

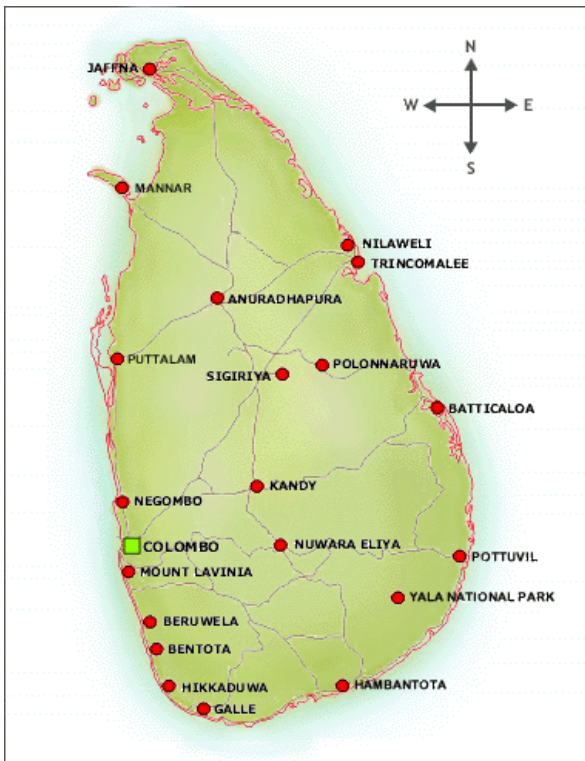
Aitken Spence



9 NIGHTS RAMAYANA TRAIL

CHILAW – TRINCOMALEE – KANDY -MAHIYANGANAYA-NUWARA ELIYA – KATARAGAMA - COLOMBO

TOUR OVERVIEW



Sri Lanka is a fascinating island of paradise and a destination where a tourist and traveller will come across rich culture, scenic beauty and a variance of locations to explore with a taste culinary cuisine at its best. Set in the Indian Ocean in South Asia, the tropical island nation of Sri Lanka has a history dating back to the birth of time. It is a place where the original soul of Buddhism still flourishes and where nature's beauty remains abundant and unspoilt. Few places in the world can offer the traveller such a remarkable combination of stunning landscapes, pristine beaches, captivating cultural heritage and unique experiences within such a compact location. Within a mere area of 65,610 kilometres lie 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 1,330 kilometres of coastline - much of it pristine beach - 15 national parks showcasing an abundance of wildlife, nearly 500,000 acres of lush tea estates, 250 acres of botanical gardens, 350 waterfalls, 25,000 water bodies, to a culture that extends back to over 2,500 years. This is an island of magical proportions, once known as Serendib, Taprobane,

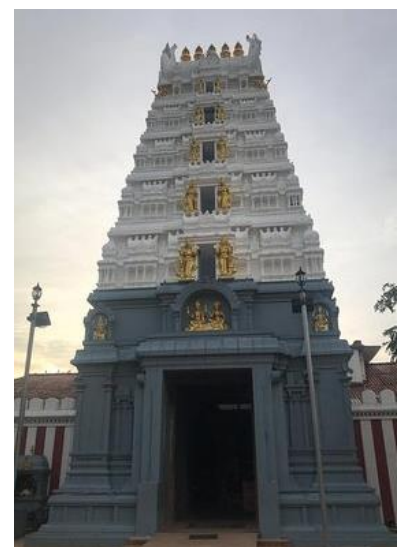
the Pearl of the Indian Ocean, and Ceylon. Discover refreshingly Sri Lanka. We will help unfold the mysteries of Sri Lanka, as we take you through Colombo, the commercial capital and city, ancient archaeological cities, towns, Hill stations and beaches.

DAY 1: AIRPORT - CHILLAW -NEGAMBO /COLOMBO

Upon arrival at the Colombo Bandaranayake International Airport, you will be received warmly by our representative. You will then be escorted to your vehicle to begin your holiday in Sri Lanka.

Munishwaram Temple

It is believed that Munishwaram predates the Ramayana and a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva was located here. Munishwaram means the first temple for Shiva (Munnu + Easwaran). A Shiva Lingam was already here when Lord Rama visited this place. Lord Rama after his victorious battle left for Ayodhya with Sita in one of King Ravana's Vimanas. He felt he was being followed by a Bramhaasthi Dosham (a malevolent black shadow) as he had killed King Ravana who was a Brahmin.



