

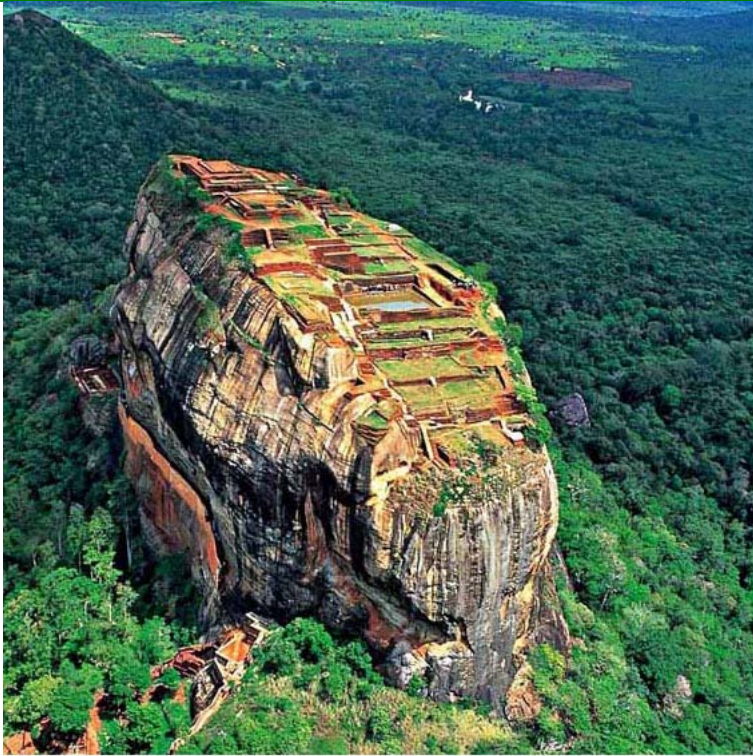
SECRETS OF SRI LANKA

Discover the history and beauty of this southern pearl

13 DAYS STARTING COLOMBO

MAR 15 - MAR 27, 2018

with Steve Mortimer



Byroads



SECRETS OF SRI LANKA

Trip Outline

Sri Lanka has had a magnetic appeal for many centuries and its gems, pearls, ivory, and spices have always attracted the attention of seafaring traders. Marco Polo visited the island twice, first in 1284 and again in 1293. Less than 50 years later his Moslem alter ego, Ibn Battuta, arrived in a place he called 'Battalah' where he was entertained as a guest of the Tamil king. The Portuguese landed in 1505 and gradually extended their control over the coast, forcing the indigenous inhabitants to move their capital from the Colombo region to the safety of Kandy, deep in the southern hills. By the middle of the 17th century, the Dutch were in the ascendancy and at the outset of the 19th century the British East India Company took full possession of the island, under a treaty known as the Kandyan Convention, signed in 1815.

But Sri Lanka's history stretches way back beyond the days of Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta. By the 4th century BC, Anuradhapura had been established as a royal city. In the 5th century AD, an amazing citadel was built at Sigiriya; and towards the end of the 11th century, Polonnaruwa became the capital, a position it held for over a century.

We begin in the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo and then drive north to Sigiriya, stopping enroute to explore the amazing cave temples at Dambulla. From our hotel we visit the ancient ruins at Polonnaruwa, and the next morning we climb the spectacular rock citadel at Sigiriya. We then head south, taking a scenic byroad through the Knuckles Range, to the old Sinhalese capital at Kandy. A day here allows us time to explore before continuing up into the highlands at Nuwara Eliya, the heart of the tea growing industry. To the southeast is Ella, the nicest of the hill towns, where we walk up to 'Little Adam's Peak', and spend a morning learning the secrets of Sri Lankan cuisine. Driving south we see the tallest Buddha statue in the world before reaching Ude Walawe National Park, Sri Lanka's premier elephant reserve. We enjoy an afternoon jeep safari and then drive to the celebrated south coast for a night at a beach hideaway. Our final highlight is Galle, a perennial favourite, where we have a full day and a half to explore. On our way back to Colombo we visit the mask museum at Ambalangoda and take a boatride on the Madu River. Our journey ends in Colombo.

