

# TRAVEL ON Q

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**SRI LANKA UNVEILED with Dave Best**

**14 APRIL – 27 APRIL 2013**

**Private Small Group Tour**

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## DETAILED ITINERARY

14 days /12 nights in Sri Lanka

**Day 1 - Sunday 14 April**

**Australia – Singapore – Colombo – Kotugoda**

### **Suggested flights ex Sydney:**

SQ 222      14 APRIL      SYDNEY / SINGAPORE      DEPART: 16.15 ARRIVE: 21.20

### **CONNECT TO:**

SQ 468      14 APRIL      SINGAPORE / COLOMBO      DEPART: 22.20 ARRIVE: 00.05 (15 APRIL)

It is a very late arrival into Colombo International Airport. After clearing Immigration and Customs, exit the airport whereupon you will be greeted by our representative who will introduce you to your guide and driver who will be at your disposal for the duration of the tour. Any required documentation will be given to your guide. You will then be driven to Jetwing Blue, a luxurious contemporary hotel with an extensive beach frontage in Negombo (recently refurbished). As well as being a beach resort hotel in its own right, Jetwing Blue is a convenient place to recuperate after a long flight, being just 20 minutes' drive from the international airport. Check in and enjoy a relaxing night.

**Overnight: Jetwing Blue – Deluxe room with breakfast**

<http://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingblue/>

**Day 2 - Monday 15 April****Negambo – Sigiriya**

After a relaxing morning, check out of Jetwing Blue mid morning and drive to Sigiriya, which is in the heart of Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle. The journey will take between 4-5 hours dependent on traffic. Lunch will be taken en route. On arrival in Sigiriya, check in to the beautiful and extensive Vil Uyana for the next three nights. Vil Uyana was the one of world's first hotels to construct a wetland system to form its very own nature reserve. This innovative thinking has provided a haven for wildlife, and a setting of total peace and tranquility for guests. There are breathtaking views of the magnificent Sigiriya Rock, one of Sri Lanka's most recognized world heritage sites. Due to its highly original design, the hotel is the first in Sri Lanka to offer villas built overlooking ponds and paddy fields all very spacious, offering comfort and seclusion.

**Overnight: Vil Uyana - Forest or Water Dwellings with Breakfast**

[www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingviluyana](http://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingviluyana)

**Day 3 - Tuesday 16 April****Polonnaruwa and Kaudulla or Minneriya National Park**

Set off for Polonnaruwa (approx 45 minutes drive), the famous medieval capital of Ceylon, as Sri Lanka was formerly known. After visiting Polonnaruwa museum, the morning is given over to an exploration of Polonnaruwa. Polonnaruwa became Sri Lanka's royal medieval capital in 1073 and remained Sri Lanka's capital until the late 13th century. Today, the ancient city's ruins remain good repair with its great ruins of



palaces, treasuries, meeting halls and temples. Most impressive are the ancient sculptures of Lord Buddha at the Gal Vihara, cut into granite stone dating back to the middle of the 12th century. Following lunch locally, continue on to Kaudulla National Reserves (Minneriya is best visited between June – September), where the elephants generally migrate at this time of the year. Thanks to the ancient man-made water tanks built by the Ceylonese kings, the parks are an excellent location for seeing great herds of wild elephants who roam between the two parks

depending on water levels. The herds of 50 or more elephants gather to drink and bathe around the lakes and access is in Safari jeeps from the park entrance with a ranger aboard. Return to Vil Uyana in the early evening.

**Overnight: Vil Uyana - Forest or Water Dwellings with Breakfast**

**Day 4 - Wednesday 17 April****Sigiriya**



After an early breakfast depart for the Sigiriya Rock Fortress (approx 1 hour). Rising 200 meters up from the plains, Sigiriya Rock (or Lion Rock) was one of the most short-lived, yet fascinating, citadels of ancient Sri Lanka. Rumored to have been built in a mere 7 years, King Kassapa retained his throne for just six years once the citadel was completed. It is a spectacular feat nonetheless with the palace structures built on the summit and all the materials would have been manually carried and hoisted up sheer rock face. Although little remains of the pleasure palace on the summit, it is still impossible not to marvel at such a feat, as well as admire the incredible views over the surrounding pleasure gardens and the Sri Lankan countryside. It is advisable to do the climb in the morning so that you avoid the final ascent in the midday sun. The climb is steep, but safe. The last part of the climb to the top of the rock is via a hanging metal stairway (not for the faint hearted) and the view from the top is stunning. You can really appreciate the vast ancient lake system from this height. Return to the hotel for a late lunch and the remainder of the day is at leisure. The endangered grey slender Loris is a resident on the grounds of Vil Uyana and with luck you might be able to catch a glimpse of this shy nocturnal primate if you take one of the hotel's evening nature walks with the resident naturalist.

