Mercury Holidays

SECRETS OF SRI LANKA

Mount Lavinia, Galle, Sinharaja, Nuwara Eliya, Passikudah & More

Journey through tropical lowland rainforests, rolling tea plantation-covered mountains and discover pristine white-sand beaches in the east of the island. Delve into the country's fascinating history with stays in ex-Colonial residences and tours of world heritage sites Galle and Sigiriya Rock. This breath-taking tour captures the very best this enchanting and beguiling country has to offer.

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Sri Lanka. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:
B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Colombo
Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Colombo International Airport.

DAY 2: Mount Lavinia D
On arrival you will be transferred to the Mount Lavinia hotel. Dating back to 1806 when it was the British Governor's residence, the hotel exudes colonial charm, has its own private beach and beautifully positioned pool and terrace. Enjoy a welcome dinner at the hotel.

DAY 3: Mount Lavinia to Sinharaja B/L/D
Depart the capital to travel down to the South of the island to visit the colonial town of Galle, without doubt Sri Lanka's foremost urban attraction. Your guided city tour will explore Galle Fort, a walled town built by the Dutch in the 18th Century, and now a world heritage site. Inside the walls you will find the old Colonial traders' houses transformed into a lovely mix of boutique art galleries, shops and bohemian cafes, infused with the scents of spices and the tropics. After enjoying lunch in Galle you will travel to the Sinharaja Forest Reserve, the last major undisturbed area of rainforest in Sri Lanka, where you will spend the next two nights at the award-winning Rainforest Eco Lodge. Each of the architecturally designed 16 chalets has its own living room and private deck to enjoy the breath-taking views of forest canopy and tea gardens. Enjoy a gentle and relaxing introductory walk around the tea estate and surrounding grounds.

DAY 4: Sinharaja B/L/D
Enjoy an early morning walk around the forest on a bird and butterfly trail discovering many species of flora and fauna endemic to the forest. After a well-deserved breakfast there will be further opportunity to explore this UNESCO heritage recognised rainforest on a guided walk. Dinner will be prepared with ingredients from the lodge's own gardens.

DAY 5: Sinharaja to Nuwara Eliya B/L/D
Today your group will leave the tropical lowlands of Sinharaja and travel up into Sri Lanka's mountainous interior to Nuwara Eliya, the city of light. En route visit the inspirational Elephant Transit Home in Udawalawe, which is a rehabilitation project for injured elephants nursed back to health so that they can be released back into their natural environment. On arrival in Nuwara Eliya enjoy a visit to a tea estate and factory nestled up in the hills to see the entire manufacturing process.

DAY 6: Nuwara Eliya to Passikudah B/L/D
This morning enjoy a tour of Nuwara Eliya passing British red post boxes, pretty Victoria Park, the 18 hole golf course and the pink bricked Victorian post office. The group will then travel to Passikudah via the small village of Mahiyangana. On arrival in Passikudah check into your hotel for your next two nights. The largely undiscovered east of the island boasts the best beaches in Sri Lanka, with pristine white sands and turquoise shallow waters.

DAY 7: Passikudah B/L/D
Enjoy a full day at leisure relaxing on the beautiful Passikudah beach. Dive and snorkelling enthusiasts may choose to explore the healthy coral gardens teeming with colourful fish whilst others may take this opportunity to recharge their batteries lounging with a good book.

DAY 8: Sigiriya to Marawila B/L/D
Depart early this morning to visit the stunning Sigiriya Rock fortress, a world heritage site dating back to the fifth century. Climb up steps carved into the rock face to the summit or enjoy the spectacular views of ancient citadel and jungle from the lily-pad-covered moats that surround the rock. Journey to Innamaluwa where you will visit a spice garden and enjoy a relaxing foot massage. After, proceed to Marawila for your overnight stay, stopping in Dambulla for lunch on the way.

DAY 9: Colombo to the UK or Extension B
Transfer to the airport for your flight to the UK, or continue on to your chosen extension.

