Gentle Walking Sri Lanka

A gentle walking holiday visiting the island's main historical, cultural, wildlife and scenic highlights.

Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Walking
Accommodation	Hotels
Grade	Gentle
Duration	16 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	Walks on: 7 days
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Sri Lanka
Land only	Joining in Colombo, Sri Lanka
Max altitude	2,243m/7,400ft, optional ascent of Adam's Peak, Day 10

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available

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Last updated: 11 January 2022

Departures

Group departures

2022 Dates:

Sat 05 Feb – Sun 20 Feb
Sat 30 Jul – Sun 14 Aug
Sat 17 Dec 2022 – Sun 01 Jan 2023

2023 Dates:

Sat 04 Feb – Sun 19 Feb
Sat 29 Jul – Sun 13 Aug
Sat 09 Dec – Sun 24 Dec 2024

Group prices and optional supplements
Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

No Surcharge Guarantee
The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Will the trip run?
This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly – we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

Insurance
We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures
We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service
We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guide

The trip will be led by an experienced English-speaking local guide, selected on the basis of their experience, levels of spoken English and helpfulness. Like the culture from which they come they are all very welcoming and have a love of showing you their country.

Your trip highlights

- A comprehensive tour of Sri Lanka, combining cultural highlights with gentle walking
- Travel into the hill country by train to hilltop tea plantations
- The opportunity to ascend Adam's Peak and watch the sun rise from the summit (November to April)
- Wildlife activities including jeep safaris to look for leopards in Yala National Park, and blue-whale watching trips offshore (in season)
- A relaxing beach stay at the end of your travels

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-3	Fly to Colombo. Drive to Ranweli. Boat trip and guided nature walk.
Days 4-6	Drive to Anauradhapura, tour of Sacred City. Drive to Mihintale, then on to Sigiriya. Visit the ruined city of Polonnaruwa.
Days 7-8	Climb Sigiriya Rock. Drive to Kandy, visit the Temple of the Tooth.
Days 9-10	Train to Nanu Oya, visit tea plantation. Drive to Horton Plains and walk to Baker's Falls. November to April - opportunity to ascend Adam's Peak.
Day 11	Drive to Uda Walawe National Park for Jeep Safari. Drive to Tissamharama.
Day 12	Morning and afternoon game drives at Yala National Park.
Days 13-14	Drive to Unawatuna and visit Galle. Whale watching excursion included (departures between November and April only).
Days 15-16	Drive to Colombo. Fly back to the UK.

Trip summary

Sri Lanka is a small island but it has many wonderful attractions: historic cultural sites, beautiful beaches, fine countryside and excellent wildlife viewing. This trip is an ideal introduction to the country for those who are interested in exploring on foot, with some delightful gentle walks as well as seeing the main cultural sights.

You will have time after your international flight to relax in Ranweli, with a walk through mangrove forest and a boat trip, before you head off into the cultural heartland of the island. Firstly you will visit the ancient capital of Anuradhapura, with its ancient rock fortress and sacred fig tree, once swallowed up by dense jungle but now a major attraction for Buddhist pilgrims and tourists alike. You will also have the opportunity to climb the many stone steps to the summit of the sacred mountain of Mihintale, where Buddhism is said to have been first introduced into Sri Lanka and you will visit the ancient, ruined 12th century city of Polonnaruwa, once the capital of Sri Lanka and famous for the stone shrine of Gal Vihara with four carved statues of the Buddha. As well as visiting these fabulous historic sites there will be ample opportunities along the way for lovely, easy-paced walks in the beautiful countryside to see daily life out in the rural villages. You will also climb to stand atop the impressive Lion Rock at Sigiriya and later visit the remarkable cave temples in Dambulla and the Three Temples near Kandy, a fascinating combination of Buddhist and Hindu architecture. You will also visit the famous Temple of the Tooth.