### **Overnight: Vil Uyana - Forest or Water Dwellings with Breakfast**

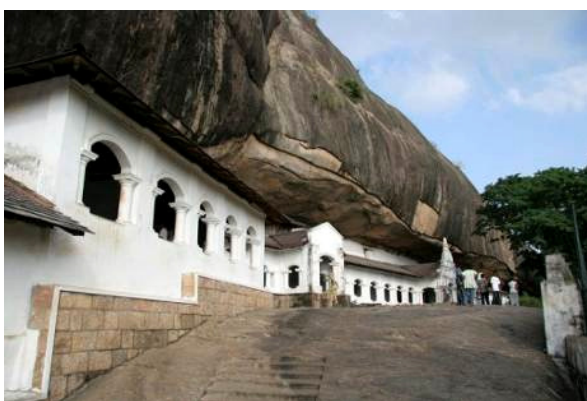


### **Day 5 - Thursday 18 April**

### **Sigiriya – Dambulla – Kandy**

After breakfast, depart the hotel and travel to nearby Dambulla to visit the Cave Temples, aiming to arrive at around 09.30am. Rising 160m over the surrounding plain, an imposing rock features a series of monastic caves, the five most impressive being ornately decorated with murals and statues. They date from as far back as the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and have acquired World Heritage status.

### **Dambulla Cave temple**



The caves first came into use as a refuge for King Valagambahu in 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Concealed by the local monks, upon returning from exile to his throne at Anuradhapura, he had the magnificent cave temple built for them. The cave temple consists of a complex of Buddhist image houses. Its rock ceiling is one large sweep of colourful frescoes, some of which dates back to over 2,000 years, which depicts Buddhist mythology, and the tales of the Buddha's previous births. This cave temple has the largest number of Buddha statues all housed in one place, including a 14m-long figure of the

recumbent Buddha carved out of the rock.

Your journey continues to Kandy, the cultural capital and geographic centre of the country. Visit the famous Temple of the Tooth which houses Sri Lanka's most famous relic, a fragment of Buddha's tooth. The best time to visit the temple is during the evening puja which starts at 7pm. At this time the temple is beautifully lit with fairy lights and candles, and the sounds of chanting and drums reverberate around the prayer halls, as hundreds of pilgrims pass through to ask for blessings at the sanctum where the fragment of the tooth is kept. The inner temple has very elaborate wood carved ceilings and another part of the complex has a series of murals depicting the ancient history of Kandy which is really engaging.



**Overnight: Villa Rosa – Deluxe Room with Breakfast**

<http://www.villarosa-kandy.com/>

**Day 6 - Friday 19 April**

**Kandy**

After breakfast, visit the beautiful Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya which were originally planted by the British, and are considered to have one of the most valuable collections of plants in the world. The gardens are extensive and well maintained and a popular spot for wedding photos. In the evening, relax in the comfortable surroundings of the Bungalow. If you are feeling active, take out the mountain bikes which are for the guests' use and explore the country lanes in and around the house and the surroundings.

**Overnight: Villa Rosa – Deluxe Room with Breakfast**

**Day 7 - Saturday 20 April**

**Kandy – Dickoya**

This morning your guide will drive you to nearby Peradeniya where you will board the 1<sup>st</sup> Class Observation train to Hatton (*subject to availability*). The train departs at 09:15am and will arrive into Hatton by 11am where your guide will be waiting for you. It is a drive to your accommodation. Here in solitude, at an elevation of 4000 feet above sea level, lies Governor's Mansion.

**Overnight the Governor's Mansion, suite and full board**

<http://www.governorsmansion.com/>



### **GOVERNOR'S MANSION – HATTON**

Experience the life of the British elite during the Colonial Era, in a quiet, luxurious setting offering complete peace and tranquillity and a welcome respite from the humidity at lower altitude. Governor's Mansion is a fully restored estate, set 4,275 feet above sea level in the cool climes of the famous Tea Valley of Dickoya. British expats owned and managed these vast tea estates and made Sri Lanka their home.



From the sprawling lawns, terraced gardens and bay windows of the suites there are magnificent views of the estate, mist covered mountain ranges, the much revered Adam's Peak can be seen in the distance.

**Overnight: Governor's Mansion, suite with full board**

**Day 8 - Sunday 21 April**

**Hatton**

Today, you may spend your time relaxing in the peaceful surroundings of the Mansion. Take an early morning walk along the tea trails and watch the tea pickers at work. Alternatively explore the local region with a scenic walk through the tea estate or for the more adventurous an excursion to climb Adam's Peak.