Itinerary Changes: The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day to day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

Hotels

Colombo (1 night): 4★ **Mount Lavina Hotel** - Hotel Road, Dehiwala, Mount Lavina. Contact number: 0094 11 2 711711

Sinharaja (2 nights): 3★ **plus Rain Forest Eco Lodge** - Viharahena, Deniyaya. Contact number: 0094 (0) 0 413405666

Nuwara Eliya (1 night): 4★ **Hill Club** - Grand Hotel Road Nuwara Eliya 22200. Contact number: 0094 52 2 222653

Passikudah (2 night): 4★ **Amethyst Resort** - Coconut Board Road, Passikudah, Kalkudah 30410. Contact number: 0094655676003-5

Marawila (1 night): 4★ **Club Palm Bay**- Thalawila Wella, Thoduwawa, Marawila 61210. Contact number: 0094 3222 54956

All accommodation is 3★ plus or 4★ and features an en suite bathroom, air-conditioning/heating*, TV* and coffee making facilities. Mercury Holidays has visited and inspected all of the hotels to ensure that they meet the high standards of service which we require for our clients. If the hotels detailed are not available, alternatives will be used of a similar standard. Final confirmation of your hotels will be sent in a document approximately 10 days before you travel. *Rain Forest eco lodge has no A/C or T.V.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Lunch on most days will be taken in local Sri Lankan restaurants. Dinner will be in your hotel as well as lunch on Day 4 and 7. A variety of restaurants for lunch are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.

Dress code

During your stay at the **Hill Club hotel**, if you choose to visit the Mixed bar, Main Dining Room or Mixed Lounge, then you will be need to adhere to a dress code. Gentlemen are required to wear a Jacket and Tie (these can also be hired from the hotel) and women are required to dress in appropriate evening wear.

On your arrival

On your arrival in Colombo you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Aitken Spence**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/Aitken Spence representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be able to answer any queries. However, if you need to contact Aitken Spence during your stay the details are:

Aitken Spence Travel (Colombo)
04th Floor
Aitken Spence Towers 02
315, Vauxhall Street
Colombo 02
Sri Lanka
Contact number: 0094 112 499623

Emergency contact information

Please find below the **emergency** contact details for **Aitken Spence Travel**

Contact	Telephone number
Rizmika	0094 772 916461
Anil	0094 777 270500

Visas

A visa is required for entry into Sri Lanka. We work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be able to arrange your visa for you on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250 590 and quote "Mercury Holidays". The cost of the visa is from £39. The visas take around 10 working days to issue and are only valid for 3 months from the date of issue. We therefore recommend that you apply for your visa 8 weeks before travel, however please be aware that your passport will be required for the application so make sure that you will not need it during this time. Alternatively you can visit The High Commission of Sri Lanka at 13 Hyde Park Gardens, London, W2 2LU.

Please note: If you have chosen to add the 'Kerala Beach Stay' or 'Highlights of Kerala' extension to the end of your tour, you will need to obtain an Indian visa prior to your UK departure. The Travel Visa Company offers a service which takes can take up to 15 working days at busy times. The cost is approximately £129. Alternatively you can apply for your own visa. You can apply in person or by post to the Indian Embassy in London: 142-148 Goswell Road, London, EC1V 7DU. There are also regional centres elsewhere in the UK. Full details on the process can be found on the Indian Embassy website www.in.vfsglobal.co.uk.

Insurance

You must obtain suitable travel insurance prior to departure. Mercury Holidays is partnered with Holiday Extras which offer insurance at the following prices:

Age in years	Up to 64	65-74	75-85
Up to 10 days cover	£37	£72	£104
Up to 17 days cover	£42	£79	£135

Prices are for worldwide insurance, excluding USA. For all persons 86 years and over, please contact us for insurance prices. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is strongly recommended that you check the latest health recommendations for travel to Sri Lanka with your GP at least 4-6 weeks before travel. Alternatively up to date information can be obtained by telephoning the MASTA Travel health line on 09068 224100. Any medicines you may need during your journey should be packed in your hand luggage. Tap water is not for drinking.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with an average level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves full days of sightseeing, often on foot, & includes some climbing of stairs and getting on and off coaches and boats. **This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.**

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 6, and the maximum will be 12. If in the unlikely event there are less than 6 people booked on your tour date then you may be asked to change to a different date. A full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival by your national guide who will remain with you for the duration of your trip. You will also be joined by a local guide in each of the cities which you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Clothing

It is seen as respectful to cover your shoulders and not to expose too much skin in Sri Lanka, so it would be advisable to pack a shawl or similar for women to cover up when entering religious buildings etc.

Tipping

Tipping is not compulsory and is at your discretion. Should you wish to tip, this will be collected by your guide at the end of your tour for your convenience. We would recommend approximately £10 for the duration of your tour for the driver and guide. It is asked that if you do not tip in the local currency, please do not give coins as these are difficult to exchange.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Sri Lanka is the Rupee, RS.
The Rupee is a closed currency and officially you are not allowed to take any cash out of Sri Lanka. US Dollars and GBP are also widely accepted in Sri Lanka should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you. Therefore, it is very important that you budget carefully.

Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, drinks and snacks. Approximately £200 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour.

