

SRI LANKA – JEWEL OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

Located just north of the Equator off the southern tip of India, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) has also been named the "Isle of Serendipity". Sri Lanka is approximately the size of Tasmania, with a tropical climate, and a number of airlines operate regular flights into the capital, Colombo.

Colombo is a busy, bustling and congested city which offers excellent shopping for clothing and porcelain as well as local handicrafts. An 11-day tour commences with two nights in Colombo before travelling by car to the Cultural Triangle. The Triangle contains three important archaeological sites dating back to the 3rd Century BC, when the first Tamil invaders conquered northern Sri Lanka. Close to our hotel is the world-famous rock fortress of Sigiriya. Although it is a steep and tiring climb to the top, the visitor is treated to a wonderful panoramic view of the surrounding plains.

Sigiriya was the site of a number of palaces built during the 10th Century, and to supply the fort an ingenious method of water transportation was used, which even allowed for a palace swimming pool on top of the rock. Also included is a visit to the famous Bandulla Caves with beautiful Buddhist frescos, and after a visit we continue and stop at a Spice Garden. A tour of the garden allows the visitor to see tropical products such as pepper, vanilla, cloves and nutmeg.

After visiting the Elephant Orphanage in Pinawalla our tour continues to the Buddhist city of Kandy for a two-night stay. The tour hotel is scenically situated above the city, and sightseeing includes the Temple of the Tooth as well as the world-famous Botanical Gardens. After a two-night stay, we travel through tea-growing country to the hill station of Nuwara Eliya, which is situated 5,600 feet above sea level. From here we drop down to the plains and Yalla National Park, which houses sloth bears, crocodiles and leopards. After an interesting game drive we stay at a nearby lodge. A stop along the coast near the former Dutch town of Galle offers wonderful seaside accommodation before returning to Colombo and a return flight to Australia.

A 10-night/11-day package costs \$3,075.00, which includes return airfares with Singapore Airlines, full English breakfasts throughout, as well as six dinners and all entrance fees. Travel is by chauffeur-driven Nissan vehicles, and tour members are met by local English-speaking guides at the various monuments. Not included in the tour cost are airport taxes and fuel surcharges (approximately \$375.00), tips and gratuities, and lunches.

For further details about this exotic and interesting destination contact Dick Cijffers of Journeys Worldwide on telephone number (07) 3221 4788.