**Overnight: Governor's Mansion, suite with full board**

**Day 9 - Monday 22 April**

**Hatton - Yala**

This morning, start early for the drive to Yala National Park (approx 4hrs) where you will be met by your hosts for the next two nights. Leopard Safaris are pioneers of tented safaris in Sri Lanka. They offer abundant wildlife viewing opportunities deep inside the national parks, with an excellent chance of seeing leopards, elephants and bears, as well as a myriad of birds. Staying with **Leopard Safaris** is to



camp inside the park itself. The advantage of staying within the park boundaries is that you can be out and about on safari early and maximise your game viewing opportunities. Similarly on the afternoon drive, whilst the rest of the Jeep traffic rushes back to the gates before sunset you can continue your game drive at a more leisurely pace. That said, the system in Sri Lanka is not as well regulated as in Africa and there is a day tripper element. The drive from the gates to the campsite will be your first taste of a Sri Lankan game drive, travelling in customised 4WD Land Cruisers.

Arrive at the camp site for lunch and some rest and relaxation before heading back out late afternoon for your second game drive, followed by sundowners. Meals are taken al fresco under the stars. Wines, beers and spirits are also included. Wonderful meals appear miraculously from the limited kitchen resources. Conditions permitting there will certainly be a BBQ under the stars one night. Sleep in comfortable beds listening to the sounds of the jungle. Whilst the tents are not en suite, guest comfort is a premium and hot showers and flushing toilets are on site.

**Yala National Park** is the most visited and second largest national park in Sri Lanka. Actually it consists of five blocks, two of which are now open to the public; and also adjoining parks. The blocks have individual names also, like Ruhuna National Park for the (best known) block 1 and Kumana National Park or 'Yala East' for the adjoining area. It is situated in the southeast region of the country, and lies in Southern Province and Uva Province. The park covers 979 square kilometers (378 sq mi) and is located about 300 kilometers (190 mi) from Colombo. Yala was designated as a wildlife sanctuary in 1900, and, along with Wilpattu it was one of the first two national parks in Sri Lanka, having been designated in 1938.. Yala hosts a variety of ecosystems ranging from moist monsoon forests to freshwater and marine wetlands. There are 44 species of mammals and it has one of the highest leopard densities in the world. The area around Yala has hosted several ancient civilizations. Two important pilgrim sites, Sithulpahuwa and Magul Vihara, are situated within the park. The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami caused severe damage on the Yala National Park and 250 people died in its vicinity.

**Overnight Leopard Safaris, Tented camp, full board and game drives**

<http://www.leopardsafaris.com/home.html>

## Day 10 - Tuesday 23 April

## Yala

Rise early for your dawn game drive – unlike in Africa, leopards in Yala are not primarily nocturnal hunters, since they have no predators to fear, so they are often to be seen during the day. Yala has the



highest concentration of leopards anywhere in the world, so there is a very good chance that you will spot these elegant, beautiful cats during their stay in Yala. However the best time for seeing leopards in Yala is first thing in the morning as the sun is rising and last thing in the day when they generally walk and start thinking of hunting. The male leopards in Yala are very confident animals and they are often seen walking the jeep tracks during the day, and seem quite unaffected by jeeps, making it a photographer's paradise. As well as leopards large

numbers of elephants can sometimes be seen wandering on the deserted beaches or bathing in the numerous watering holes in the park. An evening game safari will also be arranged.

### **Overnight Leopard Safaris, Tented camp, full board and game drives**

### **Your itinerary Day to Day with Leopard Safaris - 2 nights**

#### **Arrival Day**

**12.00 – 13.00:** pick-up at National park ticket office/car park, drive to campsite in our Toyota Land Cruiser.

**14.00:** lunch at the campsite with briefing of do's and don'ts

**14.30 – 15.30:** time to acclimatize, activities: read a book from our wildlife library, have a snooze in a hammock, watch the bird/animal life around the river

**15.30 – 18.15:** evening game drive

**18.15:** refresh yourself with a hot or cold shower and enjoy some drinks at the jungle bar with bonfire while your dinner is freshly prepared for you.

