13 DAY – SRI LANKA PREMIUM SMALL GROUP TOUR

HIGHLIGHTS TRAIL
DEPARTING MAY 2027

Essence Sri Lanka
Private Tours

13 Day Sri Lanka Premium Small Group Tour
Relaxed Small Group Journey | Maximum 12 Guests | Monthly Departures

Discover the incredible diversity of Sri Lanka on this carefully designed premium small group journey, combining ancient history, scenic mountain landscapes, wildlife safaris, colonial heritage, and authentic local experiences.

Travel through Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle, journey by scenic hill-country train, explore the tea mountains of Ella, experience wildlife safaris, enjoy local food experiences, and stay in handpicked hotels selected for comfort, atmosphere, and location.

Designed with a slower pace and balanced touring style, this itinerary includes guided experiences alongside free time to relax and explore at your own pace.

DEPARTING:
4th May 2027 - Tuessday

DBL/TWN SHARE

$ 9,840

$ 4,920 PER / PERSON

SINGLE ROOM

$ 6,530

INDIVIDUAL TRAVELERS

Date	Day	Day No:	Locat ion	Hotel	Meal	
4-May-2027	*Tue*	*Day - 1*	**NEGOMBO** Beach | Lagoon Colonial History	**Jetwing Blue** *DeluxeRoomwith Sea View*	-	*Drive: Airport - Negombo: 25 min | 14 km* You will most likely arrive late at night in Colombo. (11.00pm) Chauffeur drive will pick up from airport and drive you to hotel
5-May-2027	*Wed*	*Day - 2*			*Breakfast & Dinner*	*Drive: 1.0 hr | 20 km* Restful morning - team catchup briefing Evening: Explore Negombo old town with chauffer (4.00 - 5.30) **Evening Seafood Dinner @ Local beach front resturant (17.45 - 19.15)** - Shared starters (for the table) - Main course (set menu OR 2–3 choices) - 1 drink per person (beer / wine / mocktail) - Water
6-May-2027	*Thu*	*Day - 3*	**SIGIRYA** History | Nature Wildlife | Culture	**Hotel Sigiriya** *Superior Room*	*Breakfast & Dinner*	*Drive: Negombo - Sigiriya: 3.5 - 4.0 hrs | 154 km* On Route: Explore Ridi Viharaya *On route: Stop for Lunch - guest buy own lunch* Afternoon: Climb Sigiriya Rock Fortress and explore the water gardens (16.00 - 18.00) **Distance:** 2.4 km return | **Duration:** 1.5 hrs - 3.0 hrs return **Elevation gain:** 130 meters **Footpath:** paved with steps all way to top Non Climbers: with Historian Explore Sigiriya water gardens & Museum
7-May-2027	*Fri*	*Day - 4*				*Drive: Sigiriya - Minneriya: 1.0 - 1.5 hrs | 40 km (Return)* Sunrise: Thalkote Lake boat ride *Lunch: guest self explore and buy their own lunch - walk to near by resturants* Afternoon: Minneriya Safari for Elephant gathering (14.30 - 18.45)