Boarding a train in Kandy will signal a change of scenery as you climb to enjoy the cooler air of Nuwara Eliya for some enjoyable walks in cloud forest, tea plantations and on the Horton Plains with the opportunity, depending on the season, for the ascent of Adam's Peak. For another change in pace you then travel south out of the hill country down to the coast where you will see some of the prolific wildlife of the Uda Walawe and Yala National Parks - Yala is considered one of the world's premier parks for seeing leopard, as well as elephants, deer, wild buffalo, crocodile and many birds. During winter and spring there will also be the opportunity to go Blue Whale watching. Finally you will have time to relax on the lovely beach at Unawatana and to visit the historic town of Galle, before driving to Colombo for your flight home.

If you wish to spend more time on Sri Lanka's famous beaches, we have a number of beachside hotels that we can offer as an extension.

Special notes

Ascent of Adam's Peak

The opportunity to make an ascent of Adam's Peak applies to November - April departures only.

Should you wish to make the ascent of Adam's Peak on Day 10 please notify us no later than two months prior to your holiday (when the final balance payment is due for your holiday). There is no extra charge for taking this option but we will need to ensure that all transport and guiding arrangements are in hand for you.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Fly London to Colombo

Depart London by overnight flight for Colombo.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Colombo. Group transfer to Ranweli - 30-45 minutes.

You will be met on arrival in Colombo and make the short drive north to Waikkal. Just outside the village, and set between the sea, a lagoon and two rivers, lies the unique Ranweli Hotel. The final part of your journey to the hotel will by passenger ferry.

Overnight: Ranweli Hotel or Similar, Waikkal (Meals: L D)

Day 3: Ranweli - relaxation, boat trip and nature walk - 2 hour walk.

Today will be taken at a leisurely pace, after your long haul flight. As well as time to relax by the pool, or on the beach, you can enjoy a two hour guided walk through the mangrove swamps and a boat trip around the lagoons. There is plenty to see here; the area is home to 130 species of birds, some of which you may be able to spot, and 9 species of amphibians, not to mention the Water Monitor Lizard. This evening you may also be lucky enough to see a spectacular sunset.

Overnight: Ranweli Hotel, Waikkal (Meals: BLD)

Day 4: Drive to Anuradhapura - 4-5 hours. Sightseeing tour.

This morning your travels around Buddha's island begin in earnest as you drive inland to Anauradhapura. Whilst the distances covered on road journeys in Sri Lanka are relatively short, road conditions mean journey times are often much longer than western visitors anticipate. Today it's likely to take around 4-5 hours to cover the 200km/125miles to reach Anauradhapura, with stops for lunch and refreshments along the way.

Established in the 4th Century BC, Anuradhapura was Sri Lanka's first capital and remained so for many hundreds of years. After a turbulent later history, the city was largely abandoned in the late 10th Century and over subsequent years its palaces and monasteries were reclaimed by thick jungle. Now a World Heritage Site, Anauradhapura once again enjoys both historic and religious status. The location of the city was originally determined by the planting of a cutting from the 'tree of enlightenment' (the famous fig tree of Buddha) and today the area is a major attraction for visiting Buddhists. This afternoon you will visit the principal sights including the Sacred City and of course the Sri Maha Bodhi Tree.

Overnight: Palm Garden Village or Similar, Near Wilpattu (Meals: BLD)

Day 5: Walks and visits to Mihintale, Kala Wewa Reservoir and Aukana. Drive to Sigiriya - approximately 2 hours.

Just a few minutes' drive from Anauradhapura is the sacred mountain of Mihintale. It was here in 247 BC that Buddhism was first introduced to Sri Lanka - King Devanampiya Tissa was converted to the faith by the visiting son of the Indian Buddhist emperor Ashoka. This morning you'll take a walk to see some of the temples and shrines that adorn the slopes of the mountain. The summit is reached by a climb of around 1,840 stone steps and offers great views of the surrounding countryside.