What to Pack

- Sunscreen and hat in summer
- Warm clothing and thermals in winter
- Long trousers and a top with sleeves (required when entering any religious sites)
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger
- An electric plug converter - the electricity in Sri Lanka is 230 volts and is a 3 round pin plug or a UK plug
- Loo paper for public WCs
- Binoculars

Flight and Airport Information

Your flight is to Colombo International Airport with Sri Lankan Airlines (UL), departing from London Heathrow Terminal 3.

Route	Depart	Arrive	Flight Duration	Flight Number
London Heathrow-Colombo	21:00	13:00	10 hours 35 mins	UL504
Colombo-London Heathrow	13:05	19:30	12 hours	UL503

IMPORTANT: Please note that all flight times are subject to change. Final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Baggage allowance

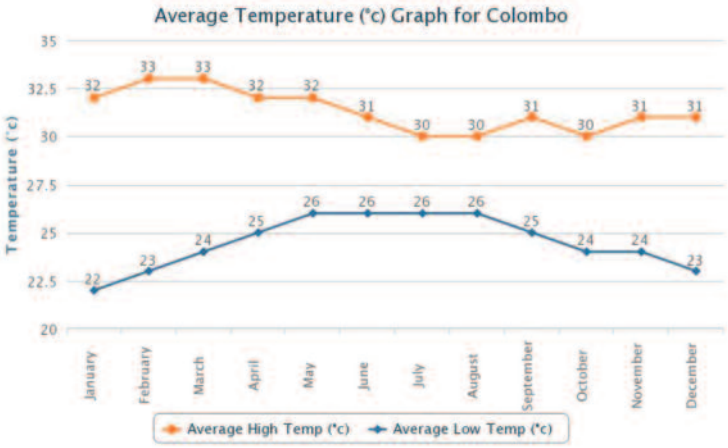
Baggage allowance (per person): Each passenger is entitled to 30KG of hold luggage plus 1 item of hand luggage of 5kg not exceeding 56cm x 36cm x 23cm in size and 1 personal item such as a handbag, briefcase or laptop case. Weight restrictions will be finalized on E-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check – in. Check-In should be at least 3 hours before departure. These timings are for the Secrets of Sri Lanka tour only and may vary. If you have booked an optional add on please contact us for more information.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras - Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

Weather and Climate

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate chart below.



Galle Fort

Sigiriya Rock

Mercury Holidays

THE MALDIVES BEACH STAY

Extension

Indulge yourself with your fabulous 4 night extension to the Maldives. Arriving at Male airport you will be transferred to your hotel by speed boat for four nights of pure bliss. Enjoy spectacular views of the bluest seas, whilst you unwind on this island of paradise.

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to your Maldives beach stay.

Maldives Beach Stay (4 nights)

With luxuriously warm seas and powder white beaches, the Maldives are a picture-perfect holiday destination. The island's unspoiled beaches are possibly the best in the world. Shores are fringed by swaying palm trees and sparkling waters with tropical fish, dolphins and five species of sea turtles.

All you need to know

This fabulous extension begins with a speed boat transfer to the 4★ Adaaran Club Rannalhi. Then simply unwind and enjoy the stunning beaches. Your transfers, accommodation and All-Inclusive meals are included.

You will not need to obtain a visa for the Maldives prior to your beach stay extension. You will be granted a free 30 days tourist visa on arrival. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding passport validity.

Hotel Information:

4★ Adaaran Club Rannalhi - Rannalhi, South Malé Atoll.
Contact number: 0096 0064 2688

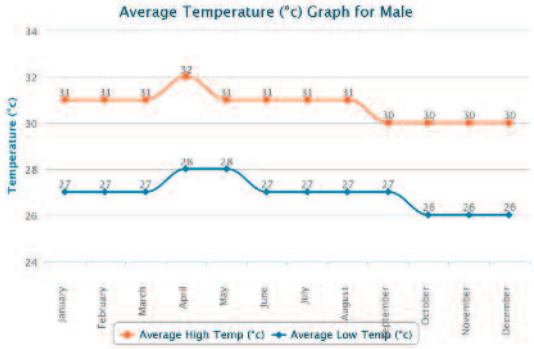
If you have booked another hotel, other than those featured above, this will be shown on your invoice.

Personal Expenses

The currency in the Maldives is the Maldivian Rufiya. The Maldivian Rufiya is a closed currency and officially you are not allowed to take any cash out of the Maldives. US Dollars are also widely accepted in these destinations, should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you. You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and items not included in your All-Inclusive package.

Tour Guides

Your beach stay is not escorted by a tour guide and your time will be free to explore the area at your own pace. Representative service will be on telephone contact only due to geographical reasons.

Weather and Climate

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