8-May-2027	*Sat*	*Day - 5*	**KANDY** History | Culture	**The Trees Kandy** *1x Deluxe Room with Lake View*	*Breakfast & Dinner*	*Drive: Sigiriya - Kandy: 2.5 - 3.0 hrs | 92 km* On route: Visit Dambulla Cave Temple (8.30 - 10.30) **Steps to reach top:** Approx. 360–370 *On Route: Stop for Lunch* Afternoon/Evening: Enjoy a leisurely walk and dinner at a local restaurant; featuring South Indian / Tamil-inspired cuisine (17.30 - 18.30) Explore the Temple of the Tooth evening pooja ceremony (18.45 - 19.30) Followed by an **optional drink** at the historic Queen's Hotel, with return transport arranged (19.30 - 20.30)
9-May-2027	*Sun*	*Day - 6*				*Drive: Kandy - Peradeniya: 45 min - 1 hrs | 20 km (Return)* Morning: Peradeniya Botanical Graden (8.30 - 10.30) *Lunch: guest self explore and buy their own lunch - walk to near by resturants* Afternoon: Kandy Market visit & village cooking class 3.30 pm onwards
10-May-2027	*Mon*	*Day - 7*	**NUWARA - ELIYA** Mountains | Colonial Heritage	**Heritage Grand Nuwara Eliya** *Deluxe room*	*Breakfast & High Tea*	*Drive: Kandy - Nuwara Eliya: 3.0 - 3.5 hrs | 92 km* Afternoon: High Tea (15.30 - 16.30) Afternoon/Evening: Walk from hotel to Explore Nuwara Eliya Town (16.30 - 18.00)
11-May-2027	*Tue*	*Day - 8*	**ELLA** Mountain Views Mountain walking	**Hide Ella Hotel & Resort** *1 x Deluxe Double Room*	*Breakfast & Dinner*	*Train: Ambewela- Ella: 3.5 - 4.0 hrs - 1st or 2nd class tickets* Train Ride: 1st Class - Air conditioned carriage 2nd Class - Opened windows Leisurely Eveing Walk: (16.30 - 18.00) Nine Arch Bridge: 1.3 km | 40min - 1.0 hrs
12-May-2027	*Wed*	*Day - 9*	**ELLA** Mountain Views Mountain walking	**Hide Ella Hotel & Resort** *1 x Deluxe Double Room*	*Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner*	*Drive: -* **Option 1:** **Pekoe Trail 16: Ella to Demodara** | 9.5 km | 3.0 - 4.0 hrs | (8.30 - 13.00) - Local Trekking Guide - Water, picnic tea & sandwiches - leach socks - transport back to accomadation **Option2:** **Halpewatta Tea Estate Tour with Tea Tasting** with transport - Get to know about how tea is made - & about life inside a tea estate Restful evening:
13-May-2027	*Thu*	*Day - 10*	**YALA** NationalPark | Safari Glamping	**Jetwing Yala** *1 x Luxury Room*	*Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner*	*Drive: Ella - Yala: 2.5 hrs | 112 km* On Route: Visit Buduruwagala Rock Statues (9.00 - 10.00) Afternoon: Yala Safari (14.30 - 18.30)

