

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 home for the night - a picturesque forest bungalow which was once the home of a British tea estate owner. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon relaxing on the verandah; the views over the surrounding hills are wonderful. Night bungalow.

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

Day 4: Gammaduwa - Riverstone

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! Our wonderful forest bungalow lies just a few minutes' drive away in Riverstone; this home of a former Prime Minister is set amidst smooth lawns and spectacular views. Night bungalow.

Trek approx. 6–8 hours (18km)

Day 5: Riverstone - Manigala Rock - Riverstone

After a hearty breakfast and a short transfer to the village, we set off towards the stand-alone sheer-sided rock monolith which rises clearly before us. Once used by local people to calculate time, it dominates the landscape. Walking initially on a small village back-road, we pass colourful village houses with flowering bougainvillea, a small river with tumbling waterfall, and emerald-green rice paddies, before reaching the border of the Knuckles

Mountain Range. Here, at the foot of Manigala, we leave the track and ascend ancient, jumbled stone steps leading up into dense forest, again accompanied by large butterflies and incessant cricket-calls. This is a long climb, tough-going at times – we ascend almost 1000m – but eventually we emerge into sunshine. From this impressive mountain plateau, we are rewarded with well-deserved, jaw-dropping views straight down to the paddy-fields and across to the misty peaks that form our terrain for the next two days. We cross the open plateau and may see water-buffalo, which graze here freely when not needed for farming work, before a final ascent brings us to the top (1085m). Here our path plunges back into the trees and we descend to the river, where smooth, flat rock makes the perfect rest-stop and we can refresh our feet in the cool water, receiving a reviving ‘fish massage!’ An undulating path takes us parallel to the river and, on reaching the road, it’s only a short transfer to the comfort of our bungalow. Night bungalow.

Trek approx 5–6 hours (13km)

Day 6: Riverstone - Kabaragala

We leave the village track alongside a stream, enjoying great views across to Manigala once more, before climbing through pine and thick bush. Crossing the tumbling stream, we join a wide track which heads gradually downhill through shady pines and cardamom plantations. Steep-sided hills loom up around us, their rocky escarpments breaking through the lush greenery. This region covers only a small percentage of Sri Lanka’s land, but is home to a significant proportion of the country’s biodiversity; over a third of the country’s endemic flora is found here. You’re likely to see black eagles and kites circling high above, and may hear shy grey langurs clambering agilely away from our approach. Deep in the forest we pass a quaint temple, where animal sacrifices to the gods are sometimes performed. Our scenic, varied route continues uphill through grassland and alongside the river, with its gushing stepped waterfalls, before a good trail leads us through a tea estate dating from 1880 – yet more diverse scenery! We meet our vehicles and drive through more tea plantations and villages, passing a scenic waterfall, to our beautifully-located hotel set among tea bushes and smooth lawns, with wonderful views over the forest. Night hotel.

Trek approx. 5–6 hours (15km); transfer approx. 1.5-2 hours

Day 7: Kabaragala - Kandy

Some of our best trekking awaits! A short drive brings us to our river-side start point, where steps up the steep hillside provide a demanding warm-up. The resultant views across to the forested mountains, with distinctive tea-bushes blanketing the lower slopes, are worth the effort. From here we continue uphill, our path snaking relentlessly through exotic forest inhabited by a rich variety of wildlife, including purple-faced leaf monkeys, as we get steadily closer to the Knuckles peaks. A few steps off the path lies Knuckles Falls, plunging into a pool from high above; we then climb up to mountain grassland with wide-stretching views. We gain height slowly but surely, heading through bamboo forest and some steeper sections to the second-highest ‘knuckle;’ from here it’s not much further to our highest point: Knuckles Peak. We take time to enjoy the views and descend; going down isn’t always easier than up, and there will be a few aching muscles! 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 6-7 hours; drive approx 2 hours

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)

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
- Accommodation in wonderful forest bungalows and hotels
- 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
- 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](#)

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.

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.

Accommodation

So good we count it as a highlight of the trip, our accommodation on trek consists of forest bungalows, usually dating back to the colonial era and lovingly restored. Characterful and friendly, these are tranquil and truly wonderful places to stay. Sipping Ceylon tea or a freshly-squeezed watermelon juice on the verandah, overlooking magnificent views of the forested hills or tea plantations, creates the perfect contrast to an adventurous day of trekking! At the start and end of the trip we stay in well-located hotels of a very good standard.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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!

CHALLENGE EXTENSIONS



CULTURAL TRIANGLE EXTENSION

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

PRICE

2021	£775
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TREK TRAINING WEEKEND

£170 Special Offer - Only when you book at the same time as registering for your main challenge

Discover Adventure Trek Training Weekends take place in Snowdonia National Park, Wales. This training weekend is designed to put you through your paces to enable you to gauge fitness levels and gain advice from our experienced leaders.



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 20 Jun 2021, and the challenge is subject to change.