



**SRI LANKA
MADE EASY**
The Compact Guide
for Travel Agents



An Introduction

Sri Lanka, known as the “Pearl of the Indian Ocean”, is a captivating destination that packs a world of experiences into an island. From its pristine beaches perfect for surfing, diving, or simply unwinding — to the mystical highlands and lush rainforests — Sri Lanka’s landscapes are as diverse as they are breathtaking.

Culturally, the island is steeped in history and heritage. Home to eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the ancient cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, and the iconic Sigiriya Rock Fortress, Sri Lanka offers a gateway into thousands of years of civilisation. Festivals like Vesak and Esala Perahera bring to life the island’s vibrant cultural mosaic, showcasing a kaleidoscope of colours, traditions, and celebrations.

For nature enthusiasts, Sri Lanka is a wildlife haven. With over 26 national parks and reserves, visitors have the chance to witness elephants, leopards, and even blue whales in their natural habitats. The island’s unique ecosystems make it one of the world’s most significant biodiversity hotspots.

No matter the season, Sri Lanka offers favourable weather in various regions, making it a year-round destination for all types of beach lovers, adventurers, and cultural explorers alike. The warm hospitality of its people, the tantalising flavours of its cuisine, and a myriad of outdoor activities make it an ideal destination for those seeking authentic and unforgettable experiences.

This sales guide will take you through the highlights of Sri Lanka, equipping you with essential tips and insights to help you provide your clients with exceptional travel service.



Sigiriya Rock Fortress

Important Basics for Travelling in Sri Lanka



Sacred Etiquette

When visiting temples or holy places, it’s important to cover the shoulders and knees. Remove shoes and head coverings before entering, and avoid turning your back on Buddha statues or taking photos with them.

Visible Buddha tattoos can even have legal implications, so it’s best to be cautious.



Greet Like a Local

In Sri Lanka, greeting with “ayubowan” (hello) and a slight bow is a traditional gesture of respect. Saying “bohoma sthuthi” (thank you) can also endear you to the locals. The greetings are pronounced exactly as they are spelled.

Additionally, use your right hand for eating and handing over items, as using the left hand is considered disrespectful.



Sustainability Matters

Sri Lanka is committed to ecotourism. Support environmental protection by avoiding disposable plastics. The island nation also champions sustainable measures within its communities. Purchasing from local vendors is highly encouraged, and many tours offer opportunities to participate in community projects that promote sustainable practices while providing authentic experiences.



Warmth in Every Cup

Sri Lankans are renowned for their warm hospitality.

If offered tea or snacks, accept graciously; it’s a sign of respect and appreciation.



Respectful Dialogues

Avoid discussing religion or politics, and refrain from making negative comments about Buddhism, other religions, or political issues.

Always treat national symbols with respect.



FAQs: Answering the Most Important Questions to Travel Smart

Is it safe to travel to Sri Lanka?

After facing political and economic challenges in 2022, Sri Lanka has stabilised significantly. The government has implemented measures to restore order, and tourist areas such as Colombo, Galle, and Kandy are now peaceful. Security forces are actively monitoring these regions to ensure a safe environment. However, travellers should always stay updated with current travel advisories and avoid political gatherings.



Solo traveller aboard the iconic Sri Lanka Railways

How does Sri Lanka differ from India as a travel destination?

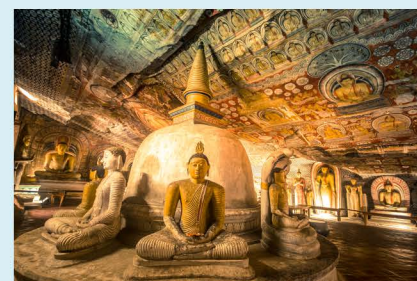


Kumu Beach, Balapitiya

While Sri Lanka and India share a border and some cultural similarities, each offers a distinct travel experience. Sri Lanka's compact size makes it easier to explore diverse landscapes and cultural sites quickly. Compared to India, Sri Lanka tends to be cleaner, greener, and less crowded, providing a more tranquil experience. The island's varied landscapes, from lush tea plantations to pristine beaches, and its less commercialised cultural experiences make it unique. The hospitality of the Sri Lankan people enhances the overall charm of the visit.