14-May-2027	***Fri***	***Day - 11***	**Galle Fort** BeachTime Histor y	**Le Grand Galle** *1 x Deluxe Room*	*Breakfast & Dinner*	*Drive: Yala - Galle: 3.0 hrs | 165 km* On Route: Visit Tissamaharama Stupas & Koggala Turtle Hachery Afternoon: Galle Fort Walk with Historian (16.00 - 18.00) Galle Fort Dinner exprience: **The Arch Restaurant - Galle Fort** - Shared starters (for the table) - 1x Main course - (from Sri Lankan | Asian or Pasta menu) - 1 drink per person (beer / wine / mocktail) - Water
15-May-2027	***Sat***	***Day - 12***			*Breakfast*	*Drive: Galle - Airport: 2.5 - 3.0 hrs | 151 km* Restfull day at hotel Extended Checkout 18.00 Airport Drop - Off *Leavel hotel at 18.20 to arrive at 21.20 - 3 hours before flight*
16-May-2027	***Sun***	***Day - 13***	**DEPART** Colombo airport	***Flight to Australia***		

Vehicle & Chauffeur Inclusions:
- Tours are operated using comfortable tourist-class vehicles with all required insurances and licensing for tourist transport in Sri Lanka.

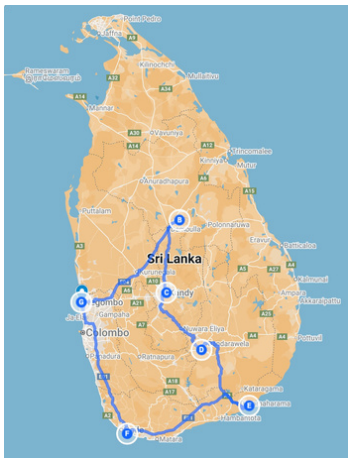
Vehicle type is based on final group size:

> 2 guests: Private car with nationally certified chauffeur-guide
> 3–6 guests: Private touring van with nationally certified chauffeur-guide
> 7–12 guests: Mini coach with National Guide, dedicated driver, and luggage handler

- All guides and chauffeur-guides are experienced, English-speaking, and nationally certified in tour guiding.
- Final vehicle allocation is generally confirmed approximately 2–3 weeks prior to departure.
- Your tour will be operated together with our trusted local operating partner, one of Sri Lanka's more established and long-standing destination management companies.

Essence Sri Lanka Tour Route | 950km | 20 - 22 hours approx

Hotel Name	Hotel Type & Star Rat ing	Bookings.com Review Rating
Jetwing Blue	5-Star Beach Resort 4-	8.2 (Very Good)
Hotel Sigiriya	Star Nature Resort 4-	8.3 (Very Good)
The Trees Kandy	Star Nature Resort 4-	8.8 (Fabulous)
Heritage Grand Nuwara Eliya	Star Heritage Hotel 4-	9.0 (Superb) 8.3
Hide Ella Hotel & Resort	Star Mountain Resort	(Very Good) 8.8
Jetwing Yala	5-Star Wildlife Resort	(Fabulous) 9.0
Le Grand Galle	5-Star Luxury Resort	(Superb)



Essence Travel Asia Pty LTD | ABN 34 671 790 088

The Commons Sydney Central | Suite 24/20-40 Meagher St, Chippendale NSW 2008
1300 752 652 | 0452 652 564

DAY 01

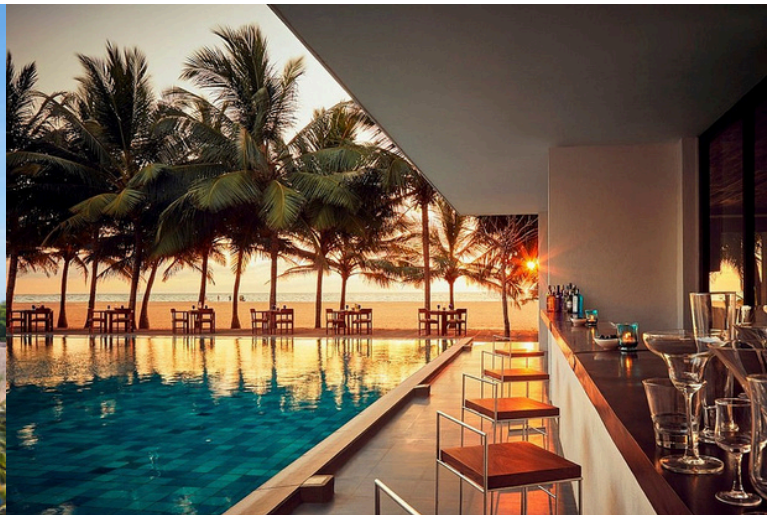
ARIPORT - NEGOMBO

- ARRIVE AT BANDARANAYAKE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
- DRIVE | 30 MINS | 13 KM
- JETWING BLUE - DELUX ROOM WITH SEA VIEW

Upon arrival at the airport, you'll be warmly met and greeted by our representative, who will then transfer you to Negombo, your first stop in Sri Lanka. The drive to the hotel takes approximately 25 minutes.

Your stay this evening is at **Jetwing Blue**, a relaxed beachfront resort located along Negombo lively coastal strip. With direct beach access, spacious sea view rooms, tropical gardens, and open-air spaces, it offers a comfortable setting to unwind after your international flight.

