

EXPEDITIONS

SIGNATURE: SRI LANKA'S
HIGHLANDS, YALA & GALLE

11 days, Colombo to Galle

Trip code ASCGNS

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your Expedition Leader and Group, Colombo
- Signature Moment: Artisanal Tea Immersion, Nuwara Eliya
- Signature Moment: Marine Conservation Cruise, Weligama

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing May 14th, 2026 and onwards

Day 1

COLOMBO

Welcome to Sri Lanka. Your expedition begins in Colombo, a coastal capital where warm tropical breezes mingle with the scent of the Indian Ocean. You will be met upon arrival and transferred to your hotel. Rest and recharge tonight, letting the ambient sounds of the city soothe you as you prepare for the captivating historical and cultural treasures that will unfold across the island in the days ahead.



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Arrival Transfer

Bandaranaike International Airport – Colombo

You will be met at the airport and transferred to the hotel to start your adventure.

The morning comes alive as you gather for a welcome meeting with your National Geographic Expedition Leader, followed by insights from your National Geographic Expedition Expert. Next, dive into the sensory swirl of the capital. Board a motorized tuk tuk to rumble past colonial landmarks, vibrant markets, and the historic streets of Colombo Fort and Pettah beside a local historian. Inhale the aroma of toasted spices during a heritage lunch at the Dutch Hospital precinct. The afternoon brings a nostalgic spin through the city in beautifully restored vintage cars. Conclude the day watching the sky turn amber during sunset drinks overlooking the crashing ocean waves before your welcome dinner.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY

Your opportunity to meet your Expedition Leader and fellow travellers, and learn more about your tour. Don't forget to see the notice in the lobby (or ask reception) for the official time and place to meet up with the group.

Vintage Colombo City Tour

Colombo

Explore Colombo in beautifully restored vintage cars, stopping at two iconic landmarks as your local guide shares stories of the city's colonial heritage, culture, and history.

Discover Historic Colombo

Colombo

Explore Colombo by tuk tuk and on foot through the historic Fort and Pettah districts with a local historian. Discover colonial landmarks and bustling markets before enjoying a traditional Sri Lankan lunch at the iconic Dutch Hospital.

Leave the coast behind and head into the emerald heart of Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle. Watch the urban bustle seamlessly dissolve into a canvas of rural countryside and swaying palms. En route, ascend a dramatic rock outcrop to reach the ancient Dambulla Cave Temple. Step into the cool, silent cavern shrines to marvel at centuries-old Buddha statues and intricate murals illuminated by soft light. After soaking in sweeping views of the plains, pause for a relaxed lunch in a tranquil lakeside setting. Arrive at your lodge nestled deep in the natural surroundings of Kandalama. Take the afternoon to unwind at leisure before gathering for a dinner overlooking the mirror-like lake.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle

Colombo - Dambulla

3h30m-3h30m

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Dambulla Cave Temple Visit

Sigiriya

1h-1h30m

Visit the ancient Dambulla cave temples at one of the most well-preserved temple and cave sites in Sri Lanka. See Buddhist mural paintings that line the walls of the seventh-century caves as well as a collection of hundreds of statues of Buddha in different poses.

Greet the dawn with a choice, each offering a distinct perspective on this ancient wonder: ascend the sheer vertical walls of the Sigiriya Rock Fortress to marvel at ancient frescoes and summit views from above, or capture the immense scale of the dramatic citadel from below via a guided scenic drive. Mid-morning, connect with a vibrant community initiative at a women-led reed weaving project. Listen to the rhythmic rustle of natural materials as local artisans demonstrate their craft, sharing light refreshments and stories of empowerment. In the afternoon, the low hum of a tuk tuk carries you through the ruins of Polonnaruwa. Explore UNESCO-listed temples and royal palaces as historical tales bring the stone to life, before returning to the resort to relax before dinner.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Sigiriya Rock Fortress Experience

Sigiriya

Choose between two ways to experience the UNESCO-listed Sigiriya Rock Fortress: climb to the summit for breathtaking views and a closer look at the ancient royal citadel, or enjoy a scenic guided visit around the base without the climb. Both groups reunite afterward before continuing together to the G for Good project.

Polonnaruwa by Tuk Tuk

Polonnaruwa

Explore the UNESCO-listed ancient city of Polonnaruwa by tuk tuk, visiting impressive royal palaces, temples, and iconic Buddha statues. Discover the rich history, Buddhist heritage, and remarkable engineering of Sri Lanka's medieval capital.