What characterises the culture and mentality of the people in Sri Lanka?

Sri Lankans are renowned for being warm, with a deep respect for traditions and elders. Buddhism profoundly influences daily life and societal values, fostering a supportive and communal spirit. Despite a generally relaxed lifestyle, Sri Lankans are hardworking and place high value on education. Their close connection to nature and simple yet fulfilling way of life reflect the core of Sri Lankan culture.



Buddha statues in Dambulla Cave Temple

How does Sri Lanka's tea culture influence daily life?



Ceylon tea community

Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon, is celebrated for its world-renowned tea. Since the 19th century, when James Taylor introduced tea cultivation, Sri Lanka has become a leading tea producer. Ceylon Tea is internationally acclaimed for its quality. The tea plantations in Nuwara Eliya, Ella, and Haputale not only produce exquisite tea but also offer stunning landscapes.

FAQs: Answering the Most Important Questions to Travel Smart

Visitors can tour tea factories, participate in tastings, and learn about tea culture at museums. Organic and fair trade practices are common among plantations. Tea is a staple in Sri Lankan daily life, featured in hospitality and social events, and also used in traditional Ayurvedic medicine for its health benefits.



A traveller taking part in tea production

What are the highlights of Sri Lanka's wildlife?



Asian elephants in Bundala National Park

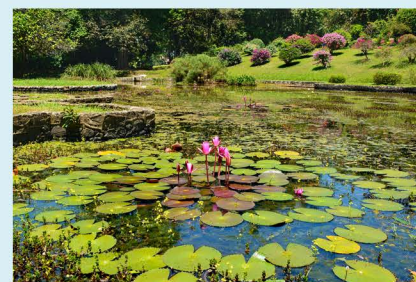
The country's rich ecosystems — ranging from rainforests and savannahs to coral reefs — make the island nation a biodiversity hotspot with numerous wildlife highlights:

- **Elephants:** Best seen in Yala, Udawalawe, or Minneriya National Parks.
 - **Leopards:** Spot them in Yala and Wilpattu National Parks.
 - **Whales:** Mirissa and Trincomalee offer excellent whale-watching opportunities.
 - **Birdwatching:** Sinharaja Forest Reserve and Kumana National Park are paradise for bird enthusiasts.
 - **Rare Species:** Wilpattu and Sinharaja are known for the Sri Lankan Sloth Bear and Tree Nymph butterfly.
- **Marine Life:** Hikkaduwa and Unawatuna coral reefs are ideal for diving and snorkelling, while Kalpitiya is perfect for dolphin watching.

When is the best time to visit Sri Lanka?

Sri Lanka is a year-round destination, with two distinct monsoon seasons: the southwest monsoon (May to September) and the northeast monsoon (October to January). Different regions experience monsoons at different times, ensuring favourable weather somewhere on the island year-round.

- **Southwest Coast:** Popular beach resorts like Galle and Mirissa see monsoon rains from May to September, while the east coast (e.g., Trincomalee and Arugam Bay) enjoys sunny weather.
- **Highlands and Central Regions:** Areas such as Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, and Ella offer cool, pleasant weather throughout the year.
- **Wildlife Viewing:** The period from May to September is ideal for spotting wildlife in national parks like Yala and Udawalawe. Whale watching is best from December to April in Mirissa, and from May to September in Trincomalee.



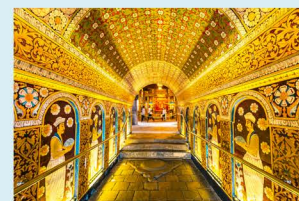
Peradeniya Royal Botanical Garden in Kandy



The Real Sri Lanka: Expert Tips from Our Team

Heritage Highlights

Our director Prasanna Rajapakse, a connoisseur of Sri Lanka's rich cultural mosaic, shares his top recommendations. "Experience the profound spirituality of Kandy's **Temple of the Tooth**, home to the revered relic of Buddha's tooth. The **Esala Perahera festival**, with its dazzling processions, offers a deep dive into our vibrant culture. Don't miss the **Sigiriya Rock Fortress**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its stunning frescoes and panoramic views." Prasanna also recommends exploring the colonial charm of **Galle Fort**, where historic streets are lined with delightful boutiques and cafés. The ancient city of **Polonnaruwa**, with its monumental Buddha statues at Gal Vihara, is another must-see.