As most international flights arrive late at night, no activities are planned for today, allowing you time to settle in and rest before the journey ahead.



DAY 02

NEGOMBO

TOUR BRIEFING | EXPLORE NEGOMBO | SEAFOOD DINNER

DRIVE | 1 HR | 20 KM

JETWING BLUE - DELUX ROOM WITH SEA VIEW

BREAKFAST & DINNER

After a restful first night in Sri Lanka, the morning is left free to relax and recover from your journey. You may choose to enjoy a slow breakfast, walk along the beach, or simply unwind by the pool before meeting the rest of the group.

In the late afternoon, your guide will take you to explore parts of **Negombo's old town and coastal area.** Once an important colonial trading port, Negombo still retains traces of its Portuguese and Dutch heritage, blended with a lively local atmosphere and strong fishing culture.

This evening, the group will enjoy a **welcome seafood dinner at a local beachfront restaurant.** With the sound of the ocean nearby and a relaxed tropical atmosphere, it's a wonderful opportunity to get to know your fellow travellers and settle into the rhythm of Sri Lanka. Dinner includes shared starters for the table, a choice of main course, one selected drink per person, and water.

DAY 03

NEGOMBO - SIGIRIYA

RIDI VIHARAYA | EXPLORE SIGIRIYA ROCK FORTRESS

DRIVE | 3.5 HRS | 155 KM

HOTEL SIGIRIYA- SUPERIOR ROOM

BREAKFAST & DINNER

Today marks the beginning of your journey into Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle, where the focus shifts toward ancient history, Buddhist heritage, and the island's remarkable cultural landscapes.

Along the way, you will visit **Ridi Viharaya**, an atmospheric ancient rock temple hidden amongst quiet forested hills. Believed to date back over 2,000 years, the temple is known for its cave shrines, murals, and peaceful setting away from the main tourist trail. It offers a fascinating introduction to Sri Lanka's Buddhist heritage and a more authentic glimpse into local religious life.

The journey then continues north toward **Sigiriya**, with a relaxed lunch stop planned at Maara Café & Restaurant, where guests can unwind and purchase lunch at their leisure.Your stay for the next two nights is at **Hotel Sigiriya**, a hotel designed by renowned Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa. Beautifully positioned overlooking the iconic Sigiriya Rock Fortress, the hotel blends tropical gardens, open-air architecture, and tranquil water features to create a peaceful setting in the heart of the Cultural Triangle.

In the late afternoon, when the temperatures are cooler and the lighting softer, you will visit the extraordinary Sigiriya Rock Fortress & water gardens.

Distance: 2.4 km return | Duration: 1.5 hrs – 3.0 hrs return |
Elevation gain: 130 meters | Footpath: paved with steps all way to top

Rising dramatically from the plains below, this UNESCO World Heritage Site was built over 1,500 years ago as a royal citadel and remains one of Sri Lanka's most remarkable historical landmarks. Explore the landscaped water gardens, ancient ruins, and the famous Sigiriya frescoes — ancient rock paintings dating back to the 5th century — as you ascend toward panoramic views across the surrounding countryside.

Non Climbers:
Enjoy a relaxed historian-led exploration of the beautiful **royal water gardens** and landscaped grounds of Sigiriya Rock Fortress, while learning about the fascinating history, engineering, and symbolism of this ancient royal citadel. The experience also includes a guided visit to the **Sigiriya Museum,** where archaeological displays, scale models, and historical exhibits provide deeper insight into one of Sri Lanka's most iconic UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

DAY 04

SIGIRIYA - MINNERIYA (RETURN)

THALKOTE LAKE BOAT RIDE | MINNERIYA SAFARI

DRIVE | 1.5 HRS | 40 KM

HOTEL SIGIRIYA- SUPERIOR ROOM

BREAKFAST & DINNER

Today is focused on the natural beauty and rural landscapes of Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle, combining peaceful scenery with one of the island's most memorable wildlife experiences.