Weaving Ancient Heritage

Sigiriya

Visit a women-led reed weaving project in a local village to learn about traditional craftsmanship and the role it plays in supporting local livelihoods. Meet the artisans, try your hand at weaving, and enjoy homemade Sri Lankan sweets and herbal tea.

Watch the lowlands dissolve into mist-shrouded peaks as you ascend into the lush highlands of Kandy. Arrive at the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, where the air is thick with the scent of jasmine and burning incense. Witness the atmospheric puja ceremony, letting the rhythmic throb of traditional drums and low chanting anchor you in this deeply spiritual space. Afterward, enjoy a home-style lunch at a women-led social enterprise, a G Adventures-supported project, while connecting with local artisans. Continue your drive deeper into the mountains, where neat rows of emerald tea bushes carpet the hillsides like velvet. Arrive in Nuwara Eliya, a cool highland retreat wrapped in crisp mountain air and timeless charm.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle

Kandalama – Kandy

3h-3h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Temple of the Sacred Tooth Tour

Kandy

1h-1h36m

Enjoy a tour of the Temple of the Tooth, which houses an important relic – a tooth of Lord Buddha kept in a well-preserved golden casket. Learn about the importance of this site from local guides.

Social Enterprise Lunch

Kandy

Stop for a delicious traditional Sri Lankan lunch prepared by Sthree Craft Shop and Café. This social enterprise offers opportunities for local women and youth living with disabilities, through handicraft and hospitality training.

Private Vehicle

Kandy – Nuwara Eliya

3h30m

75km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Step into the dew-kissed fields of a historic tea estate, welcomed by a plantation specialist. Inhale the earthy fragrance of the highlands as you learn traditional plucking techniques, working alongside local workers to harvest the bright green leaves. Follow the harvest inside the factory, watching the processing from withering to grading, and learn how the global auction system functions. Next, participate in a curated tasting led by a tea expert, identifying subtle flavor profiles before enjoying a freshly brewed cup. After a lunch overlooking the rolling estate, return to the hotel for an elegant high tea.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY

Enjoy a behind-the-scenes experience at Pedro Tea Estate, where a tea specialist guides you through the journey of world-renowned Ceylon tea. Stroll through the tea fields, try traditional tea plucking, explore the historic factory, and conclude with a private tea tasting featuring premium estate-grown teas, served with freshly baked cake.

Day 7

NUWARA ELIYA/YALA NATIONAL PARK

The whistle blows as you settle into your seats, watching the rugged peaks begin to roll past the window. Travel into a landscape of pure cinema. Peer out the window as the locomotive snakes past cascading waterfalls, deep gorges, and dramatic stone viaducts, cutting through rolling green hills wrapped in mountain mist. Disembark in the mountain town of Ella for a local lunch, then watch the scenery transform dramatically as you descend into the sun-drenched southern lowlands. Arrive at the edge of the wild savannah of Yala, checking into your lodge as the calls of the wild echo through the dry scrub and twilight settles over the wilderness.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle

Nuwara Eliya - Ambewela

1h30m-1h30m

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Scenic Hill Country Train Journey

Ambewela - Ella

Travel through Sri Lanka's breathtaking Hill Country aboard one of the world's most scenic rail journeys, with reserved first-class seating. Admire sweeping tea plantations, cascading waterfalls, lush forests, and dramatic mountain landscapes during this unforgettable ride.

YALA NATIONAL PARK

Set out in the crisp pre-dawn light in an open-air safari vehicle, entering Yala National Park as the wild awakens. Scan the golden grasses and gnarled trees as park rangers track wildlife, offering deep insights into elephant behavior and ecosystem pressures. Return to the lodge for breakfast, followed by a private presentation on elephant conservation led by an active researcher. In the afternoon, head back into the bush for a second safari, observing how the changing light shifts animal movements around the watering holes. As evening falls, toast the day's discoveries with sundowners overlooking the wild landscape, followed by a dinner celebrating local flavors.

**Meals included**

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

**TODAY'S ACTIVITIES**

Yala Wildlife Safari

Yala National Park

Experience morning and afternoon safaris through Yala National Park with an expert local ranger. Explore the park by off-road vehicle in search of Sri Lanka's remarkable wildlife, including elephants, sloth bears, crocodiles, and the elusive leopard, with lunch included between safari drives.