Manavari Temple

When the Vimana was passing over Munishwaram, he felt the Vimana vibrating, and realized the Brahmaasti Dosham was not following him at this particular point. He stopped the Vimana at this juncture and asked god Lord Shiva for advice. Lord Shiva blessed Lord Rama and advised installing and praying at four lingams located at Manavari, Thiru Koneshwaram, Thiru Ketheshwaram and Rameshwaram in India as the only remedy to get rid of the dosham.



The first lingam was installed at Manavari about 5km from here, near the banks of the Deduru Oya. At the Manavari Temple Chilaw Manavari is the first lingam installed and prayed by Rama and till date this lingam is called as Ramalinga Shivan. Rameshwaram is the only other lingam in world named after Lord Rama.

Overnight stay at your hotel in Colombo / Negombo.

DAY 2: COLOMBO / NEGOMBO – SIGIRYA

Breakfast at hotel.

The 5th century rock citadel of King Kasyapa and World Heritage Site - Sigiriya - doesn't only boasts of ancient Sri Lankan engineering & urban planning supremacy but also acclaims to be one of the finest monuments of art & culture. Step through the gigantic 'Lion Paws' - overlooking the symmetrical royal gardens below - to comprehend the absolute splendor that once dominated this rock fortress. Surrounded by ramparts & moats the Lion Rock - resembling the mythological 'City of Gods' - is coated by frescoes that relate to Gupta style paintings found in Ajanta caves of India. Walk in the shade of an eminent 'mirror wall' embracing the Western face of Sigiriya representing an artistic hundred meters laminated with graffiti. Wander into the well-fabricated museum downstairs for an epic journey of yesteryears to realize how the citadel floated above citizens with the castle, ponds and irrigation systems that pumped water right onto its summit with an ingenious hydraulic system describing a colossal masterpiece of the great king which remained a wonder in Asia for centuries



Overnight stay at your hotel in Sigiriya .

DAY 3: SIGIRIYA – TRINCOMALEE

Breakfast at hotel.

Trincomalee is a port city on the east coast of Sri Lanka. The city is built on a peninsula, which divides the inner and outer harbours. It is one of the main centers of Tamil speaking culture on the island. The Bay of Trincomalee's harbour is renowned for its large size and security; unlike every other in the Indian Sea, it is accessible to all types of craft in all weathers. The beaches are used for surfing, scuba diving, fishing and whale watching.



City tour: You will be able to visit the famous Koneswaram temple which attracts many pilgrims from all parts of India. It is also known as the Temple of a Thousand Columns. There are several Buddhist historical sites around the Trincomalee. These include the famous Seruwila Mangala Raja Maha Vihara (Seruwila Temple) which is under consideration to be declared a UNESCO world heritage site dating back to 2nd century B.C. the Sri Gajaba Len Vihara (Sri Gajaba Cave Temple), Tiriya temple and the Welgam temple. The entrance to the roadway leading to Koneswaram is actually the entrance to what used to be Fort Fredrick. The fort was built in 1623 by the Portuguese. The city has the largest Dutch fort in Sri Lanka. (Entrance fees to sites not included)

Visiting Shankari Devi Temple.

Overnight stay at your hotel in Trincomalee.

DAY 4: TRINCOMALEE – KANDY

Breakfast at hotel.

Early morning go to Kinniya (07 hot spring wells)

After that proceed to Kandy.

Lying amidst the hills, Kandy is the last capital of the ancient kings of Sri Lanka. While being the second largest city in Sri Lanka it is also famous for its immense beauty and is named as one of the seven UNESCO declared World Heritage sites in the country. With its luxuriant prairie, picturesque lake, longest river of the country and misty mountains, Kandy successfully mesmerizes every visitor unsurprisingly.



While on your city tour you will visit one of the world heritages as well as a sacred place for the Buddhists all over the world; namely the Temple of tooth Relic known to the Sri Lankans as