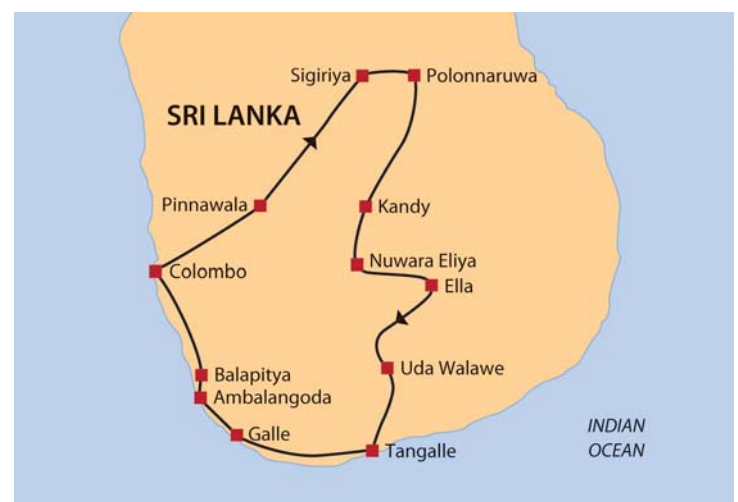
Tour Host – Steve Mortimer



Steve Mortimer heads up Byroads Travel and will be your host on this tour. Steve has nearly 30 years in the travel industry and has travelled to well over 100 countries. He has worked with a number of well-known Australian adventure travel companies. Most recently he has been involved in researching and developing holidays in several different regions of the world including Latin America and the Middle East where he lived for two years in Egypt.

Steve likes nothing better than getting out and about with like-minded travellers, sharing his knowledge and introducing them to some of the world's most interesting places. A particular feature of his tours is the chance to see places that other tour groups often miss (or simply don't know about!), such as the pueblos blancos or 'white villages' of Andalusia, Sri Lanka's stunning south coast or the wonderful vernacular architecture of Iran's Yazd Province.

With our itinerary you can be confident you'll visit all the 'must see' attractions – and much more, however there are some days when you'll have time to wander and make some of your own discoveries. Throughout the tour local guides are employed to provide a wealth of background information and share their extensive local knowledge.



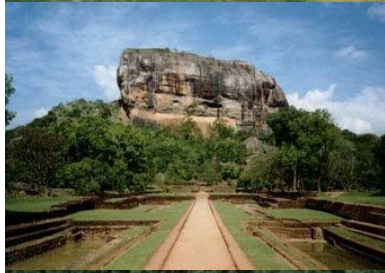
ITINERARY - STARTS IN COLOMBO



THU 15 MAR: COLOMBO – Upon arrival at Colombo Airport you are met and transferred to your historic boutique hotel. Pre-tour accommodation is available if you wish to arrive a day early (see back page for details). Mid-morning we visit the excellent National Museum and take a drive through the old colonial quarters. The afternoon is at leisure to explore the historic old town known as 'Fort'.



FRI 16 MAR: COLOMBO-PINNAWALA-SIGIRIYA – Leaving Colombo, we drive north-east towards Pinnawala, an elephant orphanage and nursery, where we stop for an early lunch by the river. We then continue to the superb rock temples at Dambulla, an ancient cave complex housing some 150 Buddha images. Tonight we stay at hotel in the shadow of Sigiriya's celebrated fortress. (B)



SAT 17 MAR: POLONNARUWA – Polonnaruwa is one of the great sights in Sri Lanka and this morning we explore the extensive ruins. There are numerous buildings to see including palaces, temples, shrines, audience halls and a 7th century circular relic house, the oldest monument in the city. In the afternoon we stop at a local woodcarving workshop before returning to our hotel, where the balance of the day is at leisure. (B)



SUN 18 MAR: SIGIRIYA-KNUCKLES RANGE-KANDY – Sigiriya is sometimes referred to as Sri Lanka's Machu Picchu. The actual rock is all that remains of the central core of an ancient volcano and in the 5th century a splendid citadel was built on its summit. Later it became a monastery and today it is one of Sri Lanka's most photographed monuments. There is time to ascend to the summit before we head south, taking a back road into the spectacular Knuckles Range, where we have a simple picnic lunch. Mid-afternoon we stop to visit a fascinating spice plantation before an evening arrival at our hotel in Kandy. (B)



MON 19 MAR: KANDY – Not only was Kandy the last capital of the Sinhalese Kingdom, before capitulating to the British in 1815, it is also the home of Sri Lanka's most important relic, housed in the Temple of the Tooth on the edge of Kandy Lake. We spend the day exploring the city, visiting the temple and extensive Botanical Gardens. We may also visit a gem factory and/or Batik manufacturer. (B)



TUE 20 MAR: KANDY-NUWARA ELIYA-ELLA – We visit the excellent Tea Museum before driving up into the hills to Nuwara Eliya, once known as 'Little England'. We enjoy lunch at the famous Hill Club, a wonderful relic of the British 'Raj' and later visit a working tea plantation to learn about the manufacturing process – and for a cuppa! A spectacular drive then takes us through mist-covered hills to our hotel in Ella, set in the heart of a tea plantation. (B)



WED 21 MAR: ELLA – Our hotel overlooks Ella Gap and it's short walk to the summit of 'Little Adam's Peak', which you can do at any time. Our stay in Ella coincides with market day, and after breakfast we visit the local market to purchase supplies for a morning cooking class, where we learn to make some of the delicious food we've been eating all week, which we then consume for lunch. The afternoon is then free to wander around Ella, or just relax at our hotel. (BL)