#### **Camp Day**

**05.30 – 05.45:** wake-up call; tea or coffee

**05.45 – 08.45:** morning safari

**09.00 -** Breakfast at campsite Chill-out until lunch

**14.00 -** Lunch by the water - time to rest until evening safari

**15.30 -18.15:** evening game drive

**18.15:** refresh time, jungle bar and dinner

#### **Departure Day**

**05.30 – 05.45:** wake-up call; tea or coffee

**05.45 – 08.45:** morning safari

**09.00:** breakfast

**10.00:** departure and drop off at National park entrance/car Park

**This is only a rough schedule and times can vary or can be changed on request**

## Day 11 - Wednesday 24 April

## Yala – Galle



After breakfast, you will be driven further south to Galle to stay at the Frangipani Tree in Thalpe. The Frangipani Tree is a stylish boutique hotel set at the edge of a secluded beach in the fishing village of Thalpe, which opened in late 2007. Situated just 15 minutes from the historic city of Galle, Frangipani Tree is ideally located to explore the diverse southern heritage and the sun-kissed beaches of the south coast.

Designed by Channa Daswatte, a sought-after local architect and protégé of the famous Geoffrey Bawa, Frangipani Tree is a tranquil and luxurious setting. Windows and verandahs that open onto the Indian Ocean, high-clay tiled roofs, cooling cement floors, courtyards with frangipani trees, white washed walls and interiors with contemporary timber and steel furniture make this a luxurious yet homely getaway.

### **Overnight at Frangipani – Deluxe (Breakfast)**

<http://thefrangipanitree.com/>

### **Day 12 – Thursday 25 April**

### **Galle**

Start your day with a visit to the magnificent beach at Galle Fortress to see the stilt fisherman who sit for several hours a day perched precariously on a single stilt as the surf ( often quite rough) swirls around them. However they are gone by 9am so you will need to arrive an hour earlier at least.



Return to your hotel for breakfast, and then set out to visit the fortress itself, the only part of Galle to withstand the devastating Tsunami which engulfed the entire coastline between Galle and Colombo. After visiting the sights (mainly the Church and the lighthouse), there will be ample free time to wander around the old streets which now house lots of interesting shops and cafes.

### **Day 13 - Friday 26 April**

### **Galle – Colombo (Departure)**

After breakfast, the remainder of the day is at leisure at the Frangipani until it is time to go the airport. Day use rooms have been arranged.

The new Southern Expressway which is Sri Lanka's first E Class highway now connects Galle to the airport vastly reducing the travel time – approx 1.5 hours. The highway links the Sri Lankan capital Colombo with Matara, a major city in the south of the island. A farewell dinner will be arranged on the lawns of one of the airport hotels. A representative will be on hand to escort you through security and to the check in desks. Singapore Airlines flights typically depart after midnight.

### **Suggested flights:**

SQ 469	27 APRIL	COLOMBO / SINGAPORE	DEPART: 01.20	ARRIVE: 07.50
<b>Connect to:</b>				
SQ 211	27 APRIL	SINGAPORE / SYDNEY	DEPART: 09.40	ARRIVE: 20.30

**END OF ARRANGEMENTS**

## TOUR PRICING AND INCLUSIONS

**Tour Cost:** \$ 4600 per person twin share

**Single Supplement:** \$1460

Prices are based on 8 participants, with Dave Best as your accompanying international guide and a local English speaking guide and a driver. The vehicle is a modern 4 wheel drive Minivan.

Prices will reduce if numbers exceed 8. Maximum group size is 12. Prices will increase if the number falls below 8 and the tour still proceeds.

**Deposit:** A deposit of \$300 per person is required to secure a place on the tour and should be accompanied by a signed booking form. The deposit is non refundable if you cancel.

**Balance:** The final tour balance is required 65 days prior to departure.

**Flights:** Approximate cost of flights ex Sydney is currently \$1670 inclusive of all taxes

### Prices Include:

- Accommodation based on quoted hotels or similar
- Cost based on minimum of 08 participants
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary
- Transport in air-conditioned vehicle
- English speaking chauffeur guide for all sightseeing
- One foreign tour leader in a single room
- Entrance fees to all sites as per the itinerary
- All currently applicable taxes

### Prices DO NOT Include:

- International airfares, visa fees (currently USD 50), airport tax
- Insurance
- Items of personal nature like drinks, laundry, telephone calls, tips, etc
- Any other meals than those mentioned in the itinerary
- Any other item not specifically mentioned above as 'INCLUDED'

### General

- All prices are subject to any revision of government tax structure and fuel prices and currency fluctuations
- Prices are based on anticipated 2013 hotel and transport prices
- Changes may be made to any aspect of the itinerary and hotels due to reasons beyond the control of travel on Q or Banyan tours who act as the ground operator on our tours.
- All hotels used are of 4 star rating or better except for Leopard Safaris which does not have a hotel rating. The camp is more rustic and is the best accommodation offered in the Park.