Returning to your vehicle you now drive to Kala Wewa Reservoir. Such reservoirs or 'tanks' as they are known locally, are a common feature of the landscape in this part of the island. Although used as domestic water source by local villages, their primary function was originally to store water for irrigating the surrounding

fields. Alighting at the dam, you take a walk to visit the giant 12m/40ft Aukana Buddha statue, carved out of a rock face in the 5th Century. Alternatively, you may take a walk in the countryside on the way to Sigiriya. Your day ends with a couple of hours driving to reach your base for the next two nights in Sigiriya.

Overnight: Aliya Resort & Spa or Similar, Sigiriya (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Visit ancient city of Polonnaruwa. Countryside walk - 2-3 hours.

Polonnaruwa is the ruined 12th century capital of Sri Lanka, and beautifully set on the man-made Parakramabahu Samudra. Before visiting the ruins, you will visit the modern museum which gives an excellent insight into the history of the old city. The highpoint for many visitors to Polonnaruwa is the Gal Vihara (Stone Shrine). Four Buddha statues have been carved from the same huge slab of rock and originally were part of a monastery complex. The reclining Buddha is 14 metres long and supremely ethereal. It is one of the most famous sights in Sri Lanka. After lunch your leader will take you on a gentle countryside walk, a great opportunity to observe day to day life in rural Sri Lanka. The predominant activity here is Chaina cultivation (slash & burn farming). This involves villagers cutting and then burning patches of jungle to create clearings for short-term cultivation of crops, such as rice and vegetables. Water is a precious resource here so farming operations are kept small scale with farmers typically only working two or three small plots at any one time. On your walk you will doubtless see numerous wooden tree-houses where villagers take it in turns to stay at night keeping watch over their crops, lest they fall prey to wild elephants or other animals.

Overnight: Aliya Resort & Spa or Similar, Sigiriya (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Climb Sigiriya rock in the morning - 2½-3 hours. Afternoon visit to Dambulla Caves. Drive to Kandy - 1-1½ hours.

The citadel at Sigiriya rose to importance in the 5th Century AD when Prince Kassapa murdered his father, the King and built a castle on top of Sigiriya Rock in anticipation of the backlash against him. 500 years later the site was abandoned, and was largely forgotten until rediscovery by the British in 1828. The rock is a World Heritage site and is much visited by tourists. It is worth arriving at the site early to walk through the peaceful water gardens to the start of the climb up the main rock. The walkway up the rock is astonishing and the rock is covered in notches and grooves cut for alternative routes to the top. From the summit the jungle extends seemingly endlessly in all directions.

This afternoon you will visit Dambulla, famous for its remarkable cave temples. The caves are a steep 15 minute climb up from the road and are naturally carved out of a huge granite outcrop. It is thought that the caves may have been inhabited from prehistoric times, and now the five caves are full of beautiful statues and carvings. The rock offers magnificent views of the surrounding countryside across the plains.

You then drive to Kandy, the last bastion of independent Sri Lanka before falling to the British in the 19th century. The city has distinctive Sinhalese culture and architecture.

Overnight: Hotel Topaz or Similar, Kandy (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Three Temples walk - 3-4 hours. Evening visit to the Temple of the Tooth.

This morning you will visit the Embekke Devale, Lankatilake and Galadeniya Temples. Founded in the 14th Century and set in three small villages in the hills just outside Kandy, you will walk between the three temples which are a fascinating combination of Buddhist and Hindu architecture.

The afternoon is free to do your own sightseeing or shopping or you could make an optional visit to the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens. Covering 150 acres, they are the largest and best kept gardens in Sri Lanka with over 10,000 trees, an orchard house and spice gardens. The visit to the garden is an excellent introduction to many of the trees and plants that you will see in the wild.

In the early evening you will visit to the Temple of the Tooth. Said to have been brought to Sri Lanka over 2,000 years ago in the hair of a Princess, the tooth relic is the island's most important Buddhist relic.

