

Cultural Triangle Extension



Duration: 4 days

Sri Lanka has an impressive number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites for a small island, and many of them can be found in the Cultural Triangle, a treasure trove of historical wonders which are not to be missed!

This north-central region was the home of ancient Sinhalese royalty, which has left a golden legacy of ancient monuments, royal cities and Buddhist temples. Our route starts in Kandy, the southernmost point of the triangle, and takes in two more of Sri Lanka's historic capitals – vast, sacred Anuradhapura to the north, and well-preserved medieval Polonnaruwa to the east. In addition, we visit the incredible Dambulla cave temples, and, for some memorable wildlife-spotting, Minneriya National Park – famous for its population of wild elephants.

Sri Lanka's colourful culture is one of the undisputed highlights of any trip here; this is the perfect opportunity to make the most of your time, and discover the unforgettable sights of its Cultural Triangle. We base ourselves in a great, centrally-located hotel, adding a more relaxed vibe after the challenges of your main trip.

Min 2 pax

Single supplement: £200

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Kandy – Dambulla Caves – Habarana

(main group departs Kandy same day)

After breakfast, we leave Kandy and drive towards the richly-painted caves of Dambulla, the largest, best-preserved cave-temple complex in Sri Lanka. This sacred pilgrimage site, located on a high granite outcrop, was constructed by a Sinhalese king and dates back to the 1st century BC. You will discover five main sanctuaries filled with a vast array of colourful Buddhist statues, many of them life-sized, and murals which depict historical and religious events. Over the centuries, subsequent kings added their own embellishments, and the contents form some of Sri Lanka's most important pieces of religious artwork. From the caves, you can also enjoy breath-taking views over the surrounding countryside and towards Sigiriya some 20km away.

After spending some time at the caves, we head onwards to our hotel in the small town of Habarana, which forms

the perfect base for our explorations over the coming days. (driving time approx 2.5 hours total)

Breakfast & Lunch provided; hotel accommodation

Day 2: Anuradhapura

Today we discover the ancient city of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka's Buddhist capital and one of its most sacred sites. The first capital of the Sinhala kings, its monasteries and temples covered a large area of the northern plains; many still remain. From the moment you set foot within the site, it is easy to picture how majestic and striking this would have been at the height of this civilisation's power, some 2,200 years ago. At the centre of Anuradhapura is the sacred Bodhi tree, brought as a sapling from the tree in India under which Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment. At over 2200 years old, it is the oldest documented living tree in the world and respected by Buddhists the world over. After plenty of time to explore, we head back to our hotel.

Breakfast & Lunch provided; hotel accommodation

Day 3: Polonnaruwa & Minneriya National Park

This morning we head for Polonnaruwa, another of Sri Lanka's UNESCO World Heritage Sites. This ancient city dates back to the 10th Century, taking over as the capital city after Anuradhapura was destroyed and abandoned. It's far more compact than its predecessor, and very well-preserved, with a vast array of temples, monasteries and rock-carved statues of the Buddha. We have plenty of time to wander these photogenic ruins, which offer a fascinating insight into medieval Sri Lanka, before heading off to enjoy something very different!

Minneriya National Park boasts a wide variety of lush habitats, from steamy wetlands to tropical forest, and is known as one of the best places to see wild elephants. The reserve is also home to sambar deer, macaques, langurs, and the rare sloth bear and leopard, as well as an abundance of birdlife including pelicans, heron and cormorants. A jeep safari allows us to enjoy this wealth of wildlife, before heading back to the hotel for our last night.

Breakfast & Lunch provided; hotel accommodation

Day 4: Habarana – Negombo; Flight departs

We transfer (approx 4 hours) to the airport for our flight home.

Breakfast provided

Single supplement: £200

Extension requires a minimum of 2 people to operate at the above price

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Hotel accommodation on twin-share basis (3* Oak Ray Elephant Lake or equivalent)

- Meals as indicated in itinerary; expect them to be fairly local in style
- Entrance fees to monuments/sites visited in itinerary
- Jeep Safari in Minneriya National Park
- All transportation in private vehicle (including group airport transfer)
- Local English-speaking driver/guide

NB: If usual accommodation is unavailable a similar alternative may be offered

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED?

- Meals as noted in itinerary
- Any entrance fees to optional sites or activities
- Any personal spending, extra drinks, snacks or souvenirs



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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 3 Jul 2025, and the challenge is subject to change.