The morning begins with a relaxing **lake boat ride at Thalkote Lake**, located near Sigiriya Rock Fortress. Surrounded by peaceful rural landscapes and village life, the lake offers beautiful views toward both Sigiriya Rock and Pidurangala Rock rising dramatically in the distance. Enjoy the calm atmosphere while gliding across the water, with opportunities to spot local birdlife, fishermen, and the slower pace of life that defines Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle.

The remainder of the afternoon is left free to relax at the hotel or enjoy the surrounding atmosphere at your own pace. Guests may choose to unwind by the pool, enjoy views of Sigiriya Rock Fortress, or simply take in the peaceful setting of the Cultural Triangle. Lunch today is flexible, allowing guests to independently explore nearby local restaurants and cafés.

Later in the afternoon, the group will depart for a safari experience at **Minneriya National Park** or a nearby neighbouring park depending on elephant movements at the time. This region is famous for "The Gathering," where large numbers of wild Asian elephants congregate around the reservoirs during the dry season. Travelling by private safari jeep, you will explore grasslands, wetlands, and forest habitats while searching for elephants, deer, birdlife, crocodiles, and other wildlife. The safari continues into the early evening, when the softer golden light creates particularly beautiful conditions across the park landscapes.

DAY 05

SIGIRIYA - KANDY

DAMBULLA CAVE TEMPLE | SOUTH INDIAN DINNER | TEMPLE OF THE TOOTH

THE TREES KANDY | DELUXE ROOM WITH LAKE VIEW

DRIVE | 2.5 HRS | 92 KM

BREAKFAST & DINNER

Today you leave the Cultural Triangle behind and journey into Sri Lanka's hill country, travelling toward the historic city of **Kandy**, the island's last royal kingdom and an important centre of Buddhist culture.

The morning begins with a visit to **Dambulla Cave Temple**, one of Sri Lanka's most remarkable Buddhist sites. Dating back over 2,000 years, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is famous for its cave shrines filled with ancient murals, painted ceilings, and hundreds of Buddha statues. Set atop a rocky hill, the temple also offers beautiful views across the surrounding countryside.

Steps to reach top: Approx. 360–370 | Stepps all the way to the top.

The journey then continues toward Kandy with a relaxed stop for lunch along the way. As you gradually ascend into the hills, the landscapes begin to change from dry plains to greener forests, winding roads, and cooler temperatures.

Your stay this evening is at **The Trees Kandy**, a hillside hotel overlooking Kandy Lake and the surrounding hills of the city.

In the evening, enjoy a leisurely walk through the centre of Kandy before dinner at a local street food restaurant specialising in **South Indian and Tamil-inspired cuisine**, flavours that have long influenced Sri Lanka's hill country food culture.

Later, you will visit the sacred **Temple of the Tooth** to experience the **evening pooja ceremony**. Located within the former royal palace complex of the last Sinhala Kingdom, the temple houses the revered relic of the Buddha's tooth and remains one of the most sacred Buddhist sites in the world.The evening ceremonies, accompanied by traditional drumming and ritual offerings, create a deeply atmospheric cultural experience. Following the temple visit, guests may optionally enjoy a relaxed drink at the historic Queen's Hotel before returning to the hotel for the evening.

DAY 06

KANDY - PERADENIYA (RETURN)

- PERADENIYA BOTANICAL GARDENS | MARKET VISIT & VILLAGE COOKING CLASS WITH DINNER
- THE TREES KANDY | DELUXE ROOM WITH LAKE VIEW
- DRIVE: 1 HRS | 20 KM
- BREAKFAST & DINNER

Today is centred around the cultural and local experiences of Kandy, offering a slower paced day to explore the city's botanical heritage, markets, and traditional food culture.

