

## Cycle Sri Lanka



Duration: 10 days

Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon, is an island renowned for its natural beauty and wildlife, fascinating culture and beautiful beaches. Our diverse, hilly route traverses the central highlands from west coast to south, linking cultural highlights and National Parks. This trip simply has everything!

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 ... even the rare, unforgettable experience of cycling past elephants!

The cycling is challenging at times, 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!

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1: Depart London for Negombo

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### 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 cycle. 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.

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### Day 3: Negombo – Algama – Kandy

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. There are a few small climbs as we near our lunch-spot, in a more forested region. After lunch and an opportune waterfall stop, 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. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 52km; Drive approx 2.5 hours**

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#### Day 4: 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 stiff but stunning 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 may stop 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)**

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#### Day 5: 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 through teak and rhododendron forest to reach Horton Plains National Park. 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**

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#### Day 6: Bandarawela – Tissamaharama (Tissa)

After a good night's rest we set off, 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. Our end point of today's ride is the lakeside town of Tissa. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 70 - 120km (with probable transfer to hotel)**

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### Day 7: Tissa – Udawalawe

Today offers yet another contrast to the terrain and scenery, as we explore dry monsoon forests, interspersed with stretches of rice paddies and grasslands. The terrain is predominantly flat, so we can take in the long-stretching views, bird and animal life surrounding us. Look out for grey langurs in the trees! This area is also known for its curd, served chilled with palm treacle, which makes for a delicious and refreshing pit-stop. The final stretch leads us to our destination of 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. Unless we are unlucky, we should be able to cycle alongside the wild elephants which come to the fence at the edge of the reserve. This afternoon there will be time for an optional game drive in the National Park. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 81km**

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**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**

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### 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)*

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### Day 10: Fly Negombo to London

We transfer to the airport for our international flight home.

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## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All transport from London to Negombo return
- All meals except where specified, and accommodation
- Discover Adventure leaders; local guides/mechanics and cooks
- Vehicle support and backup equipment on the trip
- 21-speed Mountain bike (Trek/Giant or equivalent)
- Entrance to any sites visited as part of the itinerary

## WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Cycle helmet (compulsory) and water bottle
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Tips for the local guides and support crew
- Airline taxes: we cap these so £250.00 is the maximum you will pay
- Inbound airport departure tax (no tax applied at the time of writing)
- Sri Lanka entry visa
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

## 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.

#### 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 we travel to is far below what you would spend on a normal 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 communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), 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.

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## Flight Information

Group flights 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.

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## Accommodation

Accommodation is usually in well-located, comfortable 2-3\* hotel(s); standards are generally very good though there may be some variation.

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## Roomshare Arrangements

Accommodation is usually on a twin-share basis in hotels or camp. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation. Please tell us if you know somebody else on the trip that you would like to share with and we will try our best to accommodate your request. If you don't know anyone else in the group don't worry, we always pair you up with someone of the same gender, and a similar age where possible. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

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## 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 20-30 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.**

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## 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 in camp or at the hotel, depending on accommodation. 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 and 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.

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## 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 destination and 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.

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## 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 post or email. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration fees, amendment fees and insurance premiums 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.

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## PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

### 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.

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## 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. To find out if you need a visa you can check your requirements using our partner, Visa Machine, website [here](#); please ensure you allow plenty of time.

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

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## 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, as well as details on useful discounts you are entitled to as a Discover Adventure customer. We are always available if you need advice.

If you are still to buy some kit don't forget that Cotswold Outdoor, Snow and Rock, Cycle Surgery and Runners Need offer all Discover Adventure participants **15% off** any purchases you make with them. Please ask us for the code if you do not have this already.

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## Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on our challenges; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed. Should you need to cancel on medical grounds, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

You should also ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation.

You can obtain a quote with Insure to Travel from our website [here](#), or you may choose to take out your own travel insurance, just remember to let us know the policy number and emergency phone number!

For more information about travel insurance, please click [here](#).

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## Cultural Differences

For most people, the main attraction of travelling to a different country is to see new sights and enjoy new experiences. Sometimes those new experiences can make life harder or more inconvenient than you may like, such as toilet hygiene or different food, or simply a different attitude to solving problems. This is all part of the challenge you are signing up for! We are very privileged to live in a country with a high standard of living, and travelling exposes us to different challenges – all of which help broaden our horizons. We can guarantee that coming face-to-face with experiences outside your normal 'comfort zone' will help you bond with your fellow participants and provide you with plenty of things to laugh about! A sense of humour and sense of adventure are two of the most important things to bring with you!

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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 26 Feb 2021, and the challenge is subject to change.