Overnight: Hotel Topaz or Similar, Kandy (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Train to Nanu Oya - approximately 4 hours. Drive to Nurwara Eliya - 1 hour. Walk and tea plantation visit.

This morning you will catch the train from Kandy to make the journey to reach Nanu Oya and the surrounding hill country. Dating back to the mid-19th Century, Sri Lanka's railway network is another legacy of the British colonial era. Whilst sometimes journeys can be even slower than by road, a train journey is definitely an atmospheric and enjoyable way to travel, especially through the hill country, passing lush forest, waterfalls and manicured plantations.

After arriving by train at Nanu Oya, you travel by road for around one hour to reach Nuwara Eliya, your overnight stop. Here, you spend the remainder of the day enjoying a countryside walk and making a visit to one of the area's many tea plantations. From the time tea was first brought to the island in the 19th Century, after the pre-existing coffee plantations were decimated by a coffee-fungus, the tea industry in Sri Lanka has developed at an incredible rate. Initially exporting mainly to British markets today, more than 70% is grown for sale to Russia, the Middle East, and North Africa. During a tea plantation visit you will learn a little about the growing and harvesting techniques as well as perhaps having the chance to see first-hand the production process from bush to cup.

If you have opted to do the sunrise walk up Adam's Peak tomorrow you will leave the hotel in the late evening and drive for approximately 1¼ hours to the base of the mountain to begin your walk in the early hours (see Day 10 below).

Overnight: Hotel Black Pool or Similar, Nuwara Eliya (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Optional ascent of Adam's Peak, 2,243m/7,359ft (seasonal). Alternatively drive to Horton Plains, walks to Baker's Falls and World''s End - 5 hours.

Optional ascent of Adam's Peak (departures between November and April only).
For those that wish, there is the option to make an early hours' ascent of Adam's Peak, 2,243m/7,400ft, to watch the sun rise. Although not quite the island's highest point, Adam's Peak is its most famous and held sacred by Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims alike. Atop the peak, now covered by a shrine, is reported to be the footprint in the rock which, depending upon your faith, is believed to be that of Buddha, Adam or Shiva. The peak is a major pilgrimage site and in the season many hundreds of people climb through the night to watch sunrise from the summit. Setting out from the base of the mountain at Dalhousie at around 2-2.30am, it takes between 2½-4 hours to cover the 7km/4½ miles and 5,200 stone steps, to reach the summit. Along the way you will pass a multitude of refreshment and souvenir stalls and the occasional rest area, all amongst the hubbub of monks, pilgrims and entire families making the climb. Watching the sunrise, and feeling its warming rays as they reach you, is certainly a memorable reward for one of the more unusual mountain walks you are likely to make.

Having walked back down the mountain you will have breakfast at a local guesthouse and then make the return drive to the hotel. The rest of the day is yours to rest and relax.

If you are not opting for Adam's Peak then the day's programme is:

Visit Horton's Plains, walk to Baker's Falls and World's End:
Today you will enjoy a circular walk that encompasses the main views and incredibly rich biodiversity of the Horton Plains National Park area of mountain moorland and cloud forest. From the park visitor centre a broad track leads you onto the plains and via locations with such evocative names as 'Chimney Pool' or 'Leg of the Mutton pool' to reach Baker's Falls. Although not especially high at 20m/65ft Baker's Falls are a picture postcard spot, where the rushing waters of the Belihul River plunge into a gorge filled with rhododendrons. You can view the falls first from an observation deck and then after a short climb down, from their base. Your next viewpoint will be the dramatically named World's End, where the plateau drops away in a vertical drop of some 1,000m/3,300ft to the plains below.
The paths around the plains vary from broad tracks to narrow dirt paths but the walking is gentle throughout,

with negligible ascent and descent. Your leader will doubtless have his favourite route to follow, but altogether you can expect to be out walking today for around 5 hours, covering 5-7 miles.

