

Cycle Sri Lanka – NEW For 2026



ACTIVITY

Cycle

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel

CHALLENGE FACTORS

Hot

DURATION:

10 days

GRADE



Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon, is an island renowned for its natural beauty and wildlife, fascinating culture and beautiful beaches. Our diverse, rolling route traverses the central highlands from west coast to south, linking cultural highlights and National Parks rich in wildlife.

From tropical lowlands, we ride through forested valleys and small villages up into the tea estates and cloud-forest of the Central Highlands, before descending to the southern plains and the coast. Barely a mile goes by without something to divert us - the ever-changing views, remote temples, friendly villages, roadside stalls selling fresh coconut, monkeys in the trees ... these colourful images of Sri Lanka are as memorable as highlights like Sigiriya (Lion Rock) and Kandy's Temple of the Tooth.

The rolling terrain, heat and humidity provide plenty of challenges, but with wonderful hotels each night, an afternoon game drive in Udawalawe National Park and the promise of a beautiful beach at the end, there is plenty to reward your efforts!

Watch this space for our extension option coming soon!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart London for Negombo

Day 2: Arrive Negombo

On arrival we transfer to our hotel and have time to freshen up and prepare our bikes for the start of our exciting ride. Depending on flight schedules, there may be time to relax and enjoy the beach before dinner and a detailed trip briefing; we then get ready for a good night's sleep before the start of our challenge! Night hotel.

Day 3: Negombo – Wariyapola – Sigiriya

After a good breakfast, we set off! This morning gives us a wonderful warm-up ride, getting us used to our surroundings and the heat as we pedal through lowland villages and plantations of rubber and palm, with some stretches of forest. Our route follows relatively flat back-roads which criss-cross between villages, and are a great introduction to everyday life in Sri Lanka; they are used by mopeds and tuk-tuks but very few larger vehicles. The terrain becomes a little more undulating as we head further inland, and by the time we reach Wariyapola, we will be happy to rest in the shade and enjoy a delicious local lunch! Joining the vehicles here, we drive to the impressive rock fortress at Sigiriya, also known as Lion Rock – one of Sri Lanka's top highlights. A 5th-century royal palace and castle combined, the engineering on this huge monolith is extraordinary. Climbing to the top – up 1200+ steps – may tax the legs, but the views are incredible. We enjoy the sunset here; a perfect end to our first full day in this fascinating country. It's then a short drive to our wonderful hotel. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 70km; Drive approx. 2.5 hours

Day 4: Sigiriya – Kandy

A beautiful ride awaits us today, heading through forest and lush vegetation on small roads fringed with palm trees. Cotton and cocoa trees vie for space with wild forest; look out for jackfruit and mango too. We pass small villages and fruit-sellers, and can enjoy the views of the forested Knuckles Mountains to the east. This is a good region for spice-growing, with cinnamon, cardamom and pepper among the many herbal and medicinal herbs harvested here; we stop for lunch in a spice garden near the small town of Matale. After lunch, we transfer to the historic city of Kandy, our destination for the night. An ancient capital, Kandy is a beautiful city and home to the golden-roofed Temple of the Tooth, one of the holiest Buddhist sites in the world, which we will visit this evening. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 70km; Drive approx 1.5 hours

Day 5: Kandy – Nuwara Eliya

We take a short drive (15 mins) to avoid the busy traffic, then head for Tea Country! Once on our bikes we ride the undulating roads that take us into the hills; we pass through small towns and green landscapes dotted with rice paddies, lush forest and waterfalls. The vegetation changes as we climb higher; this region is known for its cool, crisp climate, and was an appealing summer retreat to the British living here in the 19th Century. We start to see tea shrubs laid out in neat rows among the green forests and valleys surrounding us. A stunning, relatively gentle climb takes us towards the small town of Walapane, where we have lunch and relax. The rest of the route to Nuwara Eliya is almost entirely uphill, and steep in sections, so we load up the bikes and enjoy a very scenic drive through more plantations and settlements of tea pickers; if time permits, we should have time for a brief visit to a tea factory en-route. Nuwara Eliya is set in a wooded basin below Sri Lanka's highest mountain peak; known as 'Little England' with its English-style lawns and colonial buildings, the town is a great place to wander before dinner. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 50km; drive 1.5 hours (35km)

Day 6: Nuwara Eliya – Bandarawela

After breakfast we set off again, with our first section mostly downhill. The temperatures should remain cool and comfortable – perfect for cycling. As we ride, we enjoy views of the surrounding green mountain slopes, waterfalls, and dense jungle. Passing through Hakgala Forest, we make our way to Kande Ella, the highest lake in Sri Lanka, and continue onwards to the hill station of Ambewela, renowned for its dairy farming and often referred to as ‘Little New Zealand.’ Cycling through green, rolling meadows lulls us into a false sense of security, before we are rudely awakened by a very steep 4km climb! The vehicles meet us here, and whisk us through teak and rhododendron forest to reach Horton Plains National Park, where we re-join our bikes. These high altitude grasslands are majestic to cycle through, with their atmospheric misty plains and cloud-forest; look out for sambar deer and other wildlife. From here, we begin our long, well-earned descent through the shady forest of Ohiya, dropping around 700m in elevation. We make our way to the busy market town of Bandarawela; an excellent end to an amazingly varied day of cycling. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 68km