One final morning safari offers a chance to catch the park's predators and birdlife active in the cool dawn air. After breakfast, swap your safari vehicle for a tuk tuk, rumbling along coastal lanes to a fragrant cinnamon estate. Watch a harvesting demonstration, learning the intricate art of peeling the bark, before enjoying a private lunch infused with local spices. Continue along the coast to the historic trading port of Galle. In the late afternoon, join your Expedition Leader for a walking tour of the massive Galle Fort. Walk the stone ramparts past the lighthouse and historic churches, before choosing to stay in the fort for dinner or returning to the hotel.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Yala Wildlife Morning Safari

Yala National Park

Set out on a privately guided morning safari through Yala National Park with an expert local ranger. Travel in off-road safari vehicles in search of Sri Lanka's incredible wildlife, including elephants, sloth bears, crocodiles, and the elusive leopard.

Cinnamon Estate Experience

Galle

Travel by tuk tuk to a private cinnamon estate for an immersive experience celebrating Sri Lanka's renowned spice heritage. Enjoy a traditional estate lunch and a demonstration showcasing the art of cinnamon harvesting.

Galle Fort Walking Tour

Galle

Explore the UNESCO-listed Galle Fort on a guided walking tour through its historic streets, colonial landmarks, and centuries-old trading heritage. Discover highlights including the Lighthouse, Clock Tower, Dutch Hospital, and key religious sites while learning about ongoing conservation efforts. Guests can continue exploring Galle Fort at leisure afterward or return to the hotel.

Wake early for fresh pastries and coffee before transferring to the harbor. Board a private yacht for an exceptional ocean cruise alongside a Marine Biologist and National Geographic Explorer. Inhale the salty sea spray and enjoy breakfast and lunch on board while contributing to marine conservation fieldwork, scanning the deep blue waves for marine life. Return to shore for a free afternoon to wander Galle's cobblestone lanes. At dusk, visit a serene hillside temple to participate in a moving, candlelit blessing experience. Conclude the expedition with a festive farewell dinner.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY

Set sail aboard the Ceycat yacht for a private ocean experience featuring expert insights from a marine biologist and National Geographic Explorer. Learn about marine conservation efforts, the local ecosystem, and ongoing research projects while enjoying breakfast and lunch onboard.

Please note: the featured marine biologist may vary based on availability and may not always be a National Geographic Explorer.

Candlelight Blessing at Yatagala Temple

Galle

Visit Yatagala Temple for a serene candlelit blessing ceremony featuring traditional chants, offerings to local monks, and the symbolic pirit string ritual.

Your expedition to Sri Lanka concludes today. Take advantage of a provided day room to refresh and pack at your leisure, depending on your flight schedule. Transfers are provided to the airport at any time during the day.



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Departure Transfer

Galle – Bandaranaike International Airport

You will be met at your hotel and transferred to the airport at the end of your adventure.

What's included

- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your Expedition Leader and Group, Colombo
- Signature Moment: Artisanal Tea Immersion, Nuwara Eliya
- Signature Moment: Marine Conservation Cruise, Weligama

What are the main highlights of this trip?

Follow the leaf from field to factory during a private estate tour and curated tasting, Set sail on a private yacht alongside a marine researcher to study coastal conservation, Track leopards and elephants alongside local rangers on privately guided game drives, Intertwine with local culture at a women's reed project reviving ancestral crafts, Savor authentic home-style cuisine at a women-led community development project

What are the main highlights of this trip?

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How large will the group be?

Max 22

What meals are included in this trip?

10 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 8 dinners

What are the modes of transportation on my trip?

Private Vehicle, Walking, Train, Tuk-Tuk, Safari Vehicles.

Where will we stay during the trip?

Hotels (10 nts)

What should be on my packing list?

Conservative Dress:

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

Essentials:

- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, band-aids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Headphones (Noise-cancelling recommended)
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

Health & Safety:

- Face masks (Clients will be only be required to wear a face mask where it is mandated by local regulations.)
- Hand sanitizer
- Pen (Please bring your own pen for filling out documents.)

Smart Dress:

- Smart outfit (For evenings out)

Warm Weather:

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Sturdy water shoes/sandals
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear

What activities are optional on this trip?

- No optional activities

How old must I be to join this trip?

You must be 18 to travel unaccompanied on a G Adventures tour. For minors travelling with a guardian over 21 years old, the minimum age is 12.

Are international flights included in this trip?

No, international flights are generally not included in the price of your tour.

However, on some combo tours travelling between two different countries, international flights are included as part of the itinerary and price of the tour. Please speak to your GCO or booking agent for further details.

In addition, check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.

Dossier Disclaimer

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Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.