Overnight: Hotel Black Pool or Similar, Nuwara Eliya (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Drive to Uda Walawe - 2½-3 hours. Jeep safari at the National Park. Drive to Tissamharama - 30-45mins.

You will leave the hill country today and make the scenic journey south towards the coast. From Nurwara Eliya the road descends first to Ella Gap, a prominent viewpoint over the valley that leads to the coast. There's a rest-house here which makes for a good refreshment stop whilst taking in the view. Driving on you'll arrive at Uda Walawe National Park, where you will have a Jeep Safari through the park. You are now in the Dry Zone, a lowland area of evergreen forests which in contrast to the ubiquitous rain forest, is one the few dry forest areas in the whole Indo-Pacific region. Combined with the surrounding areas of thorny scrubland this environment supports a healthy population of elephants and over 70 other species of mammal. After lunch you continue on to reach your overnight hotel in Tissamharama.

Overnight: Blue Turtle Hotel or Similar, Tissamaharama (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Game drives in Yala.

An early start today. Yala National Park is perhaps Sri Lanka's best-known spot for wildlife viewing. Covering around 130,000 hectares it covers a wide range of vegetation zones including monsoon forest, grassland, fresh water & marine wetlands, and sandy beaches. These habitats support an equally diverse range of flora and fauna and on your morning and afternoon safari drives here you may be able to see elephants, deer, wild buffalo, crocodile and some of the more than 120 species of birds including, Lesser Flamingos and Paradise Flycatchers. Today Yala is considered one of the world's premier parks for seeing leopard, as these normally elusive cats have grown quite accustomed to the safari jeeps that criss-cross the park. On an early morning or early evening drive you therefore have quite a good chance of spotting a leopard on the dirt trails or sitting atop a rocky outcrop.

Overnight: Blue Turtle Hotel or Similar, Tissamaharama (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Drive to Unawatuna - 4 hours. Afternoon walking tour of nearby Galle.

A further contrast in scenery lies ahead today as you make the short drive to reach the coast south of Tissamaharama. Upon reaching the main coast road you'll then follow the shoreline westward via Hambantota, Tangalle and Matara to reach Unawatuna, across the bay from Galle.

After checking in to your hotel and having lunch, you will make an afternoon visit to the nearby town of Galle. This fortified Portuguese/Dutch port is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Walking along the walled ramparts and through the narrow streets, makes for a really pleasant afternoon. Galle is a popular spot for visiting tourists and you will doubtless be able to pick up some nice souvenirs or presents to take home

Overnight: Coco Bay Beach Resort or Similar, Unawatuna (Meals: BLD)

Day 14: Day at leisure. Or morning whale watching (November to April departures only).

In recent years Sri Lanka has developed a reputation as one of the best places in the world to view both blue whales and sperm whales. The prime spots are offshore from Dondra Head or Mirissa, both of which are just a short drive from Unawatuna. Early morning is considered the optimum time for sightings, so it will be an early start today in time to join one of the whale watching boats departing Mirissa at around 6:30am.

Sri Lankan coastal waters are very rich in nutrients and therefore sea life, as a result of the heavy inflow of river waters during the monsoon rains. With the waters off Dondra Head being particularly deep and lying on the migratory path of the whales, conditions are ideal for whale watching. As well as the giant blue whale and sperm whales, dolphins are also commonly seen. Returning to shore in time for lunch, the rest of the day is now yours to relax in the comfort of your hotel, by the pool or on the beach.

On May to October departures the whole day will be at leisure.

Overnight: Coco Bay Beach Resort or Similar, Unawatuna (Meals: BLD)

Day 15: Drive to Colombo - 3 hours. Remainder of day at leisure.

This morning you will drive to Colombo and transfer to you hotel. The rest of the day will be at your leisure.

Overnight: Galle Face Regency or Similar, Colombo (Meals: BLD)

Day 16: Group transfer to Colombo airport. Fly to London.