THU 22 MAR: ELLA-BUDURUWAGALA-UDA WALAWE NATIONAL PARK – We descend into the hot plains where we visit the massive stone-carved Buddha at Buduruwagala. We reach Uda Walawe and after time for lunch at our hotel we enjoy an afternoon jeep safari. The park is known primarily for its elephants, but also contains deer, wild boar, water buffalo and an abundance of birds. (B)

FRI 23 MAR: UDA WALAWE-SOUTH COAST RETREAT – Leaving the hills behind, we descend to our elegant hideaway on Sri Lanka's stunning south coast where the afternoon is at leisure to relax, swim, enjoy an Ayurvedic massage – or just stroll along the glorious white sand beach. (B)

SAT 24 MAR & SUN 25 MAR: GALLE – Galle is a perennial favourite, and with good reason. We arrive around midday, spending two nights at the superb Geoffrey Bawa-designed Lighthouse Hotel, considered one of the best in Sri Lanka. On our first afternoon we head into town for orientation walk, seeing the principal sights. The next day is completely free to explore on your own and enjoy some of the many fine restaurants. (B)

MON 26 MAR: GALLE-COLOMBO – After a leisurely breakfast we make our way back towards Colombo. At Ambalangoda we visit the informative Mask Museum and at Balapitiya we take a boat trip along the Madu River. We expect to arrive back in Colombo by mid to late afternoon and tonight we can enjoy a farewell dinner at one of the excellent restaurants in Fort. (B)

TUE 27 MAR: COLOMBO – Our tour ends after breakfast. Hotel checkout time is generally around midday, at the latest. Taxi transfers to the airport can be arranged from the hotel. (B)

Prices & Inclusions

13 Day Secrets of Sri Lanka

Price: USD 3695 (per person twin-share)

Single Supplement: USD 1465

Price includes: Steve Mortimer as Tour Escort, local driver/guide, all transfers and transportation, 12 nights accommodation, meals as indicated.

Not Included: Visa fees, travel insurance (compulsory), flights, additional meals, drinks, optional tours, spending of a personal nature, laundry and tips, departure transfer.

Transportation: Our transport is in a comfortable air-conditioned minibus.

Accommodation: One of Sri Lanka's charms is its colonial architecture, and many gracious old buildings have been converted into small hotels. In Colombo, the historic Galle Face Hotel is considered one of the finest in the country. In Kandy we stay in a colonial-style hotel surrounded by a luxuriant garden, and in Galle our Geoffrey Bawa-designed 5-star property is one of the best in the country. In Sigiriya our comfortable village hotel is full of charm and in Ella we stay at a stunning hilltop retreat in the heart of a tea plantation. At Uda Walawe we spend the night in an eco-friendly lodge before heading to our luxurious beach hideaway near Tangalle.



Historic Galle Face Hotel, Colombo



Village hotel in Sigiriya



Colonial-style in Kandy



Mountain retreat in Ella



Eco lodge at Uda Walawe



Lighthouse Hotel, Galle

Food and drink: Breakfast is included every day, however most lunches and all dinners are to your own account. Soft drinks and beer are widely available, along with wine and spirits in some hotels.

Group size: Maximum 16

Additional Expenses: Food is not expensive in Sri Lanka. Allow around US\$10-\$15 for a light lunch and around US\$15-\$20 for dinner. In addition you should budget for any personal spending. Please also allow extra funds to tip your local guide, driver and porters (full details will be provided in the pre-trip field guide).

Bookings: Travel on Q (Sydney) is the sole booking agent for this tour. Please register your interest ASAP in order to secure your place and note there are a limited number of single rooms available. A non-refundable deposit of AUD 750 per person is required with final payment due 60 days prior to tour commencement.

Travel on Q (Carole Grassby and Tina Briggs)

Level 1/128 Crown Street

Darlinghurst Sydney NSW 2010

Tel: (02) 9357 6800 Email: travel@travelonq.com.au

Currency: Due to the volatility of global currencies the tour price has been quoted in United States Dollars (USD) however you will pay for your tour in Australian dollars based on the buying rate set by Westpac Banking Corporation on the due date of your final balance.

Flights & Transfers: The most likely flight options into and out of Colombo are with Singapore, Thai or Malaysia Airlines. In most cases flights arrive late at night, so you may wish to consider booking an extra night before the start of the tour. An arrival transfer is included; however the departure transfer is not and can be arranged on request. Travel on Q will be able to assist you with your flights and advise you on your best options.

Extra nights in Colombo: Extra nights can be booked pre and post tour but you must advise Travel on Q well in advance to ensure availability.

Documentation: Upon receipt of final payment, a comprehensive field guide will be mailed and you will be sent the relevant tour and accommodation vouchers prior to departure.

Visas: A Sri Lankan visa is required by most nationalities including citizens of Australian and NZ. These are best applied for on-line and should be issued prior to departure. Travel on Q can advise you on the procedure.

What Next? Contact Travel on Q to discuss your travel plans and to make your booking. Further information is also available at www.byroads.com.au.

