices, availability and other information with your travel agent at time of or before booking. Package cancellation fees apply. Denise Marie Falsay trading as Solo Connections. ATAS Accredited A11424. ABN 92 582 582 996



Day 1: Wednesday 16 April 2025
Depart Australia – Arrive Colombo, Sri Lanka

Today our Brisbane passengers will meet with our Tour Host at Brisbane International Airport for the flight to Singapore and ongoing to Sri Lanka. Interstate passengers will meet the group in Singapore. When we arrive at Colombo International airport, our local guide and driver will be waiting to transfer us to our hotel to check in.

Accommodation: Jetwing Colombo Seven (2 nights)

Day 2: Thursday 17 April 2025
Colombo

B-D

After breakfast at the hotel we will take a guided city tour in **Colombo**.

Driving through the city we are taken to the busy commercial areas as well as the tree-lined residential, **Cinnamon Gardens**. Visit **Fort**, the former British administrative centre and military garrison, **Sea Street** - the Goldsmith's quarters in the heart of Pettah, the **Bazaar area**, a Hindu Temple with elaborate stone carvings and the **Dutch Church of Wolfendhal** dating back to 1749. If time permits, we may also be able to see the replica of Avukana Buddha & the Independence Square.

This afternoon we visit the **Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art**. This new education-led initiative aims to establish a public museum dedicated to the display, research, collection and conservation of Sri Lankan modern and contemporary art with the priority to create a museum that is compelling, inclusive and relevant to the art histories that are unique to the contexts of Sri Lanka.

Returning to our hotel we have time to freshen up before we come together this evening for a **Welcome Dinner**.

Day 3: Friday 18 April 2025
Colombo –Sigiriya - Habarana

B-D

After breakfast at the hotel we proceed to Habarana via a **local village**. Accompanied by a guide, we are taken through the village to experience a typical local lifestyle. We will walk through the paddy & chena cultivation and the beautiful nature followed by a cookery experience with local ladies where we get the chance to sample some of the local food.

Later this afternoon we make our way to one of Sri Lanka's major attractions, the **Sigiriya Rock Fortress**. Built by King Kashyapa (477-495 AD), it was for the sole purpose of protecting him from his rivals. An UNSECO World Heritage listed site, it is also known as the "Fortress in the Sky". The climb up to the top of the fortress doesn't only offer the reward of breathtaking views but there is so much to discover during your climb to the top. Highlights of the climb include water gardens, artistic frescoes, mirror wall, the lion gate and the magnificent views from the rock summit. **A very good level of fitness will be required to climb to the summit and involves a lot of stairs, some without hand railings.**

Arriving into **Habarana** we will check into our hotel and then meet for dinner.

Accommodation: Habarana Village By Cinnamon (2 nights)



Day 4: Saturday 19 April 2025
Polonnaruwa - Minneriya

B-D

After breakfast at the hotel we depart for a guided tour of **Polonnaruwa Ancient Kingdom**.

Polonnaruwa was founded in the 11th Century AD and was governed by many Kings. King Parakrambahu I's reign was considered the most significant for this ancient kingdom. During his reign (12th Century AD) this second Kingdom of Sri Lanka (after Anuradhapura) was known as the Golden Age of Polonnaruwa, as Parakrambahu ruled during an era where trade and agriculture was at its peak.

This afternoon we get to enjoy a game drive at **Minneriya National Park**. The extent of the Minneriya National Park is approximately 8,889 hectares. Dry zone plant and animal species are common. The elephants, however, are a highlight of the park. Approximately 160 species of birds, 9 amphibians, 25 reptile species, 26 fish species and more than 78 butterfly species can also be found here. There are also rare bamboo trees in this park which is unique to Minneriya National Park.

Returning to the hotel we will meet this evening for dinner.

Day 5: Sunday 20 April 2025
Habarana – Matale - Kandy

B-D

After breakfast at the hotel we leave for **Kandy**.

Along the way we will make a visit to **Matale Spice Gardens** which is located at Matale (in the Hill Country of Kandy). Sri Lanka is well renowned for its spices and natural ayurvedic remedies and Matale spice garden delivers it all! Stroll through the hand reared and harvested plantations of natural spices to satisfy the three main senses.

See the large tropical trees and take in the fragrant aromas. Touch and learn about the popular and exotic spices that are so readily used in Sri Lankan cuisines and ayurvedic treatments. You will also have the opportunity to try some Sri Lankan cuisine using the popular spices, have a healing massage, purchase medicinal and cosmetic products created using the natural spices (at own cost).

Upon arrival in Kandy we will be taken to our hotel to check in and then meet for dinner.

Accommodation: Cinnamon Citadel (2 nights)



Day 6: Monday 21 April 2025
Kandy

B-D

After breakfast at the hotel we visit **Peradeniya Botanical Gardens**. This beautiful garden is located 6km from Kandy and was first built as a pleasure garden by a Sinhala king and then expanded by the British. It covers approximately 147 acres and is a stroller's paradise with extensive well-kept lawns, pavilions, an octagon conservatory, fernery, a giant Javan fig tree and numerous flower beds. The best attraction is the orchid House where you can discover more than 1000 plants.

Afterwards we commence a **city tour of Kandy**. The Hill, capital of Kandy, lies picturesquely surrounded by mountains. Kandy is also the last kingdom of Sri Lanka and is a bustling city. Our tour, time permitting, can include Upper Lake Drive, a visit to a Wood carving & Gem shop, Gem Museum, Kandy Bazaar/markets and visit to a Batik Factory.