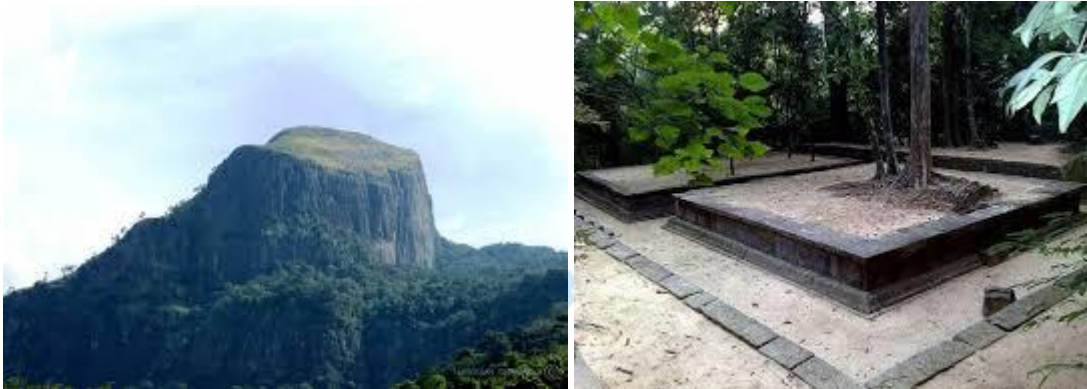
Dalada Maligawa. Your next visit will be to the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens which is a paradise for nature lovers. This beautiful flower Eden is restored with over 300 different varieties of orchids, other spices, medicinal plants and Palm trees. Every year more than 1.2 million people are enchanted by the beauty of these 147 acre flower gardens. The real evidence of the richness will be affirmed by your visit to the Gem Museum. Sri Lanka produces the finest quality of gems in the world. Semi-precious gems, the sapphires of Sri Lanka, which are very exclusive and comes in shades of blue, red, green, white etc. In the evening you will witness a traditional cultural dance show.

Overnight stay at your hotel in Kandy.

DAY 5: DAY EXCURSION TO MAHIYANGANAYA

Breakfast at hotel.

Transfer to Mahiyanganaya.



Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your hotel. Today you will visit the following places Mahiyanganaya.

Dunuwala & Laggala - Dunuwala (the site where Ravana died) and Laggala (where Ravana prayed to Lord Shankara). The cartels behind the Dunuvila Lake are called Laggala. Laggala is derived from the Sinhala term Ilakka Gala, which when translated into English gives us the meaning "Target Rock". Laggala served as a sentry point to the King Ravana's army and it was from this rock the first Glimpse of Lord Rama's army was sighted. This hill is geographically the highest part of the northern region and on a clear day Thiru Koneshwaran and Talai Mannar can be seen. King Ravana is believed to have meditated on this rock and prayed at Thiru Koneshwaran to Lord Shiva. It is here that King Ravana was killed by Lord Rama's Brahmaastharam. The top of Laggala is flat and believed to have been hit by the Brahmaastharam.

Yahangala Here King Ravana's body was displayed after his death to allow his countrymen to offer their last respect.

*Wera Gantota Weragantota was the capital city of King Ravana and means "a place of flying chariot (aircraft) is landing" in Sinhala language. It is believed to be the first place where Sita was brought into Sri Lanka in King Ravana's Vimana. These jungles are the place where the city of Lankapura once stood. The city had a beautiful palace for Queen Mandothari surrounded by waterfalls, streams and varieties of flora and fauna.

Sita Kotuwa Sita was kept at Queen Mandodari's Palace and later move first to Sita Kotuwa (translated "Sita's Fort") and finally to AshokaVatika. The ruins found here are the remnants of later civilizations.

*Gurulupotha Lankapura Here was a flying chariot (aircraft) repair center known as Gurulupotha. In Valmiki's depiction King Ravana's Vimana resembled a huge peacock. The Vimana in Sinhala language means Dhandu Monara which is known as "flying peacock"; hence the name Gurulupotha, which means "parts of birds" .

Return back to Kandy

*Historical believe only, but not as a precise location

NOTE: Yahangala viewed from distance considering the safety of the passengers as it is situated in the mid of Mountain/Forest .

DAY 6: KANDY - NUWARA ELIYA

Breakfast at hotel.

On the way visit Ramboda Hanuman Temple.

Nuwara Eliya (City of Lights), blessed with salubrious climate, breathtaking views of valleys, meadows, mountains and greenery; Surrounded by hills and tea plantations, the town of Nuwara Eliya enjoys spring-like weather throughout the year. It is also known as "Little England", which was the favorite hill station of the British who tried to create Nuwara Eliya into a typical English Village. The old brick Post office, country house like hill club with its hunting pictures, trophies and strict formal dinner attire; the 18 hole golf course, horse race course, etc., all remind you of "England".



City tour: During the city tour in Nuwara Eliya you will visit the main attractions of the town which include the golf course, trout streams, Victoria Park, and boating or fishing on Lake Gregory. You can also visit a working tea factory where the slow-growing tea bushes of this highland region produce some of the world's finest Orange Pekoe tea.