The morning begins with a visit to **Royal Botanic Gardens**, Peradeniya between 8.30am and 10.30am, the ideal time to explore the gardens with cooler temperatures, softer natural light, and fewer visitors. Originally developed during the British colonial period, the gardens are spread across beautifully landscaped grounds featuring giant bamboo, towering palm avenues, orchids, flowering trees, and tropical plant collections from around the world.

After returning to Kandy, the afternoon is left flexible for guests to relax or independently explore the city and purchase lunch at their leisure.

Later in the day, you will visit **Kandy's lively central market** together with your cooking host, who will guide you through the bustling stalls while selecting fresh vegetables, spices, herbs, and local ingredients for the evening's meal. Overflowing with tropical fruits, flowers, and everyday produce used by local families, the market offers a fascinating insight into Sri Lanka's food culture and daily life.

The evening then continues with a **village-style cooking experience** hosted by a local family. Together, you will learn about traditional Sri Lankan cooking techniques, spices, and regional dishes before enjoying the freshly prepared meal for dinner. This relaxed and interactive experience offers a more personal connection to Sri Lankan hospitality and home-style cuisine.

DAY 07

KANDY - NUWARA ELIYA

- HIGH TEA | EXPLORE NUWARA ELIYA TOWN
- DRIVE: 3.0 - 3.5 HRS | 80 KM
- HERITAGE GRAND NUWARA ELIYA | DELUXE ROOM
- BREAKFAST & HIGH TEA

Today you leave the cultural capital of Kandy behind and begin the journey into Sri Lanka's central highlands, a region of misty mountains, tea plantations, colonial heritage, and cooler temperatures. As the road winds gradually higher into the hills, the scenery transforms into lush green landscapes dotted with waterfalls, terraced slopes, and tea estates.

Your destination is **Nuwara Eliya**, often referred to as "Little England" due to its colonial architecture, cool climate, and long history as a retreat during the British colonial era.

Your stay this evening is at **Heritage Grand**, an iconic colonial-style hotel located in the heart of town overlooking Gregory Lake and the surrounding hills. Originally built during the British period, the hotel retains much of its old-world charm with classic interiors, timber detailing, fireplaces, and elegant public spaces.

In the afternoon, enjoy a traditional high tea experience at the hotel, a long-standing hill country tradition influenced by Sri Lanka's colonial past and tea-growing heritage.

The remainder of the evening is left free to enjoy a **leisurely walk through Nuwara Eliya town** together with your guide. With its cool mountain air, colonial buildings, gardens, and relaxed atmosphere, the town offers a very different side of Sri Lanka compared to the tropical lowlands visited earlier in the journey.

DAY 08

NUWARA ELIYA - ELLA

EVENING: RESTFUL EVENING OR A MOUNTAIN WALK

HIDE ELLA HOTEL & RESORT | DELUXE DOUBLE ROOM

MORNING TRAIN FROM NANU OYA - ELLA
TRAIN: 3.0 - 4.0 HRS | 1ST OR 2ND CLASS TICKETS

BREAKFAST & DINNER

Today's exciting mountain **train journey** awaits you as you travel deeper into Sri Lanka's scenic hill country toward the laid-back mountain town of Ella. Considered one of the most exciting railway journeys in the world, today's experience is a true highlight of travelling through Sri Lanka.

After breakfast, you will transfer to Ambewela Railway Station and board the famous hill country train. As the train winds slowly through the mountains, you will pass endless tea plantations, mist-covered forests, waterfalls, tunnels, and small rural villages perched amongst the hills.

You can choose between **1st or 2nd class tickets**, depending on your preference.

- **1st Class:** Air-conditioned, reserved seating, and quieter.
- **2nd Class:** Open windows and doors, offering better views and a more local experience.

Since the weather in the mountains is much cooler, air-conditioning is not really needed, and many travellers prefer 2nd class for the fresh air and scenery.

Along the way, the train passes Pattipola, Sri Lanka's highest railway station at 1,898 metres (6,227 feet) above sea level. From this high point, the journey gradually descends through spectacular hill country scenery. Originally built during the British colonial era to transport tea to Colombo, this historic railway remains one of the finest ways to experience the charm and natural beauty of the highlands.