This morning, after breakfast, you will be transferred the short distance to the airport for your flight back to the UK. **(Meals: B)**

Our grading system

Gentle Walking Sri Lanka is graded as a Gentle walking holiday, as described below.

Gentle
Trips within this grade typically mix sightseeing with easy-paced half and/or full day walks. On these trips, walks will be on relatively low altitude trails, for a duration of around 4-6 hours. On all of our Gentle graded trips, some ascent and descent should be anticipated, and there may occasionally be a longer walking day. Holidays within this grade generally use hotels and comfortable lodges although a few do have some nights camping.

These holidays are suitable for people who enjoy easy-paced walks in the British countryside or exploring on foot rather than in a vehicle.

Trip altitude

Important - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend www.medex.org.uk as a good source of information.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ An English-speaking Sri Lankan leader
- ✓ Whale watching excursions (Nov to Apr departures)
- ✓ Early Morning optional ascent of Adam's Peak (Nov to Apr departures)
- ✓ All meals included from lunch on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 16.
- ✓ Single, timed, group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ All hotel/airport transfers by private vehicles
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation, full board, twin share basis
- ✓ Sightseeing where specified
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- × Travel insurance
- × Visa fees
- × Sri Lankan airport departure taxes (where applicable)
- × Tips

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit For further information about our campaign visit https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign.

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.

Ranweli Hotel, Waikkal

Set on a small island and accessible by passenger ferry, this is a unique eco hotel with comfortable en suite bungalow rooms on the beach.

Palm Garden Village or Similar, Near Wilpattu

Palm Garden Village. Lovely rooms, air conditioned and good amenities. The hotel is situated in a beautiful location by a lake, set in very attractive landscaped gardens, and has a pool.

Aliya Resort & Spa or Similar, Sigiriya

Accommodation at this stylish, contemporary resort is in spacious, well-appointed chalets set in secluded landscaped gardens. There is an infinity pool and Ayurvedic Spa Centre set against the impressive backdrop of Sigiriya Rock.

Hotel Topaz or Similar, Kandy

Hotel Topaz is nestled on top of Anniewatte Mountain. It provides a spa, a large outdoor pool and elegant accommodation. Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the property.

Hotel Black Pool or Similar, Nuwara Eliya

Hotel Black Pool is located in the heart of Nuwara Eliya. It is surrounded by vast tea estates, carefully tended vegetable plantations and beautiful mountainous terrain. All the rooms are decorated with traditional Sri Lankan designs. The hotel has 50 rooms, each with air-conditioning, a safe, and free Wi-Fi.

Blue Turtle Hotel or Similar, Tissamaharama

Situated close to Yala National Park, the Blue Turtle Hotel makes the ideal base for exploring Sri Lanka's premier wildlife park. The hotel as a restaurant, bar and outdoor pool set in pretty gardens. Rooms have air-conditioning, private bathrooms and balconies.

Coco Bay Beach Resort or Similar, Unawatuna

This boutique, beachfront hotel is situated on the quieter side of Unawatuna Beach and has far-reaching views across to Galle Fort. All rooms have private balconies with sea views, minibars and air-conditioning, whilst the generous bathrooms have a spa bath and rain shower. The resort has a restaurant by the beach, outdoor pool and lounge bar, and also offers massages and yoga sessions.

Galle Face Regency or Similar, Colombo

The Galle Face hotel is Sri Lanka's most historic hotel being built in 1864. It is situated on Colombo's seafront facing the Galle Face green. Rooms are comfortable and well-appointed. The hotel has a swimming pool and a spa.

Meal arrangements

All meals included from lunch on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 16.
14 breakfasts, 14 lunches and 14 dinners.