### Climate

Sri Lanka has a year round tropical climate which offers warmth and sunshine throughout the year. In Colombo and the west coast, noon temperatures range between 28-32C and peak in April, which can be quite uncomfortably humid, before the monsoon rains begin. Up in the hill country daytime temperatures are on average about 10C cooler than on the plains. Humidity ranges between 70-90 percent in Colombo, lower in the highlands and cultural triangle. Ocean breezes also moderate temperatures on the coast, making travel even in the hottest months tolerable.

However, as is the case worldwide, the monsoon is becoming increasingly unpredictable and the traditionally wet months often go a week or more without any rain. Sri Lanka averages about 240cms per annum but figures vary widely from region to region. The north and east coast experiences its monsoon from December to February, whilst the south west monsoon affects Colombo and the region further south in May and June.



# GENERAL TRAVEL GUIDELINES FOR SRI LANKA

## Visa Formalities

### Online Visa – Sri Lanka

It is mandatory that all passengers travelling after the 1st 31st December, 2011 to submit their Visa application on-line by logging onto (paste into your browser)

[sri-lanka.visahq.com/embassy/Australia/](http://sri-lanka.visahq.com/embassy/Australia/)

### Dress

Sri Lanka is a very casual country, so no smart attire is required at any of the hotels. That said you may like to change for dinner at certain hotels – simply to make it more of an occasion. This is a personal decision. Because of the tropical climate light cotton and linen clothing is ideal. You will need some sturdy shoes for the climb up Sigiriya Rock, and on safari muted colours are best. Because of the heat we recommend you carry a sun hat and sunglasses at all times. We also suggest you pack some form of waterproof jacket as rain is always a possibility in Sri Lanka.

### Currency

Sri Lanka's currency is the 'Rupee', abbreviated as 'Rps'. Rupees. Notes (Bills) are in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 & 1000 and 2000 Rupees. It is not possible to purchase Sri Lankan Rupees outside of the country. The current exchange rate is approximately 110 Rps to the Australian Dollar

### Foreign Exchange

Visiting foreigners can exchange money at international airports where 24-hour exchange facilities are available, through banks and approved moneychangers. Because you will not be spending any time in the cities we suggest you get all necessary currency at the airport on arrival.

### Tipping

It is usual to tip your guide, driver and National Park Drivers and Guides.

Though we give below the general guidelines, it is to be remembered that tipping is a sign of gratification for good service, and therefore please view these guidelines as the middle ground, which can be adjusted depending on the level of service you feel you have received.

Please note the below amounts are per couple/ individual traveller.

**Chauffeur Guide:** USD 20.00 per day (based on two people) given on departure.

**National Park Driver:** RPS 500

**National Park Naturalist:** RPS 500

**Safari Camp Staff:** USD 20.00 per day given to staff on departure.

Please note that whilst all hotels include a 10% service charge in their rates, it is customary to leave tips at the end of your stay at the boutique properties in particular. We suggest 1000 Rupees per day for your housemaid on departure.

### Electricity

An Indian or European plug is required. In Sri Lanka voltage is 230 volts AC, 50 cycles, though some areas also have DC supplies. Visitors are advised to check the voltage before using electrical appliances. Socket sizes vary, so it is as well to take a set of plug adapters, available from most electrical stores.

**Photography – Digital cameras**

Remember to take several SD cards and 2 batteries and a battery charger.

Visitors to Sri Lanka find varied subjects for photography including people, monuments, wildlife, festivities, and landscapes. Most Sri Lankans are very happy to have their photograph taken but common courtesies apply and permission should be asked beforehand. No money need be given; this is not the Sri Lankan way.

**Mobile phones**

They do work in Sri Lanka and you can purchase local cards for cheaper calling rates.

Just remember to turn off all forms of global roaming if you do not want a nasty shock on your next bill.

**Prohibited Articles**

The import of prohibited articles such as dangerous drugs, live plants, gold/silver bullion and coins, not in current use, is either totally prohibited or restricted. The law provides heavy penalties for the infringement of this restriction. Also, by law, visitors are banned from taking antiques and wildlife products out of the country – any infringement is punishable by fines and imprisonment.

**Visiting Places of Worship**

Removing one's shoes before entering any temples is essential. Do not wear shorts, skirts above the knee or sleeveless tops in places of public worship.

**Insurance**

it is always advisable to obtain good travel insurance to cover the worst possible scenario. Do keep a copy of your policy separately as a safeguard.

**Inoculations/Vaccinations**

Before travelling to Sri Lanka it is advised that you consult your doctor or local travel clinic regarding any inoculations you may need. A malaria preventive course may be advised for curtail areas to be taken before your trip in consultation with your doctor.

**Recommended Reading**

Travel on Q can send you a list of recommended books if you wish