This evening we visit **The Temple of Tooth Relic** ("Dalada Maligawa" as known to the locals). A sacred temple, it is also home to the palm-leaf transcripts and its history dates back to 1687. This stunning piece of architecture is instantly recognised by its octagonal shape and golden roof. Although you are not able to view the actual tooth itself, the casket within which it is held is occasionally displayed.

Returning to the hotel, freshen up before we meet for dinner.

Day 7: Tuesday 22 April 2025
Kandy – Nuwara Eliya

B-L

After breakfast at the hotel we heading off to Nuwara Eliya.

Part of our journey will be travelling on a **Scenic Train from Peradeniya to Nanu Oya**. A ride in the scenic carriage gives you an unparalleled view and penetrating glimpses both of the scenic beauty and culture of the hill country as we travel along.

Continuing by coach, upon our arrival in **Nuwara Eliya** we will enjoy Lunch at a local restaurant.

We then visit a **tea plantation and a tea factory**. We get to observe typical tea-pluckers, explore a tea planter's village which offers a unique glimpse into the everyday life of a tea-plucker.

Later we are taken to our hotel for check in and then the remainder of the day is *at leisure*. Your tour host will be on hand to assist the group with afternoon and evening plans if needed.

Accommodation: Jetwing St Andrews (1 night)



Day 8: Wednesday 23 April 2025
Nuwara Eliya - Kataragama

B-D

After we enjoy breakfast at the hotel this morning we have a travel day to **Kataragama**. This is going to be approximately 4 hours of driving, and we will have a few stops along the way.

Upon arrival we will check in to our hotel, have some time to freshen up before we visit embark on an adventure with a **Wildlife Jeep Safari** approximately 24km Northeast of Tissamaharama. **Yala National Park** is the best location to sight and photograph the rare and remarkable **leopards**. Other highlights include the herd of wild elephants, bears, wild boars, buffalos, deer, crocodiles and many species of birds. The vegetation ranges from open parkland to dense jungle. There are also an abundance of water supply for animals and birds ranging from waterholes, streams, small lakes to lagoons.

Returning to the hotel we come together for this evening's dinner.

Accommodation: Mandara Rosen (2 nights)

Day 9: Thursday 24 April 2025
Kataragama

B-D

Following breakfast we have the morning at leisure.

Late afternoon we visit **Katharagama Devalaya** for the Puja ceremony. Kataragama is home to one of the most important religious sites and draws pilgrims from various faiths. A shady avenue leads to the majestic Devalaya, whilst further away is the stark white stupa gleaming away in the sun, gracefully rising over the site. The Puja ceremony is a ceremonial worship, ranging from brief daily rites in the home to elaborate temple rituals. Puja, the loving offering of light, flowers, and water or food to the divine, is the essential ritual of Hinduism.

Upon returning to the hotel we meet for dinner.

Day 10: Friday 25 April 2025
Kataragama - Galle

B-D

After breakfast at the hotel we will proceed to Galle and commence a **guided city tour** upon arrival.

Galle, recognised as the Southern Capital (116 km from Colombo) and home to the popular Fort called "**Santa Cruz**", which is listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The Fort which was initially built by the Portuguese in 1619 has been expanded and further developed by the Dutch and the British. Galle was the main seaport of Sri Lanka before Colombo and still handles shipping and cruising yachts today. During the tour of Galle, we may also have the opportunity to visit Galle Fort, Old Dutch Church and Walk along the Rampart, time permitting.

At the conclusion of the tour we will make our way to the hotel for check in and some time to relax before this evening's dinner.

Accommodation: Radisson Blu Galle (2 nights)



Day 11: Saturday 26 April 2025
Galle

B-D

Enjoy a relaxed breakfast before having a full day at leisure.

Your tour host will discuss options with the group as to what everyone would like to do, this may include some optional excursions (at own expense) or simply relaxing and enjoying the hotel facilities.

We will come together tonight for dinner where we can share the stories of our day.

Day 12: Sunday 27 April 2025
Galle – Kosgoda - Bentota

B-D

After breakfast at the hotel we take the 2.5hrs drive to **Bentota**.

Enroute we get to visit the **Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery**. The turtle hatchery in Sri Lanka is one of the most recommended things to do by Lonely Planet. The small town of Kosgoda, on the southern strip, is famous for its turtle hatchery which is operated by the Wild Life Protection Society of Sri Lanka. At the hatchery, fishermen are paid for rescuing the vulnerable eggs, which they collect at night, along the sandy beach. Visitors can witness the exceptional sight of them hatching or even see tanks filled with new born hatchlings. After being fed, the baby turtles are returned back to the sea where they are released when they are 2-4 days old. Once placed on the beach, most baby sea turtles start moving towards the water, flapping their tiny flippers. People love to visit the hatchery and watch the turtles being released back into their natural habitat.

We continue on and arrive into Bentota to check into our hotel and freshen up before meeting for dinner.

Accommodation: Thaala Bentota (1 night)

Day 13: Monday 28 April 2025
Bentota – Colombo - Airport

B-D

After breakfast at the hotel, we have the day at leisure and a **late check-out** until 4pm.

Your tour host will discuss options with the group as to what everyone would like to do, this may include some optional excursions (at own expense) or simply relaxing and enjoying the hotel facilities.

After we check-out from the hotel we proceed to Colombo for a **farewell dinner** at a local Restaurant.

Late evening we depart to the Airport to check in for our overnight flights home.

Day 14: Tuesday 29 April 2025
Depart Colombo - Arrive Australia (via Singapore)

We say goodbye to Sri Lanka as we head home with newfound friends and fabulous memories.