

## Trek Sri Lanka



Duration: 9 days

Little can rival Sri Lanka's variety. From rice paddies, high grasslands and emerald-green tea estates, to dense forest and golden tropical beaches, the Island of Serendipity is renowned for its natural beauty, rich wildlife and fascinating culture.

Our trek takes us through the Central Highlands, a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its biodiversity, on little-trodden trails through the plantations and wild forests that blanket the steep, green slopes. We pass tumbling waterfalls and marvel at the colourful tropical birds and butterflies that flit through the lush vegetation. Within the Highlands lies the Knuckles Mountain Range, named for its likeness to a clenched fist; at 1900m, Knuckles Peak is our highest point. The isolated communities of local farmers and tea planters offer an authentic glimpse into everyday life, though you're more likely to see monkeys or majestic eagles than other trekkers.

On an island dotted with UNESCO World Heritage Sites, we also make time for two of the most renowned - the ancient rock fortress of Sigiriya, and the serene Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, where we finish our trek. All combined, this is an irresistible trek in one of the friendliest countries in the world – you will not want to leave Sri Lanka!

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1: Depart London

### Day 2: Arrive Colombo; transfer to Sigiriya

Arriving at the international airport near Colombo, we transfer straight to our comfortable hotel in Sigiriya, where we can freshen up and prepare our kit for tomorrow's trek. There will be a full trip briefing in the evening over dinner. Night hotel.

*(Lunch not included)*

**Drive approx 4 hours**

### Day 3: Sigiriya - Lion Rock - Gammaduwa

An early start takes us to the impressive rock fortress at Sigiriya, also known as Lion Rock. A 5th-century royal palace and castle combined, the engineering on this huge monolith is extraordinary. One of Sri Lanka's highlights, it also makes a perfect trek warm-up as we slowly ascend the 1200+ steps to the top. We drive south to the small village of Andawala, the start point of our trek, where we have the opportunity to receive a traditional good-fortune blessing from Buddhist monks at the village temple. Our trek begins on small paths, which lead out across paddy fields fringed by palm trees. Irrigation streams lead us into forest where pepper, cotton and cocoa trees vie for space with wild forest; look out for jackfruit and mango too. We ascend beside a small waterfall and pool, and continue gently uphill, crossing a stream before stopping for a rest at a small village. Wider tracks then take us through the hills, with wonderful views, into shady pine forest and finally a small tea plantation, before we arrive at our picturesque forest site. A hot cup of local tea awaits! Night camp.

**Drive approx. 1.5 hours, trek 3 – 4 hours (9.5km)**

### Day 4: Gammaduwa - Riverston

Our scenic, hilly day starts in cinnamon plantations as we follow wide, gradually-ascending pine-shaded trails. Inspiring views open up across verdant forest as we contour around the hills towards Kargastene, a completely isolated settlement supporting only one small farming family. We trek across a brief stretch of grassland with great views back over our route, before heading into jungle-like forest. A narrow path takes us steeply downhill before emerging at paddy fields; here we follow irrigation channels to a series of idyllic pools – a perfect place to rest and cool off. After lunch at a temple in the village below, we head uphill again, on a little-used path which threads steeply up through dense forest, crossing numerous streams. The challenge ramps up here, but we finally emerge onto a wide track cutting through the forest; crickets chirrup loudly and the occasional giant squirrel rustles overhead! At the end of the track, we transfer a short distance and walk to another trip highlight – Mini World's End, a lookout with panoramic views of the forests and peaks of the Knuckles range, down to the fields and villages of the foothills, and even, on a very clear day, to the Indian Ocean! Jeep trails take us to our night stop in Riverston; we camp at a riverside campsite with fantastic views over Manigala Rock. Night camp.

**Trek approx. 5–6 hours (18km)**

### Day 5: Riverston - Gurulupotha: Rathna Ella Hike

This morning we transfer to the south-eastern part of the Knuckles Range, where our adventure continues. The Knuckles region covers only a small percentage of Sri Lanka's land, but is home to a significant proportion of the country's biodiversity, including more than a third of the country's endemic flora. You may see black eagles and kites circling high above, or hear shy grey langurs clambering agilely away. Today's walk starts from the guesthouse, and offers a great combination of authentic cultural experiences, beautiful scenery, and a refreshing dip in a natural pool. After passing some ruins and a small waterfall, we can stop for a break to try some tasty local snacks such as hoppers and rothi – good fuel for the rest of the day! After a fun, adventurous river crossing,

we continue uphill to Rathna Ella, a beautiful waterfall. If there's time we can have a dip in the pool – a real highlight. Return through forest and rice-paddies for a late lunch in the village; if there's time to look around, do make the most of this authentic cultural opportunity. We drive the remaining 30 minutes back to the guesthouse. Night guesthouse.

**Total transfer time approx. 2 hours; Trek approx. 4 – 5 hours (14km)**

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### Day 6: Gurulupotha: Moragaya Hike

Our toughest day today, with approx. 900m gain in elevation. A short drive takes us to a nearby village, where we set off through scenic fields. After crossing an elephant fence – a reminder of the diversity of nature here – the uphill starts in earnest! An old, disused colonial road takes us up through woodland, then old steps which climb up relentlessly, and finally emerge into open grassy slopes with amazing 360-degree views of valleys surrounded by forested mountains – look for yesterday's waterfall! Have a snack, and enjoy the sense of achievement, before descending to a small waterfall for lunch. Going down isn't always easier than up, and there will be a few aching muscles, but there's a chance for a dip before returning to the village through woodland. Night guesthouse.

Trek approx. 5-6 hours (15km)

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### Day 7: Gurulupotha - Kandy

We say goodbye to our friendly hosts, and start our drive towards Kandy. Our last day's trek breaks the journey and gives us some new views in the Knuckles! After approx. 2 hours' drive, we start walking through varied landscapes of village fields and tea country. The terrain is kinder to our muscles than yesterday, and it's a fairly gentle hike, mainly on good tracks, that allows us to soak up our last day in the hills. Enjoy the views across to the forested mountains, with distinctive tea-bushes blanketing the lower slopes. It may be possible to visit a tea factory before heading back down. This is an achievement to savour as we meet the awaiting vehicles and drive to our lovely hotel in Kandy, the cultural capital of Sri Lanka. This evening we have a great celebration to mark our triumphs over the past week, and the opportunity to watch a traditional dance. Night hotel.

**Trek approx 5-6 hours; drive approx 2 hours**

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### Day 8: Free Day Kandy

After a good night's sleep and a relaxing lie-in you have the day free to explore Kandy. There are plenty of fascinating sights, and you can shop for souvenirs or indulge in a lazy day and treat yourself to a massage. In the evening, we visit the impressive golden-roofed Temple of the Tooth, one of Buddhism's most sacred shrines as it houses a relic of the Buddha. Night hotel.

*(Lunch and Dinner not included)*

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### Day 9: Kandy - Colombo; Flight Departs

Transfer to the airport in time for our flight home.

*(Lunch not included)*

Drive approx 3-4 hours

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All flights and transport from London to Colombo return
- All meals except where specified
- Camping in grounds of wonderful forest bungalows and hotels (camping equipment included except sleeping bag)
- Discover Adventure leaders; doctor with a group of 15 or more participants; local guides, drivers, porters and cooks
- Entry to Temple of the Tooth and Sigiriya Rock Fortress
- Local support and back-up equipment

## WHAT'S EXCLUDED

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

## GRADE | ORANGE

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** 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 (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)



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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 25 Apr 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.