Day 7: Bandarawela – Udawalawe

After a good night’s rest, we set off early, leaving the bustle of Bandarawela behind us. Our route today takes us on a gradual climb through tea plantations, before descending for around 20km until we reach Ella, a laid-back hill-country village with picturesque viewpoints. Continuing our journey down to the flatter Southern Plains, the highlights keep on coming, as we pass teak, eucalyptus, and rubber plantations, and ride on compacted dirt tracks through miles of sugarcane rich with birdlife; look out for hornbills and wild peacocks. Emerging onto road again, we come to Yala National Park, known for its rich diversity of wildlife. Wild elephants roam this area and sometimes come to the road, so our overall cycling distance will be dependent on their presence. We load up into vehicles, and drive the remaining distance to Udawalawe National Park, with its reservoir on the Walawe River providing an important sanctuary for wildlife. The park is famous for its large elephant herds and has many other game, from buffalo to sambar deer, plus many bird species. This afternoon there will be time for a safari in the National Park. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 70km; Drive approx. 1 hour

Day 8: Udawalawe – Tangalle This morning, we’re treated to a pleasant ride through small towns and villages, as we make our way on flat roads towards the coast. The rice paddies are soon replaced with fields of coconut palms, and the sea breeze will be a welcome refreshment. We’re heading for the charming town of Tangalle, with its sweeping beaches. Our hotel for the night is beautifully located on the coast ... the perfect place to relax, and reflect on the past week. And if you haven’t had enough wildlife-spotting, close by is a turtle reserve, and it is possible to arrange a night beach-trip to view them. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 60km

Day 9: Free Day Tangalle

We have the day free to enjoy the beach, and meet up again for an evening to celebrate our big achievements.
Night hotel.

(Lunch not included)

Day 10: Fly Negombo to London

We transfer to the airport for our international flight home.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London to Negombo
- All known airline taxes
- Transport and transfers as part of itinerary
- All accommodation in hotels on twin share basis
- All meals except where specified
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependant on group size)
- Local guides/mechanics and drivers
- Vehicle support and back-up equipment on the trip
- Bicycle (mountain bike / hybrid; contact us if you would like more detail, or to enquire about upgrading to an e-bike)
- Entrance to Sigiriya, Temple of the Tooth, and other sites visited as part of the itinerary
- Safari at Udawalawe National Park
- **We offset 100% of the carbon emissions from your trip, including flights booked with us**

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Sri Lanka entry visa (free of charge to British passport-holders)
- Travel insurance
- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Cycle helmet (compulsory) and water bottle
- Personal spending money, souvenirs & drinks, tips for the local guides/support crew
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | YELLOW

All our trips are designed to provide a challenge. Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge.
This trip lies within the **YELLOW** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors. Trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account. Some sections will feel more challenging than others, but the grade reflects the overall trip. Unusual weather conditions can also have a significant impact.

The Accommodation icon indicates the living conditions while trekking/cycling. While there are usually several factors that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

[Trip grading explained](#)

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any medical incidents. They help the crew to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Not all support crew will speak English well, but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in many countries may be less than you would spend on an average night out.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with appropriate communication devices (eg phones, radios), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick on scheduled airlines and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your journey may involve a transit en route; details of route and flight times will be confirmed several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

You will be staying in hotels / guesthouses) of a high standard. Some may be small, with friendly staff and a more family-run atmosphere; others are large tourist-class with pool and/or spa facilities – something which might help to motivate you when the going gets tough during the day!

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis, usually twin-share. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation.

You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that both people complete the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.

If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Single Supplements

In most standard hotels, we can usually offer a limited number of single rooms. This is upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis, and additional charges apply. In more communal accommodation, single rooms are rarely an option.

We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Grading

GRADE | YELLOW

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conditions can also have a significant impact.

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[Trip grading explained](#)

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Terrain

Roads vary from wide and well-maintained with very good tarmac, to narrow backroads with some worn or uneven surfaces. There may be some hard-packed dirt road. We are travelling through remote areas and weather may have an impact on road conditions. Cycling at lower elevations is hot, though the terrain is quite flat. The majority of the ride is in the cooler highlands, with most gradients fairly gentle; we transfer the most strenuous climbs by vehicle to make the ride more achievable for all experience levels. The descents are varied too - some wide and sweeping, some steep and twisty. Traffic is usually light and we will cycle at our own pace, but we may re-group for busier sections.

Electric Bikes

On this particular challenge it is possible to upgrade to an electric bike, at additional cost.

In the last few years e-bikes have become increasingly popular. At Discover Adventure we see them as a great tool for inclusivity, and a great enabler for people to get out cycling - at home and on our trips - especially when continuing riding (or starting again) in older age or through health problems.

With charity challenges being at the heart of our business, we know that e-bikes are being used by beneficiaries of various charities to aid recovery, and that they enable participation in events raising funds for those charities.

E-bikes must, however, be used with caution on a multi-day, high-mileage trip and are in no way a substitute for training. Please talk to us well in advance if you are interested in using an e-bike on this challenge, so we can ensure you are aware of the pros and cons. There are a limited number available in-country, and we need plenty of advance notice (two to three months in many destinations) to be able to reserve one for the ride.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you with all necessary information 6 weeks prior to departure to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check the [NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro](#) website for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click [here](#).

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to

your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

CHALLENGE EXTENSIONS



SRI LANKA RAINFOREST EXTENSION

Sri Lanka offers such a huge variety of contrasting highlights, it's hard to resist staying for a few extra days to experience more!

Sinharaja Forest Reserve is the country's last remaining primary tropical rainforest, and is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve. This biodiversity hotspot is home to an enormous variety of endemic flora and fauna. You'll stay in a unique, sustainable eco-lodge chalet overlooking the forest, allowing you to experience the serenity of this beautiful habitat at all times.

In contrast, we end our trip with a memorable cultural experience in atmospheric Galle, known for its coastal Fort. Different cultures have mixed for centuries in this old trading port, with its historic whitewashed buildings and old fortress, and we have time to wander and soak up the atmosphere before heading home.

Contact the office for pricing and availability.



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 4 Jul 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.