Hakgala Botanical Gardens

The Hakgala Botanical Gardens was one of the pleasure gardens of King Ravana. This garden was expanded during the British period and has a wide variety of flowers including an excellent collection of orchids. This is the exotic pleasure garden where King Ravana kept the depressed Sita, insisting that she marries him. It was here where the heartwarming meeting took place between her and Hanuman, who brought her Rama's ring with the news that Rama was looking for her. He offered to carry her back but she refused saying it would be an insult to Rama's honor if she did so. Part of this majestic garden still exists. It is also said that Hanuman nearly destroyed it in order to prove to Ravana of the forces against him.

Sita Amman Temple

The Sita Amman Temple can be seen en route to the Hakgala Botanical Gardens. The prominent temple architecture will not fail to attract your attention. Ancient statues of Rama and Sita can be seen on one side of the temple. The temple today is a modern building with its paintings, statues and pillars decorated with sculptures; all depicting the tale of Rama and Sita.

Overnight stay at your hotel in Nuwara Eliya.



DAY 7: NUWARA ELIYA - BANDARAWELA - KATARAGAMA

Breakfast at your hotel.

Divurumpola Temple

Still revered by thousands, this holy haven was the place where Sita performed her Agni Pariksha (proving her chastity) to her husband Rama. Continuing the practice for thousands of years, villagers still pledge their fidelity or take oaths there and even in certain courts, this agreement was binding. This place has been respected and worshipped by people down the ages.

Ella Ella is a small mountain village near Bandarawela and boasts three locations linked to the Ramayana where local legend claims Ravana was hiding Sita. First there is the Ravana Ella Cave, located at the massive Ella Falls; a breathtaking 1080 feet high waterfall that cascades into several falls. The rocky undergorges of the waterfall is Khondalite, a kind of limestone which undergoes faster decay as hard gneiss or granite. This has resulted in many caves being formed near the falls. King Ravana is said to have lived in one of the caves above the waterfall. A nearby pool bored out of the rock by the gushing waters is where Sita is said to have bathed Ravana.

Overnight stay at your hotel in Kataragama.



DAY 8: KATARAGAMA-COLOMBO

Breakfast at your hotel.

Visit Kataragama Temple

This is the temple of Lord Karthikeya Subramaniam at Kataragama. Lord Karthikeya was requested to go to the battlefield by Lord Indra on the last day of war. This was done to protect Lord Rama from the wrath of Brahmasthra aimed by King Ravana which otherwise would have weakened Lord Rama. The benefit was one of the most powerful weapon brahma asthra aimed at Lord Rama for the second time was rendered useless by the presence of Lord Karthikeya.

On the way to Colombo Visit Rumassala

Panchamuga Anjaneyar at Kalubowila.

This is the first Anjaneyar Temple in Sri Lanka and also the only Panchamuga (five faced) Anjaneyar Temple in Sri Lanka. Its the only temple in the world to have a chariot for Ajanyear. The chariot festival is held annually end Dec/ beginning of January.

Overnight stay at your hotel in Colombo.



DAY 9: COLOMBO

Breakfast at your hotel.

Colombo is the largest city and commercial capital of Sri Lanka. Located on the west coast, it is a busy and vibrant city with a mixture of modern and colonial impressions. Colombo has wildly varying architecture that span centuries and depict various styles. Many colonial buildings influenced by the Portuguese, Dutch and British exist alongside structures built in Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Indian and Contemporary architectural styles. No other place is this more evident in the heart of the city the Fort area. Colombo also boasts many shopping malls and department stores that offer brand name clothing at highly discounted prices. Therefore, it has become an important shopping destination among tourists.

City Tour: While on your city tour in Colombo you may visit famous places including Galle Face Green, the Viharamahadevi Park, National Museum, Twin World Trade Center towers, Old Parliament Building, Fort district, Independence Hall at Independence Square, and prominent Buddhist, Hindu, Islam and Christian places of worship. (Entrance fees to sites not included). For shopping, you may visit Odel, House of Fashion, Beverly Street, Majestic City, Noritake, etc.

Kelaniya Temple.



After King Ravana's death, Vibeeshana was coroneted as King of Lanka by Lakshmana at Kelaniya. There are murals enshrined outside the Buddhist temple depicting the crowning of Vibeeshana.

Overnight stay at your hotel in Colombo.

DAY 10: COLOMBO - AIRPORT

Breakfast at your hotel.

Transfer to airport for departure .

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