Temple of Tooth interior

A World of Wildlife Wonders

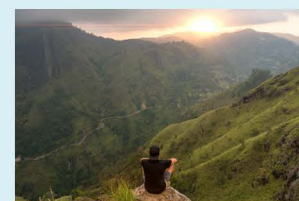


Sri Lankan leopard in Yala National Park

For a deep dive into Sri Lanka's natural wonders, Durga Ramanan, our General Manager in Europe and Vice President of Business Development, is your go-to expert. "**Yala National Park** is a must-visit for wildlife enthusiasts, offering thrilling encounters with elephants, leopards, and diverse bird species." Durga also highlights **Horton Plains**, where the misty grasslands and the dramatic cliff known as "World's End" provide breathtaking hikes. The **Sinharaja Forest Reserve**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a paradise for bird watchers, and **Ella**, surrounded by lush tea plantations and stunning waterfalls, is a scenic delight.

Adrenaline Adventures

For those craving excitement, Shiraj Juheer, our Head of Operations and Travel Centres, has thrilling recommendations. "**Arugam Bay** is a world-class surfing hotspot where both beginners and seasoned surfers can ride the waves. Another adventure awaits at **Adam's Peak**, also known as Sri Pada — hike to the summit to witness a spectacular sunrise and the sacred footprint."



Sri Pada summit view

Savouring Sri Lanka



Coconut curry preparation using a traditional method

When it comes to Sri Lankan cuisine, our Assistant Manager Insaf Mohamed, has some delectable advice. "Don't leave without trying the traditional **Sri Lankan rice and curry**, a staple dish served with a variety of curries. I also highly recommend **hoppers**, locally known as '**appa**'; they are bowl-shaped pancakes often topped with egg or spicy '**sambol**'. Not to be missed is '**kottu roti**', a street food favourite made with chopped roti bread, vegetables, and meat; this dish offers a true taste of Sri Lanka. And of course, a visit to a tea plantation in Nuwara Eliya or Ella for a **Ceylon tea** tasting is a must!"

Nature's Best Nests

For travellers seeking distinctive accommodations, our Managing Director for Sri Lanka & Maldives, Suranjith De Fonseka, recommends these unique stays. "Eco-lodges like **Gal Oya Lodge** and **Rainforest Ec Lodge** offer sustainable luxury in pristine natural settings. Experience colonial charm combined with modern comfort in charming bungalows amidst the tea plantations of Hill Country. For a unique adventure, stay in a tree house at **Back of Beyond Pidurangala** or indulge in a luxury tent at Wild Coast Tented Lodge in Yala for an extraordinary experience."



Traditional tree house



In Best Hands: DTH Travel — Your Reliable Partner in Sri Lanka

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DTH Travel, formerly known as Diethelm Travel, is a destination management company specialising in bespoke travel experiences across Asia, with a commitment to authentic and responsible tourism. Our boutique approach enables us to leverage on unique insights in creating our products, and consistently deliver personalised client servicing at a local level.

We provide our clients with one of the highest insurance coverage rates in the industry. And our progressive approach ensures that we use the latest technologies to help streamline processes, facilitating faster turnaround times for our clients.

We have offices in 14 countries, including Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Laos, Vietnam, China, Thailand, Singapore, Cambodia, Myanmar, Bhutan and Japan. With over 65 years in the industry, DTH Travel is proud to have been repeatedly recognised as Asia's Leading Destination Management Company by the World Travel Awards for multiple years.

Our Team in Sri Lanka



SURANJITH DE FONSEKA

Managing Director
suranjith.d@lk.dth.travel



PRASANNA RAJAPAKSE

Director
prasanna.r@lk.dth.travel



DURGA RAMANAN

General Manager in Europe and Vice
President of Business Development
durga.r@lk.dth.travel



INSAF MOHAMED

Assistant Manager
insaf.m@lk.dth.travel

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