Your chauffeur will drop you at the station and then drive to Ella with your luggage, so you can simply relax and enjoy the ride with a small day bag.

Your stay this evening is at **Hide Ella Hotel & Resort**, a contemporary hillside retreat nestled into the steep slopes of Ella Gap, offering sweeping views of the surrounding mountains and lush green valleys. Designed to blend modern architecture with its natural surroundings, the hotel features floor-to-ceiling glass windows and private balconies that bring the spectacular hill-country scenery into view. Surrounded by lush greenery and located close to Ella town, the property offers a peaceful escape to relax and enjoy the beauty of Sri Lanka's central highlands.

Later in the afternoon, enjoy a relaxed guided walk to the famous **Nine Arches Bridge**. Surrounded by dense jungle and tea plantations, this beautifully constructed colonial-era railway bridge has become one of Sri Lanka's most photographed landmarks. The gentle walk offers scenic mountain views and a wonderful opportunity to experience Ella's cool climate and laid-back atmosphere before returning to the hotel for a restful evening.

DAY 09

ELLA

HIKE PEKOE TRAIL 16

HIDE ELLA HOTEL & RESORT | DELUXE DOUBLE ROOM

BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

Today is dedicated to experiencing the spectacular mountain landscapes surrounding Ella through one of the most scenic sections of Sri Lanka's famous Pekoe Trail. Combining tea country scenery, local village life, and panoramic viewpoints, the day offers a more immersive look into the island's central highlands.

After breakfast, you will meet your trekking guide and transfer a short distance to the starting point of the trail.Today's walk follows **Stage 16 of the Pekoe Trail**, from Ella to Demodara, a scenic section of approximately 9.5 kilometres taking around 3 hours to complete at a relaxed pace.

The trail winds through eucalyptus plantations, tea country, village pathways, forested sections, and quiet railway tracks while offering sweeping views across the surrounding hill country.

One of the highlights of the walk is crossing the iconic Nine Arches Bridge, while the surrounding forested sections are also known for their rich birdlife and peaceful natural scenery. Along the way, your guide will also share insights into the region's mountain village life, local culture, and tea-growing heritage. Tea and light refreshments will also be provided during the trek.

Distance: 9.5 km | **Duration**: Approximately 3.0 – 4.0 hrs | **Elevation Gain**: 230 – 410 metres | **Elevation Loss**: 374 – 524 metres | **Elevation**: Gradual decline **Maximum Elevation**: 1,066 metres |

Difficulty: Moderate | **Trail Conditions**: Village paths, forest trails, railway sections, and plantation tracks.

Inclusions: Local Trekking Guide, Water, picnic tea & sandwiches & leach socks will be provided.

Non Hikers:

For guests not participating in the trek, a relaxing morning excursion to **Halpewatte Tea Factory** will be arranged together with your guide. Morning is considered one of the best times to visit the tea estates, as you will often see tea pluckers working across the hillsides while the surrounding mountains remain cool and misty. During the visit, you will explore one of Sri Lanka's largest working tea factories and gain insight into the island's famous tea-making process, from leaf grading to production. The experience also includes a **guided tea tasting session** overlooking the surrounding tea-covered mountains and valleys. Private transport and guide services are included throughout the experience.

DAY 10

ELLA - YALA

ON ROUTE: BUDURUWAGALA ROCK STATUES | EVENING: SAFARI DRIVE

DRIVE: 2.0 - 2.5 HRS | 86 KM

JETWING YALA - LUXURY ROOM

BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

Leave Sri Lanka's cool central highlands behind and descend toward the dry forests and open plains of the island's southern wilderness region, home to some of Sri Lanka's most famous wildlife reserves.

