



Buddhapath/Eleven Directions

PLACES TO VISIT

DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 1: Saturday, January 7, 2023: Arrival in Colombo. Meet at 2.00 pm. Orientation. Visit the National Museum. Visit Kelaniya Buddhist temple.
Night's stay Colombo

DAY 2: Sunday, January 8:

Drive from Colombo to Anuradhapura.

Visit the oldest continually recorded tree in the world, the Sri Maha Bodhi which adorns this city of shrines. It was brought from India in the 3rd century BCE by Emperor Ashoka's daughter. Its sanctity rests on it being grown from the Bodhi Tree (*ficus religiosa*) in Bodh Gaya under which the Buddha attained enlightenment.

Night's stay at Anuradhapura

DAY 3: Monday, January 9: Anuradhapura

Anuradhapura (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) depicts the trajectory of the Sinhalese civilization from the time it was founded in 4th century BCE. The past grandeur is narrated by a fascinating collection of ancient ruins, including stupas enshrining the relics of the Buddha, some of which have been painstakingly restored. Visit Isurumuniya, Brazen Palace, Ruwanweliseya, Thuparamaya, the Abhayagiri monastic complex, the Elephant pond, Guard stone and Moon stone, the Buddha Samadhi statue, Kuttam Pokuna twin ponds, Ratnaprasada, Jetavanaramaya Monastery and the Archaeological Museum.

Night's stay at Anuradhapura

DAY 4: Tuesday, January 10: Anuradhapura

Continue to explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Anuradhapura. Visit Mihintale the first recorded wildlife sanctuary in the world, and where Buddhism in Sri Lanka began as King Devanampiya Tissa met the monk Mahinda on the hilltop in the 3rd century BCE. Also Aradhana Gala, Katu Seya, the Black water pond of Kaludiya Pokuna and the ancient stone bridge,

Night's stay at Anuradhapura

DAY 5: Wednesday, January 11: Drive from Anuradhapura to Polonnaruwa.

The impressive ruins of an ancient kingdom are home to massive palaces, huge statues including the famous sitting, standing and reclining Buddha, imposing temples and an artificial lake. Polonnaruwa is considered the cleanest city of Sri Lanka and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Although historically and culturally important, it also has a living culture of Buddhism and we will sit at Gal Vihara, a rock-cut temple of the 12th century where we hope to interact with the local Theravada monks.

Night's stay at Polonnaruwa



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DAY 6: Thursday, January 12: Continue to explore Polonnaruwa and around
Night's stay at Polonnaruwa

DAY 7: Friday, January 13: Drive to Sigiriya via Dambulla Caves

The Dambulla cave monastery (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) is traced back to the 1st century BCE and remains the best-preserved historical structure in Sri Lanka. It has five caves under a vast rock that overhangs the temple. On the underbelly of the rock a drip line is carved that keeps the interiors dry.

Inside the caves, the ceilings are adorned with intricate patterns of Buddha and bodhisattvas meticulously painted following the natural contours of the rock. It remains a living shrine that draws thousands of devotees. We reach the cave temple by walking on the gentle slope of the towering Dambulla rock that gives us a magnificent view of the plains below with the Sigiriya rock fortress emerging out of the flat landscape.

Night's stay at Sigiriya

DAY 8: Saturday, January 14: Sigiriya

Sigiriya (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) is a palace fortress of stunning splendor, an architectural marvel, a classic example of urban planning and a tribute to its ingenious builders of the 8th century. A park laid out on a symmetrical plan and water retaining structures with ingenious hydraulic systems which function till today.

The entrance through the famous Lion gate with its giant paws still intact gives Sigiriya its name. Enthralling frescoes of sensuous women and the mirror wall graffiti which narrate a story painted and etched of the genius of a people who lived and loved with passion. The Mirror Wall was so polished that the King could see himself when he passed through the ornate terrace in the sky. Its surface suggests that it is made of some form of porcelain.

Night's stay at Sigiriya

DAY 9: Sunday, January 15: Drive to Kandy via Aluvihara

Aluvihara is of great significance to the global history of Buddhism. It was here that the Buddha's teachings, the Tipitaka (including the Sutras), was first committed to writing, in Pali. During the first 450 years the Buddha's teachings were memorized and passed on orally from generation to generation. We visit the rock-cut caves, in a picturesque setting and pay homage to those who committed the great teachings to writing. That effort still goes on, and we can witness the same nearly extinct method of inscribing on palm leaves. The words are first scratched out with a metal stylus, after which black soot is rubbed into the leaf, causing the invisible words to appear magically.

Night's stay at Kandy

DAY 10: Monday, January 16: Kandy

Kandy is the cultural and religious capital of Sri Lanka. It is a city with a graceful charm, radiating an ambiance of antiquity. It has a vast array of shrines, and temples dating back to the 14th century when it was a centre for both Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism. Cocooned in the comfort of a protected valley in the central hills of Sri Lanka, the city at 500 meters (1640 feet) above sea level is home to the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, and hence an UNESCO World Heritage site. The Temple of the Tooth is part of the royal palace of



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Kandy, due to the ancient tradition that stated that the monarch is the protector of the relic. We plan to visit the newly-finished International Buddhist Museum and the National museum.

Kandy is virtually hidden behind a thick curtain of natural foliage in the form of lush tropical forests and a 60-hectare botanical garden. The garden was first conceived by King Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe on the loop of the Mahaweli River that partly encircles Kandy. Also visit Hindu temples

Night's stay at Kandy

Day 11: Tuesday, January 17: Kandy. Visit to the Centre of Ven. Dr. Bellanwila Dhammaratana Nayaka Thera or to Nanu oya by train and then visit tea gardens in Nuwaraeliya.

Night's stay at Kandy

Day 12: Wednesday, January 18: Drive from Kandy to Colombo to Galle.

Galle was known as Gimhathiththa. The city was extensively fortified by the Dutch during the 17th century from 1649 onwards. The Galle Fort is a world heritage site and is the largest remaining fortress in Asia built by European occupiers. We stay at the Lighthouse hotel designed and built by the famous architect, Geoffrey Bawa.

Other prominent landmarks in Galle include the city's natural harbor, the National Maritime Museum, St. Mary's Cathedral founded by Jesuit priests, one of the main Shiva temples on the island.

Night's stay at Galle

DAY 13: Thursday, January 19: Galle

Enjoy the beach at the Hotel. Day of leisure and retreat. Optional visit to see Dolphins and Whales at own cost.

Night's stay at Galle

DAY 14: Friday, January 20: Galle to Colombo

Visit the local market at Pettah, Gangaramaya Temple and watch the sunset on the beach.

Night's stay at Colombo

DAY 15: Saturday, January 21:

Meet some Sri Lankan opinion makers, including the Dr. Ariyaratne's family and those in the Sarvodaya movement. Dr. Ariyaratne is known as the Gandhi of Sri Lanka and has received the Sri Lankabhimanya, the highest National Honour of Sri Lanka.

Closing Circle

Transfer to airport for departure flight.