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

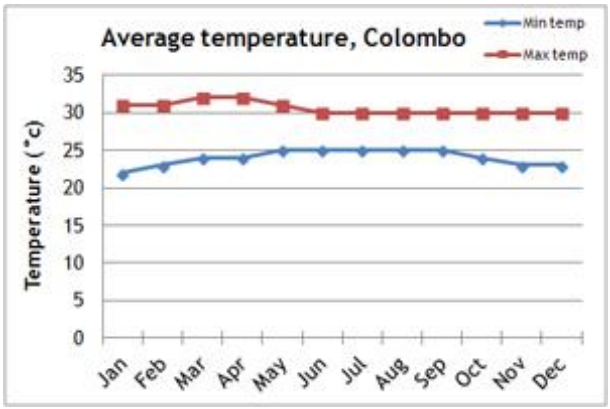
Further information

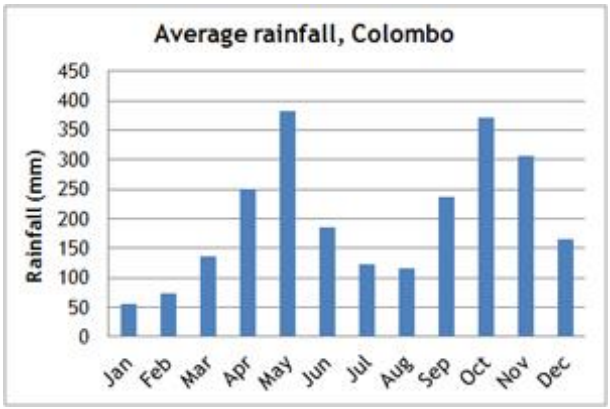
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

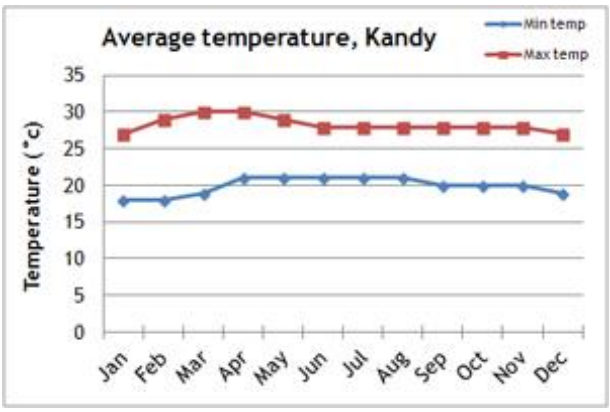
The nature of adventure travel

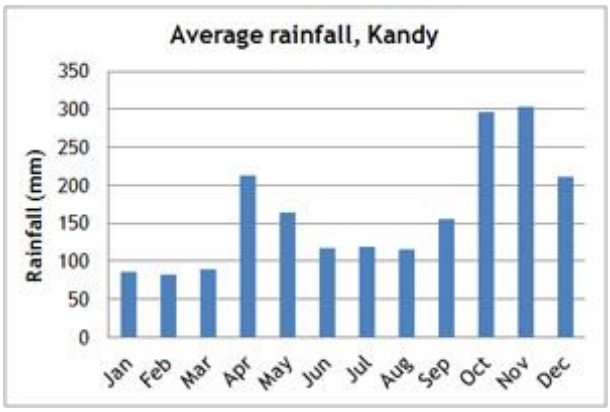
Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information









Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

There are many ways you can extend your holiday with Mountain Kingdoms: you could book extra nights at a hotel, relax at a beautiful beach resort, arrange a personal sightseeing tour or enjoy some other exciting activities such as a safari, rafting or birdwatching. In fact whatever's available, we can help make it happen. We're happy to suggest ideas, provide quotes and make all the arrangements.

We can also assist with flight and hotel upgrades.

Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- We have designed the itinerary to include not only the island's main cultural and scenic sights but also gentle countryside walks on our days in the cultural centre and hill country of the island.
- Many itineraries to Sri Lanka involve endless long road journeys – which can be very tiring – and a different hotel every night. We have tried to break up our road journeys as far as possible and minimise one night hotel stays.
- Your tour will be led by a professional, English-speaking guide who will be delighted to share their expert knowledge of the history, culture and nature of their home country.
- We have a maximum group size of 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects associated with larger tour groups.
- If you have any questions about this trip, please contact Seraphina Berry at the Mountain Kingdoms office, who has spent time travelling in Sri Lanka and is very familiar with the sights, walks and journeys included in this trip.
- We offer a flexible service and can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and exciting activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What our clients say

From beginning to end the trip was well organised. The content was varied and interesting and we were escorted by an excellent guide who went to great lengths to ensure that we all had a good experience.
-Mr C, UK

Everything was very well organised and ran smoothly. Hotels were of a very good standard throughout, as was the food. The itinerary was very comprehensive, we really felt we had a full and varied experience of life in Sri Lanka, its history, culture and way of life.
-Mr & Mrs B, Surrey

I am just back from yet another superb trip with MK. We had a fabulous time. The itinerary was rich and diverse providing us with a very broad experience of a large amount of the country without feeling rushed or pressurised… A great trip all round.
- Ms B, Buckinghamshire

This was an excellent trip. The itinerary was well organised and I think contained all the most interesting places in Sri Lanka. It had a combination of interesting historical temples, good walking, coastal scenery and wildlife. The hotels and meals were of a consistently high standard. Everything was well organised.
- Mr R, Middlesex

The standard of food and hotels was very good throughout. The size of the group was just right. The guide, driver, and assistant were always helpful and attentive. All round good experience.
-Mr & Mrs D, Shropshire

The timing and itinerary of the holiday met our requirements and were main reasons for making the booking with MK. Could not fault any of the services provided by MK.
-Mr R P, Fife

Mountain Kingdoms – distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday – it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to a hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT
CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN

TOURISM DECLARES CLIMATE EMERGENCY

For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

Carbon Offsetting

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the **Ecoan tree planting project** in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

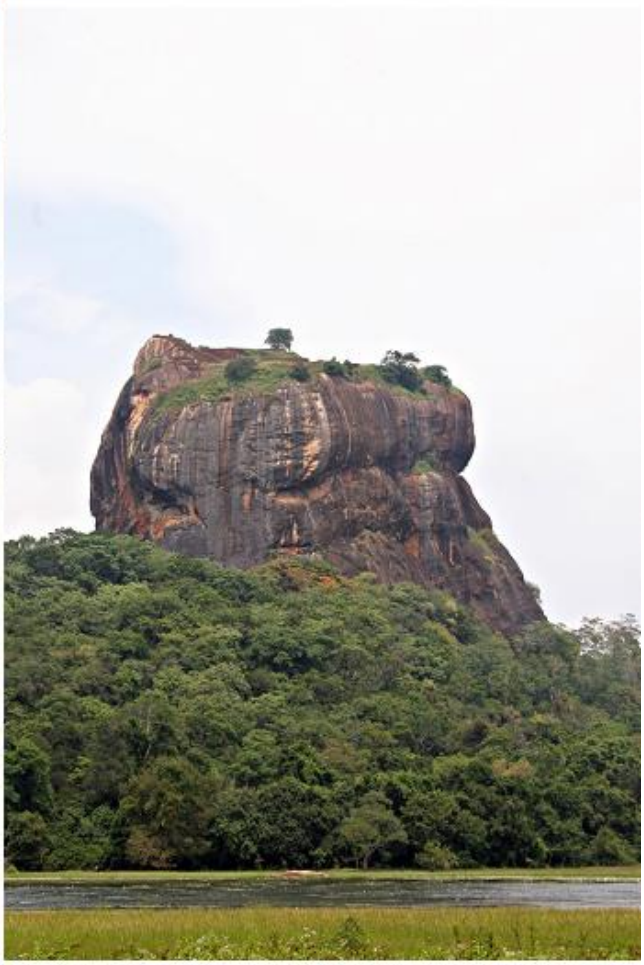
- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.