After breakfast, the journey continues south toward Yala National Park with a stop along the way to visit the ancient **Buduruwagala rock carvings**. Hidden amongst quiet forest surroundings, this impressive site features a series of large Buddhist statues carved directly into a rock face over 1,000 years ago, including one of the tallest standing Buddha figures in Sri Lanka.

Lunch will be enjoyed en route before continuing toward Yala. As the landscapes gradually change from misty mountains to warmer lowlands, the scenery becomes noticeably drier, with forests, scrubland, and wide open spaces replacing the tea-covered hills.

Your stay this evening is at **Jetwing Yala**, a safari-style lodge located on the edge of the national park and surrounded by wilderness. With its natural setting, open-air spaces, and frequent wildlife sightings around the property itself, the hotel offers a true safari atmosphere.

Later in the afternoon, you will head into **Yala National Park by private safari jeep.** Famous for having one of the highest leopard densities in the world, Yala is also home to elephants, sloth bears, crocodiles, deer, wild boar, monkeys, and a remarkable variety of birdlife. Travelling through forests, grasslands, lagoons, and rocky outcrops, the safari offers an exciting opportunity to experience Sri Lanka's rich wildlife and dramatic natural landscapes.

DAY 11

YALA - GALLE

TISSAMAHARAMA STUPAS | KOGGALA TURTLE HACHERY | GALLE FORT WALK WITH DINNER

DRIVE: 3.0 HRS | 165 KM

LE GRAND GALLE | DELUXE ROOM

BREAKFAST & DINNER

Today the group journeys from Sri Lanka's wildlife region toward the island's historic southern coastline, combining ancient history, coastal scenery, and colonial heritage along the way.

Along the route, you will visit the historic **stupas of Tissamaharama**, an important centre of the ancient Ruhuna Kingdom and one of the oldest Buddhist regions in Sri Lanka. Surrounded by peaceful village scenery, the large white dagobas remain active places of worship and provide a glimpse into the island's long religious history.

The journey then continues along the southern coastline with a stop near Koggala to visit a turtle hatchery and rehabilitation centre dedicated to the protection of endangered sea turtles found around Sri Lanka's shores. Here, you will learn about local conservation efforts and the challenges faced by marine turtle populations in the Indian Ocean.

Your stay this evening is at **Le Grand Galle**, a luxury seaside hotel positioned beside the historic fort walls with sweeping views across the Indian Ocean.

In the late afternoon, enjoy a guided walking tour of the historic Galle Fort together with a local historian. Built first by the Portuguese and later extensively fortified by the Dutch, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is a fascinating blend of colonial architecture, oceanfront ramparts, churches, museums, cafés, and hidden laneways. The walk offers insight into the fort's layered history and the multicultural influences that shaped Sri Lanka's southern coast.

This evening, **dinner will be enjoyed within the fort at The Arch Restaurant**, offering a relaxed and atmospheric dining experience surrounded by the historic charm of Galle Fort.

DAY 12

GALLE - AIRPORT

- DEPATURE FLIGHT
- LE GRAND GALLE | DELUXE ROOM WITH EXTENDED CHECKOUT 18:00
- DRIVE TO KATUNAYAKE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT | 2.5 HRS | 155 KM
- BREAKFAST

Today is intentionally left slow and flexible, allowing the group time to relax and enjoy the coastal atmosphere of Galle Fort at your own pace before the journey home.

You may choose to spend the day unwinding at Le Grand Galle, enjoy the hotel's oceanfront setting and pool, or take a leisurely stroll through the fort's charming streets filled with cafés, boutiques, galleries, and colonial architecture.

As many international flights depart late in the evening, **an extended checkout until 6.00pm has been arranged for the group**, allowing time to freshen up and relax before departing for the airport.

In the evening, the group will transfer to Bandaranaike International Airport for your overnight flight home, marking the conclusion of your Sri Lankan journey.

SAFE TRAVELS - AND UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN.

Essence Sri Lanka
Private Tours